

The Poet of Revolution

In Memoriam of Saeed Sultanpour

(1940-1981)

This pamphlet includes a few words about the poet in addition to two of his poems. The background image is a photograph of Saeed while speaking to a vast crowd gathered in Tehran on May 1st, International Working Class Day 1980.

The Poet of Revolution

“Saeed Sultanpour (1940-1981) was a poet of the people who always served the interests of the masses, and as he wrote in one of his poems, 'his young heart is like a compass that at all time points towards revolution'. It was precisely for this that the ruling capitalists in Iran could not tolerate him. Therefore, in reaction to Saeed's revolutionary poetry which indeed was an outcry for freedom, and which called upon the people to fight, to resist, and to rise up against their enemies, the regime resorted to detention, imprisonment and torture. Whereas under the Shah's repressive regime he was arrested numerous times, each time imprisoned and tortured, under the rule of the Islamic Republic whose task as the successor of the Shah's regime included finishing what had been left unfinished, in a most savage way raided his wedding, arrested him, and soon after on the last day of Spring in 1981, executed him after he had just been freed from the Shah's prison during the revolutionary period of 1977.”

Like Brecht, “Saeed believed that art in its core must carry and reflect a social responsibility as opposed to the adherents of art for art's sake who, in this way, justify their avoidance from reflecting the lives and the suffering of the people.”

“Subsequent to the Siahkal Insurrection and the armed struggle waged by the Iranian People's Fadaee Guerrillas (IPFG) in February 1971, a new chapter in our people's struggle was born. Up until then, and as a result of

our people's defeat and the betrayals of the Tudeh Party, a great number of poets in our country gave in to hopelessness and despair. Siahkal was the beacon of the death and demise of this period and the herald of a new era in Iranian society; an era where among other things, poetry too began to flourish. And in this area, Sultanpour himself, as a poet deeply attached to the masses, was one of the forerunners of this revolutionary era who depicted those days in his beautiful poems including "O' my country! What has come upon you!" and "An Ode to Time"."

"From 1974 to 1977 he was imprisoned. And finally, as a result of the impact of armed struggle on the socio-political conditions, he was released from prison on July 13, 1977 after which he left the country. After the fall of the Shah, he returned to Iran and joined the IPFG, i.e. the organization that he had sympathized with and loved all those years. However, at that point the organization no longer followed the path and the teachings of its founders, and merely bore its name; its logo. In the subsequent years as he realized that the newcomers who had overtaken the leadership of the IPFG had no intention to fight for workers and to organize their revolution, he found nothing in common with them who had now formed a majority. Consequently, Saeed saw himself in the minority and joined the faction later known as the Minority while the Majority fell deeper into the path of treachery striving for "the blossoming of the Islamic Republic"."

