

Ode To A Dream



The surest way to strengthen the foundation of peace is to support the growth of democracy and gain the full respect for human rights.

- Ronald Reagan

(Founding speech for the United States Institute of Peace. 11:48 a.m. Cabinet Room at the White House, February 26, 1986)

i.

They piled signage on the floor.

Rubble.

Pillage made visible.

A public ritual.

A de-naming. An unchristening. An un-hailing.

If the name is trampled, they thought, the soul dies.

ii.

Notes were sent on Privy Council letterheads.

Cher Vassal,

Cease. Desist. Delete.

We appreciate your insignificance.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Your Thralldom

iii.

Of these three – cynicism, dishonor, and shame – the greatest is humiliation.

iv.

If people feel crushed, they thought, their dreams die.

v.

People say hope is not a strategy.

What seems true, lies.

What lies hidden, holds truth.

Humiliation is not a strategy.

Humiliation serves a cold dish.

Insatiable. Gorged on spite.

A frozen plate of elusive dominion.

vi.

The first victim of humiliation is always the one who serves the dish.

vii.

Hope may not be a strategy, but hope is a tender tenacious weed.

viii.

Five truths about hope.

Dreams find life in cracks and crevices.

Dreams tap centuries.

Dreams seek the light.

Dreams leave seeds.

Dreams drive tyrants crazy-cold.

ix.

When I was young my elders pursued a dream.

They had received the dream from their ancestors.

The dream melded through two wars. The wars that ravaged the whole of the earth. The wars that kept coming.

The dream started with the words: *Never again!*

Never again! required buying at least an ounce of prevention. *Jaw, jaw better than war, war.*

Si vis pacem, colere dignitatem.

Si vis pacem, finem violare.

Si vis pacem, facere justitia.

Si vis pacem, para audire y loqui.

If you want peace, cultivate dignity, end violence, and do justice. If you want peace, prepare to listen and talk.

It was a crevice castle-wall-cracking dream.

Hope is always a wilding weed.

x.

Some prefer numbers over words, data over poetry.

United States Defense Department Budget 2024:
\$841,400,000,000.

United States Institute of Peace Budget 2023:
\$55,000,000.

xi.

The little ounce that could. And did. And will again.

Si vis pacem, vivare spe.

If you want peace, live hope.

xii.

*dreams and weeds
when cut and trimmed
just drop seeds
that rise again*



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