



Poetry

For the Children

If I could I'd give you all a home.
Not a house or a tent,
But a home that rings with laughter.

If I could I'd feed you all.
Not with oatmeal or rice,
But with pasta and hot chocolate.

If I could I'd warm you by my fire
And wrap you up like the gift you are,
In fluffy blankets without holes.

If I could I'd stop the gunfire.
That fills your ears,
And the smoke that blinds your eyes.

If I could I'd teach you to read.
Read fairy tales and make-believe.
I'd give you the key to my favourite treasure.

If I could I'd give you music.
A song to break the stillness,
A tune to chase away the spectres of loneliness
and terror.

If I could I'd bring your Daddy back.
He could hold you and wipe away
Those blood-filled tears that map your cheeks.

If I could I'd rock you until
The pain went to sleep
And you could dream again.

If I could I'd give you peace
So you could play those childish games,
And pet the dogs and chase the rainbows.

If I could I'd tear my love
Into tiny pieces and throw it to the wind
So it could cover you like stardust.

But I can't.
I can't do anything.
But watch.
And pray.

And cry.

Discussion Questions:

- What does the author wish for children of the world?
- What does the author want to protect children from in the world?
- Why does the author feel she can't do anything but watch, pray and cry?
- Do you feel this way sometimes when you learn about world poverty and hunger? Why / why not?
- Can we do more than watch, pray and cry? What more can we do?

**By Lynnette Roberts 1993
Year 11 student (16 years old)**





Poetry

The Arithmetic of Poverty

Decide, mother
 Who goes without.
 Is it Rama, the strongest?
 Or Baca, the weakest
 Who may not need it much longer
 Or perhaps Sita?
 Who may be expendable.
 Decide mother,
 Kill a part
 Of yourself
 As you resolve the dilemma
 Decide mother.
 Decide ...
 And hate.

Written by Appadura from India
 Source: Overcoming World Hunger—the Challenge Ahead

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the woman's dilemma?
2. What would it be like to have to make such a decision?
3. How is she trying to make the decision?
4. Would you choose? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. Sita, the girl, is referred to as "expendable". What might this reveal about attitudes towards girls and women in this society?
6. Who might the woman hate as a result of having to make such a choice?

GOD to a Hungry Child

Hungry child—
 I didn't make this world for you.
 You didn't buy any stock in my railroad,
 You didn't invest in my corporation.
 Where are your shares in BHP?
 I made the world for the rich
 And the will-be-rich
 And the have-always been rich.
 Not for you
 Hungry Child.

Written by Langston Hughes
 Source Good Morning Revolution, New York

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the poet trying to say? Do you agree with his view?
2. What do you think the poet is feeling?
3. Do you think other people in the world share this view?

I Was Hungry

I WAS HUNGRY
 And you fed your animals with my food
 I WAS HUNGRY
 And your multinationals planted your winter
 crops on our best land
 I WAS HUNGRY
 And you wouldn't give up your steak from South
 America
 I WAS HUNGRY
 But they grow tea for you where rice might grow
 for my daily meal
 I WAS HUNGRY
 But you turned our sugar cane into fuel for your
 cars
 I WAS HUNGRY
 But the waste from your factories is poisoning the
 fishing grounds of the earth
 I WAS HUNGRY
 But with your money you bought all my food
 I WAS HUNGRY
 While my land grew exotic fruits for your table

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

Forgoing excessive and harmful consumption?
 Having to change your attitudes?
 The power of the politicians?
 The work involved in achieving greater self-
 sufficiency?
 The disapproving looks of your neighbour?
 WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?
 I was hungry and you gave me no food.

Source unknown

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you believe the claims made in this poem are correct?
2. What can we do about altering this situation of hunger (particularly in very poor countries)?
3. What are some things that you buy or consume that could be damaging to the people of the developing world?
4. What does the Bible say about helping the hungry? Look at Matthew 25:42-45.
5. How can we in Australia—a country blessed incredibly— help more?

