

# Loving America

A Poem: "Love the people not the government"

By [Prof Peter Dale Scott](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

## Loving America

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We are made schizophrenic  
by loving America  
by our love of the well-cherished  
gardens of our comfortable neighborhoods  
of the kind woman this morning  
who rebuttoned my sleeve  
after drawing blood from my arm  
and told me that her friends  
two Christian missionaries  
had *real problems in Afghanistan*  
*-or near there -*  
*perhaps it was Zimbabwe -*  
and the cultures of its people  
as caught by Bernstein  
in *West Side Story*  
and the music of Leonard Cohen  
*Democracy is coming*  
*to the U.S.A.*

Love has problems with knowledge  
which is why Dostoevsky said  
he would choose Christ over the truth  
and Milosz wrote in the midst  
of the destruction of Warsaw

*Who serves best doesn't always understand*

Milosz *New and Collected Poems* 50

which is why for Socratics  
love isn't always a virtue

and because we love America  
we tend to believe our president

*it was only after*

*the Taliban refused*

*to turn over Osama bin Laden*

*we sent our troops into Afghanistan*  
12/1/09

Obama, West Point

as we suppress what the Taliban

actually said:

they would not hand over bin Laden

*without proof or evidence*

*that he was involved in last week's attacks*

which Bush refused them

CNN 9/21/01

and we ignore the unpoetic truth

from FBI Headquarters

why its "Most Wanted" webpage on bin Laden

does not list 9/11

*the FBI has no hard evidence*

*connecting Bin Laden to 9/11.*  
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=2623>

or Cheney on TV

*We've never argued the case*

*that somehow Osama Bin Laden*

*was directly involved in 9/11.*

*That evidence has never been forthcoming.*

Tony Snow Show, 3/29/06

and we ignore the fact

that America then recruited

high-level drug traffickers

from Pakistan and even France

to assist in the invasion it had already prepared

of Afghanistan

in the same way

that for more than half a century

our secret armies helped develop

Thailand Burma and Laos

to become for the first time

global opiate suppliers

in alliance with drug traffickers

so powerful and important

they are absolutely never named

in U.S. newspapers

Scott American War Machine

like Li Wenhuan

General of the Fifth Army

in whose honor a huge statue is being built

we ignore whatever our papers ignore

and we suppress the obvious

because we are made schizophrenic  
by loving America  
while our country is delivered  
into the hands of men  
like the priapic  
ex-senior officer of Enron  
who cashed out for a quarter billion  
married one of his strippers  
and became the second largest  
landowner in Colorado

Mimi Swartz *Power Failure* 193

I don't believe for a second  
that what we think are our thoughts  
are only the thoughts of our age  
like those *who proclaim*  
*that it is language that controls us*  
*and not we who control language*  
we make our own culture  
but not just as we choose  
and we are bent way out of shape  
when we struggle to lead  
a virtuous life  
in this freest  
and most belligerent nation in the world

Milosz *Beginning with My Streets* 204

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so many of whose poets  
once left the country  
committed suicide went insane

play now in the gardens of their ivory towers

and the safely meaningless

or

have celebrated America's power

*as a country of vast designs and expectations*

of a new and *more excellent social state*

*than history has recorded*

*Emerson, Sellers Market Revolution 380*

or Carl Sandburg your *Chicago*

*alive and coarse and strong and cunning.*

*a tall bold slugger set vivid*

*against the little soft cities*

*Sandburg Chicago*

or even you Walt Whitman

celebrating the guns of *the new empire*

and its Broadway pageants

the way we celebrate fireworks

*I chant America, the Mistress—I chant a greater supremacy....*

*I chant my stars and stripes fluttering in the wind;*

*I chant commerce opening,*

*When the thunder-cracking guns arouse me*

*with the proud roar I love*

*Whitman, "A Broadway Pageant" Leaves of Grass*

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and I have to say to my friends

who as I do love Whitman

you ignore the esoteric

you suppress the obvious

because we are made schizophrenic

by loving of America

I saw it in fragments of a text  
as in two shards of a mirror  
*that it is not we*  
*who speak the language*  
*but it is the language*  
*that speaks us*  
and then nearby  
*We can express no more than*  
*the language of our time and place*  
*allows us to.*  
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Milosz *Beginning with My Streets*

In the wake of our civil war  
when Whitman was attacked by Allen Tate  
can there yet be a poet  
with the breadth of compassion  
to do for America

and Whitman's *fervid IDEA*  
*Works*935-6

Whitman *Democratic Vistas Complete*

what Milosz achieved for Poland  
when he translated Simone Weil  
into the language of his people  
*the unreasonable hating themselves*

Scott *Poets Who Grow Gardens in Their Heads*

*even more than they hate other nations*

Milosz *New and Collected poems* 245

to persuade the militant church and the militant left  
the factions of believers and thinkers  
engaged in cultural wars  
and increasingly self-deranged  
by rejecting each other

that they could instead address  
the heartlessness  
at the center of the capital  
conniving with lies and murder  
as now in the case of Washington  
which targeted a hospital in Fallujah  
as “a center of propaganda” *AsiaTimesOnline 11/10/2004, DahrJamilIraq.com 11/16/04*  
and has sent a fleet  
on its way to the Persian Gulf

with “bunker busters”  
for blasting underground structures  
aiming specifically at Iran

*Chomsky July 2 2010*

Are we mentally obese?  
why do most of us  
barely mind or even notice  
“They are gearing up totally  
for the destruction of Iran“?

*HeraldScotland March 14 2010*

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*Love America!*

(means)

*Love the people*

*not the government!*

and don't seriously blame anyone!

not the people

not those in Washington

not even the poets

though *What is poetry which does not save*

*Nations or people?*

*A connivance with official lies...*

*Milosz, New and Collected Poems, 77-78*

we make our own culture

but not just as we please

and all are caught up in

a relentless dialectic

the two sides of Whitman

love of power and hatred of pain

which no poet can resolve

until America comes to realize

like Britain in 1956

it can no longer

*control any situation in the world*

*Joint Vision 2020 Pentagon*

**Peter Dale Scott**, a former Canadian diplomat and English Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, is a poet, writer, and researcher. He was born in Montreal in 1929, the only son of the poet F.R. Scott and the painter Marian Scott. He is married to Ronna Kabatznick; and he has three children, Cassie, Mika, and John Scott, by a previous marriage to Maylie Marshall.

His prose books include *The War Conspiracy* (1972), *The Assassinations: Dallas and Beyond* (in collaboration, 1976), *Crime and Cover-Up: The CIA, the Mafia, and the Dallas-Watergate Connection* (1977), *The Iran-Contra Connection* (in collaboration, 1987), *Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America* (in collaboration, 1991, 1998), *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (1993, 1996), *Deep Politics Two* (1994, 1995, 2006), *Drugs Oil and War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, March 2003), *The Road to 9/11* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), and *The War Conspiracy: JFK, 9/11, and the Deep Politics of War* (Ipswich, MA: Mary Ferrell Foundation Press, 2008).

An anti-war speaker during the Vietnam and Gulf Wars, he was a co-founder of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at UC Berkeley, and of the Coalition on Political Assassinations (COPA).



His poetry has dealt with both his experience and his research, the latter of which has centered on U.S. covert operations, their impact on democracy at home and abroad, and their relations to the John F. Kennedy assassination and the global drug traffic. The poet-critic Robert Hass has written (Agni, 31/32, p. 335) that "Coming to Jakarta is the most important political poem to appear in the English language in a very long time."

*His latest book of poems, Mosaic Orpheus, appeared in 2009 from McGill-Queen's University Press. It [can be ordered from Amazon.com](#). His other chief poetry books are the three volumes of his trilogy Seculum: Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror (1989), Listening to the Candle: A Poem on Impulse (1992), and Minding the Darkness: A Poem for the Year 2000. In addition he has published Crossing Borders: Selected Shorter Poems (1994), published in Canada as Murmur of the Stars. In November 2002 he was awarded the Lannan Poetry Award.*

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