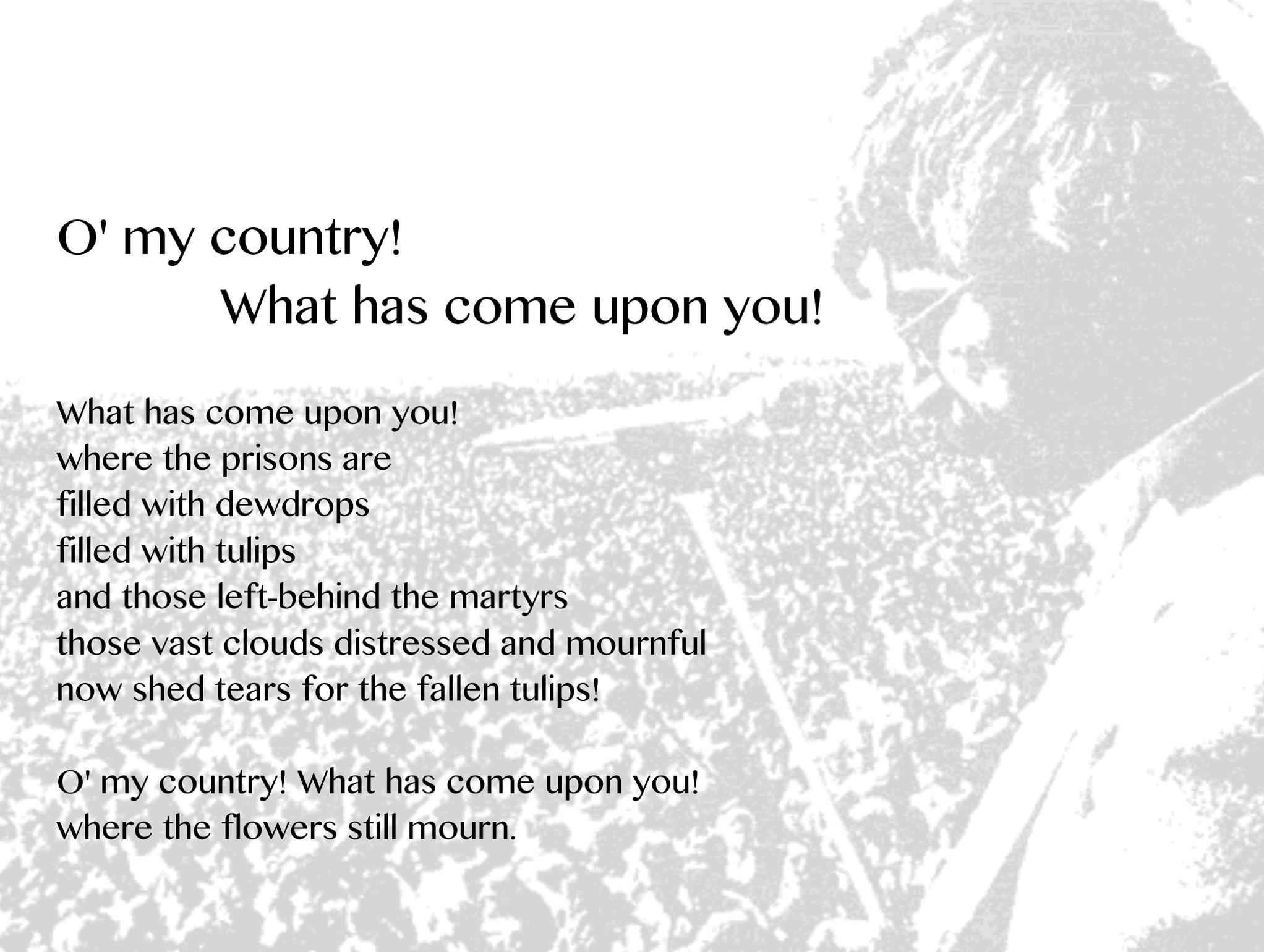
"The efforts and the activities of Saeed including reciting poetry in political gatherings and organizational meetings were obviously not unknown to the

Islamic Republic regime and in fact infuriated the new rulers. It was these activities that eventually led to his arrest on his wedding night on April 16, 1981. A grievous arrest that teaches a bitter lesson as well, a lesson, which even though negative, must be taken into consideration nonetheless. As much as has been revealed, on the day of Saeed's wedding, a number of men from "Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution" entered the place and as a result of the deceptive role played by some of the guests belonging to the "Majority" faction, the armed men from "Army of the Guardians..." managed to call for back-up and subsequently arrested Saeed. He was executed a short while after on June 21, 1981."

"The execution of Saeed was, in fact, a declaration of the Islamic Republic's total and systematic attack on our people's struggle."

"That bitter experience becomes even more vivid and tangible for the young generation in the fact that under the rule of an unleashed dictatorship, which is inherent in ruling dependent capitalism, one cannot achieve freedom through conciliatory measures. Instead, one must uphold the flag of revolution like Saeed, and move towards organizing the revolution to which Saeed gave his heart."

