



EXTRACT 1

from 'Cho Oyu, by favour of the gods' by Herbert Tichy

In the 1950s, the mountaineer Herbert Tichy climbed Mount Cho Oyu, the fifth highest mountain in the world. During the climb he experienced a storm of immense proportions – a terrible blizzard with huge winds. Here, Tichy and his three Sherpa guides, Pasang, Adjiba and Ang Nyima, are sheltering in their tent when the storm strikes.

There was not a cloud in the sky. But we could not always see the sky; it was hidden by thick flurries of snow. A hurricane of a force I had never experienced scourged the snow-covered mountainside. The temperature was thirty to thirty-five degrees below zero. The most horrible part of it
5 was the cloudless blue sky.

I crouched down beside Pasang in the snow. We could not stand up. The wind would have thrown us down or lifted us from the ground.

The other tent was also wrecked. The huddled bodies of Ang Nyima and Adjiba were moulded by the flattened canvas. We gave them a prod.
10 They were still alive and crept out to join us. The four of us cowered together beside the flattened tents and stared into the vortex. We could only speak in shouts.

'Never known a storm like this,' Pasang shouted. 'All die.'

He repeated it again and again.

15 I agreed with him. We should all die. Adjiba and Ang Nyima said nothing. They sat huddled and dumb, their faces a bluish grey, marked by death – no, dead already. Their dark eyes were fixed on mine, asking no questions, hinting no reproach. They were gates to another world, at whose frontier we had now arrived.

Vocabulary:

scourged (line 3): *rubbed forcefully*

vortex (line 11): *whirling centre*

EXTRACT 2

The poem 'Hurricane' by James Berry

Born in Jamaica, James Berry is one of the Caribbean's foremost poets. In this poem, he describes a typical hurricane in his native land, where storms of this violent nature occur frequently.

Under low black clouds
the wind was all
speedy feet, all horns and breath,
all bangs, howls, rattles,
5 in every hen house,
church hall and school.

Roaring, screaming, returning,
it made forced entry, shoved walls,
made rifts, brought roofs down,
10 hitting rooms to sticks apart.

It wrung soft banana trees,
broke tough trunks of palms.
It pounded vines of yams,
left fields battered up.

15 Invisible with such ecstasy –
with no intervention of sun or man –
everywhere kept changing branches.

Zinc sheets are kites.
Leaves are panic swarms.
20 Fowls are fixed with feathers turned.
Goats, dogs, pigs,
all are people together.

Then growling it slunk away
from muddy, mossy trail and boats
25 in hedges: and cows, ratbats, trees,
fish, all dead in the road.

Vocabulary

ecstasy (line 15): *feeling of energy*