

Resistance

1 'Resistance' as a noun has been around since the mid 14th c. It's meaning from Latin *resistere* is to make a stand, to oppose. In 1939 the term extended to include the concept of an organized, covert position. (source: the blog, Word Nerdery)

2 I will not take "but" for an answer. **Langston Hughes**

3 What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence. **Audre Lorde**

4 Every religion... imposes on each man some obligations toward mankind, and so it draws him away, from time to time, from thinking about himself... Thus religious people are naturally strong just at the point where democratic peoples are weak. **Alexis de Tocqueville**, "Democracy in America", 1840

5 Precisely at the point when you begin to develop a conscience, you must find yourself at war with your society. **James Baldwin**

6 We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art, and very often in our art, the art of words. **Ursula K. Le Guin**

7 If the main pillar of the system is living a lie, then it is not surprising that the fundamental threat to it is living in truth. **Vaclev Havel**

8 Protest is when I say I don't like this. Resistance is when I put an end to what I don't like. Protest is when I say I refuse to go along with this anymore. Resistance is when I make sure everybody else stops going along too. **Ulrike Meinhof**

9 We must learn that passively to accept an unjust system is to cooperate with that system, and thereby to become a participant in its evil. **Martin Luther King Jr.**

10 After all, if you do not resist the apparently inevitable, you will never know how inevitable the inevitable was. **Terry Eagleton**

11 I write these words to bear witness to the primacy of resistance struggle in any situation of domination (even within family life); to the strength and power that emerges from sustained

resistance and the profound conviction that these forces can be healing, can protect us from dehumanization and despair.

— **bell hooks**, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*

12 We realized from the beginning that when challenges in our society go unanswered, it's almost never for lack of good ideas or good people. Rather, it's for lack of good people with ideas who are willing to stick their necks out to put those ideas and ideals into action. **Ann Medlock** and **John Graham**, on behalf of the nonprofit, Giraffe Heroes Project which honors "compassionate risk-takers who are largely unknown, people who have the courage to stick their necks out for the common good, in the US and around the world."

13 Moral courage is a quality of mind as well as spirit because it involves both the processes of intellectual discourse and the feelings of rightness and wrongness inherent in each individual. It enables us to face up to problems — not necessarily to resolve them and certainly not to promise that we will master them, but to address them squarely, frontally and with determination. It requires action that is both firmly persistent and confidently assured that its tools — the moral, mental, and emotional elements of argumentation and persuasion — are sound enough to weather serious resistance. Finally, it requires us to act without flinching or retreating in the face of persuasions, from the subtle to the violent, that make us want to turn tail and run. **Rushworth M. Kidder**, from his book, **Moral Courage**

14 It's this way **Nazim Hikmet**

I stand in the advancing light,
my hands hungry, the world beautiful.

My eyes can't get enough of the trees-
they're so hopeful, so green.

A sunny road runs through the mulberries,
I'm at the window of the prison infirmary.

I can't smell the medicines-
carnations must be blooming nearby.

It's this way:
being captured is beside the point,
the point is not to surrender.

Translated by **Randy Blasing** and **Mutlu Konuk**. The Turkish poet, **Nazim Hikmet**, was a political prisoner for eighteen years.

15 Poem Resisting Arrest

Kyle Dargan

This poem is guilty. It assumed it retained
the right to ask its question after the page

came up flush against its face. The purpose
this poem serves is obvious, even to this poem,

and that cannot stop the pen or the fist
choking it. How the page tastes at times—unsalted

powerlessness in this poem's mouth, a blend
of that and what it has inhaled of the news. It spits

blood—inking. It is its own doing and undoing.
This poem is trying to hold itself together. It has

the right to remain either bruised or silent,
but it is a poem, so it hears you'd be safer

if you stopped acting like a poem, ceased resisting.
Where is the daylight (this poem asks and is

thus crushed) between existence and resistance,
between the now-bloodied page and the poem?

Another poem will record the arrest of this poem,
decide what to excerpt. That poem will fail—

it won't find the right metaphor for the pain
of having to lift epigraphs from the closing

words of poems that were accused of resisting.
That poem is numb. This poem is becoming

numb, already losing feeling in its cuffed phrasing.
No one will remember the nothing of which

this poem was accused—just that it was another
poem that bled. This poem never expected to be

this poem, yet it must be—for you who will not
acknowledge the question. This poem knew

it was dangerous to ask why?

From "Anagnorisis," (TriQuarterly/Northwestern UP, 2018).

Source: The Quarry, a Social Justice Poetry Database, poems published by Split This Rock
<https://www.splitthisrock.org/poetry-database/>

For Reflection and Discussion

A What does resistance mean to you?

B Does the distinction between protest and resistance resonate for you?

C Has there been a moment (or moments) in your life when you feel you embodied resistance?
What price did you pay? What were the rewards?

D How does your experience of All Souls relate to your understanding of resistance in word and in deed?

---Mary Beth Hatem, for covenant groups at All Souls Church, Unitarian