

Texts featured in "Unconquerable Soul"
by Richard Shelton and Piotr Szyhalski

Nr. 01

In German

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
By loving forces...

By loving forces silently surrounded,
I feel quite soothed, secure, and filled with grace.
So I would like to live these days together,
and go with you into another year.

Still matters of the past are pressing our hearts
and evil days are weighing down on us.
Oh Lord, to our souls, so scared and sore,
give rescue, as it's that you made us for.

And when you pass to us the bitter chalice
of suffering, filled to the brim and more,
we take it, full of thanks and trembling not,
from this, your caring and beloved hand.

But if you want to please us, over and again,
with our shining sun and wondrous world,
let us muse on what is past, and then we shall,
with our lives, in all belong to you.

Warm and bright be our candles' flame today,
since into gloom you brought a gleaming light,
and lead again us, if you will, together!
We know it: you are beaming in the night.

When silence now will snow around us ev'rywhere,
so let us hear the all-embracing sound
of greater things than we can see and wider,
your world, and all your children's soaring hail.

By loving forces wonderfully sheltered,
we are awaiting fearlessly what comes.
God is with us at dusk and in the morning
and most assuredly on ev'ry day.

Nr. 02

In Spanish

Fernando Valdés
Untitled

Prison must be written from within.
Those who built it from the outside know nothing,
Here the innocent is destroyed,
who lives in fear and does not have the strength of the real
delinquents.
The guilty person is not rehabilitated either,
but he is given reasons to continue his activity if he is released.

Nr. 03

In English

Clarence Alexander Rae
False Dawn

A memory of yesterday:
I rose betimes to greet the day
The morrow was my wedding-morn,
When all my world would be reborn
And from my cement looking out,
Saw all the darkness put out to rout
Before the sun-god's majesty,
New-risen from the girdling sea.
And the white road across the moor
Was straight a Gateway of Romance
My knight might ride with couchen lance.

Down the road of gold there came
A gypsy lad with a face a flame
With the sun's gold and all his hair;
And oh! Right boldly did he stare,
Till my eye met eye, and then I knew
In all the world was but two;
And so had been since first we met

In some far day I'd not forget.
I know not was I slave or queen,
Nor cared I, knowing I had been
His true love in a day long past,
And we met – too late– at last.
The Morrow is my wedding–morn,
When all my world will be reborn.

Nr. 04

In Arabic

Wael Said Al Deen
Untitled

Here I am alone, and further away
Maybe closer, to no one
Whenever I say hand in hand
The emptiness waves me its hands
And I regret time
Lost as I lost my homeland
Which street still carries my father's shadow
I search, a child
Sacrificed, bloodless
Witness, when no one witnessed
And war taught me how to b-
-e beautiful when lost
It taught me how to grab to-
-day from a yesterday followed by a tomorrow
It taught me how to search for
Friends where I cannot be found
I hold a dream and it holds me
Amongst destruction despite my enemy
And some of my dream is the speech of a G-
-od and his revelations
Like conditioning the weight of a circle
Reason held by a peg
What is the limit of fortitude? What is patience
Perhaps I will die by its glimmer
Perhaps Narcissus died
Betrayed by its shimmer
This is how you kill a lilac
Uncountable and unseen
Hide me oh life for I have
Other pictures, and I have a body
And I have a girl whose mouth is full of honey

Her hair like the fall of night
A darkness that inflames
A heel in the sky
A waist pulled by forever
Magic knotted
knotting and unknotting
Return oh love in a different manner
Bring with you lovers if any still live
This is how my song begins
The violins strings unleashed
Me alone and further away
Maybe closer, to no one.

Nr. 05

In Chinese

Huang Xiang
Behind Bars Hearing Mountain

In my eyes
A
Bird
Overhead
A
Cloud
On my lip
A drop of
Water
Desolate toes
Crush
Graven
Cogitations
There
Descends
Ethereal
Sweet
Music
In the simple time
That
Comes
After
A
Blink

Nr. 06

In English

Keyanna Brady (with "Spirit Awakening")
Who Am I?

Who am I? A woman with a heartbeat so strong I can feel the vibration
beneath my feet. Strong willed and wild, I guess you can call me
crazy.

With a stare so cold, it'll make your own vision hazy. Who am I? Who
do you think I am is the question, tell me what you've learn so I can
teach you a lesson. Who am I really? That's what I'm trying to figure
out, but that remains a question in my head not to escape out my
mouth. Who I am, is a woman with a plan. You can gone and try to stop
me but I'll tell you right now I'll be Damned if you try to tell me
I'm not who I am.

