

Henry Cow, Living In The Heart Of The Beast

Situation that rules your world (despite all you've said)
I would strike against it but the rule displaces

There I burn in my own lights fuelled with flags torn out
of books, and histories of marching together
United with heroes, we were the rage, the fire.
But I was given a different destiny - knotted in closer despair.

Calling to heroes do you have to speak that way all the time ?
Tales told by idiots in paperbacks; a play of forms
to spite my fabulous need to fight and live.

We exchange words, coins, movements - paralysed in loops
of care that we hoped could knot a world still.
Sere words, toothless, ruined now, bulldozed into brimming pits
- who has used them how? Grammar book that lies wasted :
conflux of voices rising to meet, and fall,
empty, divided, other

Clutching at sleeves the wordless man exposes his failure :
smiling, he hurls a wine glass, describing his sadness twisted
into mere form: shattered in a glass, he's changed
Now dare he seize the life before him and discompound it in
sulphurous confusion and give it to the air?
He's rushing to find where there's a word of liquid syntax
- signs let slip in a flash : "clothes of chaos are my rage !"
he shrieks in tatters, hunting the eye of his own storm.

We were born to serve you all our bloody lives
labouring tongues we give rise to soft lies :
disguised metaphors that keep us in a vast inverted stillness
twice edged with fear.

Twilight signs decompose us

High in offices we stared into the turning wheel of cities
dense and ravelled close yet separate: planned to kill all encounter.
Intricate we saw your state at work its shapes
abstracted from all human intent. With our history's fire
we shall harrow your signs.

Now is the time to begin to go forward - advance from despair,
the darkness of solitary men - who are chained in a market they
cannot control - in the name of a freedom that hangs like a pall
on our cities. And their towers of silence we shall destroy.

Now is the time to begin to determine directions, refuse to admit
the existence of destiny's rule. We shall seize from all heroes and
merchants our labour, our lives, and our practice of history : this,
our choice, defines the truth of all that we do.

Seize on the words that oppose us with alien force; they're enslaved
by the power of capital's kings who reduce them to coinage and
hollow exchange in the struggle to hold us, they're bitterly
outlasting Time to sweep them down from power
- deeds renew words.

Dare to take sides in the fight for freedom that is common cause
let us all be as strong and as resolute. We're in the midst of
a universe turning in turmoil; of classes and armies of thought
making war - their contradictions clash and echo through time.