

Revolutionary Consumerism

*A weekend away to Armagh
A package tour to war-torn territory
Ravages of a war witnessed
Through corrugated sheets and bleak landscapes,
Barbed wire fencing, poverty amongst the people.
Meet real live soldiers, rifles in their hands
Creating confusion and panic.*

*A package tour to war-torn territory
Snapping away at murals,
Symbols of cultural resistance.
To take home, show friends
Plastic bullets.
Grabbing at gruesome mementoes
Just souvenirs to embellish stories*

*A package tour to war-torn territory
Visiting prisoners
'I felt so overcome'
'Such an emotional experience'
Marvel at the rizla paper letters
Of resistance and struggle.
'How quaint' 'Aren't they sweet'
'What strong women'
Romanticizing the terror of the oppressor
Sensationalizing the strength of the resisters.*

*A package tour to war-torn territory
A voyeuristic adventure
Agonizing over Republican women's
Stand on abortion
Question their feminism.
Impose criteria born of
Comfortable conditions.
The Imperialist psyche
runs deep.*

*A package tour to war-torn territory
The silence of Black women ignored
Pat them on their backs
'So good of you to come'
'So good of you to see the links'
Don't question or criticize
Put your arms around your white sisters
Feigning long lost affinities.*

*A package tour to war-torn territory
Amongst their ranks
An 'exotic' mascot,
Justifying their racism
Easing their consciences
Singing songs of freedom
Which women, Whose freedom?
It's a familiar tale
So we leave.*

*A package tour to war-torn territory
Hear what we say
We are not here
Because of you
We are here
For we share a struggle
With Irish sisters
In spite of you.*

Pratibha Parmar