Nr. 07

In Turkish

Nazim Hikmet
Our Eyes

Our eyes are limpid drops of water.
In each drop exists a tiny sign of our genius
Which has given life to cold iron.
Our eyes are limpid drops of water
Merged absolutely in the Ocean
That you could hardly recognize
The drop in a big block of ice in a boiling pan.
The masterpiece of these eyes
The fulfillment of their genius the living iron.
In these eyes filled with limpid pure tears
Had failed to emerge from the infinite Ocean
If the strength had dispersed,
We could never have mated
The dynamo with the turbine,
Never have moved those steel mountains in water
Easily.
As if made of hollow wood.
The masterpiece of these eyes

The fulfillment of their genius
Of our unified labour the living iron.

Nr. 08

In Polish

Wladyslaw Broniewski
Letter from Jail

My darling daughter,
I am writing this letter from jail.
Gloomily dusk turns into night,
as whistles sound at the train station,

behind the window gray rags of sky
framed by steel bars,
and sparrows peck on bred crumbs
before flying out into the world.

It's nothing, Darling, nothing,
that blow follows blow:
I am one, who casts steeled bravery
into the face of darkest fate.

You will not know that time here flows
like blood from open veins...
Stay healthy, Darling, be happy,
and I will remain strong,

like a brother of Pilgrims',
I trail the path of the banished,
and must carry the weight of this song
to the other shore of my time.

Nr. 09

In English

Robert Counts
if only

if only human beings could traverse time
back to and through
the very indifference and strife
which caused that first human
to take that first life, if only
apples were oranges and i could undo
all the pains i've caused to others,
i would soothe them with the sweetness of ripe fruit
aged in trees removed from time and youth
if i were young again, unsalted by the very indifference
which causes justice to sit ever so comfortably
upon the fence, judging others with the scurrilous scrutiny
which keeps connecting me forever
to that movement in time
when frustration only sighed in reply, if only
roses had no thorns and apples were oranges
and every child born were but a citizen of the world...
if only
the life that i stole could be reborn in the dirges of my redemption
if only
i had promises to keep

Nr. 10

In Italian

Fabrizio De Andrè
During my freedom hour

I don't want to breathe the same air that a jailer breathes
So I decided to give away my freedom hour
If something can be shared between the prisoner and his guard
It is not that courtyard's air
But only the prison
It is not that courtyard's air
But only the prison.

It started an hour earlier
And after an hour it was already ended
I saw people coming by themselves
And walking together toward the exit
I wasn't expecting a mistake from you
Tribunal people
If I were sitting in your chair...
But I am not sitting in your chair
If I were sitting in your chair...

But I am not sitting in your chair.

Outside the courtroom down on the street
I asked my face
A polemic for dignity
Many scowl, grim, blunt looks,
Not even try to explain them that Spring has begun
They know but they prefer
To take it away from these who go to jail
They know but they prefer
To take it away from these who go to jail.

Many scowl, grim, blunt looks,
A few faces, in which her,
She is wondering all day
She reminds herself, I swear
What she will say about me to the people
I will tell you what she is going to say
He was different
But not in telling me I love you
He was different
But not in telling me I love you.

It is hard to go ahead
From trained to obey
To a more human gesture
That gives you the sense of violence
However it takes as much
To become a fucking idiot
Not to be able to understand
That there are evil powers
Not to be able to understand
That there are evil powers.

And now I am learning a lot
With them dressed all like me
Except from what is the right crime
Not to be taken as criminals.
They taught us to admire
Those who steal the bread
Now we know that the crime is
Not to steal when we are hungry
Now we know that the crime is
Not to steal when we are hungry

We don't want to breathe the same air that a jailer breathes
We decided to imprison them
During the freedom hour
Come to the prison now
Listen through the door

Our last song
That repeats again and again
Even if you believe you are absolved
You are still involved.
Even if you believe you are absolved
You are still involved.

Nr. 11

In Russian

Anna Alexandrovna Barkova
Untitled

What's the point of faith to some fatherland,
Why pretend that we've one settled home?
Now, facing life's judgement, each one of us
Is merciless, indignant, strong.

With a sneer of disapproval,
We'll remember our fathers' mistakes;
We know now that our sainted relations
Were gambling for worthless stakes.

And with a slave's quiescence
We shall pay our blood-stained toll,
In order to build a useless
Heaven of concrete and steel.

