

# *The Chain*

*An epic poem*



Hisham Hauari

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The Chain by Hisham Hauari

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# THE CHAIN

Hisham Hauari





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# FOREWORD

Poetry is marked by spontaneity and subtlety of expression. Generally, it carries deep emotions and feelings as well as pearls of wisdom. It is the earliest form of literature in all human communities and was the main vehicle for sages, scholars and scribes to describe their perception of human life and of the world. In the past, it was synonymous with creative expression and writing.

In the society in which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born, poetry was the hallmark of artistic achievement. The influence that the poets exerted is perhaps comparable to what the media moguls do today. Even though there were poets who were opposed to his message and sought to deride him through their poetic composition, the Prophet did not inhibit poetry. He encouraged poets among his companions to dedicate their literary talents to higher purposes. Accepting literature as a means to promote what is good and prevent what is evil, the Prophet motivated them to make its best use.

There were poets in Makkah such as Abdullah ibn Ziba'ra, Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith, Thirar ibn Hattab and Hubayra ibn Abu Wahb, as well as those in Madinah, like Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf and Rabi ibn Abil-Houkayk who used their poetic arsenals to spread misinformation and disinformation about the Prophet. Against them, the Prophet had a galaxy of versifiers who used their poetic voices to counteract such misuses and in the service of truth and justice.

Most notable among them were Hassan ibn Thabit, Ka'b ibn Malik and Abdullah ibn Rawahah (may God be pleased with them). Hassan ibn Thabit was an extremely illustrious poet known across the Arab world. Different ruling dynasties invited him to compose and recite poetry at their courts. He embraced Islam at the age of 60 when he was at the peak of his literary career and lived another 60 years as a Muslim. Hence, he is called the owner of two lives. After Hassan ibn Thabit's acceptance of Islam, the Prophet



encouraged him to continue to compose poetry which he did to defend Islam and the noble character of the Prophet from the vicious caricaturing of hostile artists.

The status of Hassan ibn Thabit was so elevated that in the masjid of the Prophet there was a special pulpit for him to stand and recite poetry. In an earlier essay titled “Good literature and bad literature: Debate on Islam and poetry” (2014), I argued that it is wrong to brand Islam as a dull and dry religion and to say that it hinders literary creativity. In the Qur’an, there is a surah (chapter) called al-Shu’ara (the Poets). Towards the end of this chapter, God describes two types of poets: the lying and immoral ones who are followed by the misguided, and the honoured and honest ones who remain connected with their Creator and use their talents to vindicate themselves once they are wronged.

Similarly, in hadith collections, there is a chapter on poetry. The Prophet is reported to have said that some poetry is wisdom. His fondness for poetry transcended religious boundaries, as he was more concerned with the content of a poem than with the (religious) identity of the poet. He liked even non-Muslim poets for their decency and sincerity. For example, the poet Umayya ibn Abu Salt was not a Muslim, but the Prophet appreciated his poetry.

The hadith reporter 'Amr bin Sharid related on the authority of his father that the Prophet asked him to recite poems. After listening to the poetry of Umayya ibn Abu Salt, the Prophet said: “He (Umayya bin Abu Salt) was about to become a Muslim” or, as transmitted on the authority of Ibn Mahdi, “he was almost a Muslim in his poetry” (Muslim).

Conversely, the Prophet abhorred poetry that contained mischievous, spiteful content. As Abu Sa'id Khudri relates: We were going with Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him). As we reached the place (known as) Arj, there met (us) a poet who had been reciting a poem. Thereupon Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: Catch the Satan or detain the Satan, for filling the belly of a person with pus is better than stuffing his brain with poetry. (Muslim)

All these suggest that Islam promotes poetry that falls under the category of beneficial knowledge and disapproves of literary activity that spreads falsehood or contributes to harmful behaviours. In the glorious days of Islam – during the time of the Prophet and afterwards – Muslim societies produced a remarkable corpus of literary work, which Marmaduke Pickthall discussed in his book titled *The Cultural Side of Islam* (1927).

## *Foreword*

However, the decline in the glory of Muslims also impacted this field. In today's world, Muslims are not known as the pacesetters in creative production or in literary scholarship. Mimicry and imitative behaviours seem to have crippled the creative faculty of many of them. However, the need to use poetry to promote good values has not been exhausted. Muslims should come forward to tell the world who they are and what they stand for. Literature is a very good way to do that. It is in that sense, I congratulate the poet Hisham Hauari on producing this poem.

In some way, the poem *The Chain* contains a brief history of the human race from a Qur'anic perspective. Full of historical references, it provides a chain of major events in human history and ends with reflections on the contemporary world. The poem is long considering the reduced attention span of the readers of the twenty-first century. But classical world literature is replete with longer poems which have survived the test of time. Firdawsi, Rumi, Milton and Byron – to name only a few – all wrote long poems. I would invite the reader to enjoy and appreciate the poem *The Chain* and benefit from the wisdom that it contains.

Md. Mahmudul Hasan  
**International Islamic University Malaysia**  
23 January 2022



# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Islamic Literary Society was founded in 2019 with the aim of promoting, fostering and developing a heightened appreciation of authors and literary works of classical and contemporary scholarship. This is accomplished by way of readings, book launches, publications, talks by published authors and other speakers, critical reviews, events, online discussion and membership meetings. The aim is to encourage the revival of Islamic readership in our day to day lives and to increase literary awareness among ILS members and the general public.

We are now pleased to announce its first publication authored by Hisham Hauari. It is an engaging poem that tells the tale of mankind from the beginning to the present. Though a true history, it is fused with an Islamic account of some things that may not be historically demonstrable. The book evokes various emotions: a pleasure to read, interesting and also grim. The seeds of the idea to write an historical account of humanity had been sown in the author's mind over a decade ago. The result is the culmination of a succinct book called *The Chain*.

Imran Kamaly  
**Publications Manager**



# PREFACE

**I**t has been said that a writer should never try and say everything, but only what is true. For my part I cannot conceive of one without the other. What limits me is only the length of time that I am given to live and the depths to which I am able to reach.

A useful analogy is that of the free deep-sea diver. The deeper one goes, the shorter the time one can spend there and look around. But what he sees, perhaps very few men before him have seen, and in telling them about it, he may inspire others, younger and more able, to go deeper. That is the aim of this poem. To get you, the reader, to not only see as much of what makes up this thing we call history but to comprehend it in both its simplicity and complexity.

As for the rest, you already know the answer. History is nothing more than the efforts of Humanity to come to terms with and accept the demands that life makes of it and the limits that death proscribes. Notice I have said Humanity and not Man, or woman. If there is one thing we are more aware of today than perhaps at any other time, it is our collective destiny. We are of individual worth only to the degree that we work towards the alleviation of the suffering of our fellow human beings, whether they are within close proximity or separated by oceans and continents.

This is 'The Chain' of the title. It is the humanitarian quality of the links between us that make us strong or weak as a species. History has no more important truth to impart than this one. Our greatest moments are those when we sacrifice for others. Our most shameful, when we do not. What is true for the individual is true for a group, whether that be a Village or a Nation.

Wars are no more than the apparent manifestation of a spiritual war that does not cease within the individual against the selfishness of acquisition and the vanity of exclusion. The greatest struggle is within, not without. That is why billions revere those who have mastered themselves in order to set others free. Men become inhumane to the degree that they kill the humanity in themselves. That is true for the person sitting opposite you on the train as it is to a Plato or a Hitler.

