

Poetry

"Raphaelistic Head Exploding", 1951, Oil on Canvas. Salvador Dali



A Child Dying

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Silver bracelet, silver ring,
Adorned my arm and finger.
Pretty clothes and everything,
For which I long and linger.

The sun shone bright. Pretty day.
The sky was clear and blue.
The air was warm, the breeze gave way,
But nowhere flowers grew.

The car swerved right. The car swerved left,
We laughed and talked together.
All trivial stuff: escaping theft,
And talked about the weather.

We talked of wars, of human rights,
Of liberty and justice.
We talked of blacks, we talked of whites,
We talked of Law and practise.

We talked of women, of abuse.
We talked of child harassment.
On poverty, we were profuse,
On life, we gave assessment.

And there he was, all nude, so thin,
His body trembling, dying,
A boy of ten, with brown, dry skin,
There, on the streets was lying.

Dreams shattered here, hopes shattered there,
His squeals of laughter gone.
His eyes were open in a stare,
Dimmed, they no longer shone.

No arms around him, no embrace,
No flowers by his bed,
No priest to pray, no nurse's face,
No cradle to his head.

People went, and people came,
Indifferent to his plight.
Or, if they saw, they're not to blame,
They might be next. They might!

We could not stop. We did not shout.
We did not help, or wait.
We shook our heads, and talked about,
Child, women, gay and straight.