WILDERNESS REFLECTIONS

Goddess Mother

Shadows hide
Among rocks, prayer flags,
And dirty black ice.
In around skeletons of tents,
Like ribs of great fish left to rot
Ragged ribbons of yellow nylon
Chant in high, thin, steel-blue air.
Clouds of juniper smoke curl,
Mingled with ginger curry and sweat.
Generations of litter
Exploration history
O2 bottles tin cans packing crates
Discarded fiber-pile with familiar names
North Face Patagonia Arc'teryx,
There are voices here—
Echoes of footfall songs
Sounds of those blessed to have come
And gone
Pilgrims to a Holy Land of frozen canyons
Khumbu and Rongbunk—silently raging rivers
Precarious towers
High desert of white desolation.
Seracs snow bridges yawning crevasses
Traps ready to spring
Set off simply by Earth's breath
Or a swallow's wings
Grind together rock bone.
Chomolungma Goddess Mother
Capricious wet-nurse to all living
Holds to her cold breasts
A tribe of a thousand souls.

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