Love to Lucite

a fugue of revolution for 3 actors

By C. Scott Ananian, from works by W. H. Auden, Solomon, Cecil Day-Lewis, C. S. Lewis, and the Zapatistas

MARK DANIEL:

WYSTAN:

BETH:

Our people are hurting, Wystan. Our people, hurting. They're not abstract ideas; they are souls, personalities: starving with cardboard over their heads. They don't see the violence you'd bring.

Today we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Beginning on January 1st of this year, Zapatista troops initiated a series of political-military actions whose primordial objective is to make the miserable conditions in which millions of Mexicans live—especially we the indigenous people, known to the Mexican people and the rest of the world.

We are the heirs of the true builders of our nation.

With these actions we also want to make known our decision to fight for our basic rights through the only means that government authorities leave us: armed struggle.

The dispossessed, we are millions and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only just path,

The extreme conditions of poverty in which our fellow country people live have a common cause: the lack of liberty and democracy.

so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a 70 year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors!

I saw the tears of the oppressed—
and they have no comforter;

We, the men and women, full and free,
are conscious that the war that we have just declared is our last resort, but also a just one.

We believe that authentic respect for liberty and the people's democratic will are indispensable requirements for improving the economic and social conditions in which Mexico's dispossessed live.

Power was on the side of their oppressors—
and they have no comforter.

For this reason we raise the flag

Therefore, we ask for your participation,

for the improvement of the Mexican people's living conditions and demand free and democratic policies.

your decision to support this plan that struggles for work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace.

We declare that we will not stop fighting until the basic demands of our people have been met by forming a government of our country which is free and democratic!

--transition--

It is a difficult thing when ideas supplant people.

MARK DANIEL:

Humanity is stirring

The masses are rising up
Theory and practice
now in contact
see the sparks.

Drumbeats marching with hearts in step
as rank and file of working-class men
join the revolution

The poor are oppressed; rights are denied,
Stand up and fight.

WYSTAN:

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odor of death
Offends the September night.

Into this neutral air

Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,

Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:

But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong

Faces along the bar

Cling to their average day;

The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,

All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

Who have never been happy or good.

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow,
"I *will* be true to the wife,
I'll concentrate more on my work,"
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?

BETH:

A man can lie to himself

A man can lie with his tongue
and his brain and his gesture;

A man can lie with his life.

But the body is as simple as a turtle
and straight as a dog;

the body cannot lie.

You want to take your body off like a glove
You want to stretch it and shrink it
as you change your abstractions.

You stand in flesh with shame.
You smell your fingers and lick with disgust
and are satisfied.
But the beaten dog of the body remembers.
Blood has ghosts too!

MARK DANIEL:

WYSTAN:

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky.

BETH:

There is a time for everything.

A season for everything under the sun.

A time to be silent, and a time to speak.
A time for everything.

The revolutionary says, we can let go.

We both used to say that a great deal.
If what we change does not change us
We are playing with blocks.

There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

You only love what you possess, Wystan.

It boils down to this—do you really want to win
Or prefer the fine gesture of giving in?
Are you going to keep or to make the rules,
Die with fighters or be dead with fools?

All I have is a voice!
To undo the folded lie
The lie of authority,
Whose buildings grope the sky

(during this speech, versions of which both Mark Daniel and Wystan make, a slide flashes overhead: ***DON'T LOOK AT THE LEADERS... WATCH THE PEOPLE*** and scenes from the Zapatista movement flash. Wystan notices, and starts to realize with horror that the dead bodies he sees are ***REALITY***; that he is responsible. Then, suddenly, flashes: ***LISTEN***, and we hear Beth. Last picture of a dead schoolgirl.)

(in background, grows) So when the 800 Zapatistas poured into the municipal offices here, opened the police and property archives and set them on fire, and when another thousand—maybe two thousand—or of their comrades simultaneously seized five other nearby towns, opening the food warehouses to the poor, chasing out and in some cases killing the local police, dismantling another town hall stone by stone with sledgehammers, yet another with axes and saws, and then fought the Mexican Army to a standstill for more than a week, they were not acting out some pathetic revolutionary *retablo* left over from the Central American cataclysms of the Eighties. No. This Chiapas rebellion is much, much more than an Indian Uprising, far more significant than a recycled Marxist guerrilla movement. The shots fired in Chiapas signal the End of the End of History. Rather than the final rattle on the snake of revolution, Chiapas is the first armed battle *against* the Global market and simultaneously *for* Democracy.

All I have is a voice
To undo the twisted lie
The lie of authority
Whose buildings grope the sky.

We make a call to workers, poor peasants, teachers, students, housewives and professionals, and to all politically and economically independent organizations to join our struggle within their milieus and in all possible forms until we achieve the justice and liberty that all Mexicans long for. We will not put down our arms! We want justice, not pardon or charity!
(As Mark Daniel continues, Wystan notices the pictures of reality being shown behind him, and is drawn to it. Here he begins to question the movement he is swept up in.)

