




The Price of Freedom

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LIU NIANCHUN

Night's curtain fell softly, like an iron net, that day
So freedom might withdraw from history's memory
Life that day became a theatrical prop for dictators
For prying wide the bloodied eyes of corpses

To one side, history¹
Tiananmen records one bloody event after another
On the other side, the mausoleum²
Dictators celebrate their grand, repeated massacres

The Goddess of Democracy lifts high her torch
Stands tall and unafraid between history and the present
Blood pulsing hot in their veins, the Chinese people
Are at a loss, all around them
A place they do not know

The Army is deployed throughout Tiananmen Square
A forest of tombstones in neat array
Pander to death in the darkness
Already the death bugles ring out
Faint green ghostly lights
Play over grave-like faces

History will never forget
[June 4, 1989]
This day
The Goddess of Democracy's noble countenance
Gazing into the distance
Students workers city folk hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder
Standing guard beside her

On one side, an invitation from hell
On the other, the splendid dreams of youth

About the poet

Liu Nianchun is a dissident writer from Beijing. He was a major participant in the Democracy Wall movement in 1979 and an editor of the underground publication Today. Beginning in 1981, Liu served three years in prison for transferring manuscripts written by his imprisoned brother. In 1989, he participated in the Tiananmen Democracy Movement. He currently resides in the United States.

When the moment finally came
It seemed 40 years in the waiting
The people's souls woven into a wreath of rainbow brilliance
[June 4, 1989]

That day
The Goddess of Democracy wore it lightly on her brow

Bullets rain down like hail
Slowly rose the eternal heavens

This day
The hot-blood of the Chinese people
Was in full bloom on Tiananmen Square
There were green petals
And a green hope
Looking haughtily down at the solid black bricks
At the wickedness spreading over them
And the imperial thinking sprouting there

The day will surely come
The Goddess of Democracy's gaze will sweep over time and space
Here comes Lin Zhao³
And here comes Zhang Zhixin⁴
And there, Yu Luoke⁵
Here come the countless brave souls of victims
Transformed into a huge banner of freedom and democracy
Rising slowly in the sky
Above the motherland
Here, in the East

自由的代价

刘念春

那一天铁笼似的夜幕悄悄降临
为了让自由退出历史的记忆
那一天生命成为独裁者的舞台道具
为了让僵尸睁开嗜血的目光

一边是历史
天安门记述一次次吸血经历
一边是陵堂
独裁者庆贺一回回残杀盛况

自由女神高举火炬
昂然屹立在历史与现实之间
中华民族热血激荡的脉搏上
茫然四顾
陌生的地方

军队已经布满天安门广场
森林般的墓碑整整齐齐
黑暗中迎合死亡
杀人的号角已经奏响
绿幽幽的鬼火
游走于墓碑似的脸庞

历史将永志不忘
[八九六四]
这一天
自由女神高贵的面孔
凝视远方
学生工人市民手挽手肩并肩
护卫在自由女神身旁

一边来自地狱的请柬
一边青春绚丽的梦想

终于等到那一刻
象是等了四十年
中国人的灵魂编织成彩虹绚烂的花环
[八九六四]

这一天
自由女神轻轻戴在额上

冰雹密集的枪林弹雨
冉冉升起永恒的天堂

这一天
中国人的一腔热血
盛开在天安门广场
那是绿色的花瓣
那是绿色的希望
高傲地俯视坚硬的青砖地
宛延在青砖地上的邪恶
邪恶中滋生的帝王思想

一定会有这一天
自由女神穿越时空的目光
走来林昭
走来张志新
走来遇罗克
走来无数死难者的英灵
化成一面自由民主的大旗
在大地母亲的天空
冉冉升起
在东方

Translated by J. Latourelle

Notes

1. The Museum of the Revolution and Chinese History stands on the east side of Tiananmen Square. ^
2. Mao's Mausoleum stands on the south side of Tiananmen Square. ^
3. Born in 1932, penname of Peng Lingzhao. A student of Peking University, she was labeled a rightist after publicly showing sympathy toward rightist schoolmates. Lin was imprisoned in 1960 for being a counterrevolutionary and killed in secret by authorities in 1968. ^
4. Born in 1930 in Tianjin, Zhang Zhixin was a Communist Party member who believed Mao had corrupted true Marxist ideals. She was a fierce critic of Mao's personality cult during the Cultural Revolution. Imprisoned in 1969 and executed in 1975. ^
5. Buddhist cycle of death and rebirth. ^

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