

# The Prairie Light Review

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Volume 14  
Number 1 *Seasonal Dreams*

Article 57

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Fall 12-1-1994

## Mourning Rwanda

Jeffery Littner  
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### Recommended Citation

Littner, Jeffery (1994) "Mourning Rwanda," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 14 : No. 1 , Article 57.  
Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol14/iss1/57>

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## Mourning Rwanda

by Jeffery Littner

so dark you can barely see anymore  
ain't such a bad thing though ain't such a bad thing  
sometimes wish i was born with no eyes couldn't see ugly then  
wouldn't even know what ugly was  
all be beautiful-i'd embrace the world a newborn babe fresh from the warm the  
of his mother's  
womb  
sometimes wish i was never born at all couldn't know death then  
wouldn't even know what death was  
all be gone-i'd bask in the glorious radiance of nothing  
a blank space in the midst of never having had to exist  
i'll gouge out my eyes like oedipus...i'll hang from a tree like judas  
won't do no good though  
i've already seen  
i've already been  
a classic victim i can't escape my past will condemn me  
sometimes wish a wish would come true

i wake up quick my throat dry from late night cigarette fests over a bottle of gin  
the morning a blur and upside down i aimlessly scramble toward the shower  
hot springs of rushing water pour forth and working together they are able to  
create  
a thousand tiny flowing streams that all begin at my head and surge downward  
spilling in gay cascade 'round the curves of my tired flesh and finishing their  
course  
in subtle eruption beneath feet that have walked too many miles  
beneath feet that are sore with confusion  
beneath feet that have been away for awhile now

i like the water  
used to go swimming with pa in a little ol' river just a few hundred feet from  
home  
people called it fisherman's bay  
never seen no fish in it though never seen no fisherman either  
pa got a kick outta watching me swim like a flying bass he said i was  
look at that boy go! he shouted to ma and the girls  
that boy's gonna be an athlete someday! look at 'em go would ya!  
i told pa i liked the water 'cause i felt free in the water  
pa said that's because the water makes me clean  
something free about being clean

damn its been a long time since i felt clean  
water gets the outside but it ain't the outside that needs cleaning so much any more  
i still feel dirty after stepping out of the shower

the newspaper rests comfortably on the kitchen table waiting patiently to be read  
front page screams black and white in bold print of another massacre in rwanda  
two hundred thousand dead at a roman catholic parish  
a young man who survived goes to pray and finds the bloody corpses of babies without  
heads  
scattered and random throughout the church  
blood cries out from the ground declaring its innocence  
in vain i was shed...in vain i am no more...

i realize that there are thousands of people who are reading these words  
the exact same words as i  
do any of them weep?  
land covered with lifeless blue babies expired and unresponsive  
sprawled numb a face still moist with wetness  
i am but one person  
these who will never become men  
these who will never become women  
these who will walk no more

and for the first time in a long time i remember that i am alive  
suddenly the weight of my head becomes too great to bear and in a moment i am  
broken knees  
a wailing marionette whose strings have been unexpectedly cut  
sobbing upon cold hard tiles of fancy japanese pattern  
a voice from somewhere deep within echoes my outrage that life is not as it should be  
is this to mean there is no good?  
is this to mean there is evil?  
who can decide such things?  
certainly not man who is capable of playing the monster without shame  
man so hard his own conscious doth not testify against him  
man on path with head held high after his murder of the defenseless

i clear my throat and spit wrath toward the pale face of ignorance  
it shouts there is no wrong but i fuck these words and return them void  
for my heart speaks a language different than that of the world  
a wild and vibrant language that lives and moves and has its being in unspoken  
awareness

that no words could ever make sense of why we have to die  
a language of fierce passion that consumes in silence and without pity  
those who would say that things are the way they are because that's the way they have  
to be

a language bringing order to disorder  
a language not of chaos but of peace  
a language that is justice to the masses of hoping wounded

we do not deserve this hell

its been years since i wept like this  
tears make me feel clean  
for a while anyway  
the men scratch their heads and slowly stroke the sharp bristles beneath their chins  
the women stand behind their men and turn away in disgust  
the children still believing they'll live forever ask what it means to die  
the parents fidget nervously and tell stories about a place called heaven where everyone  
goes

when they die  
ya can't tell a child that ya just die  
ya die and that's it  
children ain't ready for that yet  
gotta ease them into it just like santa claus  
they'll find out soon enough and if you go telling 'em right away the little fellas will  
die before their time  
gotta let the little ones live for a while cause they're the ones who inspire and give hope  
to the folks  
who've been around and know the way things are

just bum that bridge when it comes to be crossed

third world countries wake up with clenched fists of white hot rage  
"these are our people"  
but these are my people too  
all people are my people  
same color blood as i do  
laugh and cry same ways as me  
die just like i'm gonna someday

all people are my people