

Fourth World

by Larry Strattner

Where are you going, boy who never was?

Shuffling dust roiled by cobras.
Filth blown in by sweeping winds,
settled upon your family's blood.

Where are you going, mother who cannot be?

Looking for a child perhaps?
Looking for a world perhaps?
Those hidden well enough to live?
Well, there are none. None remain.
Who of peace escapes a sudden blade?

Where are you now, land of never was?

Just a curve of earth, hardly seen.
Featureless, save spots where people died,
glittering shell-case jewelry of war,
scattered necklaces or broaches on the ground,
decorating dust imprints,
outlines of the innocent.

Where are you now,

men of steel who say you never were?
Blown in and out upon the hateful storms,
wringing joy and goodness from these lives,
until the strangled Earth vomits blood and tears,
crushed, gagging up her people to you,
as you make this land a place,
only the Devil dreams for men.

