

in their name,
in the name of those brothers and sisters,
in the name of my language,
nourished by the heritage of a thousand years,
in the name of the language in which
I am accustomed to addressing my mother,

in the name of my native land,
I say, I have come today,
here on the open grounds of the university,
to demand their death by hanging,
the death of those who killed
my brothers and sisters indiscriminately.
I have not come here to weep for them
who gave their lives under Ramna's
sun-scorched Krishnachura trees
for their language,
those forty or more who laid down their lives
for Bangla, their mothertongue,
for the dignity of a country's great culture,
for the literary heritage of Alaol,
Rabindranath, Kaikobad and Nazrul,
for keeping alive the bhatiali, bawl,
kirton and the ghazal,
those who laid down their lives
or Nazrul's unforgettable lines:
"The soil of my native land

is purer than the purest gold"

Forty blooming lives fell
like innumerable Krishnachura petals
on Ramna's soil.

In the husks of the seeds

sprouting therefrom I can see

endless drops of blood,

the blood of young Rameswar and Abdus Salam,
the blood of the most brilliant boys of the university.

I can see each drop of blood

shining on Ramna's green grass like burning flames,
each boy a piece of diamond,
forty jewels of the university,
who, had they lived, would have become
the most precious wealth of the country, in whom
Lincoln, Rolland, Aragon and Einstein had found refuge,
in whom had flourished some of the
most progressive ideals of this century's civilization.
We have not come here to shed tears
where forty jewels sacrificed their lives.
We have not come, either, to plead
for our language to the killers
who had arrived with their rifles loaded,

with orders to shoot our brothers and sisters.

We have come to demand the hanging
of the tyrants and the murderers.

We know that our brothers and sisters were killed,

that they were mercilessly shot,

that one of them was perhaps called 'Osman'

just like you,

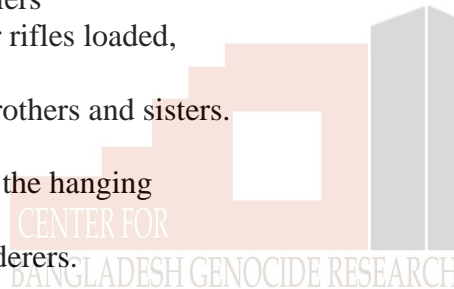
that perhaps one of them had a clerk for his father

just like you, or that one's father was growing

golden crops in some remote village of East Bengal,

or was a government functionary.

Today those boys could be living just like you or me.



Perhaps one of them had his wedding day fixed
just like me.

Perhaps one of them had left on his table,

just like you, his mother's letter

received a moment ago,

hoping to read it when he got back

from the procession he went out to join.

Those boys had harboured concrete dreams
in their breasts,

and they were killed by the bullets
of the cruel tyrants.

In the name of those deaths

I demand that those who wanted to
banish our mother-tongue be hanged,

I demand that those who ordered
the killings be hanged,

I demand that the traitors
who climbed to the seats of power
over the dead bodies of my brothers and
sisters be hanged.

I want to see them tried and shot
as convicted criminals
on that very spot in this open field.

Those first martyrs of the country,
those forty brilliant boys of the university,
each of them had dreams of building
a quiet home in the bosom of this earth
with his wife, children and parents.

They dreamed of analysing
the scientific theories of Einstein with greater depth,
they dreamed of finding ways
to put the atomic power to man's service
in the cause of Peace.

They dreamed of writing a poem
more beautiful than Tagore's 'The Flute Players'.

O my martyred brothers,
the spot where you laid down your lives .

will continue to glow

even after a thousand years.

No footprints of civilization can wipe out



the marks of your blood from that soil,
although procession after procession
will one day converge here
and shatter its vague silence.
The tolling of the university bells
will daily announce the historic hour of your deaths,
even if one day a violent storm
erupted and shook the building's very foundation.
Whatever came to pass
the brightness of your names as hallowed martyrs
would never grow dim.
The cruel hands of the murderers
can never throttle your long cherished hopes.
Some day we shall surely win

and hail the advent of justice and fair play.

O my dead brothers,

on that day, your voices,

the strong voice of Freedom,

will soar from the depths of silence.

The people of my country, on that day,

will surely hang from the gallows

those tyrants and murderers.

On that day, your hopes will shine like flames

in the joy of victory and sweet vengeance.

Translated by Kabir Chowdhury

The poem was written at 7.00 pm on 21st February 1952