

## **The Broken Rosary**

By J. Rodriguez Velez

*For her. For all of them.*

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## ***Perdóname***

### **Domine**

To Lord I pray,  
And must I say,  
That I feel as unheard,  
As I did, yesterday.

Thou art still the shepherd.  
Trust in you I cannot help,  
But this silence makes me question  
If I'll bask in Heaven's wealth.

### **Be Swift My Soul To Answer Him**

A dawn of red and a night of black,  
Make for a time when I know I lack,  
The warmth of a lover on a bleak winter's eve,  
Or the smile of a friend beneath autumn leaves.

Like childhood summer I'm but a ghost,  
Unlike spring, no new life do I boast.  
For once I embrace defeat and walk away,  
We'll meet in Heaven, if you pray.

But I think you won't, a man encounter

But a broken soul before a seat of power.  
Where a beaming man of stately pose  
Is flanked by a woman marked by a rose

As rapids to Niagara, tears are to a gentle cheek  
For there she weeps and forgiveness I seek.  
Forgiveness for the wounds, I made upon my flesh.  
For all the blood I drew, to which my scars attest.

She prays for me now, and at the hour of my death,  
And I beseech unto the Lord, to grant me my rest.  
But all the praying of the mother of divine,  
Could not prevent, my ultimate decline.

My heart was good, and it meant well,  
But it was still I, that from grace fell.  
The Judgement of the Shepard is sure now to come,  
I only hope that I'm forgiven what I've done.

## **Every Step, a Penance**

With every step, a penance.

With every breath a hurt.

Twas I that wronged.

Tis I that I besmirch.

To ribbons go my feet,

A sting to every step.

I won't dress this wound,

Lest I dare forget.

My soul forbade me,

But the itching was great.

I took up the iron,

And let it to its fate.

There's a phantom trail behind me,

Breadcrumbs of ichor cold,

It trails me like the guilt,

That in my heart I hold.

In a twisted ritual,

A modern, silent flog

I wince upon every step,

As I wander the bloody fog.

## **Incongruity**

You made me in your image,  
But you also did the others.  
That is how I know you lied,  
For I am nothing like my brothers.

They fill the air with howling laughs  
And speak in lofty tongues.  
While I am bound up in myself,  
Screaming songs from sorry lungs.

For what reason did you craft me  
In a way that defies design?  
Am I flawed for my benefit?  
To be drab while the others shine?

Why am I unlike, all the rest of my kin,  
So sorry, confused, and afraid?  
Why did you my pitiful mind,  
Make in this godforsaken way?

It speaks to a cruel sense humor,  
That you would allow this be.  
I wanted only a human life,  
But thou hast forsaken me.

## **But Poison is the Cure**

My spirit's in crisis and distress,  
Its lost and painted a shade of dolor  
No longer do the Lord I impress,  
And now temptation I implore.

I am unlike the faithful Job,  
Who from belief never faltered,  
Or the captain of the boat,  
Who trusted God when Earth was watered.

In the deserts of Judea,  
Christ was tempted by Satan.  
How he resisted I've no idea,  
At mere sorrow my soul is laden,

With lust for gluttony,  
Both of food and indulgence.  
And I partake in these sullenly,  
For rancor I have in abundance.

I was the good lamb,  
I was instructed to be,  
Yet my day you damped,  
And in fear drenched me.

Why must I be blamed,

For into temptation giving,  
When I invoked unto your name,  
And was met with unforgiving,

Torrents and tempests and downpours,  
And a sickled angel's waltz?  
It was you who ignited this mind-borne war,  
I am not at fault.

### **In Lieu of Sainthood**

Haunted, befallen by a plague.  
Here I am, circled by the wraiths  
Of all the things I failed to be,  
Chanting all the sorry songs I always sing.

The ones that never cease,  
Droning on in an endless round.  
Narrating tragedies,  
That a thousand have already found,  
And solved long ago,  
Long letting those notes ring hollow.  
Setting down the Hymnal Damned,  
And returning to crystal hands  
That will toil and break, but be no worse for wear,  
While I wallow here, spectres everywhere.

