

# You shoot at yourself, America

Yevgeny Yevtushenko

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The color of the Statue of Liberty  
Grows ever more deathly pale  
As, loving freedom with bullets  
You shoot at yourself, America.  
You can kill yourself this way!  
It is dangerous to go out  
Into this hellish world,  
But it is still more dangerous  
To hide in the bushes  
There is a smell on earth of a universal  
Dallas,  
It is frightful to live  
And this fright is shameful  
Who is going to believe hypocritical fairy tales,  
When, behind a facade of noble ideas  
The price of revolver lubricant rises  
And the price of human life falls?  
Murder attend funerals dressed in mourning,  
And later become stockholders,  
And, once again,  
Ears of grain filled with bullets  
Wave in the fields of Texas.  
The eyes of murderers peer out alike from under hats and caps  
The steps of murderers are heard at all doorways  
And a second for the Kennedys falls...  
America, save your children!  
Just like your  
Bill of Rights  
You promised to the conscience of the world,  
But, at the brink of bottomless shame,  
The children of other countries turn gray.  
And their huts.  
Bombed in the night.  
Burn in your fire,  
You are shooting not at King,

But at your own conscience.  
You are bombing Vietpam,  
And with this your own honor.  
When a nation is going dangerously insane,  
It cannot be cured of its troubles  
By hastily prescribed  
Calm.  
Perhaps the only help is shame,  
History cannot be cleansed in a laundry  
There are no such washing machines  
Blood can never be washed away!  
O, where is it hiding, the shame of a nation,  
As if it were a runaway Negro?  
The slaves are within the slaves.  
There are many unfettered murderers.  
They carry out their mob justice,  
Pogroms.  
And Raskolnikov wanders through America  
Insane.  
With a bloody ax.  
Hey, Old Abe  
What are people doing,  
Understanding vilely only one truth,  
That the greatness of a tree  
Can be assessed only after it is felled  
Lincoln basks in his marble chair,  
Wounded.  
They are shooting at him again!  
What beasts.  
The stars  
In your flag,  
America,  
Are like bullet holes.  
Arise from the dead,  
Bullet-pierced Statue of Liberty  
Murdered so many times,  
And speak out like a woman and mother  
And curse the freedom to kill.  
But without wiping the splashes  
of blood from your forehead  
You, Statue of Liberty, have raised up  
Your green, drowned woman's face,  
Appealing to the heavens against being trodden under foot.

# fifth Estate

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