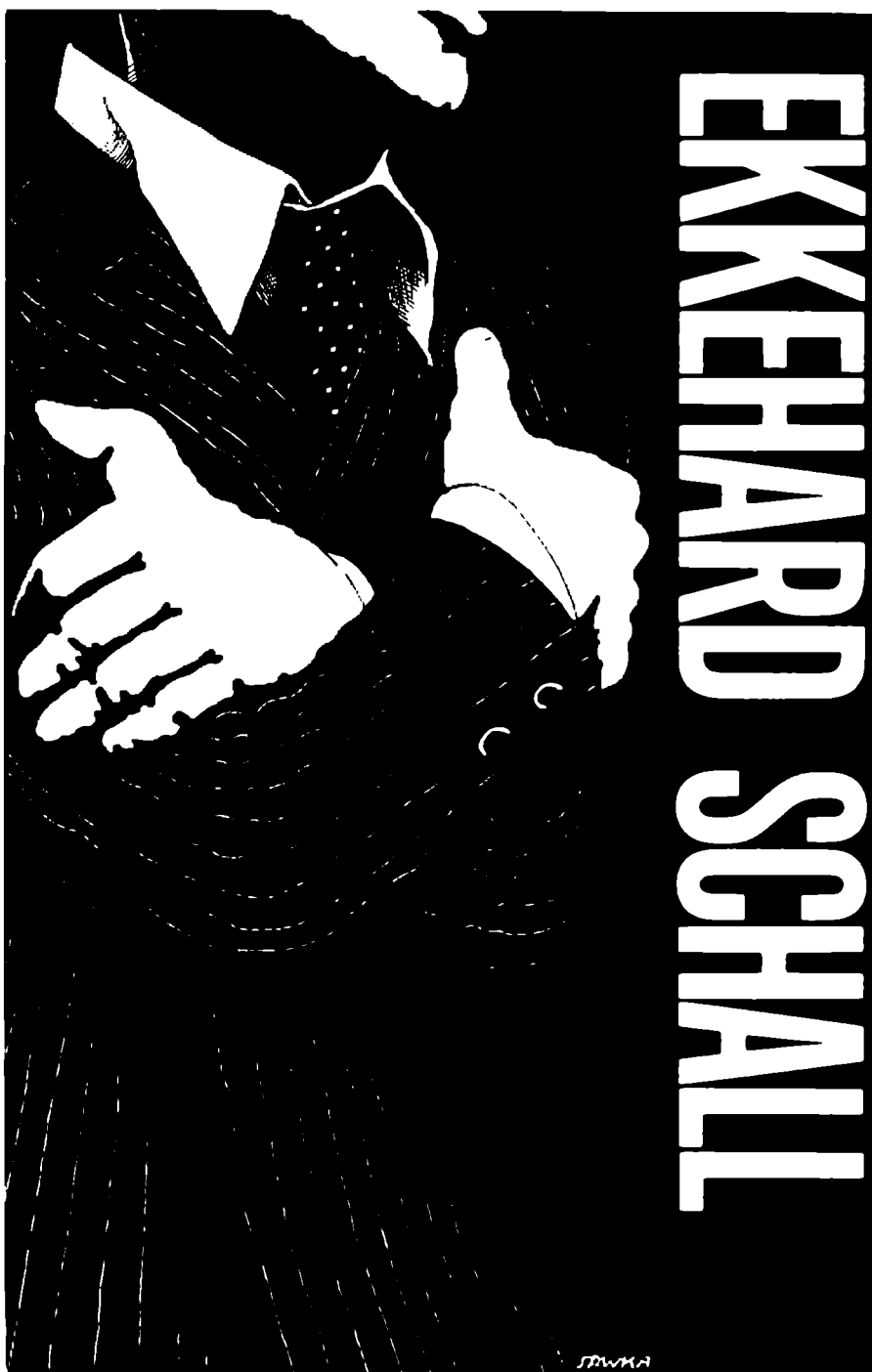




FROM LAUGHING AT THE WORLD TO LIVING IN THE WORLD
Songs, Scenes and Poems by Bertholdt Brecht

In putting together this program, I have paid no special attention to chronology or to biographical detail. It is not difficult to find in all Brecht's works references to contemporary historical events which profoundly changed the lives of many Germans of his generation and of mine. These events give the program its cohesion and structure.

Through two World Wars Brecht tenaciously protected and nurtured his poetic talent, defending his right to freedom of thought, even to life itself. Few men have seen their lives as he did: as a series of decisions, a series of goals to be achieved, all resting on the hope of greater social justice. Whilst still a young man he wrote the "Pirates' Ballade" in which he says:-

They murder coldly and detachedly
Whatever comes across their path
They throttle gullets as relaxedly
As fling a rope up to the mast.
At wakes they fall upon the liquor
Then stagger overboard and drown
While the remainder give a snigger
And wave a toe as they go down.

Towards the end of his life he denounced those who "are openly preparing for wars compared to which the wars of the past will be as nothing." When he received the Lenin Prize for "Peace and understanding between Peoples" he said:
"Those peoples who have fought to achieve a socialist economy have made real progress towards peace. They now turn instinctively away from war. The struggle of all against all is transformed into the struggle of all for all. He who helps society helps himself. He who helps himself helps society."

The program describes a journey through a dangerous and contradictory world. Timidity will not help us on our way, only toughness. Many others beside Brecht have made the journey, all have been put to the same test.

(Some poems are in abridged versions)

FROM LAUGHING AT THE WORLD TO LIVING IN THE WORLD

1. Ballad of the adventures (1917)
Music Bertolt Brecht
2. Mounted on the fairground's magic horses (1920)
3. Choral of the great Baal (1918)
Music Bertolt Brecht
4. She says she is the truest girl alive (1925)
Music Hans Dieter Hosalla
5. Victoria's song (c. 1955)
Music Rudolf Wagner-Regeny
6. And when we think it over (c. 1926)
7. Salomon-Song (c. 1929)
Music Kurt Weill
8. Far be it from me to suggest that Rockefeller
is a fool... (c. 1926)
9. Bilbao-Song (1929)
Music Kurt Weill
10. New version of the ballad of the good life (1949)
Music Kurt Weill
11. Ballad of the dead soldier (1918)
12. On the infanticide Marier Farrer (1922)
Music Karl-Heinz Nehring
13. Song of a german mother (1942)
Music Hanns Eisler
14. Europa is Hitler's fortress (1939)
15. The song of the girl and the soldier (c. 1933)
Music Paul Dessau
16. The children's crusade (1939)
17. No one, or us all (1934)
Music Hanns Eisler
18. The Manifesto (1945)

