WHICH WAY JUSTICE?
(FOR ZIMBABWE AND SOUTH AFRICA)
by
Lourdes Sison Pammit

The British say the scales of justice even out with the good poised triumphant on top yet a Russian Count born to a wealth of serfs had seen justice suffer in its grinding way found it was not hastened by impassioned words nor by tears poured on wounds calling for redress.

A stoop-shouldered man with sensitive fingers that probed musty books in the London archives wrote not of blindfolded justice balancing scales but of brawny hands taking their tools to arm over the sacrosanct gates of the Titled to level with their feet the divine position of rank.

Which way justice?
the whiteman's blindfolded lady
that hears the cries
but never the hand
that shackles another
weighing the scales
imperturbably not seeing evil?
Or the justice that calls
blood for blood
the old biblical:
an eye for an eye?

To everything there is a season but not for all-time suffering.
The time when thrown stones were gathered to form prison walls must make way for the time when same stones leave their victims to return with originators' intent.

A kindly heart is open to treachery
A forgiving nature is easily appeased
An open and trusting hand is soon bound by steel grips that do not know of kindness but despise what appears to be meek.
Which justice can redress a century of infamy? wipe the blood bring back the dead straighten the deformed dry the tears cried so long they had formed rivers?

The Count is still right infinite though his love for man; despite the apocalyptic dreams of an expatriate whichever way justice: a dream deferred is irreversible.

* * * * *

Lourdes Sison Pammit is a Filipino graduate student in African Area Studies at UCLA.