



KAAL N ZENAAT N (ቃልን ጽንግትን)

By **Kiki Tsegai** (Martyr *Berhane Tesfamariam's* wife)

ብኪኪ ጸጋይ (በዓልቲ ቤት ስወ.እ ብርሃነ ተስፋማሪያም - ወዲ ባሊሳ)

15 July 2015

KAAL N ZENAAT N

I gave you a promise Berhane

That our kids will be raised with pride,

and never be hungry.

That I would double a blanket to keep them warm in their sleep.

But above all, I gave you a promise that I would raise them in your shadow.

I gave you a promise Berhane

that the freedom you gift us with, I would take over to protect.

I promised you that at times of betrayal, I would keep on going and smile.

At times of peace, I would work harder to make our freedom last for eternity.

I promised you that I will never forget

what you meant when you said those last words

while the occupier Ethiopians were taking you away to jail" It will be very hard on you from now. Do not let the kids forget me" (Naakhi ya tkefaaki kab heejei - keloot keyresuuni")

They never did and they never will my beloved.

Our daughter Nohemee married and named her first born Berhane.



I smile when I look at your picture and I see you smile as well.
You were so peaceful and giving and yet, you were tortured to death.
Your only crime? To be a proud Eritrean.
I gave you my word Berhane, and I learned from you to never give up.
Love you always, your wife Kiki

July 15, 2015 (37 years to the day)



SWAY WITH ME

Sway with me when
everything seems dark.

Tonight the enemy's trucks sound very
close.

Sway with me to escape the sound of bullets
and their military boots marching our
sidewalks.

I am tired of listening to the Martin Luther
King record you brought back from college.
"Free at last" King said.

But I ask you to sway with me to Dean
Martin's song. Berhane, I am tired of this
life confined in terror.

I know tomorrow morning I will ask you to stay home and I will go outside to
check the dead bodies scattered somewhere in Asmara's beautiful streets
turned each night to an open morgue.

Some so young and some so old. All guilty to be proud Eritreans.

Some have their hand cut off and stuffed in their own shoe sitting next to their
body.



I will ask you to not come outside because they are still there.

The assassins enjoy watching terror painted in our faces and like to target men in particular.

They enjoy the tears streaming from our eyes wide open, our voices screaming silently.

When I am home with you I want to dance. I want to teach you how to sway.

You take my face in both your hands and whisper so close to my lips

that you will eventually learn my favourite dance and dance it with me right in Babylon street – just below our dining room’s window . You also added that you would be glad to be arrested for such affront but only by the Eritrean police forces. You gave me hope that we were not so far from reaching that dream.

They murdered you before we could dance and sway. They also took the Martin Luther King record.

“Free at last” we are now Berhane, but I still long to teach you how to sway to my favourite music.

I love you, your wife Kiki

July 15, 2014 (36 years to the day)



Berhane Tesfamariam (wedi Balilla)’s Epic History and Testimonies by his Wife (Kiki) and his colleagues. ታሪኽ ጅግንነትን መስዋእትን ብርሃነ ተስፋ-ግራያም፡ ብበዓልተ-ቤተ (ኪ.ኪ. ጸጋይ) ከምኡ’ውን ፈለጥቲ ፈዳይን ሕድራይ ፍስሃን ካልኣትን ከግለጽ ከሎ፡

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WAITING INTERROGATION, 199th LT INF BG by [James Pollock, U.S. Army Vietnam Combat Artists Program Team IV](#),

(CAT IV 1967). [Watercolor](#) by Pollock depicts enemy suspects waiting interrogation during the [Vietnam War](#).

Courtesy [National Museum of the U. S. Army](#)

WAITING INTERROGATION **BERHANE**

Your eyes blind folded, your mouth swollen from the beatings, your heart racing.

Yet, you think about the kids and me. You saw our daughter racing with her baby legs trying to hold your hand. In her mind, she could free you from the about 80 Ethiopian soldiers that came to arrest you.

You sit on the floor. Your hands handcuffed behind your back. Your knees hurt. Your heart races.