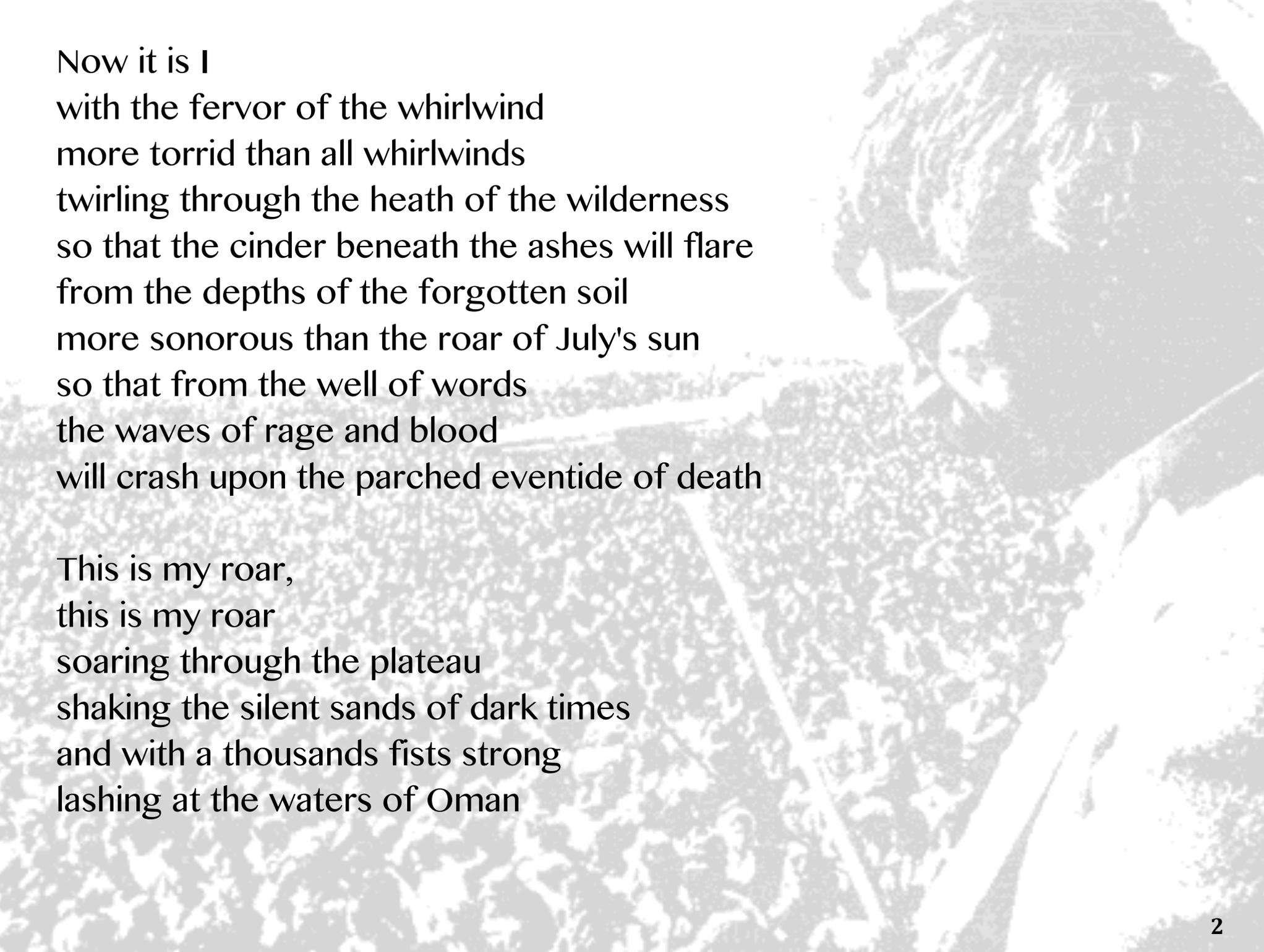
(Excerpts from "In Memory of Saeed Sultanpour, the Poet of Revolution" a speech given by comrade Fariborz Sanjari, a member of The Iranian People's Fadaee Guerrillas, on June 12, 2010 in Goteborg, Sweden)



O' my country!
What has come upon you!