## *Preface*

So as you read this poem, think of it a mirror in which there is reflected back at you, not only the image of you as a human being like all the other human beings that have come and gone before you, but also in which the present can be seen, receding, like a veritable landscape, thousands of years into the past and future.

Hisham Hauari  
London 2021



# **THE CHAIN**



Something stirs inside of me;  
Is it time, or eternity?  
How swift it leaps from tips of trees  
To travel across galaxies.  
Without ears to hear, or eyes to see,  
I remember things once told to me.  
Of creatures pure and made of light  
Told to bow to some new sight.  
A figure strange and made of clay  
Raised above them on this day.  
One does not kneel and makes protest;  
Saying that his form is best.  
Made of flame, unsoiled by smoke,  
For him to bow would be a joke.  
The devil frets, 'I won't repent!  
To prove you wrong is my intent.'

And of a garden in the sky  
Where no one has to die.  
Where streams run white as an eye  
And fabled creatures speak and fly.  
About a couple and a tree;  
And mention of bad company.  
They eat the fruit and seal their doom,  
And exit bliss like from a room.  
To labour now with sweaty brow  
And meet the body's needs somehow.  
With sorrow and humility  
They mourn the lost proximity.  
Forgiven, yes; but still some blame.  
Perhaps a chance to come again.  
The little ones are taught to fear  
He who brought their parents here.  
Between two siblings there will come  
The intrigues of the mentioned one.

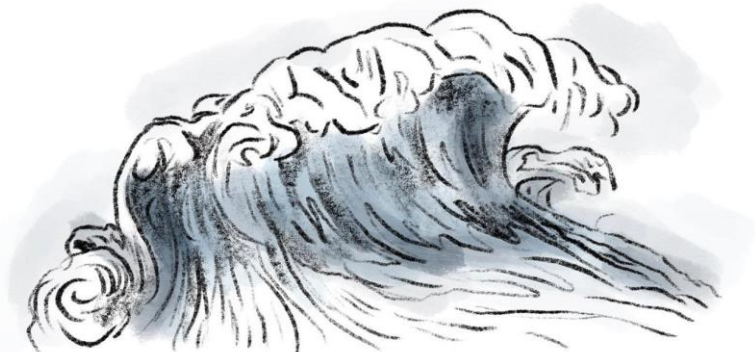
*The Chain*

And a seed of envy sown  
Inside the head of a brother grown.  
Envy now will murder spawn  
And war between men is born.

**M**en and woman multiply  
And spread out beneath the sky.  
The devil's efforts will not wane;  
To see us lose is his aim.  
First, he will imply  
The best among us will not die:  
'Let them live on in wood and stone  
To replace what's gone with flesh and bone.'  
'Oh my people,' Noah said,  
'I have advice for you:  
Forsake the worship of false gods  
And follow what is true.  
Desist from violence borne of lust  
And come back to your senses.  
He who has created you  
Will forgive you these offences.  
To cap it off you will receive  
A joy that does not fade;  
And perhaps avert from you  
A torment like-was made.  
Do not belittle what I say;  
Am I not from you?  
Would you prefer a foreigner  
To tell you what is true.  
My Lord I call them night and day;  
They do not listen and bar the way  
For you to come and give them peace  
From him whose hatred will not cease.'  
Screams perpetual! Screams of terror!  
Screams too late of pride and error.

*The Chain*

Screams perpetual! Screams of panic!  
Flingers slip from peaks of granite.  
Screams perpetual! Screams no more...  
Bodies sinking to the ocean floor...



**T** Truths half remembered,  
Half forgotten- who can say for sure?  
What was once as clear as day  
Now in the realms of lore.  
Towers built to reach the stars  
And read them like a book.  
Temple scribes spinning tales  
From where people fear to look.  
Priest make kings;  
Kings make priests, in this fertile land.  
A blueprint left for all to follow  
Still written in the sand.  
With science strange and labour forced  
To make the universe stand still.  
A thirst for immortality  
That petrifies the will.  
Born to Ur is Abraham  
A stranger to his time

*The Chain*

Who sees gods everywhere  
But says, 'None of them are mine.'  
With concern he begs his father  
To consider and suspect  
That the idols in his shop  
Can neither shelter nor protect.  
'Oh my father, verily,  
In error you exist!'  
'Oh Abraham, I'll stone you  
If in this insolence you persist.'  
With excuses made  
And absent from the feast,  
Now in the temple all alone  
With the wooden beasts.  
When the people came to bow  
And saw their idols smashed to bits,  
No one could they think to blame  
Except that rebel in their midst.  
They searched the city high and low  
And brought Abraham to check.  
'Ask the one with lips of stone  
And that big axe around his neck.  
Worship what your hands have made?  
I cannot pay that any mind.  
It grieves me, yes, but I see  
We are off a different kind.'  
'It's too much for us all,  
Let's go and see the king.'  
Who at first sight is baffled  
At the sight of him.  
'My Lord,' said Abraham,  
Dispenses life and death.' 'So  
do I,' exclaimed the king, In  
a single breath.  
And to prove his point

*The Chain*

In a manner he thought best,  
A pair of captives summoned  
To put the argument to rest  
One of them is given an ambiguous reprieve;  
The other from his neck  
Does his head most swiftly leave!  
'From the East  
Does my Lord awake the sun;  
From the West,  
Can you make it come?'  
Enough of this; migration it will be!  
To see if there are others  
Whom God has made like me.'  
When he's old,  
Some strange news to come:  
That after all these years,  
He will have a son.  
'Oh my boy, I had a dream  
That I must slaughter you!'  
'Oh my father, if God so wills  
Then you must see it through.'  
So the head did he grip  
And press against a rock  
With blade against the vein  
And satan there to mock.  
But before the blade will move to  
Slice such tender skin,  
One who is Most Merciful  
Is merciful to him.

**I**n a dream, an omen comes  
Of an Israelite  
Who will end a Pharaoh's rule  
With unsuspecting might.  
To see this does not come to pass

*The Chain*

An order will be given:  
Through every newborn male  
A sword must now be driven.  
Fearfulness and secrecy  
The traffic of the hour,  
But in the flow of sweetened blood  
Blooms a precious flower.  
A mother's faith in God unseen  
Will save her from despair,  
Even as the basket floats  
Towards the tyrant's lair.  
The Pharaoh's queen a token sees  
To keep it as her own.  
Not suspecting what a judgment comes  
Into her husband's home.  
The slave-boy does a prince become  
Of deportment and great learning,  
But whose heart feels the lash  
From which the Israelite is burning.  
Much respect does he command  
Yet tainted by his kin.  
And when one day he kills a man  
The truth of it sinks in.  
Prince no more and on the run;  
A common criminal.  
Cast into the wilderness  
With unsuspecting wherewithal.  
With sore and bloodied feet  
To Midian does he come;  
And performs an act of charity  
When others would never think of one.  
Then he falls against the dust  
Like a man about to die.  
With no censure on his lips  
Except to Him Most High.