## **Cannon's 'gainst Self-Slaughter**

I'd send it up to you,  
But you'd hate me if I do.

I could grasp the glinting steel,  
But your anger you'd reveal.

I could imitate the marine and come bloated and soaked  
But you would no doubt say, some sacrament I broke.

I could soar lacking any wings or feathers,  
But you'd be annoyed, I not the challenge weathered.

I could let the rancid fill my nostrils,  
But at my arrival you'd be hostile.

I could drink down foulness and deathly clench my gut,  
But you'd banish me from Heaven and call it just.

I could mangle both machine and vessel,  
But I'd meet your fury at my crashing metal.

I could finally tie that calling knot,  
But you'd show me none of the mercy I had sought.

## ***Flores Marchitas***

### **Ave Maria**

Ave Maria, gratia plena

El Señor es contigo

Blessed art thou amongst women,

Et Jésus, le fruit de vos entrailles, est béni.

Santa Maria, Mother of God

Pray for us sinners...

Sinners,

A sinner, my Lady,

Could you ever forgive him?

Mother, could you ever see your sweet child again?

You would weep at all my sins I'm sure,

I can't break your heart, but neither can I cure

The complete sinfulness of my soul,

Not even He could absolve me so.

I fear for you, my Mother dear,

You who so faithfully appears.

There in Lourdes, in Tepeyac,

Such respect I must gravely lack,

For you and all the pain you endured!

To see Him slain upon that cross,

To weep for Him, who died for us.  
How could I have blasphemed so?  
How could I have such evil sown?  
To rend apart my flesh with abandon,  
To be gluttonous and lustful, to have a hand in  
The destruction of so much goodwill  
That might've lit the world.  
How could I be forgiven?  
Mother Mary.  
Mother Mary.

Ay! Mi Madre Maria!  
I mourn for what I've done,  
Remorse courses through my blood.  
In every vein, on every breath  
Know my chest heaves,  
Through each repent.  
My sweet mother,  
My beautiful mother,  
I am pained for what I've done.  
I regret that you had I,  
For your sorry, dejected son.  
For all you can do now is pray,  
To pray....  
Now, and at the hour of our death,  
Amen.

## **A Withered Rose**

And in the times most obscured,  
Is when we curse our Lord.  
For one who lived by the rosary,  
All they receive is pained demise.

She prayed unto you, followed the word of Christ,  
She went to church, and nightly, the rosary recite.  
But thou taketh beneath rainclouds,  
And thou showeth no remorse.

And in that tempest, teardrops fall,  
And many begin to lack the wherewithal,  
To say that unto you they believe,  
And that there exists only devils.

What kind of eternal plan, would so require,  
So many beloved lives to expire?  
So much so, that they seem stolen,  
And suffer gravely until final breath.

Thou damned murderer, we've faced this before,  
Thou art shepherd, and we the lambs you gore.  
But tired are we of only sorrow,  
Give us the fortune we deserve.

I saw her on that death-bound cot,

And it was you who I sought.

“In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy spirit”

And yet thou takest her shrieking into that founight?

Thou truly are bound by mysterious ways,

And I think it's only fair for me to say,

Thou art a cruel, and angry beast.

There is no use for this grief.

## Weeping Statues

It might inflict more hurt upon a man,  
Than any bit of sharpened steel.  
It is as weightless as feath'ry clouds,  
But it is all a man can feel.

Melodies will resound,  
From instrument or mouth,  
And wrench open a beating heart.  
A fountain of sorrows before the art.

The stoic veneer mimicking marble,  
Will turn to moistened clay,  
As wails will begin to warble,  
And tears fall like the rainéd day.

The man who professed to be a mountain,  
Of unmovable earth will quake.  
As somber recollections pass him by,  
Leaving broken stone in their wake.

The crumbled man, will wince his eyelids shut,  
For memories of his beloved fill his mind.  
He'll try to force through, professing a clear head,  
But Lo! How he clearly laments the dead!

## **The Pallbearer**

What a doleful duty  
Bestowed upon me.  
Bear the departing bark.  
Pallbearer I must be.