Behind a door hopped with iron
In the dark of our torturous hearts
A priest conducts godless rituals,
A suffering saint, and a liar.

Nr. 12

In English

Harry Hawser
Lines

To the memory of Lieut, S. B. S. of Princeton N.J.

Green rise the velvet turf above the grave,
Where rest the ashes of the seaman's pride;
I would his sepulchre had been the wave,
Where navies in embattled beauty ride.

He should have died – O, yes, he should have died
Upon the wave, where he so lov'd to be,
Where freedom's banner floats in all its pride,
Above the forms of ocean's chivalry

Then iron men, a rough but generous crew,
Had launch'd his manly form beneath the wave;
His place of rest had been the waste of blue,
His noblest cenotaph some coral cave.

His was the cheek that never blanch'd before
The deepest thunders of the howling gale,
When gallant ships were sinking 'mid the roar
Of ocean's waters, and the brave grew pale.

But this is classic ground where rests his head,
Here patriot's fought, – here gallant Mercer fell;
'Mid Princeton's smiling scenes his spirit fled;
Here mourning friends receiv'd his last farewell.

Nr. 13

In French

Snoopy
A prisoner's thoughts

I am a prisoner
And I know I have deserved to be one.
I am just 35 years old.
When I'll get out, I'll certainly be an oldster.
Ha! if I could start my life over,
Never, would I do all these foolish things.
I thought myself to be smart
Because I made a lot of money.
People's lives I did not respect.
How many did I make cry?
Now it is my turn to pay
For the crimes I committed in society.
I see Christmas and New Year's Eve coming,

It reminds me of when I was a child.
Midnight mass, the late parties,
I felt so good at home with my parents.
Much pain I caused them
but they forgave me, always.
I really wish I could kiss them
One last time, before God takes them away.
If someone reads what I wrote in this poem,
Don't do what I did, honor your parents.

Nr. 14

In German

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Loss

You walk away—love's happiness and sore pain.
What name shall I give you?
Distress, life, bliss, part of myself, my heart—times past?
All gone? The door slams shut, I hear your footsteps slowly die away.
What is left when you are gone? Joy, anguish, longing?
I know only this: you go away—and all is gone.
Can you feel now, how I clutch at you,
how I hold you so tight that it must hurt you?
How I open the wounds, that your blood may flow,
only to be sure that you keep close to me,
you, so full of real and earthly life?
Can you sense that I have now a terrible longing for my own suffering?
That I yearn to see my own blood flow,
only that all may not sink into times that are gone?
Life, what have you done to me?
Why did you come? Why do you pass away?
Times past, if you flee from me, are you not still my past, mine?
As the sun sets ever more quickly over the ocean,
sucked into the darkness, so sinks and sinks and sinks,
relentlessly, your image into the sea of forgetfulness,
engulfed in a few waves.
As a puff of warm breath dissolves in the cool air of morning,
so fades your image, until your face,
your hands, your figure I no longer know.
A laugh, a glance, a gesture appears to me,
then it fades, disappears, without comfort,
without your nearness, it is destroyed,
an illusion from the past.
I want to breathe the air of your being, absorb it,

lose myself in it, as on a hot summer's day,
the heavy blossom invites the bees, and intoxicates them;
as the mohawk becomes drunk from the privet;
but a rough wind destroys the fragrance and the blossom,
and I stand like a fool, as all vanishes and is gone.
To me, it is as though red-hot pincers tear pieces from my flesh,
when you, my past life, rush away from me.
Mad defiance and raging anger seize me,
I fling wild and meaningless questions into the air.
Why and why and why? Always the same question.
If my senses cannot hold you, my vanishing passing life,
I will think and think again until I find what I have lost.
But something tells me that all around me,
within and without, laughs at me,
unmoved and puzzled by my useless labors,
snaring the wind, to win back what is past and gone.
Eye and soul become evil, I hate what I see,
I hate what moves me, I hate all that is alive and beautiful,
all that should console me for my loss.
I want my life, I demand my own life back, my past life,
You! You! Tears fill my eyes;
perhaps through the veil of tears I will win you back,
the total vision, the whole of you.
No! I will not weep.
Only the strong are helped by tears, the weak are made weaker.
I am tired as evening comes, welcome is my cell,
which promises forgetfulness when possession is denied me.
Night, quench the fire that burns, send to me full forgetfulness,
be kind to me, night, and perform your gentle art, to you I entrust
myself.
But the night is strong and wise,
stronger than the day and wiser than me.
What no earthly power can do, where thinking and feeling,
defiance and tears must fail, the night showers its full riches upon
me.
Undeiled by hostile time, pure, free and whole,
the dream brings you to me, you, from the past,
you, my life, you, from past days and past hours.
By your presence, I am awakened in deepest night,
and cry out- are you again lost to me?
Do I seek you ever in vain, my beloved of past days?
I stretch out my hands and pray- and I learn something new:
That which is past will return to you again as your life's most living
strain,
through thanks and through repentance.
Lay hold on God's forgiveness in the past,
pray that he will care for you this day and to the last.