*The Chain*

In Jethro's ears his daughters  
Whisper of a man  
Who in a state of destitution  
Lent a helping hand,  
'Without his help,' she tells him,  
'Your flocks would have no water...'  
And with this selfless act  
Moses wins a prophet's daughter.  
Ten years of happiness  
With his new family,  
But the ache of others left behind  
Doesn't let him be.  
The time has come  
To move a station higher;  
Summoned to a burning bush  
Untouched by its own fire.  
'Oh Moses, stop. I am your Lord  
Commanding you to go  
And free your people from the one  
Who calls himself, Pharaoh.'  
His tongue unsure he begs his Lord  
Not to send him there alone.  
So strengthened with three miracles  
And a member of his home.  
Two prophets come before a king  
Who thinks himself a God,  
To put him in his rightful place  
With a common, wooden rod.  
A Pharaoh's massive pride  
Dented by admissions  
Of worship of this God  
From his own magicians!  
'Do you think me mad  
To let the slaves of Egypt go,  
When our honour and prestige

*The Chain*

Depend upon them so?  
Tell your God to do his worst;  
You underestimate my strength.  
I intend to make them all  
Suffer at great length.'  
Plagues will come upon the land  
Till Egypt learns its place.  
The last will drain the colour  
From every father's face.  
Out from Egypt Moses leads  
His people one and all,  
But a Pharaoh still in mourning  
Sounds a battle-call.  
'Surely, Moses,' they all cry,  
'Overtaken we will be.'  
'Never,' came the firm reply,  
'My God will never let it be!'  
Then behold they did  
The shallowing of the sea,  
And trod with disbelief in water 'neath the knee.  
No such luck  
For the army at the back:  
Gathered by the returning waves  
As though into a sack.  
After their deliverance  
An idol made of gold.  
The fleshpots carried out of Egypt  
On the heart still have a hold.  
'No shame have we to do this thing  
In the Creator's sight.  
Oh Moses we will not believe  
Until we see your God outright!'  
A nation lost and sullen  
In a wilderness,  
Bearers of a covenant



*The Chain*

Given as a promise.  
Carried on the shoulders  
Of an ageing Patriarch  
Who looks into the future  
And sees that it is dark.  
A necklace of small islands  
In the Aegean Sea,  
From which there will appear  
Men of strange tenacity.  
The choices facing man  
Of how he is to live,  
One of them it seems to me  
The Greek was doomed to give.  
Although the Cosmos still proscribes  
The limits of the dream,  
Inside the breasts of certain men  
Something feels supreme.  
The Mystics sense a counsel  
That forces them to heed  
A truth that grows inside of them  
Like something from a seed.  
The hallucination of a craft  
That in nature seems revealed  
With its internal logic  
Like a mirror to its field.  
'One is in the many;  
And the many in the one.  
From this understanding  
We'll build cities in the sun.'  
Men and gods  
Joined together at the seams.  
In a hope to reconcile  
Our terror with our dreams.  
But in the duress of the Myth  
Things aren't so clearly read

*The Chain*

And something leads the Greek  
To where he's not supposed to tread.  
A heroism petrified  
And drenched in blood-stained glory.  
Nothing more to make of it  
But a tragic story.  
'Behold being as it is  
And do not the passage mourn;  
For the only thing to say is better,  
'...is never to have been born!  
The cosmos feels our suffering  
And lends a little light  
To illuminate the knowledge  
That we are children of the night.  
The actors of the chorus,  
Each one in a mask,  
Will teach us how to pity  
And no questions ask.  
Souls born to die  
With no abode above;  
Staring terror in the face  
To see what there is to love.  
So do not say you know us,  
You who take us as your tutor;  
For our dream was the murder  
Of the Human future.'

**T**he daughters of a disposed king  
Births brothers half-divine,  
Thrown into the Tiber  
To assure a new blood-line.  
Pulled, however, from the depths  
By a she-wolf out to hunt.  
And now between the teats and other cubs  
The siblings have to shunt.

*The Chain*

Soon grown fierce and cunning,  
Two brothers stand alone;  
And waste no time in giving  
A father back his throne.  
On the matter of inheritance  
The brothers can't decide,  
Until there comes between them  
The judge of fratricide.  
Etruscan monarchs to the North  
Decadent and cruel,  
Will all be swept away  
By a more inclusive rule.  
Electing consuls from themselves  
Checked on every side ;  
To advance on principles  
The nobles will decide.



**‘THE ROMAN SENATE AND THE PEOPLE’**

Is the motto of the day,  
But as one grows in strength  
The other must give way.  
Carthage smashed  
And Hannibal destroyed:  
A military genius  
Tossed into the void.  
An example made of those  
Who have humiliated Rome:  
Fifty thousand prisoners to a slaughter, thrown.  
Africa and Sicily,  
Old Hispania too,  
Greece and Northern Europe  
Filled out like a shoe.  
This Latin behemoth  
Giving new direction:  
With tyranny in check  
By a shrewd administration.  
All religions matters  
Within the rubric of the state,  
And those subdued  
Will likely see a silver lining to their fate.  
The genius of Rome  
Already in the frame;  
With the civil strife  
That will blight her name.  
Amphitheatres, aqueducts  
And religious toleration,  
Smooth the flow of foreign goods and occupation.  
Legions move like packs of wolves  
Until they meet the snow,  
Retuning after years of war  
To have nowhere to go.  
Senators and landlords

*The Chain*

Have stolen all their land  
And outsource the work to all the slaves that flood the land.  
But on the stratagems of generals  
The empire now depends,  
And to these armed gangs  
Its precious laws will have to bend.  
The senate soon a body  
With each day a different head,  
Filled with either dreams of peace  
Or motives borne off dread.  
Romans poor and fickle,  
Given games and bread  
To keep them ill-attentive  
To what might have been instead.  
Power that is absolute  
Brings absolute attrition  
And no solace in the soul for either plebeian or patrician.

**I**n the Common Era  
A great change will begin  
Within a Roman Province  
Ruled by a Jewish king.  
In sources lost to history  
They say he did receive  
An omen of a new-born  
And a kingdom to achieve.  
To the house of Jacob sent  
With angelic grace  
In the hope to God again  
The Jew might turn his face.  
To restore them both to earthy power  
And the Lord's estate;  
Lest the devil take them all  
To a different fate.  
'Turn away,' Jesus says,

*The Chain*

‘from a life of sin.  
To a kingdom fadeth not,  
And for which the keys are found within.’  
Those good of heart  
Join his ministry,  
Because there is about him  
No hypocrisy.  
Priests wring their hearts  
In vain for drops divine.  
And, resenting the messiah,  
Accuse him of a crime.  
‘How dare this man of low estate  
Come and preach the law;  
Does he think to teach us  
What we did not know before?’  
Have stories of his miracles  
Not come into their ears:  
Of one cured of blindness  
And others of their fears?  
They bring him to the Governor;  
For the said to execute.  
But clearly seeing the man is good,  
Begg another route.  
‘I tell you all-  
I see no sign of crime on him.’  
‘But he is a threat to Rome!’  
Demand the Sanhedrin.’  
To the crowd he turns his face  
And thus does Pilate state:  
‘I wash my hands in front of you  
From this poor man’s fate.’  
The smashing of some nails  
Through the hands and feet;  
And on a cross where a slow death  
He is to meet.

All who gathered  
Thought they had seen  
The bringer of the gospels  
Bleeding from the spleen.  
With Jesus gone,  
But his message put to use,  
Those without a master  
Come in for vile abuse.  
One most vehement in his jibes  
Towards this Pious clique  
Is a Jew from Tarsus  
Who knows a little Greek.  
According to his own account  
A vision felled him from his horse,  
And one -once so acrimonious-  
Is filled with great remorse.  
From some well-spring of hope and fear,  
Saul styles himself Apostle,  
And for the souls of all mankind  
Begins his fervent jostle.  
Between the Gentile and the Jew  
He strikes a new accord:  
To make the resurrected Christ  
Both saviour and lord.  
A fever burning in his breast  
For reasons thought divine.  
And so with mystic turn of phrase  
Makes heathen ears incline.  
His half-baked learning travels well  
And brings Christ great appeal.  
A new myth built from the bottom up  
Like a ship upon its keel.  
A remission of the sins  
And a kingdom drawing near,  
Which they say will spell the end

Of the one already here.  
'I have been crucified with Christ,'  
So starts the eulogy,  
'And live my own life not,  
But with Christ inside of me.'  
Moral systems matter less  
And sin won't smudge our face;  
Keepers of the law no more ,  
We are living under grace!  
Deep beneath the orgies  
And the nightmare of the circus,  
Gather those of growing faith  
Who say, 'the Devil cannot hurt us.'  
And when fed to the beasts  
Or torn from limb to limb,  
Some swore they saw them smile  
At the thought of joining him,  
Who came to teach them how salvation  
Comes from suffering.  
One now to be Emperor  
And friend of Christ and Pan;  
The age of martyrs at an end  
With the edicts of Milan.  
What is power but a shifting feast?  
Carried now by Constantine  
To a city in the East.  
Western Rome, its lustre gone,  
And weapons turned to rust;  
Vandels, Huns and Visigoths  
Smashing things to dust.  
A new dominion twice as old  
And also twice as mean:  
Its gold and purple a dead ringer  
For its bloody dream.  
Sophists dressed in temple garb



*The Chain*

And puffed up in Nicea,  
To codify what can't be seen  
In guesses foolish and unclear.  
'We believe in one God,  
Creator of it all,  
And in his son, Jesus Christ,  
Born before the fall.  
God of God (from father separate)  
To a virgin born  
And thus made incarnate.  
And in the holy spirit who is father and the son...'  
A mystical conundrum  
To suit each and everyone.  
The ancient world's no more  
And Pan is left for dead.  
Now the Pantocrator rears  
His unforgiven head.  
No more a world of frolicking  
And bestial jollity.  
Instead, impending judgement  
For a debased humanity.  
Hunger, destitution,  
Savagery and fright;  
A world now experiencing  
An absence of the light.  
Northern warlords seize their chance,  
Entering the fray,  
To challenge Roman bishops  
And have some it their way.  
Armies in the night  
Jostling for power,  
While men of learning hide away  
In the safety of a tower.  
Knowledge sacred and profane  
Hidden by the monks,

*The Chain*

Whose steps it guides through the mire  
In which humanity has sunk.  
The need for synthesis  
Will not let them be;  
And so with instincts frail  
Feel out the mystery.  
Monarchs grow in appetite;  
The church will do the same.  
For the next Millennium  
Is how it will remain.



**E**verywhere a desert  
Of sand and misery.  
The year is six hundred  
And thirty-two A.D  
What law there is to speak of,  
Isn't worth the name;  
There is only rich and poor  
And the ubiquity of shame.

*The Chain*

Among the dunes an orphan born  
Different from the rest,  
Who's loved by all until he makes  
A very strange request.  
One night an Angel's voice  
Whispers in his ear  
That he is now a prophet  
And must be without fear.  
'Read,' he hears it say,  
Causing him concern;  
Thinking that it means  
What small children learn.  
And then other words descending  
Tolling like a bell,  
Giving news of Paradise  
And the punishment of Hell.  
Years of preparation  
For what is now to come:  
To teach these hardened polytheists  
The worship of The One.  
The merchants of the city  
Smell a mutiny  
And begin a reign of terror  
With little clemency.  
'Who is this man who yesterday  
We trusted no one more than him  
Telling us so frankly  
Where our loyalties should begin?'  
They offer him a crown  
And the riches of the land,  
But he will not compromise  
With even sun and moon in hand.  
Some seek shelter with a king  
From across the sea  
Who says he won't return them

*The Chain*

For all the treasure there might be.  
Some tribes have had enough  
And decide to kill him off,  
Before at the tables of the rich  
The poor will come to scoff.  
Mohammed fearing for his flock  
Tells them to migrate  
To a town two hundred miles away  
Where love will conquer hate.  
His detractors cannot understand,  
To the point of going mad,  
'Why, before eluding us,

Return the keepsakes that he has?'  
City of the Prophet  
As it will come to be,  
And from it Islam will spread out  
Like another sea.  
For the Devil, here,  
There's neither food nor bed  
Because the brotherhood of man  
Is prevalent instead.  
His enemies, still bruising,  
Decide to go to war,  
'We cannot let this heresy  
Flourish anymore!  
Our forefathers, each of them,  
Are turning in their graves  
From this persistence  
Of belittling their ways.'  
Against an army thrice as large,  
A skirmish in the sand;  
God's band of little helpers  
Led by Angels sword in hand.  
Later on, ten years a truce,

*The Chain*



The message spreads its wings;  
And hearts begin to open  
To the truth it brings.  
A rich man and a poor man,  
A black man and a white;  
The good they do is all that counts  
In the Creator's sight.  
The truth of the whole matter  
Shining like a sun:  
That from start to finish  
Humanity is one.  
Emeralds and rubies  
Kicked up in the sands  
As Arab cavalry race across the lands.  
Where they stop they build things in the air  
As if to underscore there's nothing really there.  
The Devil sneers at all this wealth  
But sees in it a chance  
To put these so called Muslims  
In a little trance.  
In medieval Baghdad  
They play with jet-propulsion,  
Seeking out the secrets

*The Chain*

Of the Lord's creation.  
'The House of Wisdom,' or so called  
Because of all its books.  
But fewer callers to the truth  
Where anybody looks.  
Knowledge just for knowledge's sake  
Is harmful to the soul.  
Leading Arab polymaths  
Into a rigmarole.  
Men so fond of all the things  
That gratify the senses  
That when wild horsemen storm the gates  
They hide like women on their menses.  
A mountain made of skulls  
And rivers black with ink;  
The scourge of God upon them  
In the time it took to blink.  
An exiled prince in trouble  
Looking for another nest  
Spreads his gilded wings  
And flies off to the West.  
There he finds some other men,  
Coarse and grown effete,  
And without too much trouble  
Knocks them off their feet.  
Girls with slender bodies  
Moving to and fro,  
Like a serpent moving  
To a musician's bow.  
Kingdoms come and kingdoms go  
We know this to be true.  
What's taken by the sword alone  
Is lost by that way too.  
Dissensions in the Muslim ranks  
Will cost them very dear.

*The Chain*

Christians feeling confident  
Waiting in the rear.  
In empty labs and palaces  
They find amazing things  
With which to take the enervation  
Off their heavy wings.  
Unity of purpose, noble or malign,  
Is God's way of deciding  
On who the sun will shine.  
1065,  
Pope Urban screams, 'Crusade!'  
For the violence of unruly knights  
A new agenda made.  
A people so beleaguered  
They live upon their knees  
Now crawl across the continent  
In search of Heaven's keys.  
Killing Jews along the way  
And others in their path,  
With incessant hunger  
only adding to their wrath.  
Thousands march undeterred  
By lack and nature's grief;  
And spit out the human carrion  
Caught between their teeth.  
After months and days  
To Jerusalem they come,  
Killing everything that moves  
Beneath a blazing sun.  
The Christian spirit  
Lifted by marauders gone abroad,  
Whose hearts are filled with Calvary  
And the treasure they shall hoard.  
From the 'Prince of Peace'  
They have much to learn,

*The Chain*

As priests in cloth and prayer aloud  
Commend all who loot and burn.  
With feudal tyranny abroad  
The dream of peace comes home,  
Which the cathedral builders  
Transcribe in glass and stone.  
Hearts and spires praying for the light,  
Not guessing what will curse them  
Is the same source of delight.  
A swelling up of faith  
From somewhere deep within;  
Making fissures in the flesh  
To cauterise the sin.  
Perhaps the sons of Adam  
Are of a different craft;  
Where body and the soul  
Are not meant to be apart.  
Though the actions of the clergy  
Are not without some shame,  
Such understanding of the Gospels  
Will never be again.  
In 1182 a merchant has a son,  
Whose preference is for war and song  
Like any other one.  
Battle scarred  
And during convalescence,  
A young Francis of Assisi  
Finds a deeper essence.  
Perhaps a book,  
Or words dropped in his ear,  
Strike inside his heart  
The right notes of love and fear.  
In his sights a beggar  
Who at first he will ignore  
Until a feeling of contrition



Moves him to the core.  
The foremost virtue in his mind  
Is now that of charity  
And like a sword to wield it  
Against every luxury.  
'To live like Christ who is good  
And of little need;  
And plant myself in the ground  
Naked as a seed.  
To germinate  
And in good time become  
Like all nature making prayer  
And completely one.'  
Western Christendom  
On his body will it feed;  
Desperate for the sustenance  
It so badly needs.  
But lessons of the flesh  
Cast aside too soon,  
Cause there to grow in Italy  
A most unusual bloom.  
Sirens of the past  
By St Peter kept at bay  
Tempt men to swim with them again  
In the light of day.  
Christians varied and assiduous  
With science in their hearts  
Compete with one another  
To give the world their Art.  
From a wood in exile,  
A poet sings a story  
Of Loves purpose lost and found  
In its greatest glory.  
They treat him with suspicion  
And that is rightly so,

*The Chain*

Because he says he's been  
To where the living cannot go.  
The growth of personality  
Begins its cruel impact;  
Challenging the dogma  
The Church sought to keep intact.  
Men now only half-convinced  
By their theology  
Look out of the window  
On a new reality.  
Everywhere Municipals  
In gangland rivalry,  
Which a certain Machiavelli  
Relates for posterity.  
A prince to keep his crown  
Must do what is debased,  
And in a strong Republic  
It's no longer called disgrace.  
He must simply do  
What others have in mind  
And what is cruelty  
But a way of being kind!  
Now the Gospels have all disappeared  
From the hearts of men,  
Politics demands of us  
That we do not factor them.  
Another man, secluded from the rest,  
Puts his religious nature  
Through a gruelling test.  
In him the forces  
Of the heart and mind  
Lash out with paint and stone  
For relief of any kind.  
The old beliefs  
Once giving him some guarantee

*The Chain*

Fail now to match the force of his enquiry!  
He knows the Pope  
Is God's ambassador on Earth,  
But sees this fit to challenge  
With everything he's worth.  
Three years inside a chapel  
To paint the story of it all.  
The Pope takes just one look  
And on his knees will fall.  
A new kind of immortality  
Which the Artist now calls forth,  
And hearts incline like compasses  
To a new religious North.  
Another man in Florence,  
Illegitimate and strange,  
Seems to be more comfortable  
In this uncharted range.  
In him there seems no conflict;  
As if things are all the same,  
And the forces of the world  
Are just things which he can tame.  
His mind is like a mirror  
That reflects reality.  
As if there were in fact  
No room for mystery.



**O**n his way to exit  
A moor lets out a sigh  
And a reproachful mother  
Tells him not to cry,  
'Do not like a woman weep,  
Won't you understand,  
For that which you could not  
Keep as a noble man.'  
His people for eight hundred years  
Have ruled over this land;  
And now cast out like beggars  
On a strip of foreign sand.  
They sought to make alliances  
With those who meant them ill.  
They did not see how little  
Their game was played with skill.  
There cannot be two kings  
Sharing just one throne,  
But their vanity had blinded them  
To what they should have known.  
'So do not cry, my son,  
Like a thrown out maid  
For failing as man  
To make the proper grade.'  
And through his tears  
Maybe he could see  
A ship's emblazoned sails  
On new trajectory.  
Columbus all conceited  
And a step from mutiny  
By sailors starved and half-mad  
From the endless sea.  
The so-called Indios  
Who greet these visitors,  
Are paid in kind with savage dogs

*The Chain*

And shiny scimitars.  
They would kill them all  
For what they have of ORO,  
The gold that God has given men  
To bring them joy and sorrow.  
Aztec treasure  
Sets the West alight;  
Giving Spain some leverage  
To expand her might.  
But the gold that passes  
In and out of hands,  
Works the same rise and fall  
Of kings and queens in other lands.



**I**n Wittenberg a stirring,  
Both sacred and profane,  
That leads a humble monk  
To make a monumental claim.  
To the City of the Pope  
He brings such roused dejection;  
Saying the house of Christ

Needs a new direction.  
The princes of the realm  
Find in Luther's dream a niche  
For an expansion of their powers  
Beside that 'stuff' he has to preach.  
About the outcome of the soul  
Determined by a coin;  
How good deeds alone the saints  
Will not suffice to join.  
There's no transubstantiation  
-that voodoo of the church-  
God's substance is already there  
And it's for us to make the search.  
The scripture's there for all to read  
And make sense of as such.  
In respect of one's own mind  
And how deep the words will touch.  
A contention with the Papacy  
More than Christian law;  
The compromise with self-ambition  
Veils a deeper flaw.  
Between the law of Moses  
And the raising of the Christ,  
Men rack their brains again  
To try and get things right.  
Some cities free themselves  
From ecclesiastic greed,  
And from a world that would deny them  
All the things they need.  
The columns of St Peters shake  
And stir man's deepest fears;  
And for reasons dimly glimpsed  
Begin a war of Thirty Years.  
Death, disease, doom and fright  
With little place to hide;

*The Chain*

Men looking left and right  
To see if God is on 'their' side.  
From the ashes of this carnage  
A phoenix there will rise;  
Its wings all set on fire  
And burning up the skies.  
A religion split in two  
And new ideas in the air,  
Which between the Hebrew and the Humanist  
Will fall the largest share.  
No more shall we work alone  
For a world that's yet to come;  
Now that God has told us  
We can make a tidy sum.  
The Catholic Church stands accused  
By its more sullen foe,  
But the delegates of Trent agree,  
'We must go on with the show!'  
The members of the council  
Prepare recrimination  
And punish those suspected  
Of some deviation.  
Six men meet within a crypt  
To form a Company,  
Which becomes the Pontiff's sword  
Against this heresy.  
'Let Christendom burst forth  
With all its strength and glory;  
With brush and marble, heaven mirrored,  
To tell 'The Greatest Story.'  
Let those whose hearts are suffering  
From this Northern spasm  
Wander in the darkness  
Of their iconoclasm.  
In England struts a king

*The Chain*

With Confidence to spare,  
Who strikes a blow against the Pope  
Who denies him a male heir.  
The issue of the Roman Church  
In Henry's mind concluded.  
The illusion of the Papacy  
By which all have been deluded.  
'Sack the monasteries  
And bring the spoils to court,  
So new alliances and luxuries can be bought.'  
Pilgrims on a boat  
Towards an unknown shore,  
Carrying the future-  
Or at least the little that they saw.  
'Let us with humility  
And hands upon our hearts  
Step forth upon this rock  
And make a brand new start.  
And let us thank the native  
And extend to him his due,  
For without his kindness  
This winter we will not get through.  
The land is plenty;  
So what harm is there to share.  
If he doesn't think so  
We'll skin him off his hair!'  
*'They come as many as the stars  
And a time will come  
When the red man  
-if he does not want to die-  
Will have to hide and run.'*  
'We did not come to maim or kill,  
But to flee a greedy king.  
How is it we find ourselves  
Behaving worse than him?



*The Chain*

Let's keep our eyes on the frontier  
And not think of that;  
And keep this base behaviour  
Underneath our hat.  
Between the Red Man and ourselves  
We need to reach agreement,  
Or this enterprise of ours  
Will be of limited achievement.  
Now we've seen his soldiers off  
We will have our say,  
Or does the king believe our Revolution  
Is only for today?  
We wish to be a nation  
And determine our own laws;  
Say goodbye to monarchy  
And its inherent flaws.  
We are men of learning  
-if not of landed birth-  
Our revolution built on 'Common Sense'  
Will change things on this earth.  
Let us write our constitution  
In the name of Liberty  
(But underwrite it for the sake  
Of wealth and property).'  
A poor farmer's son  
Who can barely read  
Finds in his mother's 'goodness'  
All the guidance that he needs.  
His mirth and honesty  
Carry him along  
Towards a place where normally  
Such people don't belong.  
The President of These United States  
Playing with his son  
While people come and tell him

*The Chain*

Grave things must be done.  
For each of them an anecdote  
Or just a friendly smile;  
To lessen the intensity  
If only for a while.  
His speeches sound  
Like someone chopping wood,  
As if to keep the syntax  
Sounding as it should.  
Their sister States in the South  
Must now see it fit  
To leave their antiquated ways behind  
And catch up a little bit.  
'Although we know their pride  
And dependence on the Nigger,  
We too have our need of him  
And will use him as a trigger.  
I do not say he is our equal  
But something bothers me:  
If slavery not be wrong  
Then nothing else can be.'  
And so their armies meet  
Beneath indifferent skies;  
And to the fact their all Americans  
They will close their eyes.  
'To preserve the Union  
I simply cannot yield,  
Even if a million,  
Or more will so be killed.'



1789, The so-called peak of 'Reason.'  
And the French expand upon  
The possibilities of treason.  
A now self-conscious middle-class  
Seizes its great chance  
To avail itself of all the ills  
Bringing gloom to France.  
A King of good intention  
But from another age,  
Cannot stop his people  
From rattling their cage.  
There will be a revolution  
Like the one across the sea,  
To shed some blood in the name

*The Chain*

Of a fair society.  
Adding pain to injury  
The King's run out of Francs;  
And creditors and peasants  
Like rivers burst their banks.  
'We should assert our rights,  
Just like Rousseau said.  
And if the king gets in the way,  
well- just cut off his head!  
We are the Third Estate no more,  
Because our time has come,  
And by the time we've finished  
We'll be the only one.  
We are universal citizens  
And the Earth's our common pie.  
No more shall we be bled  
By those leeches in Versailles.  
Let the cities burn;  
From the pyres there will rise  
Others far more glorious  
And pleasing to our eyes.  
We must show no mercy  
-even to the queen!  
Who is not for the Republic  
Is for the guillotine!  
Institute the terror  
For the good of all;  
Whoever cannot see it  
Is a traitor or a fool!  
Man is everywhere in chains,  
But this he cannot see,  
Which is why we'll go to such extents  
To force him to be free.  
Let me be the one  
Who tells you what to do;

*The Chain*

I, Maximillian Robespierre,  
The very model of virtue!  
There's no one above the people  
Or the General Will.  
No one speak to me  
Of Danton or Camille.  
That blood that's daily spilled  
For our victory  
Will wash away from our eyes  
The old reality.  
Those gorging goblins of the church  
Have all been sent away  
And our new Being- who is Supreme-  
Is in charge today.  
The revolution won't be stopped  
And its on a role,  
Now a youthful Corsican  
Has taken on its soul.  
He sees in it a chance  
To rise up to the top  
Now that those who once barred his way  
Have come in for the chop.  
His military genius  
Is not his only skill;  
But a poetic nature  
That bends men to his will.  
He plays the game of war  
Like no one else before,  
Leaving grey-haired generals  
Watching him in awe.  
The Club of War whose membership  
Is all nobility  
Feels the walls closing in  
With every victory.  
This little upstart

*The Chain*

From a meagre line  
Is out to free the people  
One country at a time.  
From now on its merit  
And equality  
That will make the world  
A better place to be.  
His strange fatality  
Sets him far apart;  
This believer in a godless:  
Napoleon Bonaparte.  
Enlightened thinkers of the age  
Who can predict a comet  
Wonder if doesn't ride one  
Into war upon it.  
'I make my battle-plans from the souls  
Of my sleeping men...'  
Is he not in this respect  
Something more than them?  
What has given birth to him  
In this most uncommon way?  
For all his practicality  
He's the wisest of his day.  
In the middle of the desert  
Seated with some clever men,  
Who tell him that the universe  
Is no more a mystery to them.  
The General looks above  
Then stares them in the face,  
'Tell me then, good gentlemen,  
Who put all this in its place?'  
A single man possessing faith  
In a Europe where there's none.  
Forging past and present  
To make the future one.

And by his own admission  
That when the time has come,  
'A single atom will suffice  
To see it all undone.'  
An Emperor all alone  
Sitting on a rock,  
Gazing out across the sea  
Whose vastness seems to mock.  
Gone are all the thrones  
That he used to own,  
And the five hundred million men  
He wished to invite into his home.



**M**en of vicious virtue  
Awake a principle of old  
And look upon the people  
With eyes sinister and cold.  
A new kind of sacrifice  
More inhuman than before;  
The Moloch of the factory  
Demanding more and more.  
Some who are sensitive  
Warn against the gloom  
That fills their souls with darkness

*The Chain*

Like night entering a room.  
Embrace the new Ideas  
Is the mantra of the day.  
Industrial development  
Has come to show us all the way.  
There's not a soul alive  
On whom it won't accrue;  
No more living in the past  
But in what is always new.  
Is God still there?  
Who can say for sure.  
Sometimes it does feel like  
He's not with us anymore.  
An English Botanist  
Trembles at the thought  
That a lie as old as man  
Is behind what we are taught.  
That this thing called, 'Man'  
Is not in God's image made  
And so our reverence of him  
To rest must now be laid.  
Our origins are here  
Not in some garden far way,  
Beginning with a substance  
Still bubbling in the clay.  
From something ill-defined  
And chemically deranged.  
Whose secret of survival  
Is its capacity to change.  
Some adapt; some do not  
This is what he sees.  
He's sure it is the matrix  
Of everything we see.  
Creatures one and all  
Follow this clear plan



And most of all the one  
Whose name we know as, 'Man.'  
'If there's purpose to him  
Beyond procreation and his bread  
I'm not sure if I'll find it anymore  
In this Bible that I've read.  
But, if all his suffering  
By nature is caused not,  
Then for this theory I've put forward  
I know I should be shot!'



