

POETRY

**THE CROSS (II)
(LINES TO THE PATRIARCHY)**

Ma. Zenaida Bernabe French

On the battlefield of bed
 we cross unequal swords
you thrust in greed and manpride
 I parry in humility, yielding up
my guile when you lunge
 and rend apart the layers
of my finite world, breaking
 through the soft wall
of my womanhood to lay bare
 the blood-pulse of
 my womanheart

Ambushed in my innerspace
 I limn the limits
of you and me, grope
 to define my She against
your He, your One against
 my Me whom you
misread to be the Other
 of your fantasy ---
while high above the
 battlements the words
of love unspoken
 hang between us
limp, lightless and
 unfurled

 Now we plant with
bloody crosses the windless
 wastes between your
 life and
 mine.

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