

Per-Olof Johansson

*Five Essays*  
in  
The Art of Poetry

*Errors as part of life.....*

*Contact [mail@per-olof.dk](mailto:mail@per-olof.dk)*

## *Hydra for Equinox*

- I have written this poem Hydra for Project Equinox 1996 - <http://www.el.net/poem/>
- on the day of the equinox. *PROJECT EQUINOX(tm) was promoting World Peace*
- *Through Poetry in what they called ' the Greatest Poetry Writing Event in History!'*
- *June 2008 it is still out there in Cyberspace...*

## *Hydra*

Am I the one  
or is it mankind.  
Today is in focus and one head begun:  
A hard day told in a strange language.  
Only the children I take care of  
help me to forget it sometimes.  
In the newspaper a reader feels badly:  
He tells me that the Danish language is disappearing  
and that we, the Danes will be more invisible  
than Chief Seattle and his tribe.  
Then you have to follow me on my bike  
on my favorite tour, greeting everyone I meet  
and those only I see: Egun with the same disease as I,  
we knew why we were biking, and now he is dead,  
but to me he still has his head on his shoulders.  
Then in the grass at the lake without the heron  
I see the sword, a child's made of wood,  
but the child will grow.  
I see the apples ripen on the trees:  
but in the shop they are French, Spanish or from Belgium.  
The dove is from Turkey, the squirrel is not red but black -  
what is happening here? Yes a son, Mamma and Pappa,  
grandmother and grandfather, are in the churchyard:  
but 100 years ago the family came here  
and the language is still in my ear, this is our America.  
Home from work, I am met with the message  
that an old friend Erik is dead at 12 o'clock.

His origin is like my own and we made jokes with  
the tongue of our mothers, with tears in our eyes.  
Hercules did find his weapon:  
this is my day, this is my head.



### *New Year's - every day*

From where I am living,  
I see preserved forests to the northwest,  
and those to the east,  
and the residential suburb, itself a forest.

I see the vapors from the gas-heated houses  
like smoke from fireplaces in the village.  
Peace and frosty weather New Year's morning  
following the tremendous bangs and glorious star domes.

Working intensely to spread the quiet  
with open eyes, I send a seagull off  
to Noah's Ark with a green branch.



## *Stigma on China*

Of course it is important to keep calm.  
I have to experience excitements  
but should not let them flood the brain.

Excitements have their own logic,  
and so I am urged to address  
the personified Great Power:

*"Listen China, get a translator,  
so that you can understand what I am saying.*

*Your overwhelming population doesn't justify  
genocide or the killing of a culture.*

*Tibet is a culture of its own,  
and your technique of extermination shall blemish  
all the culture of China  
from now on and several thousands of years backwards.*

*You can't save yourself even though  
the USA exterminated the culture of the red Indians,  
the Romans scattered the Jews  
and the Germans gassed them.  
Not to mention the forced union of Soviet.*

*I have to consider  
whether I shall stop entering notes  
on this papers in a Chinese note-book.  
I wonder what is invisible on the blank pages  
of legal hanky-panky and forgery with history  
when you deny Tibet the right of independence  
and religious liberty.*

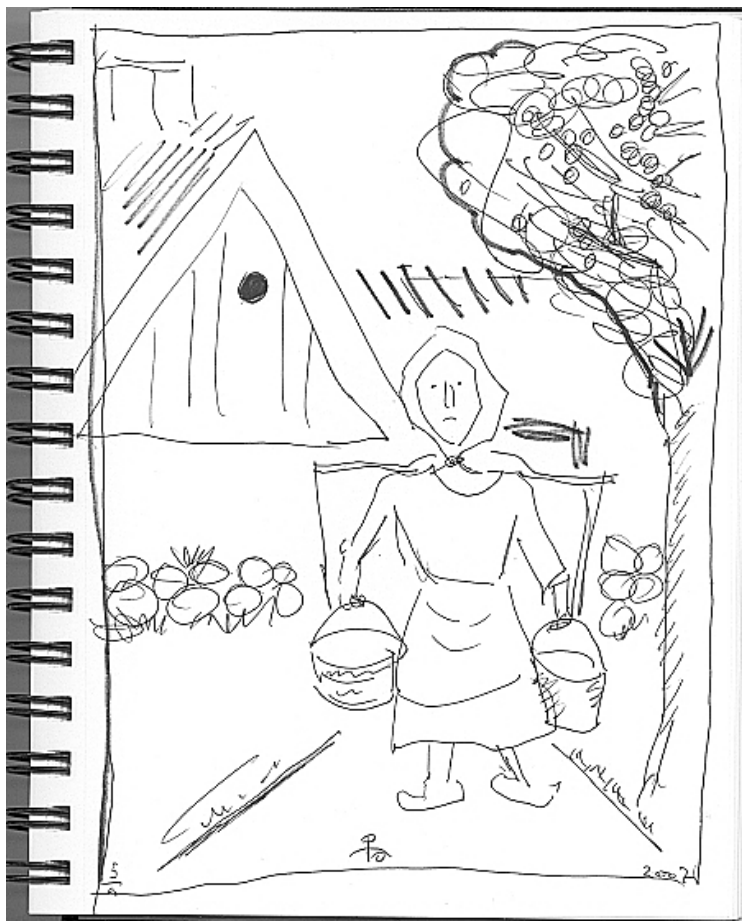
*Shame on China!  
As long as Tibet is invaded and maltreated!"*

Maybe China, then, tells us  
that every culture is so stained.

When the poet rambled on about a peach branch  
and a dickey-bird hidden among the leaves,  
his assistant, the politician, went to work  
with sword and torture.

What, then, about the peoples' cry for justice?

Shall the dark clouds never  
be replaced by a brisk wind?



*Painting*

When my father came home  
my mother had painted the floor red  
and he did not like it.

Before Christmas she painted  
hundreds of splint baskets  
with a red handle and red flowers  
along the side, and a few green leaves,  
traditionally, as they did at home  
in her childhood.

This painting is the one she bought in her youth:  
A woman standing before a farmers house  
with a yoke on her shoulder,  
carrying a bottle of water in each hand,  
one modern of zinc and the other  
made of wood, as my grandfather made them.  
With wooden shoes,  
she has a red skirt under the apron,  
white blouse with sleeves rolled up  
and the headscarf bound under her chin.  
I think she is on her way to  
the cattle and the horse in the field.  
Behind her, between her and the house  
a stone fence with flowers.  
The farmers house to the left, with a wooden gable, a triangle  
with a black hole in the middle to the interior,  
a thatched roof and a white chimney.  
To the right a tree, bad painted but with symbolic values.  
I remember a photo with my mother  
smiling under this painting.

The artist's name unreadable, like unknown,  
no name known world-wide, the painting not bad,  
not especially good either,  
has no place in my view on art,  
but a painting my mother bought  
for some reasons  
I have to guess:  
the woman,  
the yoke,  
the water,  
the house,  
the chimney,

the tree,  
the road,  
the work,  
the flowers,  
the triangle,  
all this at a glance:  
a red skirt.



### *Anti hate speech*

If hate is God  
God hates you.  
Hate is a poison,  
it kills you, your family,  
your goal its self.  
Hate creates hate,  
makes hate your God.  
If hate is God  
God hates you.



Visit <http://per-olof.dk>