**A** precocious thinker,  
A sort of summit for the rest,  
Takes upon his soul a tremendous test.  
He spies in Europe's distant past  
A cure for all its pain;  
A philosophy of terror  
That's strange as it's arcane.  
'We must look at our condition  
And face up to what we see:  
A jumble of resentment  
And slavish piety.  
The God you worship on that Cross  
Is none other than you,

Which looked at in another way  
Makes it no less true.  
There is no Holy Spirt.  
Father, or The Son.  
Just a suffering Human Being  
Beholden to no one.  
Each must seek it in himself  
To turn suffering to joy.  
The Greeks can be a lesson  
In what methods to employ.  
Inside you is the Ubermensch  
(Or the 'superman')  
Who has no time for pity  
-I know it's hard to understand.  
The Good and Evil that we know  
Is no longer true.  
I'm not the first to say it;  
Just the first to think it through.  
I'm not denigrating God  
Or worshipping the Devil,  
I just think we need to think of this  
On another level.  
No god of suffering  
To protect the weak.  
Without which  
They would not have learned to speak.  
Something more courageous  
And bolder in its aim;  
To be our own masters  
And forget about the blame.'  
But everything that Nietszche says  
Splits him into two.  
As if what he is and wants to be  
Is equally untrue.  
A paranoid fanatic, ultimately sad.

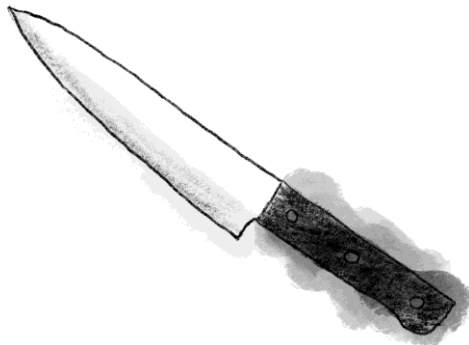
*The Chain*

Those whom the gods will first destroy  
First they make them mad.  
And so it was one winter's day  
In a foreign city,  
He sees a horse being beaten  
And grabs it out of pity.  
What so long had been repressed  
Came back with tragic force;  
His Christ-like humanity  
Unleashed upon a horse.  
He wished to be a Greek,  
Knowing neither right nor wrong,  
But he did not see that their time  
Has now been and gone.  
Shamans dressed in suit and ties  
Prance and speak in tongue;  
Unsure as well  
If their time has passed, or not yet begun.  
An age of separation  
Growing wider by the day,  
Till dialogue is monologue  
And we hear only what we say.  
Enter in a Prussian  
And a die-hard pamphleteer,  
Who says some things about the rich  
They do not wish to hear.  
And as his words rise like smoke  
From his chimney-head,  
He's far from thinking that the fumes  
Will leave many millions dead.  
'There is in Capital  
A source of Mankind's shame.  
But I think I've found a way  
To stop the gravy-train.  
We are on the threshold

Of a communal breakthrough  
-if only this last phase of conflict  
We can just get through!  
There is a system of relations  
Governing the world,  
Where abstractions are distractions  
To intoxicate the herd.  
With this in mind  
And all this technology,  
I see an end  
To what we know as, 'History.'  
A cornucopia  
And an end to class.  
A Heaven here and now  
Not in some disembodied trance.  
A simple Revolution  
To bring it all to pass,  
Although the bourgeoisie will tell you,  
I'm talking from my arse!  
Workers of the world unite  
You can only lose your chains'  
But he forgets to mention  
What's lacking in their brains.  
'In your hands these forces  
Will change reality,  
Which is more than what can be said  
Of all philosophy.'  
But what makes Marx so sure  
That his idea will stick  
When he says ideas  
Are nothing but a bourgeois trick?  
Some Russians come along  
And take Karl at his word.  
And proceed to apply it  
To a semi-feudal herd.

*The Chain*

Dressed in anonymity  
And without a crown or throne,  
But for all the talk of solidarity  
Still elitist to the bone.  
The divisions in society  
Are as natural as the rain  
And don't come about because  
Someone hoards the grain.  
Even if you share it out,  
However equally,  
You'll find the same behaviour  
Occurring naturally.  
The whole of Marx's thought  
Is premised on this view:  
That we can have an industrial Utopia  
Where men have nothing much to do.  
Stripped down to a set  
Of just material feed;  
With all that denied us  
What the soul would need.  
To change the world was beyond his ken,  
But his sympathies remain today  
As fresh as they did then.



A timid Doctor in Vienna  
Moonlights as a Seer  
And the horrors he discovers  
Leave him full of fear.  
'Behind our great ideals  
There's only great despair,  
Which is the only reason  
We have put them there.  
Lie down on the couch  
And I'll help you see  
That we are just the products  
Of 'anxiety'.  
You must tell me everything  
And hold nothing back.  
In your dreams are doorways  
Which your waking hours lack.  
Talk and talk  
But do not look at me,  
For in this new procedure  
There's no place for empathy.  
We are born to hate  
And perhaps even to kill,  
Even if we sometimes think  
It goes against our will.  
Children are all monsters  
And women are the same,  
But I do not say anywhere  
That someone is to blame.  
With some poetic licence  
And new techniques on my part,  
Psychiatry will make of you  
A modern work of Art.  
You might come out disfigured  
And a little cruel,  
But this won't be an exception

But more in fact the rule.  
Do not pay attention  
To what Mr Jung will say.  
He wants to bring religion back  
Through a different way.  
There is no other man  
Who knows as much as me.  
Who else could turn your private parts  
Into a magic key.  
The more cocaine I take  
The more that I am sure  
That life is masturbation  
-What a metaphor!  
But when I'm all alone  
Do I sometimes see  
An old and bitter Sigmund  
Unloved in infancy?'

**O**n the 28th of June  
Nineteen hundred and fourteen,  
A shot rings out in Belgrade  
That makes the whole of Europe scream.  
'A World War,' they say  
Not concealing what they mean.  
Nations all belligerent  
And pursuing the same scheme.  
'Our wealth is not enough;  
Let us take some more.  
Conscript the young and savages  
And let us go to war.'  
Scars upon the Earth  
That a century won't heal;  
The youth of twenty nations  
Slaughtered in the kill.  
'A Great War,' they say,

*The Chain*

Not knowing what that means,  
Really just a family feud  
Between some kings and queens.  
A sort of Pied Piper  
Staring in defeat  
At visions of apocalypse  
But his small moustache kept neat.  
The leader of ten million men  
Alone now in a room;  
His mausoleum left unfinished  
And a bunker for a tomb.  
'It was not long ago  
That I stood up in a hall  
And made myself look big  
By making everyone look small,  
I told them in no uncertain words  
That I would clean their streets  
From those filthy foreigners  
That everywhere you meet.  
I gave them all a vision  
Of another time,  
When Germany was not just great  
But close to being sublime.  
The economic misery  
And cultural disgrace  
Will never in a thousand years  
Come back to show its face.  
These nations which surround us  
Are mongrelised and weak,  
With me as your Fuhrer  
They will not dare to speak!  
Look at my Divisions:  
Warriors of steel,  
Accompanied by Valkyries  
Whose presence I can feel.'



