

John Milton 1673 Release Me from this Hell

*I was a man of letters and learning, a poet of renown,
But now dwell in a small upper room in London Town.
I would that I could return to the peace of Horton
"Where the red sun rises from the east horizon."
The deep dark chasms of Hades do not seem far away,
But "I have yet many words to show the light of day."
Athena's wind blows strong tonight. I feel fear in the air.
The flying black dust catches in my now- greying hair.
Conflagration and pandemonium Zeus again has wrought.
Pepy's house could not be saved – to me the news was brought.
Gunpowder wrecks good houses in the spreading fire's path.
The wild cacophony embraces the sound of cracking glass.
Foul smell of burning tallow chokes each aching lung.
The acrid stench e'en to my own tired coat has clung.
"All hell is broke loose." - I fear for Aldersgate tonight.
Retreating in haste once more to St Giles cannot be right.
Returning thoughts of deadly miasma evoke nightmares.
Will we have to escape again and pack up all our wares?
The frightened, fleeing folk scream past my very door.
I cannot withdraw into my own world of sleep any more.
I feel the very heat of the flames in my weary bones.
Yet, I well know these daunting fears are not mine alone.
My once quick mind has turned to jumbled thought.
Hephaestus, what devastation have you now wrought?
Come! My Quaker friend! Imprisoned, I cannot flee,
From Vulcan's flaming tar and pitch, quickly rescue me.
At the end of this horrendous day that is always night,
I can no longer say to those who view my sorry plight,
"Yet, I can see where many others have no insight
Manifold matters that are invisible to mortal sight."*