

Classic Poetry Series

**David Edelstadt**  
**- poems -**

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# David Edelstadt()

# At Strife

Hated are we, and driven from our homes,  
Tortured and persecuted, even to blood;  
And wherefore? 'Tis because we love the poor,  
The masses of mankind, who starve for food.

We are shot down, and on the gallows hanged,  
Robbed of our lives and freedom without ruth,  
Because for the enslaved and for the poor  
We are demanding liberty and truth.

But we will not be frightened from our path  
By darksome prisons or by tyranny;  
We must awake humanity from sleep,  
Yea, we must make our brothers glad and free.

Secure us fast with fetters made of iron,  
Tear us like beasts of blood till life departs,  
'Tis but our bodies that you will destroy,  
Never the sacred spirit in our hearts.

You cannot kill it, tyrants of the earth!  
Our spirit is a plant immortal, fair;  
Its petals, sweet of scent and rich of hue,  
Are scattered wide, are blooming everywhere.

In thinking men and women now they bloom,  
In souls that love the light and righteousness.  
As they strive on toward duty's sacred goal,  
Nature herself doth their endeavor bless—

To liberate the poor and the enslaved  
Who suffer now from cold and hunger's blight,  
And to create for all humanity  
A world that shall be free, that shall be bright;

A world where tears no longer shall be shed,  
A world where guiltless blood no more shall flow,  
And men and women, like clear-shining stars,  
With courage and with love shall be aglow.

You may destroy us, tyrants! 'Twill be vain.  
Time will bring on new fighters strong as we;  
For we shall battle ever, on and on,  
Nor cease to strive till all the world is free!

David Edelstadt

# My Will

Good friends, when I am dead, bear to my grave  
Our banner, freedom's flag of crimson hue,  
Stained with the blood poured from the toilers' veins.  
There 'neath the crimson banner sing to me  
My song, 'At Strife,' the song of liberty,  
That in the hearer's ear clangs like the chains  
Of the enslaved, Christian alike and Jew.

E'en in the grave, O brothers, I shall hear  
My song of liberty, my stormy lay;  
E'en there shall I shed tears for every slave,  
Christian or Jew; and when the swords I hear  
Clash in the final battle's blood and fear,  
Then, singing to the people from my grave,  
I will inspire their hearts, that glorious day!

David Edelstadt