

To Citizen Étienne Lemaitre
Archivist of the Committee of Public Safety
PARIS

2nd of Pluviôse, Year 1 of the French Republic
In the 4th year of the Revolution

Lemaitre,

File this letter in the night register. Not under Reason, nor Law, but under Regret.

Tonight, the moon rose like a slit throat. Red. Heavy. Too large for the sky.

The people in the square did not cheer. Not this time. They stood silent as the shadow moved over the rooftops, casting blood across the façade of Notre-Dame. I stood beside the scaffold where the king fell hours before.

And I watched the moon refuse to blink.

They say it is a lunar eclipse. That science explains the hue. But you and I have both read Rousseau. We know when the state dies, it dies not in theory—but in symbol.

We claimed to dethrone tyranny. But tonight, I saw a sky that no longer recognized us. The stars—fewer. The air—still. The Revolution, we said, would remake the heavens.

But what if the heavens are not remade?

What if they are erased?

Robespierre speaks of virtue. Marat of vengeance. The guillotine answers both. But the moon spoke of nothing. It hovered. It glowed. It watched.

You know I believed. I shouted in the streets. I burned the fleur-de-lis with joy. But now the Republic's banners hang like bloodied tongues, and the moon bleeds overhead—and I wonder: have we exchanged monarchy for vacuum? A court for a void?

Let it be known:

In the first year of the French Republic, when the red moon rose over Paris and the king's head fell, Étienne Delaroche, citizen of the Revolution, wrote not to glorify liberty but to mourn its forgetting.

You are receiving this because you record the death of things. Add this to the death of belief. Seal it behind the list of condemned philosophers.

Let it say: *we cut off the king's head beneath a red moon, and the sky turned its face. And liberty was not born—but left to wander.*

In clarity and collapse,
Étienne Delaroche
Citizen of the Republic
LYON