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To the Nameless Soldier

Afzal Moolla

Your orders may come now...

...or at 19h45 this evening.

'Shoot to kill'

'Engage the enemy'

'Hold the line'

'Break up the gathering'

'Ready, aim, fire'

but you have felt too

the stab of hunger

the bite of thirst

the bayonet of loss

the wound of despair

but you have seen too

the pain in a mother's eyes

the grief in a father's face

the incomprehension in a child's down-cast look

'Ready, aim, fire'

but you, the nameless soldier have heard

the cries of the grieving family

the wailing of the widowed wife

the quiet agonizing sound of the child's weeping

'Ready, aim, fire'

your orders may come now

or at 23h30 tonight

or tomorrow

or the day after that

or next week or month or year

but you have seen and felt and heard too

the agony of a peoples' simple desire
the hurt of a nation long bludgeoned
the wounds of your stolen generation

so when that order comes

now

or at 03h30 tomorrow morning
'Ready, aim, fire'

let your humanity muzzle your rifle
let your conscience dismiss the order
let your better side come to the fore

and let your very own people, your mother and your father, your sister and your brother, your
son and your daughter, your friend and your lover
let them live
let them be
let your rifle fall to the soil of your beloved motherland

o' nameless soldier.