I'm to be the vessel,  
By which vessel leaves;  
I am to guide  
To grave, from bereaved.

I am to hold in that moment  
All the grief in the world.  
I'm to sternly march  
Amongst laments world-heard.

I bemoan my role  
Not from selfish source,  
But because I fear  
I'll fail ritual morose.

This is the withdraw, of a person  
Sorrowed, and cherished.  
I hope bear well I will,  
All the world's anguish.

## **Pick Us a Rose**

Pick us a rose,  
For the lord picked his own.  
Greet us with it,  
When we've heaven known.

Our hearts ache much,  
We've never known such rain.  
We miss you sore,  
But Lord's pledge aids with pain.

We'll speak again,  
And laugh as times passed.  
We'll feast again,  
When we've, time amassed.

Until then though,  
Watch over our days,  
Because we'll meet once more,  
When Mary Prays.

## **In the Hands of Silver Angels**

Within pristine pearl, white as wintry breath,  
You are now at rest.  
No longer the confines of lowly Earth,  
And never shall pain unbearable be suffered.  
There shall be no more quarreling or battling,  
Nor wronging, nor tears, nor screams, only an empty, relieving silence.

Mourn I, the knowledge that never again,  
Will melodious laughter fill a smiling peopled room.  
Nor shall the caring offers of food and drink be given,  
Testaments to permanent goodwill.  
Alas, as there is no more pain or hurt, there is neither joviality.  
That was buried right alongside,  
And I fear its new sprout shall not bear its sweet tasting fruit for much time.  
Yet, it's better this way,  
To be free beyond a rotting decaying prison of too fatally human make.  
There you can be within his hands,  
And there you can rest and wait.

In the hands of silver angels,  
And beneath the crossed roses,  
You may sleep,  
And I'll always remember.

## *Preludes to Apostasy*

### **What You Leave Behind**

It's in what you leave behind  
That in there I find  
A desperate fleeting sign,  
That once you lived

The flame now dead  
The ship now led  
Down the river dread-  
ed, but into a welcoming embrace.

Into the field of reeds,  
Amongst the starry beads,  
Where of it I read,  
But alas, may not follow.

For the angel ferried you away,  
And left me here to pray,  
While I wither away,  
In what you leave behind.

About the crumbling columns  
This air so solemn,  
And how I hear the Saints call them,  
The parts of you that fell.

They cannot remain,  
They may not sustain,  
No matter my lamentous refrains  
Time robs it all.  
The memories are fading.  
In the mire I am wading,  
And your face is still evading  
My longing gaze.

The items of metal you wrought  
With rust, a battle fought,  
And all the words you sought  
To leave are scattered to the wind.

Relics are recalled,  
And I witness castles fall  
You who built those walls,  
They all come bearing down

On what you leave behind  
And summon it in kind  
To how you left as my  
...recollections of you fade

I wish only  
I hope only,  
However lonely,

This grief is,  
You'll leave it here for my sight,  
The last of you I may find,  
Lest the final parts of you die,  
For it is  
What you leave behind.

### **Decline**

That flickering flame from the candle of the mind,  
That fleeting feeling, just one of its kind.

The sweet aroma of days long past,  
Fill the air for a second, but cannot last.

The warm feeling of that August sun,  
Feels forever, but the summer's done.

These things, you love, you cherish so,  
These things that only you can know.

But now they sail, far across the sea,  
Gone from you is the self. Thy memory.

## **Echo**

Is every song the same?  
Do they all seem alike?  
Do any of my words,  
Resonance ever strike?

A few lines,  
Select shining gems  
Surely must decorate,  
My pen-spun web.

But does my humble net,  
Ever catch a fly?  
Or do my verses  
Merely pass you by?

Is each a shouting mass,  
Exactly as the last,  
With no difference save,  
A varied scheme and name?

Alas, the distinction is not mine to make,  
Control must I resign.  
In the words of poets that came before, I'm  
“Leaving it to you to prove and define...”

## **Father Hypokrites**

Would almighty need a piece like you?

A pawn to play his game?

Or should he simply reveal his truth,

And belief the faithful will gain?

I should think the latter,

You serpent sage.

