

*Thus Spake the Bitter Muse:
Do Not Profit by the Blood of Your Fellows!*

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With filial greetings to *Tanakh* prophets, who believed the only copyright resides in the voice that speaks to & through them all.

Dedicated to Rich D. Erlich, in poor return for all his counsels & encouragement

The words of the Assembler of Sayings, one of the defrocked ones in the lineage of Benjamin. The word of the Muse our Lady came to him in the days of rebellious Mazdak the Liberator, & throughout the days of betrayal & ruin when Mazdak was killed & of the murderous Warring States, & until the crash of the Great Plague coming from above by the power of inhumanity & its followers, when Jerusalem went into exile & the Assembler too died.

--*And the Muse looked frowning at him, & said, What are you doing?
Don't you see how they profit by the blood of your fellows?*

--O Muse my goddess & lady,
Have pity upon me! How have I
Offended you? I have not sat
In the company of revellers & drugged away
My brains, I have not been an oppressor.
I have sat lonely because of your hand upon me
For you have opened my eyes,
You have shown me red of the morning
& it has turned into black of the evening.
Why must my pain go on, my wound
Fester open, no healing in sight?
You have been to me like a delightful spring
That fails, water to quench my thirst

That cannot be relied upon.

I have spoken to your people
As i knew, not precisely enough,
& now i am too old.
O Muse, my strength & my stronghold,
My beauty & my desire,
My refuge in long days of trouble,
I am like a tamarack in the desert
That does not sense the coming of rain,
I am set in the scorched wilderness, placed
In a barren land without a human face.
I am hungry & thirsty,
Harvest is past
Summer is gone
Grapes have ripened
Autumn is gone
But we have not been saved.

Because my people are shattered i am shattered
I am dejected, seized by desolation.
My heart is crushed within me,
All my bones are trembling.
Is there no balm in aesthetics?
Can no physician be found?
When one is found, why is he straightway
Killed? Why has no healing
Come to my poor people?

O to be in the desert
At an oasis, a caravanserai for the weary,
O to leave my people
To go away from them
To cultivate a little garden

& not be afraid.

For they whore after Mammon

& after the Lord of the Hosts,

Their running is wickedness

Their straining is iniquity.

A band of rogues,

They kill, lie & destroy.

They advance from evil to greater evil,

& they do not heed You, Lady,

They profit by the blood of their fellows.

--Verily, *thus spake the bitter Muse,*

Do not be afraid, O mortal, for

You shall die as all animals do,

Nothing worse can happen to you but

To die badly having lived badly.

So do not say "I am too old",

& do not say "I am not worthy".

I have made of you my spokesman

& you stand before me. If you produce

What is needed out of the dark times

You shall be pleasing & i shall be pleased.

For i set before you the way of life

& i set before you the way of death

& the Muse put out her gracious hand & touched my mouth & my forehead,

& she said to me:

See I appoint you as my Speaker

To the classes & empires,

To ignorant sweaty faces

Of lean people drinking beer

& to devious rat faces

Of obese people drinking bourbon.
Go tell the truth of abomination
That my people may overthrow the violent
In self-defence, lest even worse befall,
Call them to destroy & to build,
To uproot & to plant.

Verily, said the embittered Muse,
They bend their tongues like bows
& shoot poisoned word arrows
Through a thousand thousand loudspeakers.
They have trained themselves to falsify pictures
Through a thousand thousand screens.
Their words are used to deceive
Their brains are used to spread plagues.
Their might is great & conscience nil
They are famous in the world
For treachery not honesty,
For lying not professing truth.

And the Muse said, Because they forsook the teaching I had sent them by poets & prophets, because they did not follow the Word but their own covetous heart & Mammon & the Lord of the Hosts, as their fathers had taught them, verily, I am going to feed people wormwood & make them drink a bitter draft. Tornadoes tsunamis & volcanic eruptions shall be as nothing to what I see them doing to each other, wearing top hats & spats, quoting competing Sacred Scriptures in black or white coats.

From the battlefields & the stock-markets
Disaster shall break loose upon all the denizens
Of what was a fair planet.
Each speaks to his fellow in friendship
But lays an ambush in his heart.
Every man beware of his friend!
Every woman beware of her man!
Trust not even a brother or sister,
Unless they defend against the violent.

For the mountains I am weeping,
For the pastures in the wilderness I sing a dirge,
They're laid waste, they are sere,
& no birds sing. Beasts & fish &
Birds of the sky have been & are gone.
I weary of this failed animal Homo
I send some of you as a final warning
This is your Last Chance Saloon,

Do not profit by the blood of your fellows!

--*And the angered Muse spake to me again & said:* What do you see? *I replied:*
I have been shown a system that is a seesaw,
An arrested balance going nowhere in a hurry,
& those up are kept by those down,
They worship mental sloth & Mammon,
Violence & the Lord of the Hosts,
Not the loving caress of the Goddess.

--*And she said to me:* You have seen right,
For I am watchful to have you say the right.
So prepare yourself, arise & speak to them
All that i tell you to.
Do not break down before them
Lest i break you before them.
I make you today a scapegoat,
An otter & a masked rider,
A prism & a telescope,
A pirate against kings & officers
A raider against priests & bureaucrats.
They will attack the truth-tellers,
Jail them, torture them, kill them
By thousands: Rosa Lev Che Antonio...

Ah i lack time for all the names
But they shall not overcome
For i am with you, though many die
(*Declared the Muse & Goddess*)
To see whether your species can be saved
For it hasn't played out its melody.

