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## THE ANATOMY OF FAMINE

by

Fassil Demissie

Skeletal children with protruding bones  
Silent, sad with their lives slipping away...

Thousands of mothers, their faces grotesque, chiselled by  
a sculptor's hand familiar with suffering and pain,  
with empty sagging breasts, their legs spindly, and  
bodies unable to support themselves,  
line up at feeding centers for a few grams of food

Fathers too, wizened and bowed, wail, bathe the dead and  
bury their loved ones in solemn tenderness

Brittle and discolored like dried leaves,  
The lucky ones line up in throngs in barren,  
overcrowded feeding centers  
Tongues dart in and out,  
Snatching a confetti of flies

Children, mothers and fathers with eyes  
too dry to shed tears, enshroud loved ones  
who have no energy to cry, or writhe in pain as  
starvation saps their lives and delivers them to  
death