What has come upon you!
where the prisons are
filled with dewdrops
filled with tulips
and those left-behind the martyrs
those vast clouds distressed and mournful
now shed tears for the fallen tulips!

O' my country! What has come upon you!
where the flowers still mourn.



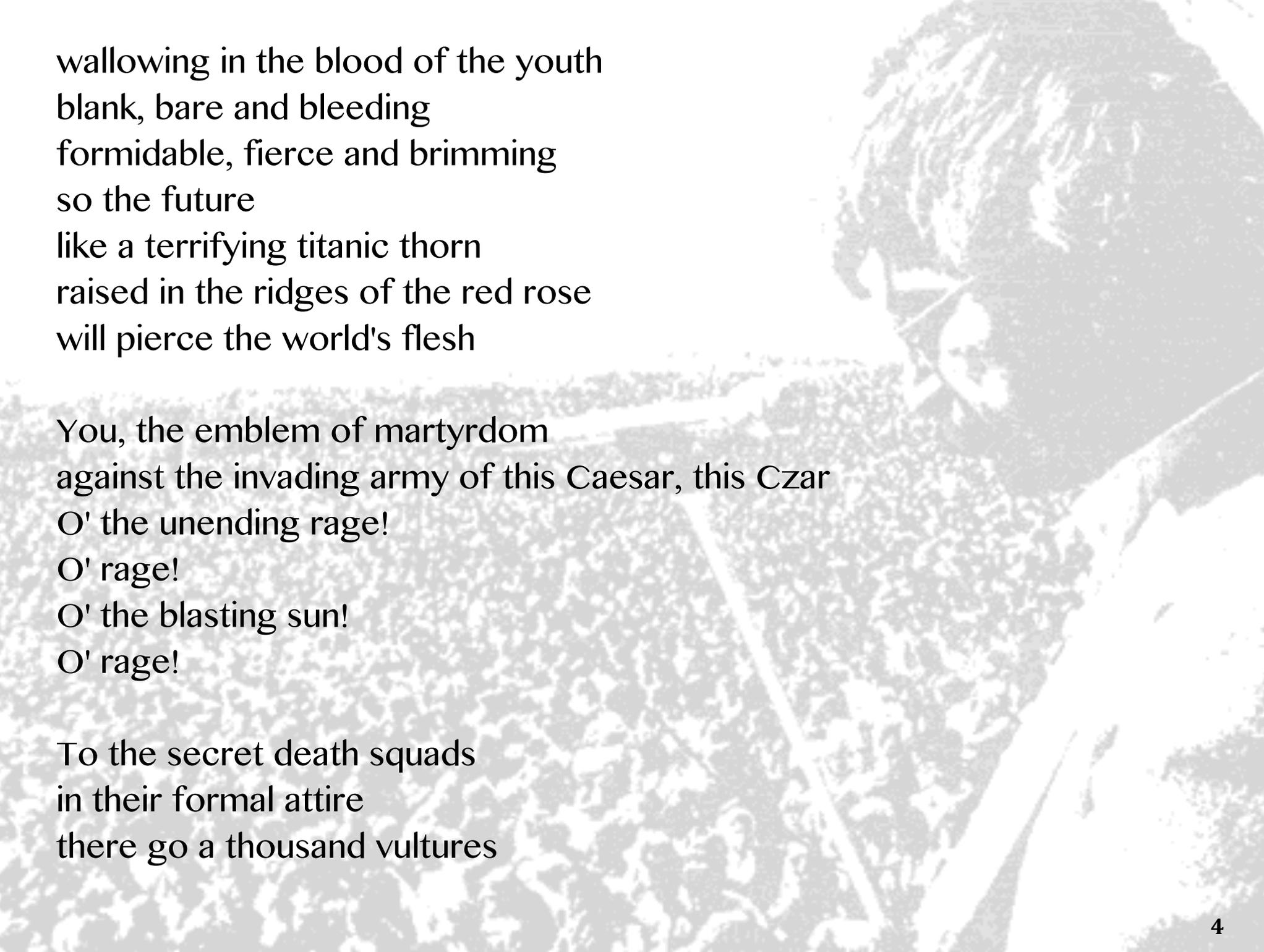
Now it is I
with the fervor of the whirlwind
more torrid than all whirlwinds
twirling through the heath of the wilderness
so that the cinder beneath the ashes will flare
from the depths of the forgotten soil
more sonorous than the roar of July's sun
so that from the well of words
the waves of rage and blood
will crash upon the parched eventide of death

