

EMMA'S BRODY'S MONOLOGUE

Scene 14 from the *THE TWO SISTERS* by Dennis Corcoran

[Inside Her Majesty's Armagh Women's Prison, Northern Ireland, 1976]

[Emma killed her husband who had shaken their infant daughter to death.]

She lay lifeless in my arms. A wee one ... not yet two. What harm could she have done? Some agony, some sorrow, I know not what, drove him to shake her, batter her ... and me, as he did. My hands, forever stained ... my soul, thus shattered ... I now call this drab-walled house of stench and grief my home ... neither tender touch nor warm whisper to quiet the ever-quarreling voices within.

Silence ... oppressive, at times ... is my only solace ...

I look on these creatures ... their faces ... their hands, their hair ... gaze into their eyes ... they smile inside ... some ... others, such hurt ... deep wounds of days gone by ... but all, their womanly frames ... built to create ... to nurture and give life ... not to take ...

The blood that pools down between their legs ... ignored, ignobly, by a heartless state ... scars a line upon our earth ... as we each - one, on the one side, one, on the other - must find our place ... as this - we - an all too human race, conjure up causes to inflict indignity and pain ...

Always ... and everywhere ... madness!

It is not Ireland alone which suffers so ... where ever there is hatred, a price is paid ... for those sore oppressed, doubly so ...

I gaze on these ... some with children, some without ... and ask my God - how can this be? A world so poisoned ... must a mother give up, of all that is a part of her ... body and soul ... and lay her innocence into its grave ...

Can a flag-draped coffin, of any stripe, be sufficient recompense ... to leave such bitterness, our legacy, to those who come behind?

I ask you this ... just this one thing ... if you have ever held a child, whether another's or your own ... how can you condone any amount of bitterness, bigotry, discrimination or hate ... when, knowing, it is your OWN flesh and blood, as well as THEIRS, which you so violate ... *[pause]*...

... if not for you, then, for our children's sake ... if not for you, then, at least for them ...

if not for you ...