Thou studied scripture, but failed to glean intent.

He told us to pray in private, yet you profess from a stage.

He instructed us to love, yet here you spread a hate.

A hate against the fellow man with whom you share a form,

Yet you detest him because his origin's a different world.

Who so cares deeply, about the tinge of a man's face,

When the color of his soul's more vibrant than a fireplace?

Why speak to me about lacking in my faith,

When I am not the filthy wraith?

It is not I, who in wrinkled skin and shaggy robes,

Wanders the stage and professes to know,

The inner workings of the mind of a deity,

And nor do I a master profess to be.

A man of god there is no doubt,

But a life without his power you'd fail to live without.

You're first human, then a learned of the church,

You forget your humanity, when us you besmirch.

### **A Dying Flame's Plea**

I'd follow you to the ends of the earth,  
I'd devote my candle-flame to the church,  
If only you this dark doubt cleansed,  
Withheld evil, and thy mercy extend.

You have taken enough, and my wax has waned,  
Give more fat, wind, and stoke my flame again.  
Do so for me, and I'll be clergy; Priest or Monk,  
Just a miracle give, and make my sorrow defunct.

### **Un Rosario en el Bosque**

In a sad damned way, I need you.  
No matter what I say, I seek you.  
It is the cross in which I live my life,  
And so I follow you despite,  
The sorrow and forsaking, and all the quiet stares,  
Because frankly, I fear that you are not there.  
It is calmer to the soul, to imagine a cruel God,  
Than to imagine, mere oblivion beyond.

What I need is the comfort that the soul goes on,  
What I seek is forgiveness, for all I've done wrong.  
Realities can only give so much,  
So I'll believe even the unjust.

I cannot accept that to me, there is no substance,  
So I'll accept Christ out of reluctance,  
In order to not fathom past the night,  
And pray those things will never reach my sight.

Understand that this is not profession of belief,  
This is a profession of a deep-seated need,  
That all humanity holds in some way,  
And that is why I choose to pray.

Know though, that when my spirit flies,  
And should you come to encounter my eyes,  
I may not be blamed for whatever transpired,  
Thou owest me, and I needn't Heaven's ire.

## **Cayetano Ripoll**

How am I to believe,  
That unto these burdens I should leap,  
When the lord himself failed,  
At the task which he assailed?

Christ was tripped by his instrument of end,  
But yet thou unto me, no respite lend?  
If Christ was gifted a Cyrenaeon,  
Why may I alone be beaten?

How am I to bear these ladders,  
When thou tearest all asunder?  
If Simon was given unto thee,  
Why does the world lack for me?

For I begin to find more truth within,  
The words and books most pagan.  
For they espouse tales that in me render,  
Longings of that comfort tender.

The sheep of thy fold, tell me though,  
That those words are blasphemes so.  
They say that by solely, and only you alone,  
Will love, That I've yet to find, its colors show.

Perhaps tis so, and in conviction I'm in want,

But there is another option to which I oft give thought.

Perhaps tis that I speak to ears, failing in exist,

And it's only savage superstition that instead persists.

## *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*

### **Nicene Creeds**

Thou art my shepherd, and I am but a lamb  
I, shepherd, am merely a lamb.

My ruminant eyes, they've borne witness to much,  
Hurt, hatred, and sorrows. There have been many trespasses.  
And I, ever your gentle lamb, have forgiven them.  
Thou forgivest mine, I am told.  
I believe.  
I hope.

The seed of doubt was sown in my mind, by your agrarian hand.  
It was the slaughtering of some of the herd, that alerted me.  
Thou feedest the herd, of course, grateful are we.  
But prithee, what dost thou doest with the meat?  
Know I that thou eat of it,  
And thou takest the blood of the herd,  
And thou spreadest that blood upon the lintel,  
And posts of every door  
In the land of Egypt,  
So that scythed angel may not enter.

So thou, who art shepherd, and who art but lamb thyself,  
Inflict pain upon those who follow thee  
Yet despair at the same upon thee?

“There shall be a great cry throughout all of Egypt”

Thus saith lord,

But what sayest thou?

Shall thou sparest me and mine kin?