(in the sudden silence)
We can't help noticing how those who insist that
We ought to stand up for our rights,
And how important we are, keep insisting also
That it doesn't matter a bit
If one of us gets arrested or injured, for
It is only our numbers that count.

Wystan is *beginning to doubt the movement, but his knee-jerk reaction to Beth is defense. Then somehow he is drawn into lamenting, he knows not why, the dearth of churches and priests.*

MARK DANIEL:

What are one hundred dead peasants if the free a thousand from tyranny?

The poor have triumphed over their oppressors!

The church is for fools.

Opiate of the masses

It was a necessary step for a new strong people.
Shake off the chains! Superstition shall not bind;
we've won!

What is real is the movement!
These are stirring times for the editors of
newspapers:

History is in the making; Mankind is on the march.

The longest aqueduct in the world is already

Under construction; the Committees on Fen-
Drainage

And Soil-Conservation will issue very shortly

Their Joint Report; even the problems of Trade
Cycles

And Spiraling Prices are regarded by the experts

As practically solved;

and the recent restrictions
Upon aliens and free-thinking Jews are beginning
To have a salutary effect on public morale.

Snap out of it, Wystan!
Remember the crowd's roar?

WYSTAN:

It the movement that counts!

You would make us out to be cold-blooded killers.
This isn't a day of shame, it's a day of rejoicing!

This should be a holy day
the people have risen, justice has conquered:
A holy day.

That is not so!
The movement is supported by clergy
preached from their pulpits on eager Sunday ears
We have not lost all respect for deity,
no matter how silly or inane.

This can't be true. Why turn against boyhood
mystery when justice is sought?

No.

So Marx says

We've won, but what is it we now possess?

There is a time for everything,

a season for every activity under heaven:

a time to plant and a time to uproot,

a time to tear down and a time to build,

a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,

a time to keep and a time to throw away,

a time to love and a time to hate,

a time for war and a time for peace.

BETH:

They are one hundred dead fathers and brothers
and husbands. One hundred who simply followed
where you led, unaware that you would leave their
children fatherless.

Call your priests then, arrange your procession
Riot is all you'll find.
The priests are in hiding, the churches are rubble,
because justice has won the day.

Look then for your priests.

Is he right?

Remember what you saw, Wystan.
Remember what is real.

MARK DANIEL:

How they yelled and cheered us as heroes?

That's what we are!

The movement is up, the game is afoot
The people are rising up to support us!

We fought like men and won
Social justice is here!
Oppression will not stay!

The movement is unity and freedom!

Choose.

Tough-minded men get mushy in their sleep
And break the by-laws any fool can keep;
It is not the convention but the fear
That has a tendency to disappear.

The worried efforts of the busy heap,
The dirt, the imprecision, and the beer
Produce a few smart wisecracks every year;
Laugh if you can, but you will have to leap.

WYSTAN:

Man can have Unity if Man will give up Freedom.

What am I to do?

How can I choose? What must I choose?

Whichever way I look, I mark
Importunate in the dark
Horizon of immediacies
The flares of desperation rise
From signalers who justly plead
The cause is piteous indeed:
Bewildered, how can I divine
Which is my true Socratic Sign?
A particle, I must not yield
To particles who claim the field,
Nor trust the demagogue who raves,
A quantum speaking for the waves,
Nor worship blindly the ornate
Grandezza of the Sovereign State.

The Movement's what I believe
The people; free.

BETH:

Wystan, listen to me:

Remember our newlywed days?

Loving and planning for our new world,
where oppression and poverty were strangers?

What has become of our dreams, Wystan?

Wystan, the movement used to be about the people. It isn't anymore. The movement now is about the movement, nothing else. Power, not justice.

You've grown distant, Wystan. We used to talk about changing the world, <u>together</u>. Now your movement frightens me, Wystan. It kills people.

You talked of Liberty, but were not just; and now
Your enemies have called your bluff; for in your city,
Only the man behind the rifle had free-will.

Choose.

Choose, Wystan.

The sense of danger must not disappear:
The way is certainly both short and steep,
However gradual it looks from here;
Look if you like, but you will have to leap.

MARK DANIEL:

We've done it, can't you see? This town is ours!

From here we begin. This is ground-zero.
All of humanity will regard this land as sacred;
this as the place where freedom was found.

Don't take the weak choice.

Be strong! Can't you hear the people shouting?

Comrade! Watch and cheer!

Help us to bear these bitter growing pains.

Theory and practice once in contact, see

The sparks fly.

Wystan, use your voice
To undo the folded lie,
The lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky

(quickly back and forth)

Shower scorn

On oppressors

God!?
God is a statistician:
Offer him all the data; tell him your dreams.
What is your lucky number?
How do you react to bombs? Have you a rival?
Do you really love your wife?

WYSTAN:

I look and only see power, desire for power.
No people, only green power pulsing
from men who would be leaders.

(almost screeched)
All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky

Where is my voice to undo the lie?
What should I say? Who should I tell?

Oh, God help me!
I knew you once, discarded you
as remnant of my childhood
are you there? do you exist?
Or are you what they say? Marx's
merely materialistic
anthropological cultural necessity
superstitious myth??