19. Resolution of the cummunards (c. 1948)
20. Pere Joseph (c. 1948)
Music Hanns Eisler
21. In praise of the revolutionary (1931)
Music Hanns Eisler
22. Ardens sed virens (1939)
Music Hanns Eisler
23. New ages (1943)
24. Ballad on approving of the world (1932)
Music Hanns Eisler
25. From "Arturo Ui" (1941)
Music Hans Dieter Hosalla
26. March of the calves (c. 1943)
Music Hanns Eisler
27. Ballad of Marie Sanders, the "Jew whore" (1935)
Music Hanns Eisler
28. Ballad of the mill wheel (1934)
Music Hanns Eisler
29. Song of rivers (1954)
Music Hans Dieter Hosalla
30. In praise of doubt (1939)
31. Song of a loving woman (1950) III
Seven roses on the bush
Music Paul Dessau
32. Song of the gentle breeze (1943)
Music Hanns Eisler
33. Seventh song of the God of happiness (I) (1939)
Music Paul Dessau
34. To eat of the meat with pleasure (c. 1954)
35. The joy of giving (c. 1950)
36. Luck (c. 1939)
37. Solidarity song (1931)
Music Hanns Eisler
38. Communism is the moderate way (1934)
39. Remembering Marie A. (1920)
Music Bertolt Brecht

BALLAD OF THE ADVENTURES

1

Sick from the sun, and gnawed at by the rainstorms,
With stolen laurels in his tousled hair
He forgot his childhood, except for childhood's daydreams,
Forgot the roof but never the sky above.

2

You who were banished out of hell and heaven
You murderers whose lot is pain and woe
Why did you not stay inside the wombs of your mothers
Where it was calm and one slumbered and one was?

3

But now that even his mother has forgot him
He still is seeking in the absinthe seas
Grinning and cursing and from time to time weeping
The country where there is a better life.

4

Strolling through hells and whipped through paradises
A grin upon his calm and fading face
He dreams at times about a little meadow
A patch of blue in the sky and nothing more.

MOUNTED ON THE FAIRGROUND'S MAGIC HORSES

Mounted on the fairground's magic horses
As among the children I pranced by -
Bucking hard, we raised our blissful faces
To the marvelous clear evening sky -
All the passers-by just stood there laughing
And I heard them say, exactly like my mother:
Oh, he's so different, he's so different
Oh, he's so very different from us.

Seated with the cream of our society
As I outline my unusual views
They keep staring, till I'm sweating slightly -
They don't sweat, it's one of their taboos -
And I see them sitting there and laughing
And I hear them say, exactly like my mother:
Oh, he's so different, he's so different
Oh, he's so very different from us.

Up to heaven as one day I'm flying
(And they'll let me in, you'll see they will)
I shall hear the blessed spirits crying:
He is here, our cup of bliss to fill!
They they'll stare at me and burst out laughing
And I'll hear them say, exactly like my mother:
Oh, he's so different, he's so different
Oh, he's so very different from us.

CHORALE OF THE GREAT BAAL

As Baal grew within his mother's womb so white
Even then the sky was vast and calm and light
Naked, young and hugely marvelous
As Baal loved it when Baal came to us.

And the sky was there in joy and misery
Even when Baal slept, or had no eyes to see:
Nights meant violet sky and drunken Baal
Dawns: Baal good, sky approcittish-pale.

So through hospital, cathedral, bar
Baal trots coolly on, and learns to let it go.
When Baal's tired, boys, Baal will not fall far:
Baal will drag his whole sky down below.

Where the sinners herd in shame together
Baal lies naked soaking up the calm:
Just the sky, but sky to last for ever
Hides his nakedness with its strong arm.

And that lusty woman Earth, who laughs when yielding
To the man who'll stand the pressure of her thighs
Gave him instants of a sweet ecstatic feeling.
Baal survived it; he just raised his eyes.

And when Baal saw corpses all around
Never had he felt less cause for gloom.
Lots of space, said Baal; we aren't enough to count.
Lots of space inside this woman's womb.

Once a woman, Baal says, gives her all
Leave her; that's as far as she can go.
Other men should represent no risk at all;
Even Baal is scared of babies, though.

Vice is not so bad, says Baal. Don't spit
Either on the men who practice it.
Don't say no to any vice as such
Pick out two, for one will be too much.

Slackness, softness all this you should shun:
Nothing is tougher than pursuing fun.
Powerful limbs are needed, and experience too
Too much gut can spoil it all for you.

CHORALE OF THE GREAT BAAL (cont'd)

Baal will watch the vultures in the star-shot sky
Hovering patiently, waiting for Baal to die.
Sometimes Baal plays dead. The vultures swoop.
Baal, without a word, will dine on vulture soup.

Under mournful stars in our sad vale of trouble
Munching, Baal will graze whole pastures down to rubble.
Once they're cropped, into the forests deep
Baal will trot, singing, to his well-earned sleep.

And when Baal's dragged down to be the dark womb's prize
What's the earth to Baal? For Baal has fed.
Sky enough still lurks behind Baal's eyes
To make just enough sky when he's dead.

As Baal rotted in that tomb as dark as night
Once again the sky was vast and calm and light.
Naked, young and hugely marvelous
As Baal loved it when Baal was with us.

Ah but can one really marry that class of girl?
And with her conjoined go through life to the end?
Of course you'll tell me that it's quite impossible -
Ah but have you ever seen the girl, my friend?

SHE SAYS
SHE IS THE TRUEST GIRL ALIVE

1.
She says she is the truest girl alive
(And when you've seen her you'll believe it too)
But mustn't, she says, touch a drop, or, she says
She couldn't, says she, say what she might do.
Ah but can one really marry that class of girl?
And with her conjoined go through life to the end?
Of course you'll tell me that it's quite impossible -
Ah but have you ever seen the girl, my friend?
Ah, there yes isn't yes
No isn't no.
If once you see her face
With her you'll go.
So you don't want to, eh?
Okay, I do.
Don't go asking me if you may.
If you don't want to pay, away to hell I say
Oh, shut up you!

2.
I asked her once if she liked drinking wine
But she said no, she hated drinking so
But never, she says, try to talk her round, she says
Else she'll give way, she says she hates saying no.
Ah but can one really marry that class of girl?
And with her conjoined go through life to the end?
Of course you'll tell me that it's quite impossible -
Ah but have you ever seen the girl, my friend?
Ah, there yes isn't yes
No isn't no.
If once you see her face
With her you'll go.
So you don't want to, eh?
Okay, I do.
Don't go asking me if you may.
If you don't want to pay, away to hell I say
Oh, shut up you!

(translation Jack Mitchell)

VICTORIA'S SONG

At certain times in life we're driven
Head over heels to make a painful choice:
Whether to fate and passion we should give in
Or let ourselves be guided by reason's prudent voice.

But the bosom swells with emotion
And the mind hasn't got much to say
The sail fills with wind on the ocean
And the ship doesn't ask long: Which way?

Sister, what metal are you made of?
Where is your modesty and where your pride?
There's hardly any plight or peril you're afraid of
Once love has caught you up in its tumultuous tide.

The doe runs after the stag
And the lioness follows her lord
And to be with her lover a maid
Will go to the ends of the world.

AND WHEN WE THINK IT OVER

And when we think it over

We can't stay big for long

The wind comes and the rain

They wear us down so small

Miserable and small

Must a man be allowed to be.

SALOMON-SONG

1.

You saw sagacious Solomon
You knew what came of him.
To him complexities seemed plain.
He cursed the hour that gave birth to him
And saw that everything was vain.
How great and wise was Solomon!
But now that time is getting late
The world can see what followed on.
It's wisdom that had brought him to this state -
How fortunate the man with none!

2.

You saw the lovely Cleopatra
You know what she became.
Two emperors slaved to serve her lust.
She whored herself to death and fame
Then rotted down and turned to dust.
How beautiful was Babylon!
But now that time is getting late
The world can see what followed on.
It's beauty that had brought her to this state -
How fortunate the girl with none!

3.

St. Martin couldn't bear to see
His fellows in distress.
He saw a poor man in the snow.
"Take half my cloak!" He did, and lo!
They both of them froze none the less.
He thought his heavenly reward was won.
Now think about his case. Alas
A useful lesson can be won.
Unselfishness had brought him to that pass.
How happy is the man with none!

4.

You know the ever-curious Brecht
Whose songs you liked to hum.
He asked, too often for your peace
Where rich men get their riches from.
So then you drove him overseas.
How curious was my mother's son!
But now that time is getting late
The world can see what followed on.
Inquisitiveness brought him to this state -
How fortunate the man with none!

FAR BE IT FROM ME TO SUGGEST THAT ROCKEFELLER IS A FOOL

Far be it from me to suggest that Rockefeller is a fool
But you must admit
That there was general interest in Standard Oil.

What a man it would have taken
To prevent Standard Oil from coming about!
I suggest
Such a man has yet to be born.

Who wants to prove that Rockefeller made mistakes
Since money came in anyway?
Let me tell you:
It was a matter of interest that money should come in.

You are otherwise involved?
But I would be glad to find someone
Who is not a fool, and I
Can prove it.

They picked the right man.
Didn't he have a nose for money?
Didn't he grow old?
Couldn't he do stupid things, and yet
Standard Oil came about all the same?

You think we could have had Standard Oil more cheaply
Do you suppose someone else
Could have made it come about with less effort?
(Since there was general interest?)

Are you always and everywhere against fools?
Do you think Standard Oil is a good thing?

I hope you don't believe
That a fool is
A man who thinks.

THE BILBAO SONG

1.

Bill's ballroom in Bilbao
Was the finest that the continent could show.
A dollar bought a lot of fun and holler
And all the things that make life go.
Ah but if by any chance you'd wandered in there
I couldn't say if you would like it there or no,
Great!
Brandy puddles stretched from wall to wall
Grass on the dance-floor growing tall
And the scarlet moon shone through the slate.
An' the music too - ah you could raise a din there
For your dough!
Joe, play it the way they used to play't.
Good old Bilbao moon
Where love's still worth the tune -
What were the words again?
So long ago since then -
I couldn't say if you would like it there or no, but
It was the finest
It was the finest
Th' world could show.

2.

Bill's ballroom in Bilbao
Renovated nowadays - all comme il faut
With palm trees and with ice cream and the usuals
Like any joint you'd maybe know.
But if once the notion took you and you came there
Well it could be that you'd really like it so.
A ball!
No more grass in the new dance hall
And the brandy's not the same at all.
And the scarlet moon's been told to go.
And the music they make - you hang your head in shame there
for your dough!
Joe, play it the way they used to play't.
Good old Bilbao moon
I often called the tune
I knew Brazil in June
Ah yes, that's how it went -
Good old Bilbao moon
Too long ago since then.
I couldn't say if you would like it there or no, but
It was the finest
It was the finest
Th' world could show.

(translation - Jack Mitchell)

NEW VERSION OF THE BALLAD OF THE GOOD LIFE

1.

They tell us of the life of souls in freedom,
The type that lives on books and zero diet
While rats chew down his hovel on the quiet -
Go tell that kind of tale to those that read 'em.
The simple life - why certainly, you may!
I've found - between ourselves - it's just not on.
There's not a bird from here to Babylon
Could stomach such-like fare a single day.
What good's that freedom? It is much too crude.
Yes it's the affluent life that does you good.

2.

The truth-pursuers of courageous bearing
That thirst to risk their hides for truth and glory
And take the liberty and tell the story
So that some philistine may read what's daring:
Just watch that type a-freezing in his slum
And harking by his frigid wife in bed
To hear if one applauds and is misled
And coldly looks on the millennium:
I ask you just one thing - Is that not crude?
Yes it's the affluent life that does you good.

3.

Myself I could imagine with no trouble
Preferring seeing myself alone and splendid,
But when I saw the type, ambition ended,
I told myself - best drop that at the double.
For starving makes one wise but bitter too
And courage makes you famous but a slave.
You saw yourself just now both wise and brave;
It's time to bid this greatness thing adieu.
And that solves happiness, so I'll conclude:
Yes it's the affluent life that does you good.

(translation - Jack Mitchell)

BALLAD OF THE DEAD SOLDIER

And when the war reached its fifth spring
With no hint of a pause for breath
The soldier did the obvious thing
And died a hero's death.

The war, it appeared, was far from done.
The Kaiser said, "It's a crime.
To think my soldier's dead and gone
Before the proper time."

The summer spread over the makeshift graves.
The soldier lay ignored
Until one night there came an official
army medical board.

The board went out to the cemetery
With consecrated spade
And dug up what was left of him
And put him on parade.

The doctors sorted out what they'd found
And kept what they thought would serve
And made their report: "He's physically sound.
He's simply lost his nerve."

Straightway they took the soldier off,
The night was soft and warm.
You could tip your helmet back and see
The stars they see at home.

They filled him up with a fiery schnaps
To bring him back to life
Then shoved two nurses into his arms
And his half-naked wife.

The soldier was stinking with decay
So a priest goes on before
To give him incense on his way
That he may stink no more.

In front the band with oom-pah-pah
Intones a rousing march.
The soldier does like the handbook says
And flicks his legs from his arse.

BALLAD OF THE DEAD SOLDIER (cont'd)

Their arms about him, keeping pace
Two kind first-aid men go
In case he falls in the shit on his face
For that would never do.

They paint his shroud with the black-white-red
Of the old imperial flag
With so much colour it covers up
That bloody spattered rag.

Up front a gent in a morning suit
And stuffed-out shirt marched too:
A german determined to do his but-
y as Germans always do.

So see them now as, oom-pah-pah
Along the roads they go
And the soldier goes whirling along with them
Like a flake in the driving snow.

And when they pass through a village all
The women are moved to tears.
The party salutes; the moon shines full,
The whole lot give three cheers.

With oom-pah-pah and cheerio
And wife and dog and priest
And, among them all, the soldier himself
Like some poor drunken beast.

