

Defoe Daniel

The Storm. An Essay.



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THE STORM. AN ESSAY

I'm told, *for we have News among the Dead,*
Heaven lately spoke, but few knew what it said;
The Voice, in loudest Tempests spoke,
And Storms, which Nature's strong Foundation shook.
I felt it hither, and I'd have you know
I heard the Voice, and knew the Language too.
Think it not strange I heard it here,
No Place is so remote, but when *he speaks,* they hear.
Besides, tho' I am dead in Fame,
I never told you where I am.¹⁰

Tho' I have lost Poetick Breath,
I'm not in perfect State of Death:
From whence this *Popish Consequence* I draw,
I'm in the Limbus of the Law.
Let me be where I will I heard the Storm,
From every Blast *it eccho'd thus, REFORM;*
I felt the mighty Shock, and saw the Night,
When Guilt look'd pale, and own'd the Fright;
And every Time the raging Element
Shook *London's* lofty Towers, at every Rent²⁰
The falling Timbers gave, *they cry'd, REPENT.*

I saw, when all the stormy Crew,
Newly commission'd from on high,
Newly instructed what to do,
In Lowring, Cloudy, Troops drew nigh:

They hover'd o'er the guilty Land,
As if they had been backward to obey;
As if they wondred at the sad Command,
And pity'd those they shou'd destroy.
But Heaven, that long had gentler Methods tried,³⁰
And saw those gentler Methods all defied,
Had now resolv'd to be obey'd.
The Queen, an Emblem of the *soft, still, Voice,*
Had told the Nation how to make their Choice;
Told them the only Way to Happiness
Was by the Blessed Door of Peace.
But the unhappy Genius of the Land,
Deaf to the Blessing, as to the Command,

Scorn the high Caution, and contemn the News,
And all the blessed Thoughts of Peace refuse.⁴⁰
Since Storms are then the Nation's Choice,
Be Storms their Portion, said the Heavenly Voice:
He said, and I could hear no more,
So soon th' obedient Troops began to roar:
So soon the blackning Clouds drew near,
And fill'd with loudest Storms the trembling Air:
I thought I felt the World's Foundation shake,
And lookt when all the wondrous Frame would break.
I trembl'd as the Winds grew high,
And so did many a braver Man than I:⁵⁰
For he whose Valour scorns his Sence,
Has chang'd his Courage into Impudence.
Man may to Man his Valour show,
And 'tis his Vertue to do so.
But if he's of his Maker not afraid,
He's not courageous then, but mad.

Soon as I heard the horrid Blast,
And understood how long 'twould last,
View'd all the Fury of the Element,
Consider'd well by whom 'twas sent,⁶⁰
And *unto whom* for Punishment:
It brought my Hero to my Mind,
William, the Glorious, Great, and Good, and Kind.
Short Epithets to his Just Memory;
The first he was to all the World, *the last to me*.

The mighty Genius to my Thought appear'd,
Just in the same Concern he us'd to show,
When private Tempests us'd to blow,
Storms which the Monarch more than Death or Battel fear'd.
When Party Fury shook his Throne,⁷⁰
And made their mighty Malice known,
I've heard the sighing Monarch say,
The Publick Peace so near him lay,
It took the Pleasure of his Crown away.
It fill'd with Cares his Royal Breast;
Often he has those Cares Prophetickly exprest,
That when he should the Reins let go,
Heaven would some Token of its Anger show,
To let the thankless Nation see
How they despis'd their own Felicity.⁸⁰
This robb'd the Hero of his Rest,
Disturb'd the Calm of his serener Breast.

When to the Queen the Scepter he resign'd,
With a resolv'd and steady Mind,

Tho' he rejoic'd to lay the Trifle down,
He pity'd Her to whom he left the Crown:

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