

For George Jackson
by Emily Hanlon

How long ago was it, brother George,
that the black robes of injustice robbed you
of your youth, your life—for 70 dollars?
They sentenced you “to life,” brother:
you were Black and poor and full of anger—
for 70 dollars, brother, they stole you from the streets;
for 70 dollars they threw you into their dungeons
to rot, to die—
your anger wasting away
behind those prison walls.

It was eons ago, brother,
because you refused to rot.
You refused to die for them,
and now you will never die.
For from the drops of a revolutionary’s blood
a thousand more revolutionaries burst forth:
to avenge the death,
to avenge the crimes of the oppressors,
to free the oppressed.

It was eons ago, brother,
because like Malcolm and so many comrades,
your mind refused to bend
under the chains that bound your body—
and the prison walls became the link
between you and your people.

It was just a year ago.
that brother Jonathon held the oppressors at bay.
And for those few never-ending moments
in the minds and guts of the oppressed,
he freed us all
in your name,
for your freedom,
for all our freedom.

For in that moment of Justice,
all the feeble, black-robed bodies of injustice
felt the bullet,
and died a little,
with Judge Haley.

Long live those moments, brothers Jonathon and George!
Long live the freedom you gave us as you died!

They killed you.
They shot you in cold blood.
They hoped your strength would die.
But their own dying madness makes them blind:
they see all people as their pawns;
they see a human being as a body to exploit;
they see life as does a parasite, sucking,
living off the blood of others.
They see, therefore, death as the End.

And for them it is—their system is dying.
But ours is not yet born.
Your murder rings their death knell—
your strength is the heartbeat of the Oppressed;
your death the pangs of birth.

They shot you, brother, but you have not died.
Once they thought they had your life
in their hands, eons ago,
they took a Black youth and tried,
for 70 dollars, they tried to kill you.
But you refused to die, brother,
and then you became a warrior
in the name of the revolution—in the hearts of the oppressed.

No, brother George, you have not died!
Malcolm never died! Che never died!
The heroes of San Rafael never died!
Attica will be avenged!
The Revolution lives.