This is my roar,
this is my roar
soaring through the plateau
shaking the silent sands of dark times
and with a thousands fists strong
lashing at the waters of Oman

This is my roar
sweeping away
the ashes of time
from the rage of our days

After you,
you the unending garden of the executed
you, Khosrau the noble
you the tremor
you the blow to the thrones of all nobles
you, the last of all stars
you, the most sanguineous song

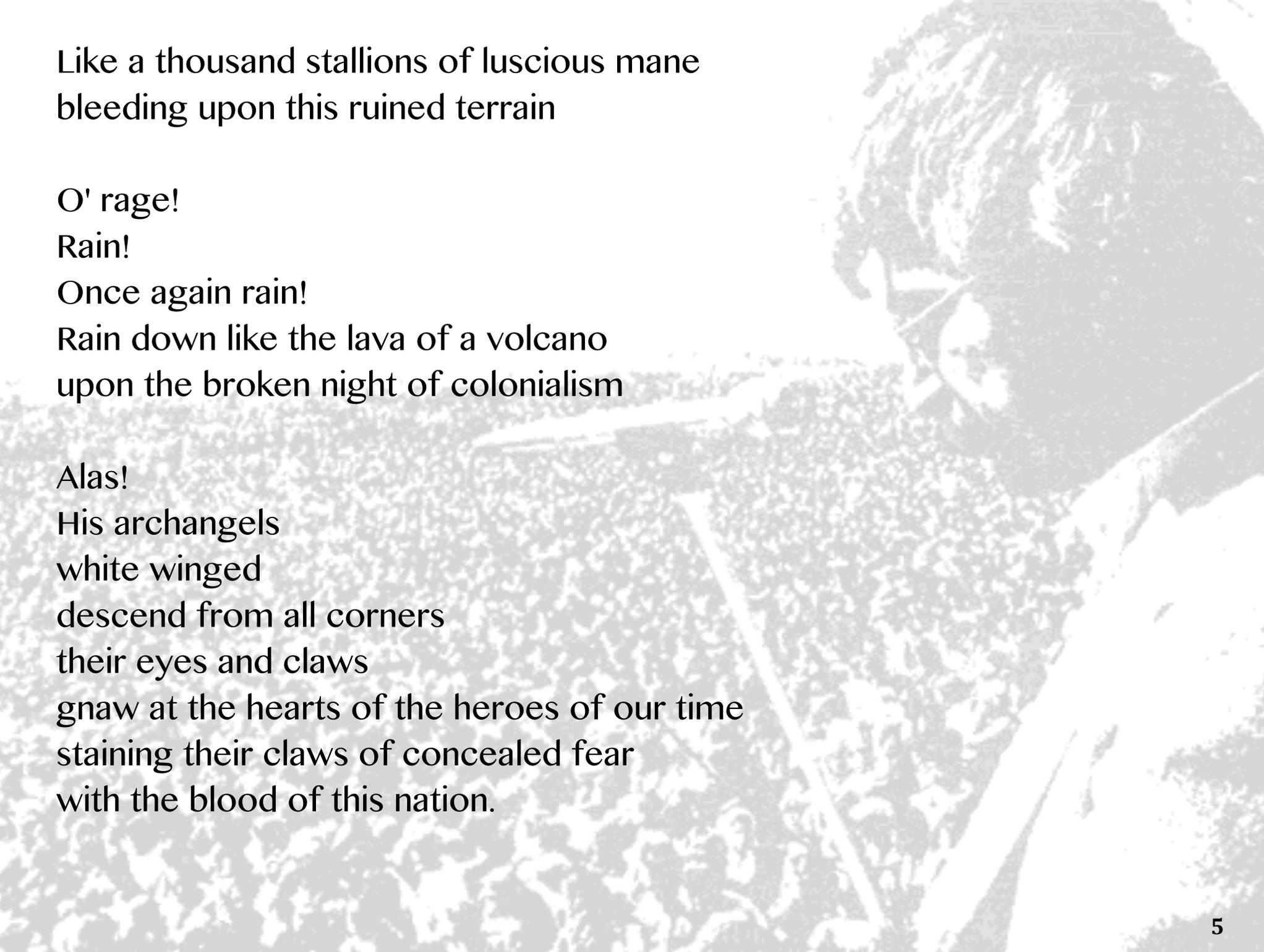
Within the garden of thistles
among the throngs of people
from afar, from near
nothing but the barrel of a gun I am
crossing the backdrop of a revolution



