

Let's Talk About It: Picturing America
The Work of Freedom: Individual and Communal

Poetry Selections

“the times” by Lucille Clifton

it is hard to remain human on a day
when birds perch weeping
in the trees and the squirrel eyes
do not look away but the dog ones do
in pity.
another child has killed a child
and i catch myself relieved that they are
white and i might understand except
that i am tired of understanding.
if this
alphabet could speak its own tongue
it would be all symbol surely;
the cat would hunch across the long table
and that would mean time is catching up,
and the spindle fish would run to ground
and that would mean the end is coming
and the grains of dust would gather themselves
along the streets and spell out:

these too are your children this too is your child

From BLESSING THE BOATS: NEW & SELECTED POEMS 1988-2000 (BOA Editions, 2000)

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