Two Sides Of Silence

Linton Kwesi Johnson

To us
Who were
Of necessary birth
For the earths hard
And thankless toil
Silence has no meaningThere is never a feeling
Of tranquility
Or mere quietness
Never a moment
Of soundless calm
From within or without
Our troubled selvesHow can the clamor
Of sounds be stilled?
There is no void where
Noises can collect
And be made muteHow indeed
Can there be silenceWhen our hearts beat out
A sonorous beat
Meeting the beating drums
Of an African past
When our eyes shed
Solid tears of iron blood
That falls on concrete groundInside our ears
Are the many wailing cries
Of misery
Inside our bodies
The internal bleeding
Of volcanoes
Inside our heads
The wrapped in thoughts
Of rebellionHow can there be calm
When the storm is yet to come?This unending silence
Taut, impervious, unbending
Not lending an ear
To the most delicate of sounds
Awaits the blast of bombs
Which man will explode
To break this silent bond
To (?)

To the use to create
Hills of soft obedience
Where sweet-clothed sounds
Can rebound
And their echoes glide
Like a carefree bird
In rhythmic calm
To a mellow
Pure, silent space

Songwriters
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