wallowing in the blood of the youth
blank, bare and bleeding
formidable, fierce and brimming
so the future
like a terrifying titanic thorn
raised in the ridges of the red rose
will pierce the world's flesh

You, the emblem of martyrdom
against the invading army of this Caesar, this Czar
O' the unending rage!
O' rage!
O' the blasting sun!
O' rage!

To the secret death squads
in their formal attire
there go a thousand vultures

A black and white photograph of a large crowd of people, possibly at a protest or rally. In the foreground, a person is seen from the side, holding a flag. The crowd is dense and extends into the background. The overall tone is somber and historical.

Like a thousand stallions of luscious mane
bleeding upon this ruined terrain

O' rage!

Rain!

Once again rain!

Rain down like the lava of a volcano
upon the broken night of colonialism

Alas!

His archangels

white winged

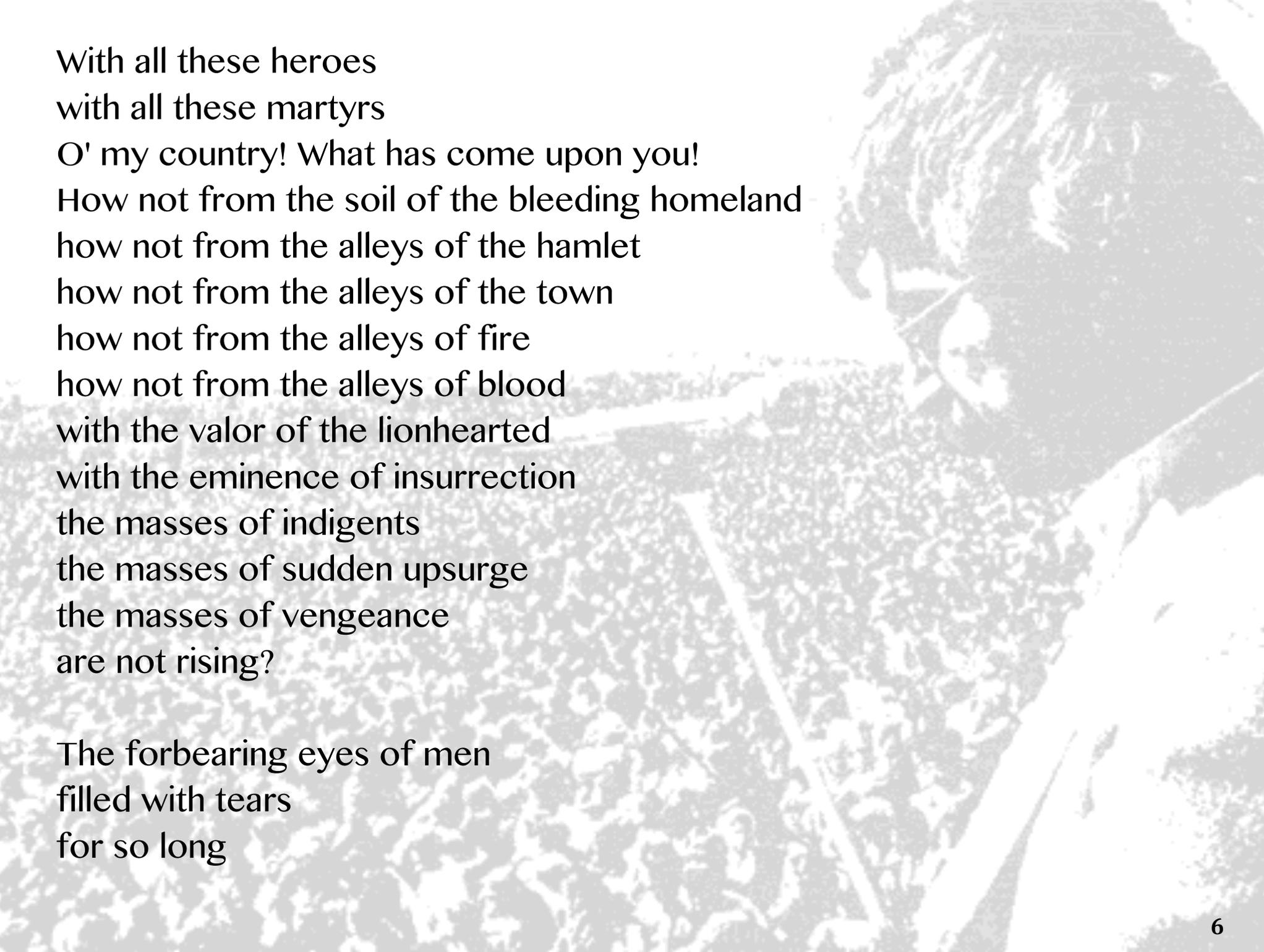
descend from all corners

their eyes and claws

gnaw at the hearts of the heroes of our time

staining their claws of concealed fear

with the blood of this nation.



With all these heroes
with all these martyrs
O' my country! What has come upon you!
How not from the soil of the bleeding homeland
how not from the alleys of the hamlet
how not from the alleys of the town
how not from the alleys of fire
how not from the alleys of blood
with the valor of the lionhearted
with the eminence of insurrection
the masses of indigents
the masses of sudden upsurge
the masses of vengeance
are not rising?

The forbearing eyes of men
filled with tears
for so long

The heart of love itself
broken in prison cells
for so long

