

Manic Street Preachers, Song Of Those Who Die

(Primo Levi [1919 - 1987])

Sit down and bargain
All you like grizzled old foxes
We'll wall you up in a splendid palace
With food, wine, good beds and a good fire
Provided that you discuss, negotiate
For our and your children's lives
May all the wisdom of the universe
Converge to bless your minds
And guide you in the maze
But outside in the cold we will be waiting for you
The army of those who died in vain
We of the Marne, of Montecassino
Treblinka, Dresden and Hiroshima
And with us will be
The leprous and the people with trachoma
The disappeared ones of Buenos Aires
Dead Cambodians and dying Ethiopians
The Prague negotiations
The bled dry of Calcutta
The innocents slaughtered in Bologna
Heaven help you if you come out disagreeing
You'll be clutched tight in our embrace
We are invincible because we are the conquered
Invulnerable because already dead
We laugh at your missiles
Sit down and bargain
Until your tongues are dry
If the havoc and the shame continue
We'll drown you in our putrefaction
Primo Levi
14th January 1985
Poem published by Faber & Faber Ltd.