

Humiliated and Insulted.  
Pier Paolo Pasolini.  
1958

### **I. To the critics of Catholicism**

A poet will often accuse and calumniate  
exaggerating, for want of love, his lack of love,  
exaggerating to punish himself, his naivete,  
his puritanism and tenderness, hard and alexandrian,  
and too acute in his analyses, of archaic symbols,  
remainders,  
he has too much shame in the concession  
of some thing to reason and to hope.  
Well, woe to him! This is not the time for  
hesitation: Speak, now!

## **II. To Gerola**

(an Italian historian and collector of foreign relics)

You are stylish too! And philological!  
Just yesterday you were a hundred forgotten poets:  
now you make lists of adjectives, origins,  
which are sensitive to sound, to “interested parties”,  
discovering the explicit as though implicit,  
proving that my poetry is not poetry.

### **III. “Radicals”**

“The Feeling”, Universal Human Rights,  
smart career moves, being fashionable,  
the Queens English, and parisian wise-cracks,  
The more liberal you get the harder you become,  
substituting reason for mercy,  
life is just a losing bet with oligarchs,  
to know thyself is illegal:  
science is normal. And money.

#### **IV. To the Prince.**

If the sun rises again, if evening falls,  
and has the flavour of future evenings  
if rainy afternoons will always come back,  
of beautiful times that never happened,  
I will not be happy, neither to enjoy nor to suffer it:  
I no longer sense my whole life in front of me...  
To be poets we must have a lot of time:  
hours and hours of solitude are the only method  
for something to be formed, with strength and abandon,  
vice and freedom, to give style to chaos.  
I have only a little time left, because of the death  
which comes at the sunset of youth.  
But it is also because of this human world of ours,  
which takes bread from the poor and peace from the poet.

**V. To me.**

In this culpable world, which only purchases and despises,  
I am the culprit, undaunted by bitterness.

## **VI. To J.D**

Poor servant who tries to save even the cabbages,  
condescending even to my abilities, a miserable alibi.

## **VII. To my unborn child.**

At the bottom of that new bridge over the Tiber,  
finished by the Catholics so as not to deny the fascists,  
among the friezes, the gravestones, fake fragments, false ruins,  
a group of women wait for customers in the sun.  
Among them was Franca, a girl from Viterbo,  
child, and mother already, she was quickest;  
running to my car door, yelling,  
so sure that I would not let her down,  
jumped in, took a seat, as happy as a boy,  
and led me to the Cassia; we passed a crossroads,  
we ran down abandoned streets in the sun,  
between gypsum yards and tripoline huts,  
and we reached the place. A field,  
beneath a hill strewn with canopies and caves,  
just an old brown horse on the wet grass,  
an empty car, in the middle of the bushes,  
nearby, here and there, festive echoes of shots:  
all around it was full of couples, poor boys.  
In those days my life, my job, were full,  
no imbalance, no fear threatened me:  
I had been going on for years, before the physical "Thank you",  
mildness and health and enthusiasm that I had when I was born,  
then in a flash of inspiration, although still uncertain,  
love, strength and conscience that I acquired by experience.  
First and only unborn child I have no pain,  
that you can never be here, in this world.

### **VIII. To Barberi Squarotti**

Imitate my mania for analysis, rendering it ridiculous,  
my grinding manner and celestial attitude,  
profit from my naive passion for beardedness,  
of my sincere wish to show your nose.



**IX. To Cadoresi. (A friulian poet and writer)**

Warm southern bed, divined into a friulian dupe,  
nothing is more ridiculous than one's commitment.

## **X. To the editors in the offices.**

(Names Names Names Names insert here)

Who has less right than I to write these verses?

Who has thought less of me in this age of ours?

Who was more lazy than I, or suffered less?

Happy alienated soul, servant of wealth,

Fucked by milanese adventurers, Neapolitan whores –

I pass like a dead man among the living, or a living one among the dead:

Uncertain betrayals, postponements, desperateness,

the result of non-existent ambition, of false needs,

and I don't even get paid...

Now I feel, inside, a taste of freshly falling rain,

every liveliness of life has a backdrop of tears.

Only a confused feeling tells me that it is a new hour,

it begins now for everyone and it forces us to be new.

Perhaps for those who have heard they can understand the commitment,

with longer to understand and allow themselves,

to think and look for each other,

if the world begins to end up just being the world,

the one which was already ours, we were born, the one we believed eternal,

the fertile object of history, continuously recited.

But also the time of life and of thinking, don't live,

and since thinking is now without method or word,

light or confusion, prefiguration and end

pure life is dissolving in the world.

Quixotic and hard, we inhabit a new language

which we do not understand that we must adopt,

which we still do not recognise as current.

## **XI. To France.**

I am glad to see how I look  
to Sekon Toure, President of Guinea:  
pinched nose and bright eyes,  
he too was returned to the greyness of history,  
from chasms of pure wild spirit,  
as black as Rimbaud was blonde.  
Perhaps to those born in the forest, to a pure mother,  
to be alone, to have only joy,  
it's up to them to recognise real life:  
give up obeying your sex to think instead,  
stop being a child so you can become a citizen,  
betray God to fight with Marx!

## **XII. To a Pope.**

A few days before you died, death  
had come to a peer of yours:  
at twenty you were a student and he a labourer,  
you noble, and he - a naughty young boy.  
But the old days have gilded you,  
old Rome that was returning anew.  
I saw his end, poor old Flatcap,  
stumbling around the markets at night,  
it was a tram coming from San Paulo that trampled him,  
and dragged pieces of him down the tracks between the plane trees:  
for a few hours I stay there, on the route,  
a few people gather around to look at him,  
in silence: it was late so there was no one around.  
One of the men collapses because of you,  
an old policeman as brash as a guapo,  
who Flatcap approached too often and shouted "Give us your balls!"  
The ambulance comes to take him:  
the people all left, other than a few stragglers,  
the manageress of a late bar, who knew him towards the end,  
said to a newcomer -  
Flatcap went under the tram, it's over.  
A few days later you died too: Flatcap was one  
of your great and human Roman flock,  
a poor drunk, without family and without bed,  
who went around at night, living who knows how,  
you knew nothing of it, as I knew nothing  
about a thousand thousand other Christs like him,  
Perhaps it is fierce of me to ask myself for what reason,  
that people like Flatcap were unworthy of your love.  
There are infamous places, where mothers and children,  
live among ancient dust in the filth of other eras,  
not far from where you lived,  
in view of the beautiful dome of San Pietro,  
there is one of these places, The Jasmine...  
A mountain cut in half by a quarry, and below,  
between an oven and a row of new builds,  
a shitpile of the construction of misery, not houses but pigsties.  
All it needed was a little gesture from you, a word  
and your children would have had a home,  
you did not gesture, or say a word.  
You are not here to pardon Marx! A tsunami,  
refracted by the history of time  
it separated you from him, from his religion:  
but in your religion don't you speak of mercy?  
Thousands of men in your pontificate,  
before your very eyes, lived in stables and sties.  
Did you know, sinning is not doing evil:  
Not to do good is sin.  
How much good could you have done! And you did nothing.  
There was no greater sinner than you.

