

Praxedis G. Guerrero

Blow!

“The sheep like multitudes were muttering like a flock in a a corral. Around me were brutality, infamy, adulation, falsehood, vanity, wearying my nerves. I fled from the city for I felt like a prisoner there and I came to this solitary cliff, which shall be the mausoleum of my ennui. I am alone at last. I shall breathe another atmosphere. The murmuring of nature shall be the sweet song which greets my ear.”

Standing on the summit of the lofty rock, the vagabond smiled.

There came a gentle breeze and to the lungs of the vagabond there penetrated some asphyxiating element. He seemed to hear, as if in the long locks of his unkempt hair, the moan of a strange voice.

“Whence comest thou, gentle breeze, which produces such uneasiness; whence contest thou, weeping in sorrow?”

“I come from a long pilgrimage. I passed through the huts of the peons and I saw how those slaves were born and raised. With my subtle fingers I touched the naked flesh of the little ones, the dry and withered breasts of the mothers, ugly and bestialised by misery and ill-treatment. I touched the feature of Hunger and Ignorance. I passed through palaces and I came upon the growl of envy, the belch of gluttony, the clink of coins counted feebly by midias, the echo of liberty-destroying mandates. I felt with my hand invisible tapestries, marbles, ornaments of gold and jewels with which were adorned, in order to make them worth something, those who were worth nothing.

“I passed through factories, through workshops, through the fields. I saturated myself with the sweat for oil for which there was no recompense. I permitted myself scarcely a peep at the mines, and brought away the weary breath of thousands of men. I swept through the naves of sacred shrines and came upon crimes and moral sloth. I bore away from there acrid odours of vile incense. I stole into the jails and caressed infancy prostituted by Justice, thought enchained in dungeons, and I saw how myriads of small insects ate the flesh of large insects. I forced my way into barracks, and saw in those quarters humiliation, brutality, intolerable vice — an academy of assassination.

“I entered the lecture halls of the colleges, and saw science as the bosom friend of error and prejudice, saw young men and women of intelligence in violent combat with each other in order to gain certificates of exploiters. I saw in those books the iniquitous right which gives the right to destroy every right.

“I passed through valleys, through mountain ranges; I whistled through the lyres of the tyrants, made from the tautly drawn cords of men hanged on the trees of the forest. I bring grief, I bring bitterness; that is why I asphyxiate.

“But see, gentle breeze, I wish to be alone.” The breeze departed, but in the unkempt hair of the vagabond human anguish remained imprisoned.

In strong gusts there came another wind, intense and formidable.

“Who art thou? Whence dost thou come?”

“I come from all the corners of the world; I bring the justice of the future I am the breath of the Revolution.”

“Blow, hurricane! Comb my long hair with your terrible fingers. Blow, sea wind! Blow over my lofty cliffs, over the valleys, into the abysses. Wind through the ravines of the mountains, destroy alike barracks and sanctuaries, wipe away those presidios, drive away that resignation, dissolve those clouds, clouds of incense, break the branches of those trees in which have been made the lyres of the oppressors. Awaken ignorance, snatch away those ornaments of gold which represent a thousand miseries.

“Blow, hurricane, whirlwind, north wind blow! Raise the passive sands which the feet of camels and the bellies of snakes pass over, and make of them burning projectiles. Blow, blow, so that when the breeze returns there will not remain imprisoned in my long hair the horrible anguish of human slavery!”

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