

"Prayer to the Old People" by Romaine Moreton

I cannot think
when hunger consumes
me

gnaws at my insides
pleads me weak

I cannot pine revolution
when my fingertips
are scarred
by the fire
in my eyes

I cannot weep for antiquity
if another soul this moment
passes through
the grating
of
my
back
door

I cannot mouth words of survival
when the dying
is getting
younger
and younger still
then quicker
and
quicker
still

I cannot feel the immortality
that was so hard fought for
when I weep for a new generation
who live with very little
reprieve

and so I call upon the old people
may you please deliver guidance
upon us

inform me
with just a flicker in the corner
of my eye
or a piece of furniture
moved
or a whisper I awake to
and ask
who was that?

please what I ask is more simple than
the most simplest thing I know
just reassure us

that you
are here

let us know that at the dawning
of each day
although feeling desperate and painful
you can reassure us
that the pain
shall
pass

let us not grow pins in our eyes
when being forced to witness
the privileges of others
grown
from the blood
of your
soil

let us not nurture bitterness
when being forced to listen
to another politician or common person
speak about us as though we are too stupid
to understand
his
or her
words

this is a prayer to the old people
with each day passing
and each day arriving
to give us strength
to carry
on

may you flock round our beds at night
or linger where we sleep
whether on the bench
in the gutters
in rivers
in cells
in despair
beneath platforms
or trees

may you flock round where we sleep at night
and deliver us
some
peace

this is a prayer to the old people
who have walked this road before
I know you would want us to live long.