

Strike!

by Amado V. Hernandez

The work in the fields
ended.

Machines in the factory
halted.

Machines and docks
idled.

And the people
take the rap.

Investments and goods
wasting.

Everything going to pieces,
Strike! Strike!

Every stubborn,
stalwart soul
has struck.

Once-oppressed minds,
once-bowed heads,
are lifted, erect.

The poor "little man,"
victimized,
rises up.

Why should not
those who plant the seed
share the harvest?

He who raises
and roasts the pig,
dies of hunger.

He who weaves clothes
for the rich
goes naked.

He who mints the coins
Must beg.

He who built the altars
lives in the gutter.

He who plows up
earth's riches
is afflicted by debt.

But as long as there is a world
where men live like beasts,
like inhuman slaves;
as long as wages remain
mere pittance or alms;
as long as those who are exploited,
who die in harness,
suffer the pangs of hunger;
as long as getting a job
in an abasing business;
as long as the many are sacrificed
to the greed of the few;
as long as those who do no sweat,
grow fatter daily;
as long as the masters do not fear
man or God,
and crooked laws
protect the sheltered few;
the strike must come
and sow its vengeance—
the strike that has no end—
storm, fire, lightning, thunder;
the blade of an axe
that brings judgment—
until the worker's rights
are recognized, until he is redeemed
from prisons and from early graves;
until labor, the new Christ
nailed on the cross,
is risen once more.