*The Chain*

In league with the Devil,  
Hitler raves and rants,  
His gestures all well-practised  
And coming in his pants.  
An advance across four continents  
Coming to an end,  
But delusion and insanity  
Making some pretend.  
'I said the ice would thaw,  
Thinking I were god,  
But two million Germans froze  
Where they all once trod.  
One by one the Allies  
Are taking back for me  
The things that I have taken  
Oh, so easily.  
I've been betrayed  
By people under me;  
I was wrong to expect great things from Germany.  
Let it all go up in flames  
They deserve to burn.  
Perhaps from their failures  
Others might still learn...  
I once had a mother  
Who loved me very much;  
What would I give again to feel her tender touch.'  
Auschwitz, Balzac, Beslan  
And Dachau are his shame;  
The worst that humans do  
Will stand in for his name.  
When the flames are out  
And everything is ash,  
One Nation in particular  
Will be ready with the cash.  
Its own greed a factor

*The Chain*

In starting World War II;  
Destroying livelihoods  
From here to Timbuktu.  
Those blue-blooded countries  
Engaged in civil strife  
Will learn from us the U.S.A  
A better way of life.  
We have shown the world  
Our power to bring to death,  
And killed a 100,000 slanty eyes  
Before they drew a breath.  
We've scorched the Earth  
And made the rain turn black;  
For killing and free enterprise  
We seem to have a knack.  
God is with the just,  
All this you can see;  
What else is the source  
Of our might and dignity?  
We are a super-power,  
Just like those before,  
If you don't let us in  
We'll just break down the door.  
With Russia we will compromise  
And there's a reason why:  
We have to sell an enemy  
Or the people will not buy.  
The 'Pursuit of Happiness'  
Is to everyone well suited;  
Not so a Manifesto  
Where freedom's voice is muted.  
A Liberal Democracy  
And all material means;  
Is this not the place  
We once saw in our dreams?

*The Chain*

That we should be happy,  
But for some reason we are not;  
Even when for every detrimental mood  
A pill for it we've got.  
So much dissatisfaction  
And even suicide;  
A unilateral selfishness  
That's left us paralysed.  
What does it mean to be American,  
No one seems to know;  
The thing about the frontier  
Is that it seems so long ago.  
We are all a contradiction  
-The best and worst of us-  
And who is this God  
In which we put our trust?  
Is it the God of Money  
Or of Liberty,  
Or something part and parcel  
Of our own vanity?  
We see ourselves elect  
But who has put us there?  
Is it all a smokescreen  
To take more than our fair share?  
The black man we will never say  
Is truly one of us.  
Although his dignity can shame us  
-like that woman on the bus.  
It seems like from the start  
We did not have the tools  
Of empathy and wisdom  
Like Shakespeare's happy fools.  
Each man must be a king  
And every woman be his queen:  
There is in Democracy

*The Chain*

Something quite obscene.  
It's as if the winds of life  
Blow us here and there  
And about their direction  
We don't really care.  
A rascal in the White House  
With fifty million friends;  
Is this put down  
To what bad weather sends?  
And why all of a sudden  
Must we put up our guard?  
Must we face the living ghosts  
Of generations we have marred?'



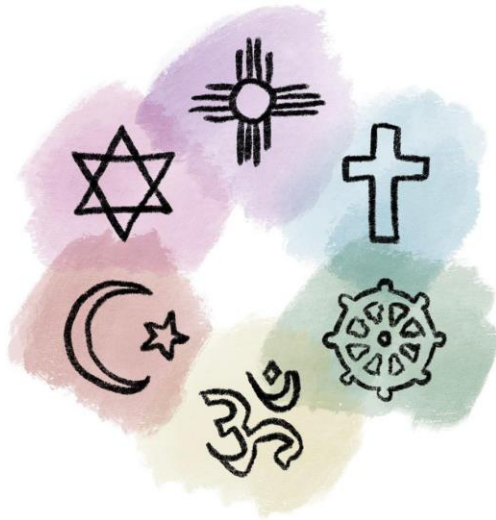
Millions move from East to West,  
Hurried by some hand,  
And nations with a guilty conscience  
Refuse to understand.  
A moral reckoning  
Disrupting their great schemes.  
For those struggling with meaning  
I will tell you what it means!  
'Give us back what you have stolen  
And stuffed inside your gut.  
Or in our desperation  
Your throats will all be cut.  
Are we not the children  
From a tidal wave of rape,  
Or is it you're unhappy  
With our mongrel shape?  
I do not wish to be like this  
But you've made me what I am.  
In my suffering,  
I've lost sight of the man.  
A species on the brink,  
Perhaps, or maybe something worse,  
If all that really matters  
Is the money in our purse.  
It's all quantifiable  
And we're on our way  
To reducing everything  
To what the numbers say.  
The random sequencing  
Without sentiment or coy,  
Will it the Homo Sapien eventually destroy?  
Another species will evolve  
More technical and cruel;  
Devising a new ethic  
By which it will rule.

*The Chain*

Death itself, we'll keep at the door;  
And our army of genetic clones  
Will replace the poor.  
The speed of light  
We've captured in a frame.  
The world from now on  
Will never seem the same.  
Cyberspace will encroach  
On the structure of the real,  
And give to our illusions  
Greater sensory appeal.  
Everything will be permitted  
And nothing will be true;  
Except the dazzling appearance  
Of doing something new.  
After all,  
This is where we are!  
A god-like particle  
Born inside a star.  
Is this all science fiction  
Or is it science fact?  
I'll venture a reply  
And say its worst than that.  
Technology is nothing new;  
It's as old as any tool.  
We've put the cart before the horse  
And this has changed the rules.  
We are a sentient component  
On a master-board  
Whose function seems contingent  
On the concept of a, 'Lord.'  
We are creatures of emotions  
Which we must harmonise  
In order to equip ourselves  
Against the conflict in our lives.

*The Chain*

Is Good the key to everything  
And Evil just a ruse  
Set in motion by some entity  
That wants to see us lose?  
Do human beings and planets  
Move by the same law,  
One that left Kant reeling  
And those after him, unsure?  
There's no such thing as progress;  
Just a circular advance,  
Whose motives cannot be explained  
By 'Accident' or 'Chance.'  
History repeats itself  
With glaring accuracy,  
Binding us altogether  
In chains we cannot see...



*The Chain*



# *The Chain*

## *An epic poem*

“A poem of Miltonian proportions...”

Dr. Mahmoud Khalifa, South Valley University, Egypt

“I would invite the reader to enjoy and appreciate the poem *The Chain* and benefit from the wisdom that it contains.”

Dr. Mahmudul Hasan, Assoc. Prof., International Islamic University, Malaysia

### About the Author

Hisham Hauari, a versatile poet, writer, and avid reader, finds solace and inspiration within the pages of books. With a passion for storytelling, he has penned numerous works, spanning from captivating short stories to profound poetry. Presently, he is immersed in crafting yet another poetic masterpiece, delving deeper into the intricate tapestry of human history.

Residing in the vibrant city of London, Hauari shares his life's journey with his beloved wife and five cherished children. For inquiries or to connect with the author, please reach out via email to the Islamic Literary Society.