

THE TOWER (A Tourist's Guide)

There stood the tower
from whose battlements
burning pitch once was hurled
on the heads of those encamped below ...
the poor
the desolute
the despairing

The same tower from which, later,
the bourgeoisie hung.
Before whose walls
heads and hearts
were severed
by the sharpened blade of indignation.

Those very same heads,
whose now silenced tongues,
once declared:
They are cold? Let them freeze.
They are hungry? Let them starve.
They are sick? Let them suffer – and heal or die as Providence sees fit.

Those same ghoulish tongues,
now risen serpents,
preserved in gallish brine,
wag on again,
spewing a venom of:
war for profit,
health to the rich,
tax the poor,
end environmental stewardship,
and on, and on, and on

[voice lowers to near whisper as following is read]

If you listen closely ...

Yes, if you close your eyes and listen very closely,
you can almost hear the slithering of the sharpening stone,
sliding slowly, smoothly, across steel edge,
the wind seeming to whisper:

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité