



"Flaming Faggots"

when I no longer have to suspect myself of being resistant to struggle
for wanting the collective help of my brothers
in fighting my own male supremacy,
for wanting to embrace in real arms all comrades brace enough
to risk with me the righting of old old wrongs,
no more the victimizer and victim,
leader and led,
lover and loved one.

Listen! No matter how powerless we are as yet,
both our pain and our demands give us every right
to face any roundtrip U.S. cane-cutter who tells us
we don't know what it's like to be oppressed.
He's really talking about his own white butch self,
marking himself as a collaborator in our oppression,
signer of the current Gender Nonaggression Pact
with the likes of David Rockefeller.
Machismo is fascism,
as the sisters of the Young Lords Party have said.

-- All the more reason why we have to get ready.
The enemy thinks that our demands aren't important,
that we won't fight for them By Any Means Necessary,
that we will go on being that meek and unarmed people who
"are slaves or are subject to slavery at any given moment."
We'd better make The Man understand right now
how wrong he is.
We're fighting a total fight in which it remains to be seen
whether he can ever be part of the solution
in any revolutionary future.

Because we're the majority -- and we're rising up,
we're on the move:
we're all those people
who can't and won't and mustn't fit into his pattern
of white male sado-dominance,
though we have so far been psychically lobotomized by him,
gang-raped in prison and the army,
fired from jobs or refused them, blackmailed, extorted, jeered at,
beaten up, spat on,
and finding no relief in alcoholism, addiction, self-mutilation,
delusions of grandeur, no relief in his hireling psychiatrists
who get rich telling us it's all personal, not political --
our fault, not his -- our hang-up, our guilt, our shame
-- no wonder we are finally driven to suicide
when we see no way out of his lies.
When witches were burned in the middle ages,
the Inquisitors ordered the good burghers (all of them men, of course)
to scour the dungeons for jailed queers,
drag them out and tie them together in bundles,
mix them in with the bundles of wood at the feet of the woman,
and set them on fire
to kindle a flame
foul enough for a witch to burn in.

The sticks of wood in bundles like that were called faggots
and that's what they called the queers, too, and call us still,
meanin' our extinction in the complete extermination,
annihilation and genocide their only response to any heretical blasphemy
against a god-given maleness.

Isn't it time we said yes,
yes to faggot,
proud to reclaim our martyrs -- who else will have them,
to see them and be we or the lovers, we flaming faggots who
embrace the call of final rebellion, women already blazing,
we outliving the flames of this time, whose plumes glowing with relief
as the bonds of an expiring masculinity
glow like wicks, then break, slipping from all our backs.

In that holocaust, I will risk my whole self
and body
even should I perish.

My melting flesh --
My screams are only the death of everything they stand for.
My pain short-circuits so quickly I can't believe it.
My hand is a trellis of fire.
I can do it. It's easier than I thought.
The crisp odor has stopped.
It's they who are fading away, perishing,
our liberation their execution.
My screams are bullets, blood stuttering through their skin.
I can't hear my own words anymore except I think
we must all still be chanting, demanding, welcoming

freedom freedom freedom



"So you're for the revolution," somebody always seems to say, rubbing
his white male macho hands.

"Well, then, it's time to get serious, you know.
It had to come to this--
It's going on all over the globe,"

-- as if I didn't know
the whole third world is going up in flames
and unless they win, the species is in danger,
imperialism the ecocidal enemy, in fact, of all life everywhere.

OK, if that's what you mean, right on, etcetera, I say,
but what's the catch?

"Nothing, except that, of course,
to be on ourside, on the side of the people,
you'll certainly be willing to give up
certain little quirks
that hinder all of us getting down to maximum work
in the minimum of time left to us."

Quirks?

"Well, like your homosexuality, like wearing your hair too long, like
acting -- well, just generally being effeminate, unmanly;
that gets the people uptight as much as women wanting to be en-
neers or something.
We don't have time for games."

Sorry to report this typically tiresome stereotype of a thousand con-
versations, but it's exactly here that I say
Absolutely not!
and he says, "Utopian faker, faggot, fairy, fuck off!"
and I do.

Because my revolution is to the left of his,
because his would preserve the old Prison of Gender which brutalizes
millions of people, its inmates, daily,
because he would actually jail me for being queer as soon as he was
in power;
and therefore it had better not be him who wins,
my comrades, it had better be all of us
who refuse to settle for
enslavement as the price of freedom,
who will fight and die -- and win --
for exactly what we are and want
and have a right to and nothing less:
a revolution total and permanent and never-ending.

To say it one last time, wiping out the kinds of human want
the rich white straight man has afflicted the world with
will be easy once we win the world-wide war against his madness
and are free to begin the work of revolution itself.
Who among us wouldn't volunteer for that?
Who wouldn't put in whatever hours are needed
in whatever free fields and factories
until we get the whole species
on a non-crisis basis, everyone having
enough to eat, enough of everything.

But with all of our liberated machines and imaginations,
that might require everyone in the world
-- a statistical fact --
to "work" several whole hours a week. Gladly, gladly --
because everything would belong to us --
and no one could fire us or starve us or jail us or anything.
But my revolution is beyond that.

Wine catches glimpses of what we could be
when there is no more religion or family or male domination
or money or property or mine or yours or forced obedience
when women are free
not only to shape their own lives
but to realize a vision of liberation
that will shape the lives of all of us

When men are able
to hug and kiss babies not for show,
but able to care for them in every sense
and for each other

when I'm no longer called queer
for wishing my father had held me with a love like that,
for loving still any --re stray glimmer of tenderness in a man,
for wanting to touch that transmutation in the flesh,
but only to share, not to hoard, such a miracle

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