

A Credence

Those who best love freedom
are those who are not free
or those who were not free
or those who could not be.

The prison. The real cell.
The bars of one's own
making. The scars, and flesh
beneath still quaking.

The dire need to breathe.
The stars and sky on fire.
Seed and pyre. The turning,
turning all to dust. The air.

A hole bored through
a tent's blue ceiling.
The sky reeling.
Reeling.

Will. Force. The thing
that will not let you die.
A million, million, million
whys. An absence

of antecedents. A frankness.
A tension. A craggy flower
rough blossom, repeating.
Repeating.

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Intersection

The earth shook. A portal opened.
I walked through it. The earth shook.
A portal opened. I walked through
it. The earth shook. A portal opened.
I walked through it. The earth shook. A
portal opened. I walked through it. The
earth shook. A portal opened. I walked
through it. The earth shook. A portal
opened. I walked through it. The earth
shook. A portal opened. I walked through
it. Ash. The earth shook. A portal opened.
I walked through it. Earth. The earth shook.
A portal opened. I walked through it. Ash.
The earth shook. A portal opened. I walked.
The earth shook. A portal opened. I walked
through it. Through it. I walked. The earth shook.
A portal opened. I walk through it. The earth
shook. A portal opens. I walk through it.

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written in the wake of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti

**Poem for the Poorest Country
In the Western Hemisphere**

Oh poorest country, this is not your name.
You should be called beacon, and flame,

almond and bougainvillea, garden
and green mountain, villa and hut,

little girl with red ribbons in her hair,
books-under-arm, charmed by the light

of morning, charcoal seller in black skirt,
encircled by dead trees.

You, country, are the businessman
and the eager clerk, the grandfather

at the gate, at the crossroads
with the flashlight, with the light,

with the light.

*“Poem for the Poorest Country in the Western Hemisphere” originally appeared
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Danielle Legros Georges

In the next town

What about such extremity makes us
want to live? Pulled
from the rubble:

A woman in ash. A boy who carries
his broken-armed sister
down a hill.

What pain she endures.
And he, witness and carrier,
worse.

What in us says life. Life.
Life after 20 days
entombed.

Life in the singing at the foot, not
even the foot, the
remains,

the imprint

of a church. The Lord somehow,
Jesus, somehow. Mother Mary
somehow.

All the gods descendent.
The gate. The gate.
The crossroads

and the light. How does a country
bury its too-hastily
-buried dead?

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