And when they pass through a village perhaps
It happens he disappears
For such a crowd comes to join the chaps
With oompah und three cheers...

In all that dancing, yelling crowd
He disappears from view.
You can only see him from overhead
Which only stars can do.

The stars won't always be up there.
The dawn is turning red.
But the soldier goes off to a hero's death
Just like the handbook said.

ON THE INFANTICIDE MARIE FARRAR

Marie Farrar: month of birth, April
An orphaned minor; rickets; birthmarks, none; previously
Of good character, admits that she did kill
Her child as follows here in summary.
She visited a woman in a basement
During her second month, so she reported
And there was given two injections
Which, though they hurt, did not abort it.
But you I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives need help from all the rest.

But nonetheless, she says, she paid the bill
As was arranged, then bought herself a corset
And drank neat spirit, peppered it as well
But that just made her vomit and disgorge it.
Her belly now was noticeably swollen
And ached when she washed up the plates.
She says that she had not finished growing.
She prayed to Mary, and her hopes were great.
You too, I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives needs help from all the rest.

Her prayers, however, seemed to be no good.
She'd asked too much. Her belly swelled. At Mass
She started to feel dizzy and she would
Kneel in a cold sweat before the Cross.
Still she contrived to keep her true state hidden
Until the hour of birth itself was on her
Being so plain that no one could imagine
That any man would ever want to tempt her.
But you I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives needs help from all the rest.

She says that on the morning of that day
While she was scrubbing stairs, something came clawing
Into her guts. It shook her once and went away.
She managed to conceal her pain and keep from crying
As she, throughout the day, hung up the washing
She racked her brain, then realised in fright
She was going to give birth. At once a crushing
Weight grabbed at her heart. She didn't go upstairs till night
And yet I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives needs help from all the rest.

But just as she lay down they fetched her back again:
Fresh snow had fallen, and it must be swept.
That was a long day. She worked till after ten.
She could not give birth in peace till the household slept.
The son was like the son of any mother.
But she was not like other mothers are - but then
There are no valid grounds why I should mock her.
You too I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives needs help from all the rest.

So let her finish now and end her tale
About what happened to the son she bore
(She says there's nothing she will not reveal)
So men may see what I am and you are.
She'd just climbed into bed, she says, when nausea
Seized her. Never knowing what should happen till
It did, she struggled with herself to hush her
Cries, and forced them down. The room was still.
And you I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives needs help from all the rest.

The bedroom was ice cold, so she called on
Her last remaining strength and dragged her-
Self out to the privy and there, near dawn
Unceremoniously, she was delivered
(Exactly when, she doesn't know). Then she
Now totally confused, she says, half froze
And found that she could scarcely hold the child
For the servants' privy lets in the heavy snows.
And you I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives needs help from all the rest.

Between the servants' privy and her bed (she says
That nothing happened until then), the child
Began to cry, which vexed her so, she says
She beat it with her fists, hammering blind and wild
Without a pause until the child was quiet, she says.
She took the baby's body into bed
And held it for the rest of the night, she says
Then in the morning hid it in the laundry shed.
But you I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives needs help from all the rest.

Marie Farrar: month of birth, April
Bred in the Meissen penitentiary
An unwed mother, judged by the law, she will
Show you how all that lives, lives frailty.
You who bear your sons in laundered linen sheets
And call your pregnancies a "blessed" state.
Should never damn the outcast and the weak:
Her sin was heavy, but her suffering was great
Therefore, I beg, make not your anger manifest
For all that lives needs help from all the rest.

SONG OF A GERMAN MOTHER

My son, your shiny boots and
Brown shirt were a present from me:
If I'd known then what I know now
I'd have hanged myself from a tree.

My son, when I saw your hand raised
In the Hitler salute that first day
I didn't know those who saluted
Would see their hand wither away.

My son, when I saw you marching
In Hitler's victorious train
I didn't know he who marched off then
Would never come back again.

My son, you told me our country
Was about to come into its own.
I didn't know all it would come to
Was ashes and bloodstained stone.

I saw you wearing your brown shirt.
I should have protested aloud
For I did not know what I now know:
It was your burial shroud.

EUROPA IS HITLER'S FORTRESS

Europa is Hitler's fortress

Goebbels tells every child

But, have you ever seen a fortress

Where enemy isn't just outside

But inside as well?

THE SONG OF THE GIRL AND THE SOLDIER

The guns blaze away, and the bay'nit'll slay
And the water can't hardly be colder.
What's the answer to ice? Keep off's my advice!
That's what the girl told the soldier.

Next thing the soldier, wiv' a round up the spout
Hears the band playing and gives a great shout:
Why, it's marching what makes you a soldier!
So it's down to the south and then northwards once more:
See him catching that bay'nit in his maked paw!
That's what his comrades done told her.

Oh, do not despise the advice of the wise
Learn wisdom from those that are older
And don't try for things that are out of your reach -
That's what the girl told the soldier.

Next thing the soldier, his bay'nit in place
Wades into the river and laughs in her face
Though the water comes up to his shoulder.
When the shingle roof glints in the light o' the moon
We'll all be home, we'll all be back again.
Put that into your prayer.
That's what his comrades done told her.

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

In "thirty-nine in Poland
There was a bloody fight
And many a town and village
Turned to waste land overnight.

Sisters lost their brothers
Wives were widowed by the war
And in fire and desolation
Children found their kin no more.

There came no news from Poland
Neither letter nor printed word
But in an eastern country
A curious tale is heard.

Snow fell, as they related
In a certain eastern town
How a new crusade of children
In Poland had begun.

For all along the highways
Troops of hungry children roamed
And gathered to them others
Who stood by ruined homes.

They wished to flee the slaughter
For the nightmare did not cease
And some day reach a country
Where there was peace.

They had a little leader
To show them where to go.
Yet he was sorely troubled
Since the way he did not know.

A girl of ten was carrying
A little child of four.
All she lacked to be a mother
Was a country without war.

In a coat with a velvet collar
A little Jew was dressed
He had been reared on whitest bread
But he marched on with the rest.

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE (cont'd.)

There was a thin and wretched boy
Who held himself apart
That he came from a Nazi legation
Was a load of guilt in his heart.

They also had a dog with them
Which they had caught for food.
They spared it; so, another mouth
It followed where it would.

There was a school for penmanship
And teaching did not cease.
On the broken side of a tank
They learned to spell out peace.

A girl of twelve, a boy of fifteen
Had a love affair
And in a ruined farmyard
She sat and combed his hair.

But love could not endure
Cold wind began to blow:
And how can saplings bloom
When covered deep in snow?

They had a funeral besides
Two Poles and two Germans carried
The boy with the velvet collar
To the place where he was buried.

There were Catholics and Protestants
And Nazis at the grave
At the end a little Communist spoke
Of the future the living have.

So there was faith and hope
But lack of bread and meat.
And if they stole let no one blame
Who never bade them eat.

Let no one blame the poor man
Who never asked them in
For many have the will but have
No flour in the bin.

