

THE BALLAD OF DENNIS CHRIST

(AND INTRODUCTORY NOTE)

In his most recent work, the as yet unpublished *Forks in the Road of History*, Daniel A. Bastard rewrites a number of major historical events (or “theses,” as he calls them) in an assertion of the individual’s right to freedom of historical interpretation. These moments include the peaceful resolution of the Trojan War – (settled diplomatically when Helen is given a good public thumping in both Athens and Troy and then sent home) – and the succession of President Dwight Eisenhower by President Woody Guthrie.

The following poem contributed to *Canon*, “The Ballad of Dennis Christ,” is taken from the section of the work dealing with the “mistaken crucifixion” (cf. Chapter 8 “The Cruci-Fiction”). Daniel’s account tells us of Jesus Christ’s escape from the Romans, and the inadvertent execution of his little known illegitimate brother Dennis Christ. The basic hypothesis is the following: Dennis, living very much in the shadow of Jesus, tours the Holy Land speaking on issues such as class war and the collective labor ethic. The brothers become estranged when Dennis differs with Jesus over what the former calls “all that hocus-pocus shit” that has imbued Jesus’ basically decent teachings. The rift endures until Dennis hears about Judas’ plot to betray his brother. At the crucial moment, Dennis rushes to the Garden of Gethsemane to warn him, arriving just in time. However, when Jesus hears the news he promptly flees, leaving Dennis behind. When the Romans arrive, a local stool pigeon with bad Latin erroneously identifies Dennis as being the one they are looking for. Dennis, out of true compassion (and probably a private awareness that Jesus’ methods had more of a future than his own) covers his brother and goes to the cross in his place.

This “real Christian sacrifice” according to Daniel, accounts for a number of “inconsistencies” in the traditionally accepted story: the otherwise loyal Peter’s denial of Jesus (i.e. Dennis), Judas’ suicide (having realized the Romans got the wrong man), and of course, the resurrection (Jesus’ major capitalizing on his own “death”).

The poem itself interprets Dennis’ thoughts as he is hanging on the cross.



THE BALLAD OF DENNIS CHRIST

Plucked from the garden too early
aloft this haughty stick he doth hang

who did the world no wrong but
seek a recalcitrant brother.

Three days is a long time to die.
Especially when your bane affords the view

of your favorite brothel in the dimming valley below.
Bastard Romans! Why couldn't they learn the vernacular??

Nailed here like a rabbit to a toaster
While God's tiny champions are trodden upon by

the iron monkeys of ignominy!
And anyway, plans did I have for this coming Sunday!

These weeping bints, showering the Earth with their tears!
You'd think that they were the ones up here

pummeled into planks.
No thanks doth one get for dreams of equality.

Such truths are squandered easily for cash or sex,
Or even a donkey [Public transport not being a Roman priority].

Aqueducts are all very fine if one doth have a house!
And what good are roads to the legless?

Fear not, feeble kin!
Equality shall take the fight and win

And none more shall be crucified.
For whom, being equal, can a cross proscribe?

And death shall no more stalk our streets
[Except for fascists whom we meet and hack like fish] ...

Enough!! A dying wish now from these bloodied woods.
You redhead there beside that sobbing wench!

Trot to town and bringeth me a wrench
To yank these nails out of their evil place,

That I might, bleeding, to town race,
And being from my death stick thusly prised,

Drift to dream between a harlot's thighs.

Daniel A. Bastard is the author of "Poems about Lard" and "Meat is Democracy." He is also the inventor of "Metchup," (ketchup with meat in it), and the founder of the DIY Party. He is currently looking for a really good lawyer.