

Into the Inferno

Sonnet III

I found myself suddenly alone, in a dust storm
We had descended, Blake and I, to another plane in Dante's imagined terror

Through the dust I saw a man, a worn tired figure
in rags, clawing wildly at the sand.

He spoke:

I am stuck here Alone! in the desert -- my home is across that barbed wire fence.
Ahhh! I am condemned to starve and thirst here in the desert,
clawing at the ground for some tiny shrub to eat,
some small amount of mud to suck on.....but I find nothing.

I spent my life writing about the greatness of my country, cheering
in smug satisfaction

Our righteous takeover of what we called that holy land.
Ahhhhhh [he sighed again]
I was a man who stopped at nothing to justify occupation...

Using any excuse and argument at my disposal to blind myself to the truth
and now, in death, I am myself locked out of what I called my homeland.....

Forever left to die but never die in this accursed desert
while the way to my home remains closed
behind borders
barbed wires
armored bulldozers tanks armored soldiers

I can see my home - there!
but cannot reach it....

I watch through the barbed wire as my home is destroyed,
over and over again.
and replaced by the homes of strangers
who shout at me in their language
surrounding me
kicking and beating me
over and over and over and over again.

I reach toward the man - dust billows up to block the path
and my black-coated guide appears again before me
"We must go now."
I try to turn back
but the man in the desert
has disappeared under the dust.

By Jenka Soderberg