Or shall there be a great cry throughout all of the pasture,

Such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again?

Prithee, speak upon the matter, mine shepherd.

I still remain thy lamb,

Still do I follow thee,

Still do I implore upon thee,

Still do I hold trinkets and objects that represent thee,

Yet thou sayest nothing.

Speak! Speak thou damned shepherd! Hear me now.

Thou may takest from me,

Thou may takest my wool,

Thou may takest my beloved kin,

Thou may even takest my life,

But thou may ne’er takest my resolve.

Yes, my resolve.

My resolve to know thee.

My resolve, to resist thee.

But most of all,

My resolve to reconcile thy nonchalance,

And thy injustice,

And all the misdeeds and missteps,  
That thou must claim on judgment day,  
All to reconcile these,  
With the profession of justice, peace, and love that thou tellest of.  
Admit shall I, that on most days, my shepherd, I fail to find you.  
I fail to reconcile.  
I fail to know.  
There is a peace in that.  
A peace in knowing that it is thou who is trespasser,  
And that thou art the one who be unjust, unloving, a mere beast.

But then thou givest a single blessing, be it  
Extraordinary, or merely a happenstance of fair fortune,  
Nonetheless, it stokes again, the embers in the heart,  
Of this little, ruminant lamb  
And perhaps, that is meant to be enough,  
To follow the shepherd.  
Even as he wieldeth a shimmering piece of iron.

## Janus

Enveloped in the breaking, fleeting day,  
Where embers of fondly remembered shades  
Drape themselves across the horizon.  
Who could but not focus on the majesty and passion  
And the sorrow,  
Rather than the spell of remembrance and clarity  
That shall blanket them,  
Come the chilled and quiet night?

It's in the crackling tongues that shoot forth,  
From broken mouths of greyed lumber,  
And cover the bed with ashes, and spit  
Burning salvia at the victim  
That shall lay scars and marks upon once tender skin,  
That anger writhes both without and within.  
The pitied then and the pitier then,  
Never once shall consider the jade stalk,  
That will eat of that discarded dust  
And rise again following the dusk.

When the God of a tormented people,  
Batters with his great spinning disc,  
The lands below and drenches them  
So that the marine know no distinction,  
And sends forth arrows of white flame,  
And bangs the war-drum

So that the call to destruction and pillage  
Reverberates through the heavens,  
None shall know of the embrace of anything but despair, and misery,  
And the worlds they've lost to the sea.

When the very Earth breaks open,  
And swallows up the holy and the damned alike,  
And the aspirations of nations,  
Fall silently into depths and chasms,  
Deeper even than the hole  
Left in their hearts at the sight thereof,  
They will have nothing but to weep.  
No matter what florescent dance buds in that moment,  
They will weep.  
No matter what winged angels sing,  
They will weep.  
When the lovely aim to give comfort so,  
They will weep.  
When The Three even attempt to know,  
They will weep.

There will come a time though,  
When tired cheeks are dried,  
And eyes are red as the blood on the cross on which they gaze,  
They will have a peace of mind,  
Out of the numbing of the soul,  
Or salvation of the mind,  
They'll know not which.

Yet they'll come to know the elements,  
And both their reason for laurels,  
And reasons for resignation of selfhood.  
For if a being may be three,  
No sense then, why two,  
Anguish cannot be.

## **The Day Laborer**

I

The poet is the miner  
Who goes within the deep caverns  
Strewn about the head,  
And gives great strokes of the pick,  
Until a vein doth he detect.

Tis a vein of emotion  
An ore of passion,  
It might be a lump of love,  
Or a gem of despair  
Regardless, he'll take it above.

II

The poet is the smith,  
Who labors away at the word-kiln  
And refines his love-ore  
Until he has metal  
Whose shape he can explore.

Many strikes upon the anvil  
Will the hammer-pen make  
In many failed attempts  
Until at last,

An amorous sonnet he invents.