You breathe slowly and try to focus on people talking around you. Their military boots kicking you at times. You feel other prisoners next to you. Some are crying and asking their mothers to come pick them up.

You sit silent. Your swollen mouth doesn't allow you to talk. You smell human blood, the place is freezing cold and you hear humans languishing. You know you are at door of yet another torture room.

You whisper our daughter's name and ask yourself if it is time for our son's afternoon nap.

Suddenly two soldiers pick you up from the floor and drag you for what seems to be a long way.

The door slams behind you and you are pulled up and made lay down on your stomach on what seems to be a very large and high wheel.

They tight your feet and the beatings start. You scream, and then you faint.

Day after day you are placed on the wheel. You become less vital and less strong; you stop breathing and when you know it will be your last breath, you call our 3 names.

We call your name each day and now more than ever, because our first grandson is named after you.

We love you Berhane.

To my Berhane- from your wife Kiki

April 23, 2015 at 2:33 USA



**ONE DAY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ASMARA
For Berhane**

One day – when all seemed lost—I came back to life from my solitude and from yours. There were words never said and time decided when to say them. I did not know what life offered before I met you Berhane, but I always listened like someone waiting for life to start.

I was frightened as if time stopped in its own static, that precise moment I first saw you outside the University of Asmara.

At that moment, silence and sadness broke into pieces as small as atoms. We looked at each other and we knew that our story would be before and after death. After I met you, you calmly and patiently made me see through the prism of my possibilities, the strength in me and the inner beauty within my being.

Each time we had dinner – you and I – we were never alone; we had our fears, our pain and the sound of bullets flying all over our roof and around our windows as our companions. But you were always my rock and you promised me that the war would end and we would dance in - Babylon Street - to my favourite music "Sway with me" by Dean Martin.

We were born when we met each other and we created our own life. short, but so real and intense. You would talk about places we could go with our children. You had promised me to take me to your college's cafeteria where you were eager for an "eat out date" by ourselves.

You un-did -one-by-one- all the knots I had in my heart. You replaced them with joy, tears, hugs, trust, friendship and above all loyalty.

You are my first everything Berhane. And that day at the University of Asmara, I came back to life when I first saw you.

To my husband Berhane Your wife, Kiki - March 09, 2011 USA



Holding your tortured body

I can't hear your voice because of screams around us.

I tried to cuddle your tortured body,
but the enemy is stronger and took you away.

I walk the beach where I tried to tie you to the sunrise.

Where I asked the sea wave to swing you slowly and heal your wounds.

I can't find you Berhane.

All I find is a message on the sand when they took you away and vanished in the fog.

I read your message and I learn to lift my shoulders from the heavy weight of this pain

I can't shed away.

You ask me to stand tall and teach our kids how to smile.

To show them how to search for small seashells with messages from you.

All I want to do is to hold your tortured body Birhin

and bring you back to this powerful love the kids and I want to share with you.

They took you away and pushed your head down. They tried to stop the message

you gift us with "**An Eritrean is never alone**"! You were never alone!

Did you hold hands with the others while facing the firing squad my love?

Tell me, did they hold your hand when you were continuously tortured?

When you faced the enemy's rage because you refused to kneel down?

Did you feel our love lifting you above the physical pain my only and one love?

How did they kill you?

I still wish I could hold your tortured body and bring you back to life.

I have to learn to let you heal; our tears preventing you from the eternal sleep.

To Berhane, your wife Kiki - July 15, 2009 (31 years to the day)



"Of all the forces that make for a better world, none is so powerful as hope. With hope, one can think, one can work, one can dream. If you have hope, you have everything."

Peace is a wall we will all create by building it brick-by-brick together. (Trade mark)

Berhane Tesfamariam (wedi Balilla)'s Epic History and Testimonies by his Wife (Kiki) and his colleagues. ታሪኽ ጅግንነትን መስዋእትን ብርሃነ ተስፋ-ማሪያም፡ ብበዓልቲ-ቤቱ (ኪ.ኪ. ዲጋይ) ከምኡ'ውን ፈለጥቲ ፈዳይን ሕድራይ ፍስሃን ካልኢትን ከግለጽ ከሎ፡

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— ደራሲ