BETH:

As do I, Wystan
I want to end oppression, I want to see the people
Rising like a warm whirlwind over the earth
To take back what is theirs.

The people's, you mean.

The movement's corrupt, Wystan.

A canker at the root is spreading.

Can't you hear the widows crying?

The people

crying

for help.

(quietly)
All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of my sensual man-in-the-street
A voice to undo to the lie.

(quickly back and forth)
Speak the truth.

To the people.

MARK DANIEL:

Get yourself taped. Put soul on the table:

Switch on the arc-lights; watch
Heart's beat, the secret agents of the blood.
Let every cell be observed.

God is an electrician!
And they that worship him must worship him
'In ampere and in volt.
Scrap sun and moon, your twilight of false gods:
X. is not here or there;
Whose lighting scrawls brief cryptograms on the sky,
Easy for us to solve;
Whose motions fit our formulae, whose temple
Is a pure apparatus.

Where is he, where? How the man stares!

Do you think he is there, buttoned up by your stars?

Put by that telescope;

You can't bring him nearer, you can't, sir, you haven't a hope.

Is he the answer to your glib equations,

The lord of light, the destroyer of nations?

To be seen of a slide, to be caught on a filter? The Cause

Limed in his own laws?

Analyst, you've missed him. Or worse and worst

You've got him inside? You must feel fit to burst!

Here, there, everywhere

Or nowhere. At least you know where. And how much do you care?

Here, there, everywhere
Or nowhere. At least you know where. And how much do you care?

WYSTAN:

Do I really love my wife? I think so. Yes.

Yes!

Beth!

Do you love me, Beth?

I do remember. Beth it's been so long. Where have I been?

What is truth?
Truth. Truth! Truth!
What is truth?

Oh God!
Are you there? Is it true a myth turned man and walked on earth?

All this is flashy rhetoric about loving you.

I never had a selfless thought since I was born.

I am mercenary and self-seeking through and through:

I want God, you, all friends, merely to serve my turn.

Peace, re-assurance, pleasure, are the goals I seek,

I cannot crawl one inch outside my proper skin:

I talk of love—a scholar's parrot may talk Greek—

But, self-imprisoned, always end where I begin.

Only that now you have taught me (but how late) my lack.

I see the chasm. And everything you are was making

My heart into a bridge by which I might get back

From exile, and grow man, And now the bridge is breaking.

For this I bless you as the ruin falls. The pains
You give me are more precious than all other gains.

BETH:

Remember our newlywed days?

Loving and planning for our new world,
where oppression and poverty were strangers?

On a journey Wystan. A journey to discover truth.

Truth is God. God is love.

MARK DANIEL:

Our holy intellectuals—where are they at?

Filling in hard times with literary chat,

Laying down the law where no one listens,

Finding the flaw in long-scrapped systems

And short cuts to places no more on the map.

Oh, subterranean fires, break out!
Tornadoes, pity not
The petty bourgeois of the soul,
The middleman of God!

Who ruins farm and factory
To keep a private mansion
Is a bad landlord, he shall get
No honorable mention.

A man can lie to himself

A man can lie with his tongue
and his brain and his gesture;

A man can lie with his life.

But the body is as simple as a turtle
and straight as a dog;

the body cannot lie.

You want to take your body off like a glove
You want to stretch it and shrink it
as you change your abstractions.

WYSTAN:

Authoritarian

By His Covenant

On love and consent

(quickly following the last line)
I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odor of death
Offends the September night.

Into this neutral air

Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,

Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:

But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong

Faces along the bar

Cling to their average day;

The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,

All the conventions conspire

BETH:

The new-born Word

Declares that the old
Authoritarian

Constraint is replaced
By His Covenant,

And a city based
On love and consent

Suggested to men,

All, all, all of them.
Run to Bethlehem.

You speak of the collective

You speak of open communication
but you form your decisions
and visit them on others
like an ax.

MARK DANIEL:

You stand in flesh with shame.
You smell your fingers and lick with disgust
and are satisfied.
But the beaten dog of the body remembers.
Blood has ghosts too!

Coward; for all your goodness game
Your dream of Heaven is the same
As any bounder's;

You hope to corner a reward
All the rich can here afford
Love and music and bed and board
While the world flounders.

WYSTAN:

To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

Who have never been happy or good.

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow,
"I *will* be true to the wife,
I'll concentrate more on my work,"
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky.

There is a time for everything.
A season for everything under the sun.
A time for hate and a time for love.
A time for war and a time for peace.
A time for everything.

Come, Beth.
The world has injured itself long enough
by hating.
Let's try to teach it how to love.

BETH:

In all of the movement there is nothing to fear
like a man whose rhetoric is good
and whose ambition for himself is fierce;

a man who says *we*, moving us,
and means *I* and *mine*.

We cannot put on airs with you
The fears that hurt you hurt us too
Only we say
That like all nightmares these are fake
If you would help us we could make

Our eyes to open, and away
Shall find night day.