

Puerto Rico, Mayor Cruz, Shakespeare

Speeches of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz

Zeteo is Looking and Listening

29 September 2017

*S*an Juan Mayor Cruz's speeches to cable-news reporters and the world were heroic and heart-rending, and examples of great leadership in a time of crisis. If and when documentaries come to be made of the Trump years, sadly, these clips are as like as any to be included. (Has the Left finally found its voice? Someone who knows how—in the midst of the current uncategorizable hurricane and of the many, yet insufficient responses to it—to speak for caring, for human life?)

With people dying and desperate in Puerto Rico, there may be precious little time for literature. Yet hearing Cruz's words, and seeing her on television, we think of great speeches from Shakespeare's histories and tragedies. Far below are a few examples and links to more. Before getting to Cruz's words, a brief quote from one example, Richard II, Act 3, Scene 2:

No matter where; of comfort no man speak:

Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;

Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes

Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth,

Cruz's words

From two clips, links far below. Note that for the following presentation there has been a little editing, cutting; not all that much.

“This is, damn it, this is not a good news story.

This is a ‘people are dying’ story.

This is a ‘life or death’ story.

This is ‘there’s a truckload of stuff that cannot be taken to people’ story.

This is a story of a devastation that continues to worsen.

“We are dying here.

Mayday, we are in trouble.

The government had the gall this morning of asking me:

‘What are your priorities, mayor?’

“I have been patient but we have no time for patience any more.

I am asking the president of the United States to make sure somebody is in charge that is up to the task of saving lives.

“I will do what I never thought I was going to do: I am begging.

I am begging anyone that can hear us to save us from dying.

If anybody out there is listening to us, we are dying.

And you are killing us with the inefficiency and bureaucracy.

“I am done being polite.

I am done being politically correct.

I am mad as hell because my people’s lives are at stake.

“So I’m asking members of the press to send a mayday call all over the world.

We are dying here.

And if we don’t stop and if we don’t get the food and the water into people’s hands, what we are going to see is something close to a genocide.

“So, Mr. Trump, I am begging you to take charge and save lives.

If not, the world will see how we are treated not as second-class citizens but as animals that can be disposed of.

Enough is enough.”

Links

YouTube clips:

- “This is, damn it, this is not a good news story.”
- “We are dying here.”

Transcript prepared by *The Guardian*:

- San Juan mayor’s harrowing plea: ‘Mr Trump, I am begging. We are dying here’

A Few Other Shakespeare Speeches

From King Lear, Act 2, Scene 4, the King speaking:

If only to go warm were gorgeous,
 Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear’st,
 Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need—
 You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need.
 You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
 As full of grief as age, wretched in both.

From Henry V, Act 4, Scene 3, the King speaking:

For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
 Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile,
 This day shall gentle his condition:
 And gentlemen in England now a-bed
 Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,

From Richard II, Act 5, Scene 5, the King speaking:

I have been studying how I may compare
 This prison where I live unto the world: . . .
 Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves
 That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,
 Nor shall not be the last; . . .
 Bearing their own misfortunes on the back
 Of such as have before endured the like.

To explore more speeches, see [Shakespeare’s greatest speeches](#), posted by Lorraine Treanor, DC Theatre Scene (“Washington’s Liveliest Theatre Website”), March 2, 2010. Or,

Greatest Shakespeare Speeches, posted by Sylvia Morris, *The Shakespeare Blog*, May 29, 2011.