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE (cont'd.)

They strove to travel southward.
The south is where, 'tis said
At high noon the sun stands
Directly overhead.

They found a wounded soldier
In a pinewood one day.
And for a week they tended him
In hopes he'd know the way.

To Bilgoray, he said to them.
The fever made him rave.
Upon the eighth day he died.
They laid him in his grave.

Sometimes there were signposts
Though covered up in snow
All turned around and pointing wrong
But this they did not know.

And no grim joke it was, but done
On military grounds.
And long they sought for Bilgoray
Which never could be found.

They stood about their leader
Who stared at the snowy sky.
He pointed with his finger
Saying: Yonder it must lie.

Once a night, they saw a fire
They turned away in fear.
Once three tanks came rolling by
Which meant that men were near.

Once, when they reached a city
They veered and went around.
They travelled then by night alone
Till they had passed the town.

Towards what was south-east Poland
In deeply drifting snow
The five and fifty children
Where last seen to go.

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE (cont'd.)

And if I close my eyes
I see them wander on
From one ruined barnyard
To another one.

Above them in the cluds I see
A new and greater host
Wearily breasting the cold wind
Homeless and lost.

Seeking for a land o peace
Without the crash and flame of war
That scars the soil from which they came
And this host is always more.

Now in the gloom it seems to me
They come from many other places:
In the changing clouds I see
Spanish, French, yellow faces.

In January of that year
Poles caught a hungry dog
Around whose neck a placard hung
'Twas tied there with a cord.

These words thereon were: Please send help!
We don't know where we are.
We are five and fifty
The dog will lead you here.

And if you cannot come to us
Please drive him out.
Don't shoot the dog for no one else
Can find the spot.

A childish hand had written
The words the peasants read.
Since that time two years have passed.
The starving dog is dead.

NO ONE, OR US ALL

Slave, say, who is going to free you?
They whose lot is most appalling,
Only they will hear you calling,
Brother, these alone will see you;
Slaves, friend, are the the ones who'll free you.
 Nothing, or the whole thing. No one, or us all.
 One alone his lot can't better.
 It's rifles or it's fetters.
 Nothing, or the whole thing. No one, or us all.

Hungry one, say, who will feed you?
If you want a loaf for carving
Come to us, we too are starving,
Come with us and let us lead you;
Hungry men alone will feed you.
 Nothing, or the whole thing. No one, or us all.
 One alone his lot can't better.
 It's rifles or it's fetters.
 Nothing, or the whole thing. No one, or us all.

Say, forlorn one, who will dare it?
He who can no longer bear it,
He must go with those who swear it
Shall be, by their need and sorrow,
Done today and not tomorrow.
 Nothing, or the whole thing. No one, or us all.
 One alone his lot can't better.
 It's rifles or it's fetters.
 Nothing, or the whole thing. No one, or us all.

(translation - Jack Mitchell)

THE MANIFESTO

Wars ruin the world and a spectre is haunting the ruins.
Not born in war, seen around in peace too, for some time now.
Nightmare to rulers but friend to the children that live in
the townships.

Shaking its head as it peers into half-filled plates in
poor kitchens.

Standing in wait then for those that are weary at pit-head
and yard-gate.

Visiting friends in the prisons, passing in without pass-card.
Seen even in offices, heard in the lecture halls, personally
Sometimes mounting giant tanks and flying in death-dealing
bombers.

Speaking in various tongues, in all tongues. Keeping silent
in many.

Guest of honour in ghettos and slums, the terror of palaces
Come here to stay, and for ever: its name is Communism.

Much you've heard tell of it. This, however, is what its
founders say.

If you read history you read of the deeds of immense
individuals;

Their star, in its rising and falling; the march of their
armies

Or of the pomp and destruction of empires. For them, for
the founders

However, history is foremost the history of conflicts of
classes.

THE MANIFESTO (cont'd.)

They see the peoples internally split into classes and
Warring within. Patricians and knights, plebeians and
slaves

Nobles, peasants and craftsmen, proletarians and bourgeois
today

Keep in their turn the whole mighty household in motion,
creating

And distributing the goods that are needed for living,
but also

Fighting their fight to the death, the old fight, the one
for dominion.

Never before was unleashed such a wild surge of creation
As that which the bourgeoisie in its epoch of sway has
unfolded

One which bowed nature to man and made steam and electrical
power

Cleared rivers for shipping and continents ready for tillage.
Never before had humanity guessed that asleep in it womb
Such liberations were lurking and powers of production
like these.

This, however, was how it went: Blast-furnace, weaving-loom,
steam-power

Revolutionised manufacture and now the guilds and all feudal
Property turned into fetters that cramped this colossal
creation

THE MANIFESTO (cont'd.)

And up rose the bourgeoisie and shattered the fetters.
Free competition molded the state form of the bourgeois class.

You see then how hurricane-like is the rise of productive
forces

Smashing the time-honoured modes of producing, believed
everlasting

And with what impetuosity classes, subservient yesterday
Tear up all title deeds, ridicule hoary and reverend
prerogatives.

Thus, when this class, provided with new title deeds and
prerogatives

Had conjured up means of production in past times undreamed of
Then it became like the sorcerer who could no longer control
The subterranean powers he had so craftily raised.

Acting like dammed-up water that first feeds the crops and
then

Drowns them completely, the means of production, ever expanding
Multiplying thus the might of this class, expanding still
further

Threaten that class with extinction; just as the founders
have shown us.

For millions of workers however
Whom it commands as hugh armies planlessly ordered about
Herding them into the sweatshops, now out of the sweatshops
again

Brusquely on to the icy streets - the truth is now dawning,
they whisper

Amazed to each other that the days of the world of the
bourgeois are numbered
Since it in its ceaseless increasing increases their
misery only
Since it has grown too marrow to compass the walth it
created.

Now however, those weapons wielded with deadly effect
To shatter the feudal world are turned on the bourgeoisie.
Yes it too has brought forth a class that will bear those
death-dealing

Weapons against it, for all through the centuries, bound in
its service

Grew with the bourgeoisie also the proletariat of the modern
Workers, living by labour and finding work only so long as
they

Work in the bourgeois interest, increasing his capital
interests.

Just as the capitalist sells his commodities, likewise the
worker

Sells his commodity, namely his labour-power, being subjected
Therefore to competition and all the ups and down of the
market.

Appendage merely to the machine he sells his simple knack
Costing no more than the cost of his keep and whatever little
he needs to

Reproduce and bring up his kind, that most useful of species

Since labour-power's price, like the price of all other
commodities

Depends on its cost of production. Out of the tiny
workshop of old

Handicraft grew the great factory ordering army-wise
Work and the workers, slaves of the bourgeois state but also
Slaves of a certain bourgeois, his overseers and the machine.

Therefore the one class capable of defeating the bourgeoisie
And shattering the fetter its state has meanwhile become
Is, in our time, the working class. It is this by its size
and condition.

