

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER POEMS

A WALK TO FREEDOM

I

What's Truth, What's Power? Silly man!
History, my soul, with hope we'll scan.
For now, head high, let's begin to walk,
though despair our spirit may well stalk.

II

Bear up, my soul, by today's setting sun
all will be, I promise, gracefully done.
In all those woodwork hours it never dawned on me
how heavy on the shoulder a tree-beam could be.

III

I used fall in childhood hours of play
once, twice, even thrice, all in one day
and she would rush to me with healing balms
then gently cradle me with comforting arms.

IV

See, there she is, grown so old in one short night;
pierced soul reflecting in eyes tear-bright.
Our gazes lock, "My love, make for the hill!
Even in this bedlam with peace our souls you'll fill."

V

No, no thank you, I can manage it on my own.
Well, if you will, let a stranger help me home.
So many strangers became my friends
on a life journey which now strangely ends.

VI

Thank you, thank you, wipe dry my eyes,
in such freedom walks the strongest cries.
On we must go to our creative destiny,
freshened by their towelling done so tenderly.

VII

So many thousands will walk such death roads,
their visions turned into crushing loads,
the poor bearing burdens not of their choosing,
falling and rising condemned to life's losing.

VIII

Hold up, though worst is yet to be endured,
I can, deep in my peaceful spirit, rest assured,
some will be soul driven by my willed vision,
to search for a new liberating definition.

IX

I am encouraged by the songs of so many prophets
who refused so bravely this world's empty profits.
I pray what we've done will escape manipulation,
though that's what I fear will be the capitulation.

X

We're here, my soul, they're stripping us naked,
I really can't fathom the depth of the hatred.
I only said to the powerless we must give justice
And hope for tomorrow to a world grown hopeless.

XI

Hold your breath, stretch out hands and feet,
now shout to the heavens, "Away with defeat!"
Nausea and fainting engulf us like the ocean tide,
distraction's in remembering the quiet mountainsides.

XII

Well done, we've walked and suffered with deep dignity
and it is time to send our spirit into eternity.
And already the dove is flying beyond the darkness
with a blood-soaked palm of powerful powerlessness.

XIII

Alright slip down, all choosing has gone,
into her stretched out arms, the day is done,
to be washed by her gentle hands one last time,
as she whispers, "Why, Oh why, cut off in your prime?"

XIV

The cave's so cold and so deathly brooding,
But hush! Can you feel the earth moving?
It is! Cracks in the rocks for us to fly free
into a new creation. Let's be off to Galilee!

UNEMPLOYMENT

Raw material in dawn day light
Chopped down not now for your skills
But shaped for the aching idleness that kills,
Two dovetailed chunks without planed frills
And not for your working to pay creditor's bills
But to rot on through the daylight night.

Is dying, then, unemployment weeping carpenter
Or were you waiting to be called for a job
In some vineyard owned by a sceptic mob
While the whole world called you a lazy slob
Till you broke the cosmic silence with an eternal sob
Begging the unproductive world to be your lover?

Go on, mighty boss, transform next Monday,
Let him wake after weekend's dreamless rest
To a whole creation busy bubbling with zest
No longer aimlessly anguishing for the best
Heart beating wildly in his healed breast,
Give him the bloodstained wages docketed on Friday.

Austin

EASTER CLEANSING

1993

Entombed suffering silence
Willed shattering violence
Not of scream or gun or shell
Not despairing cries of hell

But the loud smashing of sealed up stone
The refugee rejected is breaking for home
From imprisoning creeds choosing to elope
Flying into a mother's arms laughing hope

Joyful tears wounds were cleansing
Humanity to humanity began returning

Candles bursting into blazing light
Waters cascading through the night

Washed we cried it can be true
To make again all things new

Austin cp

INNER CITY STABAT MATER

The actors have all now departed
from the stage of my spirit,
they went because the script was no more,
there are no lines left to speak.

It has always been so,
but only now I understand it
because silence is no longer
some uncomfortable, unwanted pause.

Silence is the meaning of the plot,
punctuated here and there by a word,
a spontaneous action, a gesture of love,
an unplanned leap into an active moment.

But never because words must be spoken,
applauded actions followed through,
political or theological scenes acted out,
must the enriching silence come to an end.

The essence of the words and actions
receive meaning only from the patient silence.
The crucified chorus sings, "Talk is needless
because the silence of your being here

is my comforting hope and consolation,
that pregnant silence which is so
promising, always open to that hopefilled,
final friday afternoon gasp rising

and scattering all the birds of prey,
perched on their value-brittle branches,
alert to noisily swoop down on me,
with cries of promises already broken.

But in your silence you will smile at me,
and there shall be my final comforting
as we both make our way to join the gardener
clearing up the stones from an exploded grave."

A POEM FOR EASTER AFTER WRITING A REPORT

Tell me, were there any coke bottles
Outside your tomb?
Any crisp packets littering the world
Outside your tomb?
Tell me, as you went into the heavens,
Were there any Community Workers
Outside your tomb?
Did you get past the police
Outside your tomb?
Any left wingers
Outside your tomb?
Perhaps a few blacks
Outside your tomb?
No kids on probation
Outside your tomb?
Tell me, honestly, why did you go
Outside your tomb?
You see we're all on Calvary
Outside your tomb.
But, honest, we're going to get
Outside your tomb.

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