

# Steve Earle, Warrior

This is the best time of the day the dawn  
The final cleansing breath unsullied yet  
By acrid fume or death's cacophony  
The rank refuse of unchained ambition  
And pray, deny me not but know me now,  
Your faithful retainer stands resolute  
To serve his liege lord without recompense  
Perchance to fall and perish namelessly  
No flag-draped bier or muffled drum to set  
The cadence for a final dress parade  
But it was not always thus remember?  
Once you worshipped me and named me a god  
In many tongues and made offering lest  
I exact too terrible a tribute

Take heed for I am weary, ancient  
And decrepit now and my time grows short  
There are no honorable frays to join

Only mean death dealt out in dibs and dabs  
Or horror unleashed from across oceans  
Assail me not with noble policy  
For I care not at all for platitude  
And surrender such tedious detail  
To greater minds than mine and nimbler tongues  
Singular in their purpose and resolve  
And presuming to speak for everyman

Oh, for another time, a distant field  
And there a mortal warrior's lonely grave  
But duty charges me remain until  
The end the last battle of the last war  
Until that morrow render unto me  
That which is mine my stipend well deserved  
The fairest flower of your progeny  
Your sons, your daughters your hopes and your dreams  
The cruel consequence of your conceit