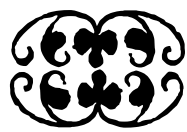


A Litany of Atlanta



Silent God, thou whose voice afar in mist and mystery hath left our ears an-hungered in these fearful days.

Hear us, good Lord!



Listen to us, Thy children: our faces dark and doubt are made a mockery in Thy sanctuary. With uplifted hands we front Thy heaven, O God, crying:

We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord!



We are not better than our fellows, Lord, we are but weak and human men. When our devils do deviltry, curse Thou the doer and the deed: curse them as we curse them, do to them all and more than ever they have done to innocence and weakness, to womanhood and home.

Have mercy on us, misearble sinners!



And yet whose is the deeper guilt? Who made these devils? Who nursed them in crime and fed them on injustice? Who ravished and debauched their mothers and their grandmothers? Who brought and sold their crime, and waxed fat and rich on public iniquity?

Thou knowest, good God!



Is this Thy justice, O Father, that guile be easier than innocence, and the innocent crucified for the guilt of the untouched guilty?

Justice, O Judge of Men!



Wherefore do we pray? Is not the God of the fathers dead? Have not seers seen in Heaven's halls Thine hearsed and lifeless form stark amidst the black and rolling smoke of sin, where all along bow bitter forms of endless dread?

Awake thous that sleepest!



Thou art not dead, but flown afar, up hills of endless light, thru blazing corridors of suns, where worlds do swing of good and gentle men, of women strong and free—far from the cozenage, black hypocrisy and chaste prostitution and this shameful speck of dust!

Turn again, O Lord, leave us not to perish in our sin!



From lust of body and lust of blood

Great God deliver us!

☞☞ From lust of power and lust of gold,
Great God deliver us!

☞☞ From the leagued lying of despot and brute,
Great God deliver us!

☞☞ A city lay in travail, God our Lord, and from her loins sprang twin Murder
and Black Hate. Red was the midnight; clang, crack and cry of death and furyfilled
the air and trmbled underneath the stars when church spired pointed silently
to Thee. And all this was to sate the greed of greedy men who hide behind
the veil of vengenance!
Bend us Thine ear, O Lord!

☞☞ In the pale, still morning we upon the deed. We stopped our ears and held our
leaping hands, bur they—did they not wag their heads ands leer and cry with
bloody jaws; Cease from crime! The word was mockery, for thus they train
a hundred crimes while we do cure one.
Turn again our captivity, O Lord!

☞☞ Behold this maimed and broken thing; dear God it was a humble black man
and sweat to save a bit from the pittance paid him. They told him: Work and
Rise. He worked. Did this man sin? Nay but some one told how some on said
another did—one who he had never seen or known. Yet for this man's crime
this man laid maimed and murdered, his wife naked in shame, his children,
to poverty and evil.
Hear us, O heavenly Father!

☞☞ Doth not this justice of hell stink in Thy nostrils, O God? How long shall the
mounting flood of innocent blood roar in Thine ears and pound our hearts to
vengeance? Pile the pale frenzy of blood-crazed brutes who do such deed high
on Thine altar, Jehovah Jireh, and burn it in hell forever and forever!
Forgive us good Lord; we know not what we say!

☞☞ Bewildered are we, and passion-tost, mad with the madness of a mobbed and
mocked and murdered people; straining at the armposts of Thy Throne, we
raise our shckaed hands and charge Thee, God, by the bones of our stolen fathers,
by the tears of our dead mothers, by the very blood of Thy crucified Christ;
What meaneth this? Tell us the Plan; give us the Sign!
Keep not thou silence, O God!

☞☞ Sit no longer blind, Lord God, deaf to our prayer and dumb to our dumb suffering.
Surely Thou art not white, O Lord, a pale, bloodless, heartless thing?

Ah! Christ of all the Pitties!

☞☞ Forgive the thought! Forgive these wild, blasphemous words. Thous art still
the God of our black fathers, and in Thy soul's soul sit some soft darkenings
of the evening, some shadowings of the velvet night.

☞☞ But whisper—speak—call, great God, for Thy silence is white terror ro our
hearts! The way, O God, show us the way and point us the path.

☞☞ Whither? North is greed and South is blood; within the coward, and without,
the liar. Whither? To death?

Amen! Welcome dark sleep!

☞☞ Whither? to Life? But not this life, dear God, not this. Let the cup pass from
us, tempt us not beyond our strength, for there is that clamoring and clawing
within, to whose voice we would not listen, yet shudder lest we must, and it
is red, Ah! God! It is a red and awful shape.

Selah!

☞☞ In yonder east trembles a star.

Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord!

☞☞ Thy will, O Lord, be done!

Kyrie Eleison

☞☞ Lord we have done these pleading, wavering words.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord!

☞☞ We bow our heads and hearken soft to the sobbing women and little children.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord!

☞☞ Our voices sink in silence and in night.

Hear us, good Lord!

☞☞ In night, O God of a godless land!

Amen!

☞☞ In silence, O Silent God,

Selah!