Nr. 15

In English

Clarence Alexander Rae
The Justice Of Men

The justice of men
Is naught;
With gold
It is to be sold
And bought;
And he that hath nor gold nor friend
Is sure of that lacking to be condemned
Of the justice of men.

The Justice of men
I see;
The great
Of their high estate,
Are free.
In every law there's a postern-gate
That opens but to the rich and great-
Oh, the justice of men!

The Justice of men
Is in vain;
How long,
O Lord, shall the wrong
Remain?
The cry of the weak goes up to Thee;
O Lord, of Thy mercy, make us free
Of justice of men!

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Nr. 16

In Spanish

Samantha Madriz (with "Spirit Awakening")
Untitled

I have seen and experienced many hurtful things
that someone my age shouldn't have. Drugs, death,
and not having a home are all things in my life that

have changed me. If I could help someone in my life right now I would help my mom. I would help her cleanse from drugs and help her find a stable home. So she can see that she is a powerful woman and she's worth way more than what she thinks. I would love to put her in a home where I don't have to worry if someone hurts her or if she's in danger. I want to help all the families who have experienced the same. I want to be different.

Nr. 17

In Arabic

Ali Ibn Jahim
Untitled

My friend why does loves grow dearer
As days and time wears new
As the covenants of songstresses are broken
And my night keeps her promises

Pain strikes while nights wing is drawn near
While the jails guards barely sleep
But do not fear when you see my bonds
For a mans bracelets are his chains

Nr. 18

In English

Robert Counts
Rejection

I am the stone that the builders must reject
yet I house not anger nor regret
toward anyone lacking imagination,
I was born to move mountains,
to command the breath of worldwinds and hurricanes
to never look back nor down, except in introspection,
to make certain that only splendor surrounds me
and yet when I see pebbles floating on the scum of time,

I am forced to reflect, how can it be
that I am the stone that the builders must reject,
yet I stand tall without such defects,
for perhaps one day, the builders will need just such a structure
to measure up to...

Nr. 19

In Chinese

Huang Xiang
Birthing

I am rippling
The sun's golden skin
On tree trunks I force open
Slowly widening
Cracks
From which
Milk flows out

From the earth's surface
I push up
Green flames
Springing from the roots up to branch-tips
With hair all tangled
I wiggle in the black
A million dark nights
Have fallen
From my sense of touch

I gradually free myself
At last
Found by fleeting clouds
I am merely a simple
Wild hill
A clear deep spring

Can you smell me
I am decaying leaves the stench of dead animals and
Muck
The sediments of of jellyfish in an ancient rock
A wolf
Or sinuous
Time warping
Snake

I hibernate in every sort of thing.
In a thousand infant forms
Am born
I will not again hide from you
I
Am not me

Nr. 20

In Turkish

Nazim Hikmet
Strontium 90

Our weather doesn't fit the norms
A bit of sun, a squall of rain, snowstorms
It's all because of the nuclear testing they say.

Strontium 90's falling in drops
On the milk, the meat, the crops
On our freedom, on our hopes
On our longings – on those doors that so
Often hear our knocks.

With our very selves we're caught up in a race,
My rose.
Either we transfer existence to the dead and
Distant stars
Or watch death descend upon this earth of ours.

Nr. 21

In English

Samantha Hernandez (with "Spirit Awakening")
Who Am I?

how can I forget I have a constant reminder every time I have to Ask
permission to do anything? who am I am? am exactly what other people
say I am. This world is so confusing I can't even sit down to think
right who am I am exactly whatever they say I am because in a place

like this people like to have that authority over you. There's no point in arguing just agree. Who am I. I was a wild flower who eventually ended up slowly dying with all the loss and sorrow that fills her heart. They say this is the place to get yourself together we know that's a lie. Who am I? am a young woman who's learned to humble herself and has prepared herself for the worst. I am who they've made me become.