### III

The poet is the jeweler  
Who goes about his jumbled shop,  
Readies his station, and puts upon it  
This sorrow-gem and shaves away,  
Chips away, to pen an elegy-onyx

He will go to market  
And provide his art refined  
Lauded with coin and laurels  
For he crafted beauty  
From crude mind-borne quarrels

Hark! For the poet is not engaged  
In some righteous moral quest  
Nor is he greater than any of the rest  
He is but a humble workman,  
Tired and drained.  
Who yet refines the raw,  
To craft wondr'ous refrains!

## Somnium

Spoken from tomes ancient,  
“Ashes to ashes,  
Dust to dust,  
From dust you were made,  
And to dust you shall return.”

Thus did the stones,  
Earthen-flesh,  
Rise and swallow up the man,  
And leave him unwhole.

The trees then,  
Who in the beginning time,  
Danced across the land,  
And settled in city forests,  
To enhome all creatures,  
Rooted themselves upon,  
The belly-full rock,  
And sunk tendrils deep within,  
Cracking and creaking,  
And eating up the soil.

Then came the water,  
In a deluge, not unlike Ark-sailed.  
The drops rain-born embraced the trees  
As crisp and shining dew,

And the trees eagerly gulped and suckled,  
The milk of the sky,  
But then the water advanced,  
And towered,  
And swept away the trees,  
Leaving merely,  
Windswept waters.

Then came the Clouds,  
Nebulous fogs of white,  
Who circled across the blue of the water,  
Then the cerulean of the daytime sky,  
And become fluffed, as sheep's wool,  
And as they rounded,  
They ate up all the water  
And gained, and grew, until they were a halo  
About an azure central disc.

Then the disc expanded,  
And made sapphire assaults  
And pushed away cumulus,  
Until there was a brimming,  
Abounding, empty canvas,  
Of a blue filled day.

Then the blue of the sky, focused,  
And it became transparent,  
As if I had peered too long through,

The firmament and resolved,  
Its glassy make.  
I felt the fresh kiss,  
Of a cool spring water,  
And I pushed against,  
The now gravelly, sanded, eroded stream bottom,  
And rose up above the line of the life-bearing ichor.

My curled hair, drenched,  
My beard, dripping,  
And devoid of modernity,  
I took form primordial.

I walked back, and grew a man  
Distant from the stream water,  
And saw my ripples fade as they crashed,  
Upon the verdant bank,  
In that ruddy, vegetated valley.

And as the water became still,  
Forgetting me as I had gone beyond its confines,  
A shape, much like mine,  
More primeval than I,  
Stood and appeared from below the shallow water,  
And he stood atop it, and walked ashore.

“Who are you?”, I spoke,  
In my modern, ancient-rooted tongue.

Clean shaven, chiseled man,  
In Eden-living form,  
Replied, “Ouranos, Sky Father.”

I pondered on what he spoke,  
Twas then that I awoke.

## **Lazarus, Come Forth**

“When a flame takes to a lamp,  
A man does not its light damp.  
For he sets it not beneath the straw,  
But upon a post to the cold night thaw.

Were these not the words of the lord?  
Who took to a lamp and lit the world?  
Was it not he who by faithful plea,  
Healed the ill and lame all through Galilee?”

I say unto thee, that it may be true,  
But to those miracles, I owe no due  
Of belief, for it is unlikely,  
A mere man healed the unsightly.

“But does not a doctor do the same?  
To heal by tonics, so health may gain?  
Why is it doubted that the sick were helped,  
When at its robbery, death did yelp?”

How am I to believe a man four days dead,  
Strolled out a tomb, as if he awoke from bed?  
Unlike that man, I’m not blinded by linen,  
For my ailments have ne’er been smitten.

“So then, thou lacks thy faith,

Merely because of a damned wraith,  
Called misfortune that troubles all mankind,  
And you could no relief then find?"

And what if I am? Is that a crime?  
I implored time upon time.  
If he can heal the lepers, dead, and maladious  
Why can he afford no aid to us?

"And who is us, my dear son?  
Surely, thou does not mean everyone?  
Many have felt the gifts of the sky,  
Perhaps its simply the knowledge that passes by."

How can it be so, that fortune to me has been bestowed,  
When I can find nothing of what I'm owed?  
There is nothing here that belongs to me,  
All I see are tragedies and travesties.

