



AS IF I CARED

POEMS AND OTHER PARTS OF A LIFE

Damian Gorman

Human Threads

(For the *arpilleristas* of Chile, who sewed their truths into rough cloth, at a time when all truth-telling was banned)

When people lose the thread of being human,
When anything can be done, and often is,
When Power is in its element – which is fire -
And loved ones disappear like scattered ashes,

When Fear and Hatred, in their darkling moment,
Are so full of themselves they blot the sun,
And if you don't want to meet the dark with Darkness
In days, in times like these, what can be done?

Well *arpilleristas* took matters into their own hands,
And charged the fingers of those hands to fight
With needles and with threads and coloured fabric,
And all the blood of their affronted hearts,

To let the love and rage that pulsed within them
And all the scalded grief come to a point.
They warmed that needle-point with what was in them.
They held it till it knew them inside-out,

Then went to work – to stitch Truth into fabric;
To stand before the makers of the Pain
And say, “those loved ones you have taken from us?
We thread them to our torn lives once again.

“Look here they are – for all the world to see -
On this rough cloth, on these white squares of cotton.
And all those crimes you say did not occur
Are stitched here too, and will not be forgotten.”

These calls, these protests, special gifts of feeling
Of love, resilience, anger and of strife,
Speak to us with more than words’ mere breathing.
They pierce the heart, so it may come to life.

Stop

(In response to the Gaza war of summer 2014)

Today I bury my child

Stop

And it was you who killed my child

Stop

I know that he wasn't the target

Stop

But that doesn't make him any less killed.

I know that "these things have contexts"

Stop

I have walked all around the contexts

Stop

I have tried unfamiliar angles

Stop

And they don't make him any less killed.

You say, "what should we do - tell me?"

Stop

And I say, "don't murder my child"

Stop

"Walk as far away from that as you can"

Stop

"Move forward, away from that thing"

Stop

And you say you are "just like" me

Stop

That we feel and we do the same things

Stop

I know what you mean, but we don't

Stop

For today you don't bury your child

Stop