

## We Outside . . .

Why don't we storm into the hall  
where the councils meet, in every land?  
The portals are huge, and we are very  
small,  
and the doors are barred by a deathly  
hand:

A respectable ghost in armor and awe  
with a tail-coat over its winding-sheet;  
on its blazonry fiery torches flame,  
and the tortured and shackled bear its  
name.

in a thousand-motor beat.  
It sits at the councils and smiles discreetly,  
gives receptions, confers and appoints and  
delays

and confers and delays and decides, and  
then neatly  
postpones, and confers—And the Earth is  
ablaze!

But it warms its hands at the smouldering  
remains:

The enormous halls are cold and gray  
with the chill of corpses with icy veins  
and considerable monthly pay.

They bow to each other with severity—

“Cannon? Air-fleets? You're mistaken.

Those are the signs of returning prosperity,  
of industry beginning to reawaken.

Peace is the only thing I seek,

with a sidelong glance at you;

If it weren't for you I'd be very meek—

But when you arm, I arm too.”

Why don't we storm into the halls.

Where the councils meet, in every land?

See if your voices shake the walls  
to the angry roar of our demand!

They will not hear our wildest cry;  
they're just as deaf when we are mild.

We, whose only use is to die;

We: you and I, the dodderer and the child.

Why don't we storm the council hall?

Braving that cold and baleful glare.

“It is on us the blow will fall,

we only ask the living's share.”

But the splendid portals aloofly mock  
our futile rage in steely disdain.

Will nobody, nobody smash the lock?

We look around for hope, in vain.

Here we all stand, unsure, untaught,

you as well as I, the young and the old;

each of us knows the other's thought,

but weeping will not make us bold.

## Porto Bello

I have seen Porto Bello, stripped and slain  
By time and all too powerful neglect,  
And where her bony members still remain  
None but the prowling forests pay respect  
And lay fresh wreaths upon the solid  
ghost.

The cannon that have boomed and boomed  
their threats

And boomed their last and their last echo  
lost

Are in their niches in the parapets.

The nunnery, as vast as many a town,  
A fountain, checkered acres of the square  
Where burro loads of gold, thrown clang-  
ing down

Shook echoes from the harbor—all are  
there.

The harbor's there, where galleons were  
borne

To gorge their bulging bellies with a meal  
Of yellow kernels of a heavy corn  
Reaped by the easy strokes of reddened  
steel.

A massive tower wherein old shadows  
thrive

Is ceiled with sinister and lightless stars,  
Fat, quiet, rayed, and suddenly alive—  
Great spiders straddled on their shaking  
bars.

Against some flimsy huts that flank a wall  
Thin negroes, lifeless as the burning air,  
Slouch in their soiled rags, lightning-eyed,  
and call

Their only welcome, a resentful stare.

So this was Porto Bello, proud and gay!  
Bastard of Inca gold and Spanish power,  
Built to make an eon of her day,  
Her day was an intense forgotten hour.

So this was Porto Bello, fast and fair!  
Three hundred years, and will a stranger  
stand

Among some quiet roofless towers, and  
stare

Aghast, and say “New York was where I  
stand?”

## Olive Ward

### The Dead at Teruel

Comrades and brothers I have forgotten  
nothing,  
neither twilight nor spun dew nor spilled  
brass of the sun,

I who am nameless now, brown hills of  
Teruel,

remember the scream of the sky, the fading  
handclasp  
the last “Salud!”

The iron rain spared nothing, not even the  
ripening olive,

but the tree has remembered April. See—  
silvered with leaves

the immortal branch rekindles; nothing is  
vanquished,

no blade nor clod nor stone, no dream of  
the people

in all this stubborn land.

Therefore I am patient, having forgotten  
nothing,

neither the seed nor the dream dark-quick-  
ening under earth;

I who am hill and ploughed field and  
gnarled root of the olive

am the fecund blood, am the pledge not  
broken

that yet shall rupture this winter, this  
night.

Olga Cabral

Hilde Marx

Translated by  
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