"That may be true, and for that I mourn,  
But it does not mean thy faith thou should scorn.  
Take for example, the case of Job- "  
Cease. For this I already know.

"Then it seems as though you have what you need,  
And the answers are now yours to seek.  
I can only but do so much,  
I cannot lead you to answers such."

Then of what authority do you speak with such bombast?  
When the answers I need you completely lack?  
Reveal to me something, that might be of use,  
If not, then my Rome-led faith I must refuse.

“In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me.  
So goes the old hymn, and much truth does it hold,  
For the second line is as rich as gold.

For truly does his glory permeate within all,  
Whether you visit Al-Aqsa or the Western Wall.  
Believe not in Christ all you might,  
But do not let perceived wrong cloud thy sight.

Humanity seeks to understand its place,  
And so in his reflection they'll spot a face.  
Some will call it Yeshua, others Vishnu,  
Some Muhammad, or just 'Human' too.

There is truth in every word that falls from our lips,  
And the dove-spirit of man will from those word-pools sip,  
And they will lap up the bits that are crisp and fair,  
And discard the foul ones, and leave them there.

Man will find meaning in whatever he wishes there to be.  
Was it placed there by God or Gods? Possibly.

But regardless of divine tampering, there is one final place,  
Is your Rock-founded Church not merely the road then, you take?"

## **Be Jubilant My Feet**

Perhaps, correct was the holy man,  
And doubted I for naught.  
Perhaps this was the plan,  
And merely I forgot.

In the temple of the three,  
They told me not to doubt.  
But they took much from me,  
That I couldn't do without.

The book spake unto me  
"Trust always in thy lord"  
"Resist valiantly."  
"Belief is thy sword."

Yet I think I failed to listen,  
I, belief often seemed to lack,  
I shunned my traditions,  
And on the cross, I turned my back.

Now in the blinding veil,  
I still remain so unsure.  
Though now I might consider,  
Christ at end of death's allure.

## **Our God is Marching on**

In the light of the lord,  
I'll march upon,  
The looming dark,  
That comes anon.

Take up the cross,  
This steel and sabre,  
And I'll perform  
This lauded labor.

I'll march in rank,  
From hills and plains  
Until his glory,  
I have gained.

At bugle calls,  
I'll run headfirst,  
And I will know  
His holy worth.

Despite barrage,  
Of shot and shell,  
Never shall I,  
See the mouth of hell.

The light of the lord,

Will shine the night,  
And my failings shall,  
Forget by Christ.

My battle will end,  
And I shall bleed,  
And I will speak  
Unto thee,

“My life I gave,  
And I did fair,  
Now unto heaven!  
Take me there!”

And in crimson field,  
My bones will lay,  
While my spirit,  
Somewhere, remains.

## Heading to Mictlan

I

Will I get to a heaven?

“No, I’m afraid. Not you.”

So then, torment?

“You’ve already had your share.”

So then where will I go?

“Wherever the road leads us.”

So why am I still wet?

“The drowned always are.”

Why do I feel empty?

“You have no heart to beat.”

So then I’m dead?

“Yes, you’re dead.”

Was it by your hand?

“No. Twas both our hands.”

Why me? What did I do wrong?

“Nothing, it was just your song.”

A song of great pain and ire?

“Yes. And look what it inspired.”

An execution of the self?

“And a suicide.”

## II

Was it worth what I did?

“What is death to a dead man?”

So you are my guide?

“I am the one who walks beside you.”

Were you there that night?

“I was to you as dawn is to dusk.”

Is this a penance?

“A penance implies sin.”

So I’m forgiven?

“Thy shepherd is not so loving”

Do we just keep walking then?

“No. There’s a place we’ll come to stop.”

Will I be able to rest?

“Maybe. We haven’t gotten there yet.”

How long will we walk for?

“A long time.”

Why?

“The flame is dead, but the smoke lingers about the hearth.”

Understanding escapes me.

“The Xocotl tree lives long after the orchard keeper.”

What then is my Xocotl?

“Something. And that’s enough.”

What is your name?

“Miquiliztli, Your shadow.”