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## MASSACRE

by

Susan Anderson

The women  
in blossom under their parasols  
enclosing their children in everlasting  
arms. They sit.

Their patience  
an anthem under the iron sun. They wait.  
Colors flutter confronting the scarce wind.  
Mute hands. An occasional man's suit  
shiny as a mirror. Faith sweltering  
mopped humbly from foreheads. The skirts  
of the women spread over the afternoon, unarmed.  
Children unaware, restless.  
A fence of shadows on the roof of buildings  
nearby. Calculated steel arrowed against  
a multitude of hearts silent with need.

They were gunned by a horde of weapons.

Shot.

Fire pierced their voices.  
Their hands were helpless in the thunder.  
Hatred erupted in wounds on their bodies.  
The children,  
the women, the men.

The gingham breasts of the women  
were ripped by heat.

Their blood railed in its own din.

The questions,

the vulnerable dignity  
catapulted into hell.  
A passbook pillow under a shattered head.  
Passbook comfort for the victims.

The desolate blood of the women  
travelled under ground. The deaths  
of the children became the shadows of  
conversation, the words behind the eyes,  
the murder of the men became  
the pulse of the flesh  
now living in Sharpeville.