

The Life and Death of Joan of Arc

I. Visions

I have seen them.
I have seen them.
In the fields,
Shimmering.
Diaphanous creatures
Of a higher plane,
Or fevered imaginings of my brain;
Either way,
I have seen them.

Demonic or divine,
Real or in my mind,
All I know is that to them I surrender;
And on my knees, I weep at their splendor.
I have seen them.

They speak to me in whispers,
They tell me they are holy,
But I know that what they want from me is blood,
And to send young men to choking deaths
Beneath the hoof-churned mud.
They tell me God has chosen me,
And I know,
If that is so,
I have no choice but to serve Him in my fashion;
But still I fear to share in His passion.

I have seen them.
I have seen them.
I know nothing of
The wages of war;
Is the soul of France worth spilling blood and dying
for?
Either way, this is my chore,
For, their words, I shall heed them.
Fragrant fields, I must leave them.
I have seen them.
I have seen them.
I have seen them.

II. War Chant

They rank by rank before us fell,
As though by God 'twas preordained;
The weary soul of France,
So beaten down and crushed,
Was beginning to rise again!

Like the Angel of Death I ride on high,
And to the mighty heavens yell;
And the swords of the oppressed,
So white-hot with rage,
Send our foes to Hell!

But the blood on their blades
Is blood on my hands;
How can this be sanctified?
How can this be justified?
If "blessed be the meek,"
If we must "turn the other cheek,"
How can this be part of God's plan?

A thousand widows I have made,
A thousand orphans in their wombs;
The flow'r of England's youth,
So rosy-cheeked with life,
Are hastened to their tombs.

The siege of Orleans now lifted,
The tide of this eternal war now shifted,
The king in grandeur crowned,
And my lowly name throughout the world renowned.
Can I be sure it wasn't for the glory?
Not His, but mine,
Or maybe all of womankind?
But despite the laurels and the praise,
Despite my hopes for future days,
I fear a bitter ending to this story.

The battle-drums are muffled now;
The craven king ignores my cries,
And enemies surround me,
Whispers in the night,
Plotting my demise.

Our chain of vict'ries at an end,
The Englishmen have taken me.
No ransom has been paid,
No gold to spare for the life of a Maid;
My thankless king has forsaken me.

III. The Trial

(Adapted from excerpts of the trial of Joan of Arc)

I shall willingly swear to tell you
What I know about this trial,
But I shall never say everything that I know.
About the revelations I have been given by God,
Even if you threatened to cut off my head,
I would not reveal anything.

If you knew me,
If you truly knew me,
About my life,
And what I have done,
You would know you have no reason
To condemn me;
I have done nothing
Except by revelation from God.

Beware!
Beware of saying you are my judge;
For indeed, I have been sent by God,
And I ought not to be here before you.
You are putting yourself in great spiritual danger.
As for me,
I know that people are sometimes hanged
For telling the truth.

It is finished.

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I have one good Master:
The Lord, in whom,
And in no other,
I place all trust.

I look only to my God.
I look only to my God.
I look only to my God.

Even if I saw the fire being prepared,
I would only say what I have already said,
And nothing else.

IV. The Passion

Forgive them.
Forgive them.
Forgive them, Lord.
Forgive them, Lord,
For they know not what they do.
Forgive them, Lord,
For they know not what they've done,
The smugness on their faces
At this vict'ry they think they've won.

Now the fires have been lit,
And when the flames have burned,
And when the dust I am,
To dust has been returned,
Men will still kill and rape,
And wage their bloody war;
What will the senseless waste
Of my life have been for?

Oh God! You have used me,
And in my innocence abused me;
Still I place all in your hands,
Submit to your impossible demands,
And throw away my worthless life
At your command.

My God,
My God,
Why have you forsaken me?
Why have you forsaken me?

Father, into your hands
I commend my spirit.