From the crypt of captivity we sang
so long
so hard
the voices are bleeding so too the bard

O' the fist of revolution!
O' the mighty fist of the people!
O' the fiery fist of the sun!
O' my country! What has come upon you!

(From the book of poetry "The Ballad of Confinement")

An Ode to Time

Song within song boiled in blood, a thunderbolt they became
earth changed, time changed, a different color they became

The eyes of each bright star that sank in blood
a blade into the back of the night, a dagger it became

The rapacious night feasting on the scion of blood
under a rain of rage, dust in the wind it became

On a father's wound, a kiss gave the bleeding lips of the son
the fire burning in the breast of the flower, a scar in the mother's heart it became

Upon the magnificent dawn, the sun's trigger was pulled
a mountain of fire and blood billowed, a mighty fortress they became

He who was bound in blood like flowers petal by petal
flared on the bleeding horizon, the honor of the East he became

The gallant, he who adorned his own cage with the blossom of blood
his lips, a firestone, his words like lightning they became

The searing heat in the raging heart of the young
the callous of wisdom it brought, the fervor of faith it became

O' L'âme enchantée! O' Red mutiny!
lit the way to dawn, the leader it became

At last, the fire of fury into the battleground it brought
all those fiery, all those bleeding crops, ashes they became

The branchlet of love burning in the garden of winter
a flame of laughter it imbued into the floret, fruitful and abundant it became

(From the book of poetry "From the Gallows")

English translation by: A. Behrang