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## RECESSIONAL 1982

(with gratitude to Kipling)

by **Esther Greenleaf Mürer, Central Philadelphia MM**  
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Deafened by our inner noise and blinded by our greed,  
Numbed by rush and conflict, muted by the sight of need—  
Need we cannot answer when our spirits have been jarred  
By the subway's reeking tube and factory's iron shard—  
    Fretful dust, we choke on dust  
    And quell each other with our disregard.

Now from dune and headland see our missile silos rise;  
Generals and kings demand the same old sacrifice:  
Hearts and minds and bodies consecrated to the fire.  
Why should we concern ourselves with Nineveh and Tyre?  
    Ere we yield our pomp of yesterday  
    We aim to make the world our pyre.

Through the drunken mists of power behold a tiny light;  
We have often glimpsed it in the stillness of the night.  
Now the light grows larger and becomes a rivulet,  
Now a mighty flood that shall engulf the nations yet—  
    Ocean of light, flow over us!  
    Connect us all, lest we forget

That Thou hast given our heathen hearts the power to kill us all,  
Power to turn all earthly life to shadows on a wall.  
Yet, despite our frantic boasts, a greater might is Thine;  
Still hast Thou dominion over prince and palm and pine.  
    Lord God of Hosts, join us together  
    In thy far-flung battleline

For only as we work together will Thy Kingdom come,  
Only as we seek together shall we find our Home;  
Only as our inner noise is stilled may there be heard

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Messages of truth and right from Thine eternal Word.

Judge of the nations, spare us yet;

Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!

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