

**[1] statement to the court (2010)**

Statement to the Court Upon Being Convicted of Violating the Sedition Act  
Delivered by Eugene Debs, September 18, 1918:

Your Honor, years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on Earth. I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it, and while there is a criminal element, I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.

Your Honor, I have stated in this court that I am opposed to the social system in which we live; that I believe in a fundamental change – but if possible by peaceable and orderly means. Standing here this morning, I recall my boyhood. At 14 I went to work in a railroad shop; at 16 I was firing a freight engine on a railroad. I remember all the hardships and privations of that earlier day, and from that time until now my heart has been with the working class. I could have been in Congress long ago. I have preferred to go to prison.

I am thinking this morning of the men in the mills and the factories; of the men in the mines and on the railroads. I am thinking of the women who for a paltry wage are compelled to work out their barren lives; of the little children who in this system are robbed of their childhood and in their tender years are seized in the remorseless grasp of Mammon and forced into the industrial dungeons, there to feed the monster machines while they themselves are being starved and stunted, body and soul. I see them dwarfed and diseased and their little lives broken and blasted because in this high noon of Christian civilization money is still so much more important than the flesh and blood of childhood. In very truth gold is god today and rules with pitiless sway in the affairs of men.

In this country – the most favored beneath the bending skies – we have vast areas of the richest and most fertile soil, material resources in inexhaustible abundance, the most marvelous productive machinery on earth, and millions of eager workers ready to apply their labor to that machinery to produce in abundance for every man, woman, and child – and if there are still vast numbers of our people who are the victims of poverty and whose lives are an unceasing struggle all the way from youth to old age, until at last death comes to their rescue and lulls these hapless victims to dreamless sleep, it is not the fault of the Almighty: it cannot be charged to nature, but it is due entirely to the outgrown social system in which we live that ought to be abolished not only in the interest of the toiling masses but in the higher interest of all humanity.

I am opposing a social order in which it is possible for one man who does absolutely nothing that is useful to amass a fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars, while millions of men and women who work all the days of their lives secure barely enough for a wretched existence. This order of things cannot always endure.

Your Honor, I ask no mercy and I plead for no immunity. I realize that finally the right must prevail. I never so clearly comprehended as now the great struggle between the powers of greed and exploitation on the one hand and upon the other the rising hosts of industrial freedom and social justice.

I can see the dawn of the better day for humanity. When the mariner, sailing over tropic seas, looks for relief from his weary watch, he turns his eyes toward the Southern Cross, burning luridly above the tempest-vexed ocean. As the midnight approaches, the Southern Cross begins to bend, the whirling worlds change their places, and with starry finger-points the Almighty marks the passage of time upon the dial of the universe, and though no bell may beat the glad tidings, the lookout knows that the midnight is passing and that relief and rest are close at hand. Let the people everywhere take heart of hope, for the cross is bending, the midnight is passing, and joy cometh with the morning.

I am now prepared to receive your sentence.

*Text: Eugene Debs*

**[2] Consent (2014)**

i want you  
i want to

i want you  
i want to

i want you  
i want to

I do.

I was thinking penetrating thoughts about you  
It will be good, we can do it, and we need it.

It can be taken from me – even from the shirt on my back.

I was thinking penetrating thoughts about you  
It will be good, we can do it, and we need it  
I miss you too, in a heart-aching kind of way.

All of it shall be mortgageable and bound as security –  
It can be taken from me – even from the shirt on my back.

I do.

I just took care of your daughter.

\* \* \*

Declare your consent  
The missing you hurts  
You'll be in it soon  
What a way to feel  
Who gives this woman

\* \* \*

i want you  
i want to

All of it shall be mortgageable –  
I just took care of your daughter  
and bound as security –  
she said you could take a picture

i want you  
i want to

I just took care of your daughter and made sure  
she was safe  
she was so in love with me that night  
I ask you to state your intentions

All of it shall be mortgageable and bound as security –  
it can be taken from me, even from the shirt on my back –  
during my lifetime and after this lifetime,  
this day and forever.

I just took care of your daughter and made sure  
she was safe  
she said you could take a picture  
she looks dead lmao

\* \* \*

I do.

I was thinking penetrating thoughts about you  
It will be good, we can do it, and we need it.  
I miss you too, in a heart-aching kind of way  
I'm really looking forward to adding to it

All of it can be mortgageable and bound as security –  
it can be taken from me – even from the shirt on my back –  
during my lifetime and after this lifetime  
this day and forever

How have you been holding out on me  
with that picture for so long?  
she said you could take a picture  
oh i am looking at all my pictures of you

You don't even want to know what I'm imagining  
you doing right now  
she was so in love with me that night  
Declare your consent before God  
I just took care of your daughter when she was drunk

\* \* \*

This original amount,  
I accept upon myself and my heirs after me –  
It can be paid from the best part of my property and possessions  
that I own under all the heavens.  
All of it shall be mortgageable and bound as security –  
it can be taken from me – even from the shirt on my back –

during my lifetime and after this lifetime –  
from this day and forever.

even from the shirt on my back  
she said you could take a picture  
I refuse to get excited

Will you accept children lovingly from God?  
Declare your consent before God and the church.

I felt knowing what was right  
she looks dead Imao  
i just took care of your daughter

but i also know we are equal to almost any...  
she said you could take a picture

Who gives this woman?

*Text: love letters written by the composer in 2006;  
The Catholic Rite of Marriage;  
Traditional Jewish Ketubah (wedding contract);  
text messages used as evidence in the Steubenville Rape Trial, 2013*

### Requiem (2016)

#### [3] Requiem aeternam

Rest, soon rest forever.  
Only light: no earth, no body. Only song.  
Pure sound.  
Rest, soon rest forever. Light without time.

#### [4] Kyrie eleison

I hope for peace.  
I yearn for rest.  
I hope for peace.

#### [5] Dies irae

This day, this day of wrath  
shall consume the world in ashes, we knew the fault-line.  
We tremble in fear  
as we watch the waves approach  
The trumpet-call shatters the troubled landscape,  
We listen.  
The earth is stunned.  
This day, this day of wrath  
was written in rock,  
in the rough sands which we moved again and again.  
We all must die. And then what?  
We widened the fault-line with our desires,  
until it erupted in anger, a revenge no longer restrained.  
This day, this day of wrath  
shall consume the world in ashes. We fall to our knees,  
our faces upturned.  
We pray. Spare us, spare us.  
We all must die.  
And then what? Will we rest?

#### [6] Sanctus

Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!  
Our voices rise in song.  
The sky is full of light.  
The burning of light high above us!

#### [7] Agnus Dei

There is a lamb in the field, bleating alone. No mother.  
He waits for someone,  
for some act of kindness  
to forestall death.

**[8] Psalm: De profundis clamavi**

From the depths, I cry out. Hear my voice.  
Let your ears be attentive. My faults are many;  
I am ashamed.  
Forgive me.  
I follow my soul towards hope.  
From the morning watch, even until night I hope.  
For hope brings forgiveness and light. Hope will forgive us our faults.  
May our souls be peaceful. Hope, light, hope.

**[9] Lux aeterna**

As we die, there will be light, burning without cease.  
Always light.  
And song without breath or vibration.  
And this is the moment of death, which is frozen and needn't end.

**[10] Libera me**

Death unwraps me until  
I am naked,  
standing newly freed  
in the place where I used to cast a shadow

*Text: Hannah Lash*