

**Miss Hoang Loan
Poetress of Dong Nai**



Giot le Da cam

Đôi mắt buồn long lanh đôi giọt lệ
Hỏi là ai đã cướp nát những giấc mơ
Bao hạnh phúc bình thường gian dị
Và tâm thân lành lặn ven toàn

Tôi mơ ước được học hành ca hát
Ngắm trời mây biển cả rộng mênh mông
Được e ấp nói lời thương nhớ
Ước mơ yêu của tuổi mộng xuân thì

Nhưng mơ ước chỉ là đôi giọt lệ
Chiến tranh buồn chât độc da cam
Đã cướp mất của tôi bao mơ ước
Tung cơn đau cơ giết tâm thân gay

Đôi tay yếu đôi bàn chân cong vẹo
Đến bao giờ xóa hết những nỗi đau
Nỗi đau đó tôi mang tung giọt lệ
Giọt lệ buồn, giọt lệ sặc da cam

The Oranged Tears

My sad eyes glow with tears that wonder
By whom were my little dreams shattered
My simple, ordinary happiness splintered
And my complete body disfigured

It is my dream to sing and study
To watch the clouds extend towards the sea
To shyly whisper, "I miss somebody..."
A dream of love and the springtime me

But drops of tears my dreams remain
This grieving war, and its Agent Orange
Has deprived me of my every dreams
Twitched my thin body with shivers of pain

My hands are weak, my feet distort
When will I be relieved from the pains
I carried in each and every teardrops
Drops of sorrow, drops of orange

It was in October last year that with friends from Ho Chi Minh City, we set out for the province of Dong Nai, for some meetings with organisations concerned with the victims of Agent Orange of the province - over 13,500. We were to meet with two families each of whom had either one or two members of the family affected by Agent Orange.

Dong Nai during the war contained the American Air Base, Bien Hoa, it was from this base that planes, whose cargo was Agent Orange, took off for spraying the chemical over areas of South Vietnam. It was also the base on which 5,000 gallons of the chemical were spilt.

We met with Hoang Loan (25 years of age) and her mother. Loan suffers from Cerebral Palsy and is confined - as you see from the photograph above - to her wheelchair. Despite her illness Loan has, in the past year learnt, with the help of friends, to use a computer on which she has written many poems, one of which is above.

Len Aldis