All that one guaranteed life in the older society now is
Rubbed out, done away with, in the life of the proletariat.
Propertyless, head and provider no longer to wife and children
Hard to distinguish by nation or native place now, for the
selfsame

Subjection at the selfsame machine marks him from Essen
to Canton

Morale and religion confront the proletarian as fata morganas
Mirroring to him, far off unattainable, edens in deserts.

His is the movement of the immense majority, and his dominion
is

Domination no more but the subjection of all domination.
There oppression alone is oppressed for the proletariat must
As society's undermost stratum, in rising, completely demolish

THE MANIFESTO (cont'd.)

The social set-up entire with all its uppermost strata.

It can shake off its subjection only in shaking off all

Subjection from all people.

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMUNARDS

Realising that it is our weakness
That enables you to pass your laws
We resolve in future to abandon meekness
And the law hereon will justify our cause
 Realising that you hold us captive
With loaded pistols at our heads
 We resolve in future not to fear your torture
 Slavery is worse than death.

Realising that you keep us homeless
Whilst around us houses stand unused
We have not resolved to put an end to trespass
From now on every worker will be housed.
 Realising that you hold us captive
 With loaded pistols at our heads
 We resolve in future not to fear your torture
 Slavery is worse than death.

Realising that we won't persuade you
Into paying us a living wage
We resolve that we will take the factories from you
Realising that your loss will be our gain
 Realising that you hold us captive
 With loaded pistols at our heads
 We resolve in future not to fear your torture
 Slavery is worse than death.

Realising that we can't depend on
All the promises our rulers make
We've resolved for us the Good Life starts with freedom
Our future must be built by our dictate.
 Realising that the roar of cannon
 Are the only words that speak to you
 We must prove to you that we have learned our lesson
 In future we will turn the guns on you.

PERE JOSEPH

After all why do we go on living? We live for the
bit extra. And we've got to have it even if we have
to go to war for it. After all why do we work for a
living? So that we can live. Hey! To your health!

Pere Josephe has no roof against the weather
To cover her bum his wife has no vest
But she cooks for him in the heather
Stolen food tastes all the better
And Pere Josephe tries to look his best.

Mother make me something extra special
For an old dog nothing is too much
Mother cook it slow. Give it all you know
Make it extra...wait the strawberries for dessert
Make it extra...wait the strawberries for dessert

Pere Josephe in the Salpetriere
For a Parson doesn't give a thought
And as if he were a millionaire
Orders his last breakfast brought.

Warnder make me something extra special
For an old dog nothing is too much
Warder cook it slow. Give it all you know
And don't forget the strawberries for dessert
And don't forget the strawberries for dessert.

IN PRAISE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY

Many are too much.
When they've gone, it's for the better
But when he's not there we miss him.

When oppression increases
Many get discouraged
But his courage grows.

He's ready to organize, fight
For a wage rise, to strike for a tea break and
Fight for power in the state.

He asks of property:
Where d'you come from?
He asks for factions
Whom do you serve?

Where things always get husband up
He'll ask awkward questions
And where the oppressors rule and there's those who
 blame fate for it
That's when he'll name the guilty.

Where he sits at table
Dissatisfaction also sits at table.
Food becomes bad
And it's seen that the room is tiny.

Wherever they chase him, with him
Goes rebellion, and where he is banished
Discontent stays behind.

Splendid, what a lovely fire
Cannot turn to chewy ash!
Friend, you're my heart's desire
Burning, and yet still intact.

Many I saw slyly cooling
Hotheads stunned by ignoring fact.
Friend, you repay my schooling
Burning, and yet still intact.

NEW AGES

A new age does not begin all of a sudden
My grandfather was already living in the new age
My grandson will probably still be living in the old one.

The new meat is eaten with the old forks.

It was not the first cars
Nor the tanks
It was not the airplanes over our roofs
Nor the bombers.

From new transmitters came old stupidities.
Wisdom was passed on from mouth to mouth.

BALLAD ON APPROVING OF THE WORLD

I'm not unjust, but not courageous either:
They pointed out their world to me today
I only saw the bloody pointing finger
And quickly said I liked the world that way.

I stood facing their world, beneath their truncheons
And spent the whole day judging what I saw.
Saw butchers who seemed suited to their functions
When I was asked 'D'you like it?' I said "Sure".

And from that moment my proclaimed opinion
Was: better cowardly than in one's grave.
To keep from falling under their dominion
I kept approving what one can't approve.

Then the industrialists: such crippling losses
They can't find work for more than one in three
I told the other two: Best ask the bosses
I'm ignorant about economy.

I saw their troops preferring guns to butter
And planning whom to murder and to rob.
I called out as I stepped down in the gutter:
Credit where credit's due, they know their job!

The deputies who tell the starving voters
That they will make things better before long -
I call them brilliant speakers, say they didn't
Intend to lie, they merely got it wrong.

Saw civil servants, green with mildew, keeping
Their huge manure contraption on the move
So badly paid for bullying and creeping
I really hope their salaries improve.

The police, of course, must not think they're abandoned.
I give them, and the magistrate beside
A dainty towel to wipe their bloody hands on
So they may know that they're not being denied.

The journalists. They use the victims' entrails
To scrawl the words: The murderers didn't do it.
I pass you on the freshly printed details
And say: How well they write; you should glance through it.

BALLAD ON APPROVING OF THE WORLD (cont'd.)

And scholarhsip which, adding to our knowledge
Also turns out to add to our distress
Deserves to be as honoured as religion
Which adds to ignorance and is not honoured less.

I saw the murderers and the victims also
And, lacking courage but not sympathy
Observed the murderers picking out their victims
And shouted: I approve wholeheartedly!

Since poverty and baseness leave me cold
My pen falls silent; times are on the move
Yet all that's dirty in your dirty world
Includes, I know, the fact that I approve.

FROM "ARTURO UI"

What I demand of you is trust. You lack
Faith, and where faith is lacking, all is lost.
How do you think I got this far? By faith!
Because of my fanatical, my unflinching
Faith in the cause! With faith and nothing else
I flung a challenge at this city and forced
It to its knees. With faith I climbed the steps
Of City Hall. With nothing in my naked
Hands but indomitable faith! And
A tommy gun? No, other men have them
But lack firm faith in their predestination
To leadership! And that is why you too
Need to have faith in me! Have faith! Believe that
I know what's best for you and that I'm
Resolved to put it through. That I will find
The road to victory.