Your people of renown & leaders,
Your great academics who should know better,
Have not asked themselves "Where is the Lady,
Great Mistress of gods & of people?"
The guardians of the teaching ignored me,
& the prophets prophesied by Mammon
In Malibu mansions & Park Avenue homes.
The rich who rule defy & hate me,
Those with obese devious faces
Drove furiously on the road to the crash
Pushing toxic trades with the speed of light.
The leaders of their cyborg armies
Consorted with the Beast of Abomination
Coolly looking at the rivers of blood
From their heights. O i will go on
Accusing you all (*said the Goddess*):
My humans have exchanged bitter medicine
For cancer wrapped in sweet images.
Be appalled, O heavens, at this
Be horrified, utterly dazed!

Verily, *said the bitter Goddess*,
I shall put stumbling blocks before these people
Over which they shall stumble,
Fathers & daughters alike
Mothers & sons alike
Neighbour & friend shall perish

Even my prophets shall perish
So that the planet may be cleansed.

I am putting my words into your mouth as fire
If these people remain obdurate, they shall be
Firewood, which it will consume:

Do not profit by the blood of your fellows!

--& *i prepared myself, apprehensive*
But not too afraid, & said,
O foolish people, clever only
At cheating each other,
You have eyes but cannot see
You have ears but cannot hear!
From the greatest down to the smallest
You are all greedy for profit,
Priest & prophet act falsely,
The rich & the scribe speak falsely.

You boast of healing the people
Saying “All is well, all is well”
When nothing at all is well.
You have acted shamefully
But do not feel shame
& cannot be made to blush.
Your ears are blocked by greed & filth,
Your eyes are blinkered by the lust of domination. See,
The Lady’s word has been spoken,
But for you it is an object of scorn,
You wilfully turn away. But I am
Filled with the wrath of the High One,
I cannot hold it to myself.

Pour it on the infant sending SMS in the street,
On the company of youths in the discotheque!
Yes, men & women alike shall go under,
Elders in asylum, babes in the crib,
Their homes shall go up in flames
Their fields shall be seared.
They shall stumble when the Goddess
Raise fires & floods against them.

Consider the ancient ways:
What is the road to happiness?
Travel it, find peace for yourselves
& peace for this ravelled globe.
But they said “We will not”, for they were afraid
Freedom was a disorder. Hear well, nations,
Simplicity is too difficult for you
The end of your schemes is disaster.
Let your misfortune rebuke you
Let your affliction reprove you
Mark well how bitter it is
To forsake the Way of the Lady.

How can you say “I am not corrupt
I haven’t gone a-whoring after Mammon’s Banks
I haven’t burned flesh with the ravening Lord of the Hosts”?
Look at your million-fold crimes in Iraq & Palestine,
Consider how you destroyed my people of Yugoslavia
Bombing Beograd worse than the Nazi Stukas,
How you starved my first-born of Africa
Like a hyena crunching bones of cadavers
Snuffling at the wind in her eagerness
Whose passion cannot be restrained.

Like a thief chagrined when he is caught
So are the speculators surprised when the stocks crash
So are the demagogues when wars are over.
Where is Mammon in your hour of calamity?
Let him arise & save you if he can!
Let the Lord Who Destroys also produce justice!
Your garments are drenched
With the lifeblood of the poor
You ravage entire continents like a meteor megacrash
Tens of thousands are drowned in immigrant boatloads
O wasting generation, hear the word of the Lady:

Do not profit by the blood of your fellows!

--& now, *said the bittersweet Goddess*,
I have made you an assayer of my people
A refiner of the earth of which they are made.
The bellows puffed mightily,
The lead was consumed by fire,
Yet the smelter smelted to no purpose,
The dross was not separated out,
I shall reject this base metal.
They are copper & iron, stubborn & defiant,
They deal basely & act corruptly.

You who build your cities upon injustice
& your penthouse upon exploitation
Of nature & your fellows, you who work the needy
For profit taken from their living labour,
Who think "I built me vast palaces
With spacious penthouses on the ninetieth floor
Provided with platinum & mahogany
Painted by the most expensive painters",
Do you think you are any nobler

Because you compete in mahogany
Because you eat off gold
Because you show off ebony or alabaster?

Can the capitalist change his lust for profits
Or the leopard & hyena their spots?
Just so much can those do good
Practiced in the arts of doing evil!
If you eat & drink simply
Ply a loving justice
Stop polluting brains & braes,
All will be well on any floor.
If you do not, you shall have
The burial of an ass, dragged out,
Lying outside the gates of Jerusalem,
A wretched broken pot,
A smashed vessel no one wants.

Is Man a serf, a slave?
Why is Columbia given over to plunder?
Wild beasts have roared over her
Hyenas raised their cachinnations
Her land has been made a waste
Her cities desolate & polluted.
China India & United Europe
Jostle in the selfsame darkness.
How high is the price you are paying
For leaving the ways of justly living
Which I showed you through those anointed --
That what there is shall belong
To those who are good for it:
Work to the workers,
Learning to those learning,
Children to the motherly

Communism to the poets,
& poetry to every wo/man.

If you do not accept correction
You will be destroyed.
I will scatter you like straw
That flies before the simoom.
This shall be the portion,
The proper measure you'll receive.
Send for the dirge-singers, let them come,
Quickly start a wailing for Humanity,
Summon the skilled women, let them come,
That your eyes may run with water,
Your ears hear lamentations. For death
Is climbing through your windows,
Entering your fortresses of torture,
Flying with the missile-toting bombers --

Do not profit by the blood of your fellows!

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