

Vow for Freedom's Sake

by Amado V. Hernandez

I was imprisoned by the enemies of freedom—
I fought for freedom from hunger, fear, and for the
liberty to speak,
to worship God and to reject false idols.
Thanks, a thousand thanks.
I know I am not alone . . .
Tens, hundreds, thousands, millions—victims of a
like fate—
will be the inheritors of a glorious tomorrow.

The thousands degraded in prisons,
whose innocence, like mine, has made them guilty;
the thousands tortured and persecuted
with neither trial nor verdict in an honorable court.
The countless ones
who have been victimized
in fields and villages, in cities and in towns;
in hovels and tenements gutted by fire
how many living souls were buried without names,
without a cross?
We will not forget, they will not be forgotten
their voices reach the ears of tomorrow's avengers.

Yes, my body is imprisoned,
but the darting mind and the throbbing heart
will never be made captive by steel or gold;
my dreams and my thoughts,
together with the free wind and the sun's light,
the bird's chirping, the wave's tumult, the
bullet's rumble,
in the protest of the people against betrayal, against
senseless orders,
in man's vow to fight the leaders without conscience,
who thrive on evil;
my soul that knows no weariness will go with them,
till my country gains its own pure promised land—
and though they crack my skull, and even kill me—
on my skull, engraved in raw blood, they will read:
"This is a Filipino who never would surrender
to the brutish enemies of freedom."