Murder! Extortion! Highway robbery!
Murdered in broad daylight! law abiding
Citizens! Machine-guns sputtering on our city streets!
In short:
Chaos is rampant. Because if everybody
Can do exactly what he pleases, if
Dog can eat dog without a second thought
I call it chaos. Look. Suppose I'm sitting
Peacefully in my vegetable store
For instance, or driving my cauliflower truck
And someone comes barging not so peacefully
Into my store: "Hands up!" Or with this gun
Punctures my tyres. Under such conditions
Peace is unthinkable. But once I know
The score, once I recognize that men are not
Innocent lambs, then I've got to find a way
To stop these men from smashing up my shop and
Making me, when it suits them, put 'em up
And keep 'em up, when I could use my hands
For better things, for instance, counting pickles.
But what's to be done? You may ask. Are we
To part with thirty cents on every dollar
For mere protection? No, nothing doing.
Well, my dear vegetable dealers, things
Are not so simple. Only death is free:
Everything else costs money. And that includes
Protection, peace and quiet. Life is like
That, and because it never will be any different
These gentlemen and I (there are more outside)
Have resolved to offer you protection.

FROM "ARTURO UI" (cont'd.)

And to secure
This peace I have put in an order
For more machine-guns, rubber truncheons
Etcetera. For Chicago and Cicero
Are not alone in clamouring for protection!
There are other cities: Washington and Milwaukee!
Detroit! Toledo! Pittsburgh! Cincinnati!
And other towns where vegetables are traded!
Philadelphia! Columbus! Charleston! and New York!
They all demand protection! And no 'Phooey!'
No 'That's not nice!' will stop Arturo Ui!

MARCH OF THE CALVES

Led by the drummer the
Sheep trot in bleating.
Their skins make the drunskin
Which he is beating.

The butcher calls. They don't see where he's leading
But march like sheep with firm and steady tread.
The sheep before them in the slaughterhouse lie bleeding
And march in spirit once their body's dead.

They hold up their hands to show
The work that they do
Hands that are stained with blood
And empty too.

The butcher calls. They don't see where he's leading
But march like sheep with firm and steady tread.
The sheep before them in the slaughterhouse lie bleeding
And march in spirit once their body's dead.

The crosses that go before
On big blood-red banners
Are angled to twist the poor
Like bloody great spanners.

The butcher calls. They don't see where he's leading
But march like sheep with firm and steady tread.
The sheep before them in the slaughterhouse lie bleeding
And march in spirit once their body's dead.

BALLAD OF MARIE SANDERS, THE "JEW WHORE"

1.

In Nuremberg they made a law
At which many a woman wept who'd
Lain in bed with the wrong man.

'The price is rising for butcher's meat.

The drumming's now at its height.

God alive, if they are coming down our street

It'll be tonight.'

2.

Marie Sanders, your lover's

Hair is too black.

Take our advice, and don't you be to him

What you were yesterday.

'The price is rising for butcher's meat.

The drumming's now at its height.

God alive, if they are coming down our street

It'll be tonight.'

3.

Mother, give me the latchkey

It can't be so bad

The moon's the same as ever.

'The price is rising for butcher's meat.

The drumming's now at its height.

God alive, if they are coming down our street

It'll be tonight.'

4.

One morning, close on nine

She was driven through the town

In her slip, round her neck a sign, her hair all shaven.

The street was yelling. She

Coldly stared.

'The price is rising for butcher's meat.

And Streicher's speaking tonight.

God alive, if we'd an ear to hear his speech

We would start to make sense of our plight.'

BALAD OF THE MILL WHEEL

Many great ones through the ages
Have attained to earthly power.
Yet they all but had their hour,
Sad it is when fate has failed to speed them.
But for us whose job it is to feed them,
Whether this one's high and that one low,
The loads, on our shoulders, always go.
Still the mill wheel turns, it turns forever,
Though what is uppermost remains not so.
The water underneath in vain endeavor
Does the work but always stays below.

Many are the different masters
Who've ruled us in their day.
Eagles, Tigers and Hyenas,
Even Swine have had their say.
Which of them was better than the other?
Every boot's the copy of its brother.
And each boot trod us well, d'you catch what's here
intended?
We do not seek new masters, we want all mastery
ended.
Still the mill wheel turns and turns forever.
What is uppermost remains not so.
While the water underneath in vain endeavor
Does the work but always stays below.

And they beat their heads till they are bloody,
Scrambling after booty.
Each calls the other rascal,
And himself the slave of duty.
The time has come, away to speed them.
Each in lasting conflict with his brother.
Only our resolve that we'll not feed them,
Brings them to peace with one another.
Still the mill wheel turns and turns forever.
What is uppermost remains not so.
While the water underneath in vain endeavor
Does the work but always stays below.

SONG OF RIVERS

Old Man Mississippi rages,
Sweeps away our cattle and the soil so dear.
Chase to hell the rabble in high places,
Those that loose him on us year for year.
 We, whose rich acres have vanished -
 Never will we forgive -
 When all his masters have vanished we'll
 Tame him and live.

Our old Ganges flows through India
And where he flows always there is fruitfulness
And where he flows always there is hunger.
But thing's won't stay that way none the less.
 We, who have planted the rice-fields
 And watered all the vale
 Know that the day's coming soon when
 We'll have a meal.

Our old Nile flows down through Egypt.
Palaces and temples look upon its shore
And enslavement lives six thousand summers
But its days are numbered, that's for sure.
 We, that have built all those houses
 And piled up stone on stone
 We know the day's not far off when
 They'll be our own.

Mother Volga, our beloved!
Lenin was your son. He never waited long.
And the slave-chant of the boatmen perished
Drowned beneath the humming turbine's song.
 Stalingrad's our city's name.
 Here the arch-fiend came unstuck.
 Friends, wherever you may come on him -
 Strike as we struck.

Our old Amazon flows plainly
In Brazil and yet he's US property.
Big and strong he is and labours daily
For the masters that he cannot see.
 But one fine day now not distant -
 This solemn oath we've sworn -
 It'll be us he'll be working for,
 The native born.

SONG OF RIVERS (cont'd.)

Earth has so many mighty rivers
So that she of richest fruits must know no dearth.
But it's us, the proletariat, who are
The most fruitful river on earth.
 Friends, he is also the strongest
 And dams he can't abide -
 Over the earth he unlooses his
 Unturning tide
 Unturning tide.

(translation - Jack Mitchell)

IN PRAISE OF DOUBT

Praised be doubt! I advise you to greet
Cheerfully and with respect the man
Who tests your word like a bad penny.
I'd like you to be wise and not give
Your word with too much assurance.

Read history and see
The headlong flight of invincible armies.
Wherever you look
Impregnable strongholds collapse and
Even if the Armada was innumerable as it left port
The returning ships
Could be numbered.

Thus one day a man stood on the unattainable summit
And a ship reached the end of
The endless sea.

O beautiful the shaking of heads
Over the indisputable truth!
O brave the doctor's cure
Of the incurable patient!

But the most beautiful of all doubts
Is when the downtrodden and despondent raise their heads and
Stop believing in the strength
Of their oppressors.

Oh, how laboriously the new truth was fought for!
What sacrifices it cost!
How difficult it was to see
That things were thus and not thus!
With a sigh of relief one day a man entered it in the record
of knowledge.
For a long time perhaps it stands there, and many generations
Live with it and regard it as eternal wisdom.
And the learned scorn all who are ignorant of it.
And then it may happen that a suspicion arises, for new
experience
Makes the established truth open to question. Doubts spread
And then one day a man thoughtfully strikes it out
From the record of knowledge.

