

OMEN OF THE ENEMY

*(On Friday July 12th 1935 a cormorant, usual disguise of the Evil One,
alighted once again on the cross of St. Paul's)*

Sitting once, his webbed feet furled on the flange of the cross,
His black flappers furled on the gold, the fairy bird,
The Enemy, surveys London. It is his. And the cross either
Of Paul or Jesus, having failed, must as defeat bear him.

What do you want, Bird? Bombs on London? O.K. by us.
Bombs on Berlin, Paris, where you will, the fool Swiss dove.
We've done our best for you. Now what more? Famine?—
Whose other names yet thin the brats: bread, marg and tea fed,
nervy.
Pestilence, then? Here's measles, dip., t.b.,
Nibbling the curve of the death-rate, rickets for a bad future.
Is this what you ask, Bird? Adequate incense? We offer our all!

Sitting twice, his cold feet tight on the bright cross,
His hard flappers erect from the gold, the fairy bird,
The Enemy, croaks at London. Is it his when the cross fails?
Must then all worship? Or who stand out, face, judge break
ranks?
Which of us not condemning our innocents to the maw of the
cormorant,

Which of us will insist, against beak-thrusts in guts, against
gold?

Who of us will stand, in London, will not bow down?

For the third time the Bird hovers, the cross waits.

Break down the cross if the Bird perches there, break down

All towers, castles, spires, pylons. Break even,

Oh, break Wren's London lest the webbed feet perch there,

And we, the third time, worship.