The Collected Poetry

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE

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CAHIER D'UN RETOUR AU PAYS NATAL

* NOTEBOOK OF A RETURN TO THE NATIVE LAND
Oh, friendly light
Oh, fresh source of light
Those who have invented neither powder nor compass
Those who could harness neither steam nor electricity
Those who explored neither the sea nor the sky but those
Without whom the earth would not be the earth
Globularity all the more beneficial as the bare earth even more earthy
Silo where that which is earthiest about earth ferments and ripens
My multitude is not a stout, its deafness burred against the clameur of the day
My multitude is not a leukaemia of dead liquid over the earth's dead eye
My multitude is neither tower nor cathedral

It takes root in the red flesh of the soil
It takes root in the ardent flesh of the sky
It breaks through the opaque procrastination with its utmost patience

Esa for the royal Cairedian
Esa for those who have never invented anything
for those who never explored anything
for those who never conquered anything

but yield, captivated, to the essence of all things
Grasped of surfaces but captivated by the motion of all things
Indifferent to conquering, but playing the game of the world
Truly the eldest sons of the world
Pompos to all the breathing of the world
Imagery for all the breathing of the world
Boundless channel for all the water of the world
Spark of the sacred fire of the world

Esa of the world's flesh pulsating with the very motion of the world!
Trepid dawn of ancestral virtues

Blood! Blood! all our blood aroused by the male heart of the sun
Those who know about the femininity of the moon's only body
The reconciled exhalation of antipode and star
Those whose survival travels to the gemination of grace
Esa perfect circle of the world, untroubled concordance!

Here the white world
Humbly weary from its immense efforts
In still joints crack under the hard stars
Her blue steel rigidly pierce the mystic flesh
In deceptive victoria's to its defects
Here the grandest albus of its plainest strombings

Pity for our unsincere and naive conquering!

Esa for grief and its tidings of reincarnated tears
for those who have never explored anything
for those who have never conquered anything

Esa for joy
Esa for love

Esa for grief and its tidings of reincarnated tears

And here at the end of these few hours is my veiled prayer that I hear neither the laughter nor the screams, my eyes fixed on this town which I prophesy, beautiful,

Grant me the savage faith of the sorcerer
Grant my hands power to mold
Grant my soul the sword's temper
I won't flinch. Make my head into a figurehead
And as for me, my heart, do not make me into a father nor a brother, nor a son, but into the father, the brother, the son, nor a husband, but the lover of this unique people.

Make me resist any vanity, but expose its genius as it flaunt the extended arm!

Make me a steward of its blood
Make me trustee of its retribution
Take me into a man for the ending
Make me into a man for the beginning
Make me into a man for the ending

But also make me into a man of gemination

Make me into the executioner of those lazy works
The time has come to grid one's loins like a brave man—

But in doing so, my heart, persevere me from all hatred
Do not make me into that man of hatred for whom I feel only hatred
For entrenched as I am in this unique race
You still know my tyrannical love
You know that it is not from hatred of other races
That what I want
Is for universal hunger
For universal thirst

To summon it to generate,
Free at last, from its intimate clausocracy
The succulence of fruit.

And be the tree of our hands!
It turns, for all, the wounds cut in its trunk
The soil works for all
The branches a blosom of fragrant precipitation!
Hors des jours étrangers

mon peuple
quand
lors des jours étrangers
germez-vous une tête bien tendre sur tes épaules rousses
et ta parole
le congé dépêché aux traitres
aux maîtres
le pain restitué la terre lavée
la terre donnée
quand
quand donc cesseras-tu d'être le jouet sombre
au carnaval des autres
ou dans les clowns d'autrui
l'épouvantail déguisé
demain
à quand demain mon peuple
la déroute mercenaire
finie la fête
mais la roue et de l'est au coeur de l'âle
peuple de mauvais sommeil rampa
peuple d'âmes remontés
peuple de cauchemars domptés
peuple nocturne amant de fureurs du brouillard
demain plus haut plus doux plus large
et la houle torrentielle des terres
à la charrue salubre de l'orage

Out of Alien Days

my people
when
out of alien days
on reknotted shoulders will you sprout a head really your own
and your word
the notice dispatched to the traitors
to the masters
the restituted bread the washed earth
the given earth
when
when will you cease to be the dark toy
in the carnival of others
or in another's field
the obsolete scarecrow?
tomorrow
when is tomorrow my people
the mercenary rout
once the feast is over
instead the redness of the east in the balser's heart
people of interrupted foul sleep
people of reclinced abysses
people of tamed nightmares
nocturnal people lovers of the fury of thunder
a higher sweeter broader tomorrow
and the torrential swell of lands
under the salubrious blow of the storm