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## **Seven Poems for Peace and Democracy**

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## **SEVEN POEMS FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY**

### **Abstract**

The following pages contain seven original poems that address issues of peace, democracy, state-sponsored violence, political representation, and personal and collective reflection.

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### **1. The Global College of Democracy**

No one ever started a war over a wind turbine.  
The wind belongs to all of us, not to nations, nor to stockholders.  
The wind, and the sun, would teach us to share, not to hoard;  
Would teach us to learn from each other, not to stifle ingenuity.  
The wind would bring our global children together as together they master  
The challenge of clean energy.  
The wind, the sun, do not call foreign children “collateral damage.”  
The wind would give our spirits a genuine frontier, better than the moon,  
For both the challenge and the blessings would belong to all of us.  
The wind and the sun know no trade barriers, no ethnic hatred.  
They are waiting for research institutes and local factories  
To spring to life in Africa, long forgotten by Detroit.

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The wind and the sun knock on all doors equally.  
We quarrel over oil, and claim to fight our wars for democracy.  
What is more democratic than the wind turning turbines for all, equally,  
Providing electricity for all, equally,  
And thus jobs and classrooms for all, equally?  
Let us learn, equally and together, how to build  
A clean and prosperous world.  
No one ever fought a war over a wind turbine.

## **2. September Love**

We never knew how much happiness could be gathered in a building.  
We never knew how much love could be gathered in a building.  
Those tall boxes of love might well have floated, like warm balloons,  
Up into the sky toward heaven.  
And those four planes so full of desperate love  
Might well have journeyed even higher toward the source of love.

We lost the happiness, but we kept the love.  
Undiminished, our love demands more than grief, more than memory.  
Perhaps our love, put to use by hands still made of flesh, not ash,  
Could build more than a monument,  
Could lift more than only one nation toward a higher realm.  
Perhaps our love could reach beyond the daily lives of those we lost,  
To the daily lives of people who dream the same dreams,  
But in a different language.

Then could our enormous love from September  
Encompass all the Earth,  
And bring some measure of happiness  
To children still seeking tomorrow.

## **3. 'Twould Give Me No Pause**

Say I've no pole-axe or cudgel or truncheon  
As I'm strolling along with a basket for luncheon,  
When lo!, a highwayman from the forest suddenly attacks,  
With broadsword and dagger and scimitar and axe,  
Stiletto, brass knuckles, a bicycle chain,  
Blowpipe and zipgun, his grandmother's cane,  
Harquebusses, blunderbusses, boomerangs and Lugers,  
Pistolets and bayonets and deadly pea shooters.  
Single-barreled, double-barreled, all beneath his crimson herald.  
Choppers and gougers and hackers and eviscerators,

Rippers and clippers and snippers and demasculators,  
Grizzly fingers twisters and foul disembowellers,  
Devitalizers, rusty circumcizers, eye socket rowelers,  
Cannons and stink bombs and death rays and KABOOM!  
Doomed to a rheumy tomb in the gloom of a looming mushroom bloom.

'Twould give me no pause.  
I'd rip him in thirds with my teeth and my claws.

#### **4. Their Harmony Appalled**

Though all of Albion shall glow with galaxies of plague pyres  
Heaped with wood and draped with flesh,  
Far greater flames I plan to ignite in the name of all we believe is right.  
For I have mastered every secret, and now can nothing stop me!  
I have but to attain the throne, the uncontested podium of truth:  
When I as monarch speak, all men in their innocence shall diligently listen.  
Then will their eyes opened in darkness  
Be opened further still.

I shall send ambassadors like beetles creeping across the land  
To meet with others too in glossy black.  
They shall return, their breath a stench with words of honor.  
From pulpit and parapet shall they issue their fiery pronouncements:  
That land no more is earth  
Whereon the rains give birth to the workings of each hand,  
But rather, Nation where mortared stone is timeless laid.  
While at home a mother sings a lullaby to her seventh child,  
Then turns to darning socks and joking with her first,  
Our ministers shall inform the hushed and solemn congregation  
That toward the mother land a serpent is coiled;  
The name of the mother queen has been soiled;  
The Holy Mother has been despoiled!  
Aye, then shall the old men bellow, and the young men march.

No more the practiced loving step behind the plow,  
Nor march to tinkling bell and fiddler's bow the beau and belle,  
But drumbeat-driven charge across the plain to meet the savage foe.  
A leap and a lunge that drive deep the pike!  
And then . . . Ha! The unanticipated pain, and blood, and stagger,  
While each warrior's eyes stare wide upon the final sight they see:  
No visages of wife and child who bedside bid farewell,  
No windowed vision of boyhood tree and manhood farm  
And ancient hills of ancient fathers;

Nay, a soldier's red and grit-filled eyes shall stare, and weep, and dim upon  
His weakening hand wrapped helpless around the well-honed point  
Of the profiteer's blade driven through his back.

And shall governments etch a cross upon the continent:  
The transept soon a trough of red,  
The nave twin holy paths bringing lambs  
To this god in man's own image made.  
Then, *then* need I but call upon the spheres to watch,  
Their harmony appalled.  
Unfastened from the firmament, stars shall fall at noon  
To scorch the earth with infernal fire:  
Conflagrations shall blanket nations in the consummation of our  
Weddedness to war.  
Leaving naught but a cross of human ash upon the blackened land.  
Yea, shall we see how petty men can be.  
And thereafter the sun and moon and plenitude of stars shall arch  
In silent procession across the sky  
Like mute mourners shuffling past a casket.

## **5. The Final Page**

Each war becomes a ledger of evil,  
And so are compiled the tomes which ever invite a further writing.

But the warrior who another martial page would scribe with scarlet ink,  
Shall pen no word so precious, nor so renowned,  
As the statesman who with his signature  
Agrees to a treaty of peace,  
Thus ending the bloody book that began  
When man first honed his sword against another man.

## **6. My Brother's Keeper**

But who are my brothers?  
I was born in Buffalo.  
Are my brothers therefore only Buffalonians?  
Do I bestow my benevolence upon my brethren  
In all the Empire State?  
Or am I an American, brotherhood from sea to shining sea?  
Is my brother the Palestinian who shared my college dormitory,  
And broke bread with me?  
Cain, your question remains unanswered.  
I'll try again tomorrow.

## 7. It's Your Turn Now

“But Mary treasured up all these things  
And pondered them in her heart.”

All right, Mary, you've pondered long enough.  
For two thousand years, the boys have had every opportunity,  
And they're *still* fighting their wars.  
It's your turn now.  
The men are still tossing pennies to the poor.  
It's your turn now.  
The men have cut down most of the olive trees,  
And have poisoned most of the wells.  
Now it's your turn.

We do not need another sacrificial victim.  
We need mother teaching daughter.  
For centuries, mothers have sent their sons off to war.  
Now it's time for mothers to send their daughters off  
To build a lasting peace.  
I'm sorry, Mary, but  
It's your turn now.