

Let the Slave

Van Morrison

Let the slave grinding at the mill run out into the field
Let him look up into the heavens and laugh in the bright air
Let the enchained soul shut up in darkness and in sighing
Whose face has never seen a smile in thirty weary years

Rose and look out, his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open
And let his wife and children return from the oppressor's scourge
They look behind at every step and believe it is a dream
Singing, the sun has left his blackness and has found a fresher morning
And the fair moon rejoices in the clear and cloudless night

For empire is no more
And now the lion and wolf shall cease

For everything that lives is holy
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What is the price of experience? Do men buy it for a song?
Or wisdom for a dance in the street? No, it is bought with the price
Of all that a man hath, his house, his wife, his children
Wisdom is sold in the desolate market where none come to buy

And in the withered field where the farmer plows for bread in vain
It is an easy thing to triumph in the summer's sun
And in the vintage and to sing on the wagon loaded with corn
It is an easy thing to talk of patience to the afflicted

To speak the laws of prudence to the homeless wanderer
To listen to the hungry raven's cry in wintry season
When the red blood is filled with wine and with the marrow of lambs

It is an easy thing to laugh at wrathful elements
To hear the dog howl at the wintry door
The ox in the slaughter house moan
To see a God on every wind and a blessing on every blast

To hear sounds of love in the thunder storm
That destroys our enemies' house
To rejoice in the blight that covers his field
And the sickness that cuts off his children

While our olive and vine sing and laugh 'round our door
And our children bring fruits and flowers
Then the groan and the dolor are quite forgotten
And the slave grinding at the mill
And the captive in chains and the poor in the prison

And the soldier in the field
When the shattered bone hath laid him groaning
Among the happier dead
It is an easy thing to rejoice in the tents of prosperity
Thus, could I sing and thus, rejoice but it is not so with me