

This Generation

©2002 Betsay Goitom

This generation's Eritrean teens were raised to the knowledge that their fathers, uncles, brothers, mothers and sisters were heroes that fought and died for the sake of their freedom and as kids they did pledge to be like those that passed away in war for them and make them proud. It would be an understatement to say that this was a noble and a thing to be honored but what kept our hearts going through trying times should of stopped there. That nowadays, seems more of a heartache and some of my very friends and countless number of my peers find themselves in fear. What makes it worse is that it is our dreams that are turning into nightmares.

We find ourselves even without the comfort of being able to point our fingers. Is it the fault of our decade and centuries-long feuds between those with whom we shared our homes with who became our rival neighbors ? Or is it the fault of the man who, is sometimes described a hero and sometimes known as a power struck dictator, is called a democratic president? Or is the confusion raised by a militia that parted ways with the current Eritrean government after a three-decade long war ? Or is it the evil doings of America? Is it because of our ties with the Muslim world ? Is it the Biblical predictions that curse us?

I only know two things: one is that it is we, the ones in the front lines, the mothers with lost husbands and sons who are feared dead -- the next generation -- who depend on the foundations we lay that will suffer. And two, the blood that has already been shed is more than enough.

I do hope I sound naive when writing all of this because that is what we know. There most probably is a greater politics. But we are your young future. Lead us, for if you mislead us you will be lost with us as well.

Everything becomes affected, the stress builds strains between families in its invisible ways and quarrels reach an all time high, the teens become discouraged and a blind courage builds. Short staffed hospitals become filled. Fatality reaches a level where it seems normal , like one mother can not grieve her sons death because her neighbor lost two of her own sons. That is not normal. Regardless of where anyone might go it is survival of the fittest, and we do embrace that reality but we want to compete in business not in killing each other: we want to drink our traditional coffee to celebrate a graduation, not to chase away the pain of loss.

Betsay Goitom

Editor's Note: Betsay Goitom is a young man from the Eritrea living in Lund. He is a prolific writer of poetry, novels and essays. We are very proud to publish some of Betsay's material, and look forward to more material from him.

Publishers interested in Betsay's work can contact him by requesting his contact details from *lundianmagazine@hotmail.com* .