

## **A Sister's Love**

All the world's children are poor,  
because they are dependent on adults and on their environment.  
How they seek and find  
affection, joy and peace, light and beauty,  
depends on what those who love or look after them share.

But all over the world  
there are children for whom it's quite a different story,  
because their parents and friends have almost nothing to share.  
These are the children born into poverty.

I grasped this again the other evening.  
I was in a housing project at nightfall.  
The damp wrapped around your skin  
as if swelling up and sinking in everywhere,  
coming from these streets,  
from these unheated dwellings that can't be called homes,  
and from these people all around,  
stripped of intimacy, voiceless and aimless,  
from these desperate people,  
because nothing is certain to last,  
not today, not tomorrow, not ever.  
You can't rely on anyone, neither on people, nor on God.  
I realized that the pleas and cries of misery's offspring  
go unanswered, their requests fall into a black hole.

This became even clearer, because right at that moment,  
in the middle of the street,  
in the depths of this labyrinth of housing units,  
a little boy was sobbing.  
He was stumbling forward,  
groping through the dusk with outstretched hands.  
A child broke away from a group of girls.  
She was about 8, or 10; who knows?  
She ran to her little brother  
to pick him up and take him away,  
to pick him up and console him,  
to pick him up and cuddle him.  
Leaning over, she grabbed him up from the ground,  
and squeezed him in her arms.  
Just then, a boy crept up from behind  
and kicked her.  
The boy was laughing.  
In the twilight, everything seemed to echo his laughter,  
the insults and tears were laughing,  
misery was laughing in those streets,  
as it does in all the other miserable places in the world.

To keep from crying  
misery was laughing with all its might  
out of disgust and sorrow...  
All this laughter rolled over the young girl  
crouched over her little brother.  
Her own people were laughing at her.  
No one came to help her.  
Panicking, she carried the child away,  
bent double under the weight of this son of man waiting to be loved.

Son of man, misery's offspring today receive  
neither peace, nor joy, nor affection,  
neither light, nor beauty  
as part of their heritage.  
That evening I realized  
how many millions of children in the world are lost,  
lost in a black hole,  
because in their world they meet none of us  
ready to love them.