Deafened by commands, examined
For his fitness to fight by bearded doctors, inspected
By resplendent creatures with golden insignia, admonished
By solemn clerics who throw at him a book written by God
 himself
Instructed
By impatient school masters, stands the poor man and is told
That the world is the best of worlds and that the hole
In the roof of his hovel was planned by God in person.
Truly he finds it hard
To doubt this world.

There are the thoughtless who never doubt.
Their digestion is splendid, their judgement infallible.
They don't believe in the facts, they believe only in
 themselves.
When it comes to the point
The facts must go by the board. Their patience with themselves
Is boundless. To arguments
They listen with the ear of a police spy.

The thoughtless who never doubt
Meet the thoughtful who never act.
They doubt, not in prior to come to a decision but
To avoid a decision. Their heads
They use only for shaking. With anxious faces
They warn the crews of sinking ships that water is dangerous.
Beneath the murderer's axe
They ask themselves if he isn't human too.
Murmuring something
About the situation not yet being clarified, they go to bed,
Their only action is to vacillate.
Their favourite phrase is: not yet ripe for discussion.

Therefore, if you praise doubt
Do not praise
The doubt which is a form of despair.

What use is the ability to doubt to a man
Who can't make up his mind?
He who is content with too few reasons
May act wrongly
But he who needs too many
Remains inactive under danger.

IN PRAISE OF DOUBT (cont'd.)

You who are a leader of men, do not forget
That you are that because you doubted other leaders.
So allow the led
Their right to doubt.

SONG OF A LOVING WOMAN

III

Seven roses on the bush
Six belong to the wind
One will stay there, so there's just
One for me to find.

Seven times I'll summon you
Six times stay away
But the seventh, promise me
Come without delay.

SONG OF THE GENTLE BREEZE

Come here, my dearest, and make haste
No one dearer could I pick
But once your arm is round my waist
Don't try to be too quick.
 Learn from the plums in the autumn
 All golden on the trees.
 They fear the whirlwind's terrible strength
 And long for the gentle breeze.

You can scarcely feel that gentle breeze
It's like a whispering lullaby
Which makes the plums drop off the trees
Till on the ground they lie.
 Learn from the plums in the autumn
 All golden on the trees.
 They fear the whirlwind's terrible strength
 And long for the gentle breeze.

Oh, reaper, don't cut all the grass
But leave one blade to grow.
Don't drain the brimming wine-glass
Don't kiss me as you go.
 Learn from the plums in autumn
 All golden on the trees.
 They fear the whirlwind's terrible strength
 And long for the gentle breeze.

SEVENTH SONG OF THE GOD OF HAPPINESS

Friends, if you should my congregation
And that might well be worth a try
Know that you'll incur disapprobation
From those who throne on high.

For the gods who are famous and fine
Have banned - it's no surprise -
Little fat me to dwell for all time
In the pig-styes.

Take delight in a well-turned behind
Early masses won't buy you exemption
If in low things like this pleasure you find
You're clearly beyond all redemption.

Even a smile is a step out of line
Laughter is always suspicious.
Don't aim for the stars, and you're merely a swine
If you laugh you are one of the vicious.

I am the God of all things low
Of tongue and balls and more, sir.
For pleasure, everyone should know
Lies just above the floor, sir.

TO EAT OF THE MEAT WITH PLEASURE

To eat of the meat with pleasure, the juicy steak
And with the black bread, handbaked, sweet smelling
Cheese from the great wheel and
To drink cold beer out of the tankard
Is despised as low, but
I think, to go to your grave
Without having enjoyed a mouthful of good meat
Is inhuman, and I say this who myself
am a bad eater.

THE JOY OF GIVING

It surely is life's greatest joy
To give to those whose lot is hard
And with glad hands, impulsively
To scatter splendid gifts abroad.

What rose is fairer than the face
Of one to whom we play the donors?
Behold his hands, o highest bliss
Encumbered with our gracious favours.

Nothing can give so keen a pleasure
As helping each and every one.
What I possess I cannot treasure
Without a mind to pass it on.

LUCK

Who wants to escape needs luck.
Without luck no-one is safe from the cold
From the hunger or human beings.
Luck is help.

I had lots of luck, that's why
I'm still here
But looking into the future I recognize, trembling
How much luck I still need.
Luck is help.

He who has luck is strong
A good fighter and a wise teacher
Is one with luck.
Luck is help.

SOLIDARITY SONG

Peoples of the world, together
Join to serve the common cause!
So it feeds us all for ever
See to it that it's now yours.
Forward, without forgetting
Where our strength can be seen now to be!
When starving or when eating
Forward, not forgetting
Our solidarity!

If we want to make this certain
We'll need you and your support.
It's yourselves you'll be deserting
If you rat on your own sort.
Forward, without forgetting
Where our strength can be seen now to be!
When starving or when eating
Forward, not forgetting
Our solidarity!

Workers of the world, uniting
That's the way to lose your chains.
Mighty regiments now are fighting
That no tyranny remains!
Forward, without forgetting
Till the concrete question is hurled
When starving or when eating:
Whose tomorrow is tomorrow?
And whose world is the world?

COMMUNISM IS THE MODERATE WAY

To call for the overthrow of the existing order
Seems terrible. But that which exists is no order.

To seek sanctuary in force
Seems evil.
But since that which is always being done is force
It isn't anything particular.

Communism isn't the inconcievable
Of which only the smallest part can be realized.
On the contrary before it hasn't been realized completely.
There exists no condition which even an insensitive person
could consider bearable.

Communism is really the smallest demand,
The most obvious moderate sensible thing.
He who stands against it
Is not somebody who thinks differently,
But a non-thinker or one who thinks only of himself.
An enemy of humanity
Terrible
Evil
Insensitive
One who wants the utmost which realizes even in smallest part
Will plunge all humanity into chaos.

REMEMBERING MARIE A.

It was a day in that blue month September
Silent beneath a plum tree's slender shade
I held her there, my love so pale and silent
As if she were a dream that must not fade.
Above us in the shining summer heaven
There was a cloud my eyes dwelt long upon
It was quite white and very high above us
Then I looked up, and found that it had gone.

And since that day so many moons, in silence
Have swum across the sky and gone below.
The plumtrees surely have been chopped for firewood
And if you ask, how does that love seem now?
I must admit: I really can't remember
And yet I know what you are trying to say.
But what her face was like I know no longer
I only know: I kissed it on that day.

As for the kiss, I'd long ago forgot it
But for the cloud that floated in the sky
I know that still, and shall for ever know it
It was quite white and moved in very high.
It may be that the plum trees still are blooming
That woman's seventh child may now be there
And yet that cloud had only bloomed for minutes
When I looked up, it vanished on the air.