

The Rebel

**I am come of the seed of the people,
the people that sorrow,
that have no treasure but hope,
no riches laid up for a memory
of an Ancient glory.**

**My mother bore me in bondage,
in bondage my mother was born,
I am blood of serfs;
the children with whom I have played,
the men and women with whom
I have eaten, have had masters over them,
have been under the lash of masters,
and though gentle, have served churls;
the hands that have touched mine,
the dear hands whose touch is familiar to me,
have worn shameful manacles,
have been bitten at the wrist by manacles,
have grown hard with the manacles
and the task-work of strangers.**

**I am flesh of the flesh of these lowly,
I am bone of their bone,
I that have never submitted,
I that have a soul greater than
the souls of my people's masters,
I that have vision and prophecy
and the gift of fiery speech,
I that have spoken with God
on the top of His holy hill.**

**And because I am of the people,
I understand the people,
I am sorrowful with their sorrow,
I am hungry with their desire:
my heart has been heavy
with the grief of mothers,
my eyes have been wet
with the tears of children,
I have yearned with old wistful men,
and laughed or cursed with young men;
their shame is my shame,
and I have reddened for it,
reddened for that they have served,
they who should be free,
reddened for that they have gone in want,
while others have been full,
reddened for that they have walked in fear
of lawyers and of their jailors
with their writs of summons and their handcuffs,
men mean and cruel!
I could have borne stripes on my body
rather than this shame of my people.**

**And now I speak, being full of vision;
I speak to my people,
and I speak in my people's name
to the masters of my people.
I say to my people that they are holy,
that they are august,
despite their chains,
that they are greater than those who hold them,
and stronger and purer,
that they have but need of courage,
and to call on the name of their God,
God the unforgetting, the dear God
that loves the peoples
for whom He died naked, suffering shame.**

**And I say to my people's masters: Beware,
beware of the thing that is coming,
beware of the risen people,
who shall take what ye would not give.
did ye think to conquer the people,
or that Law is stronger than life
and than men's desire to be free?**

**We will try it out with you,
ye that have harried and held,
ye that have bullied and bribed,
Tyrants, hypocrites, liars!**

**Patrick Henry Pearse
(1879-1916)**