

A General Declaration

(214 years after the facts)

**The lion shook its head in the purple light of dusk
Mane and dust danced a rough galaxy in fading knives of light
Freedom lifted its head to sniff out tomorrow's bloodied feet
Always running quickly along the horizons sharp edge
A lie cannot hide
even in the darkness of the heart
Lies are always naked,
trembling uncontrollably before the solemn face of Truth.**

The General in Chief
Jean Jacques De Salines
To the scattered masses
214 years after the facts

Was it not enough to have forced us out of our skins,
cultures, an entire continent
To have ensanguined that place for well over 4 centuries
Was it not enough to have exposed us to the brutality of France
We who have dared to be free
We who took the faintest whispers of hope into our mouths
and taught them to roar in our hearts
We who have had the ancient fruits of our labours gathered
and fed to infant empires
Watched them grow strong on the muscle of our young
Watched their roots take deep on the tears of our old
Even here in the land of the past
Names like Bonaparte, Columbus and Cortez are monuments
recalled with a hero's air by some
I am sick to my soul
My eyes filled with ghosts that do not rest
To see, to know that it is still the same where you are now.
Allow me, from where I stand
To address you the departed
You The yet born
You The living
A history littered with great lies walks proudly on stolen legs
Because the acceptance of your hearts are as muscle
As sinew
As tissue
As bone to it
You yourself are the very lungs of this lie
And although I have proudly witnessed millions defy death
in the face of freedom
Though many nations have followed in our footsteps
Your feet slow and your hearts full of fear
I ask what good is any of it if the story remains the same?
What is said of you despite all you do?
All we have done?
Above you the great weight of empires
run by a few
hangs as a dark cloud
As a great weight
As an impenetrable ceiling
And though you feel light upon your faces
And rejoice in that
I assure you it is not the sun
Happy are they in having never suffered under the scourge
of that which sought to destroy you
they can only wish for your welfare
It is you who must see
Construct new bodies for yourselves
To live in a new world of your own making
Be bold enough to make a world in which to live
Every man is a nation now
To his own flag and creed
Every voice then is an anthem
Every eye is a historian
Every mind an infinite book
Write!
On the gift of your blank pages
Write a tomorrow in which their names sound more like
the truth of them
For the Cocoa and gold
Golden sugar cane and precious stones
That all reek of blood do not anoint them
Remove them from their stations and call the names of your
own fallen if you were to choose saints
We were the oxen of an old age
The grass and water know our truth
The air and sun have witnessed
They are not people of the earth
Just look at their disharmonious empires
And when you learn their true names do not forget the way
your mouths twisted to form them
Do not forget how your tongue went into a fit having learned
of the lies it was forced to repeat
Record all this
Collect the truth solid
Crushed in your palms it assumes the colours of the earth
Feed your children the hued powder
The Browns, the reds the blues of this planet
And watch as generations call
themselves beautiful
Name themselves strong
We the blind who struggle to stomach our reflections
must dream in this dark
History tells you that we were butchers
From where I stood the future wanted to call you slaves
I did not let them brand you
They have misspelt the names of your ancestors
Will you do us the honour of learning to pronounce them
correctly
And never choosing a cowards long death
Over the chance to be truly free.

By Muhammad Muwakil

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