Nr. 22

In Italian

Pietro Valpreda
To my mother

Mother...don't cry
Wipes your eyes
You had to know and face
The spit, the blood, the bile
When leaves were falling
On time's paths

Mother...don't suffer
Rise your head
Now that you had to understand
Paying your salty price
Who are these who wanted:
The pyramids and blast furnaces
The frontiers and the altars
The scales and the locks
And the stratified humanity
Who are these who said
They were doing good things for all the mothers.

Mother don't scream
Bite your lips.
For the boundless army of mothers
That saw going out of their uterus
Fertilizer for
Battlefields, workshops, mines, clumps...and
Cement for
Crystal flags
Lead togas
Mimetic shrouds
Temples for emptiness.

Mother don't tremble
Close your fists.
For who invokes in pain, in death, your name
Either wearing an ilotan tunic
Or an asbestos coverall
And your name rises
From the barricades
From the mountains where the bird flew
From the red rice fields
To the place where pain and exploitation became blues.

Mother...mother
Give me your hand
You are not the first and others will come
Who had to turn their chest
Into a Tomb.

Nr. 23

In Polish

Anonymous
Untitled

To suffer?... How long? My love, my heart
Suffered so long, bathed in blood.
Stirred in the frightful storm
All my feelings burn as hell's fire.

Today, at the slightest movement
My chains cry a hallow sound -
But every thought in my soul today
Lets out wild and bloody screams...

Too late to tune the lute softly
To sing the song of revenge -
Who carries the chains, chains he earned!
I must, must escape, and avenge.

Nr. 24

In English

Clarence Alexander Rae
The desired Door

There's golden doors of palaces,
Great doors and high;
And there's the shining western door
The sun leaves by.
Full many splendid portal
Opes to cathedral dome,
But my eyes are eager only
For the little door of home.

Nor cavern sill, nor lintel,
Nor bronze leaves subtly swung
On hidden golden hinges
And moved to music's tongue,
Can move me like the rude door,
With clustered blooms above,
That frames for me at even'
The bright face of my love.

Nr. 25

In Russian

Anna Alexandrovna Barkova
Untitled

Scarlet blood and yellow bile
Feed our life, and all we do;
Malignant fate has given us
Hearts insatiable as wolves,
Teeth and claws we use to maul
And tear our mothers and fathers;
No, we do not stone our neighbors,
our bullets rip their hearts in two.
Oh, Better not to think like this?
Very well, then - as you wish.
Then hand me universal joy,
Like bread and salt upon a dish.

Nr. 26

In French

Josina Godelet
Ghosts

The Ghosts at night make the walls come to life.
How much despair, pain and expectations?
In these stones engraved for so many years?
How many locked up women, guilty or innocent,
How many broken families in this long lasting wait?
They have seen a lot, these walls dividing the prison,
These walls where strange memories are engraved in.
When the night comes, they whisper to each other,
they groan and they suffer.
They sweat hate and long gone sighs.
They sweat perfume acridier than sulphur...
Nine square meters form a society
Of two numbers without personality.

Nr. 27

In English

Harry Hawser
The Captive

The fox may roam the tangled wood,
The spotted hart the forest tread,
The dolphin glide the limpid flood,
The courser sweep the flowery mead;
Scenes clad in everlasting bloom,
The painted Indian, wild and rude
May wander, but the captive's doom
Is galling chains and solitude.

O'er flowery fields, the wilding bee,
In search of nect'rine sweets may stray;
The bird his dulcet melody
May chaunt upon the bending spray;
But, ah! What cares the heart consume
What all-subduing griefs intrude
Upon the soul of him whose doom
Is galling chains and solitude

The fawn beside its dam may play;
The halcyon on its parent's wing
May dare the wave; his matin lay
The soaring lark in freedom sing;
But, fated to a living tomb'
For years on years in woe to brood
Upon the past, the captive's doom,
Is galling chains and solitude
How bright, how fleeting are the hopes of youth!
The gems that fall translucent from the wings
Of purple morning, and, the sky puts on
Its carmine tinted drapery to meet
The amorous sun, vanish, and are no more—
And the frail flower that opens its velvet cup,
Giving its perfume to the early breeze,
And dying with the day that saw it bloom,
Are emblems meet them.

CREDITS:

Unconquerable Soul
by Richard Shelton and Piotr Szyhalski

Featured voices: Gokcen Dilek Acay, Erik Brandt, Zoe Cinel, Raul Villanueva Garcia, Jonathan Herrera, Essma Imady, Pamela Johnson, Antonia Maistrova, Piotr Szyhalski, Clement Vaccaro, Li Zeng.

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