

## « Speak red » by Catherine Côté-Ostiguy (2012)

Translated by: Cameron Joseph Monagle / <http://rougesquad.org/en/content/speak-red>

Speak red  
it is so beautiful to hear you  
speak of equality  
and of an educated and involved youth  
who will one day  
set out from our universities

They'd like to keep us ignorant and docile, but we are not mute, and our voice carries.  
We are not idiots, nor criminals, nor ignorant nor cowards,  
speak red.  
And don't accept only simplistic economic statistics and obstinate silence from our Ministers as a response.

Speak red.  
Let's talk about education and social justice.  
Talk about the Parent report, or the Quiet Revolution,  
of our predecessor's battles,  
for their victories to be brushed aside today.  
Talk of routing our government.  
We're a sacrificed generation, but we're eager to learn and for a more just society  
where education is not a luxury.  
And when you really speak red,  
when you get down in the streets,

to express your ideals,  
and to talk of equality of opportunity,  
of the Québec you want,  
a bit louder now, speak red,  
raise your second-class citizen voice,  
they're a bit hard of hearing, they're too close with their employer,  
and they only hear our breath from their ivory tower  
Speak red and loud, so they can hear you from Montréal to the Côte-Nord,  
Use your admirable language to demand the counts.  
Refuse to be ignored for stories of numbers and broken glasses.

Speak red.  
Tell them that we're doing our « fair share »  
as graduates, we'll be contributing to a better Québec  
speak red,  
faced with those who think that school benches are not made for learning,  
but for selling out  
for selling at a loss of soul,  
for selling out.

Ah! speak red!  
Each of you,  
Tell them the eternity of one day on strike,  
Tell them what we wish for tomorrow,  
so they can go home at night,  
when the sun sets beneath their towers,  
and for them to tell themselves, yes, the sun is setting, yes,  
every day of their life, east of their empires, but maybe  
maybe, something is wrong with their trader's logic.

Speak red,  
be at ease with your words.  
Maybe we're idealists,  
But we won't accept that anyone will come and threaten the basis of our society.

In the language of Molière,  
but with Miron's accent,  
we speak the language of our generation  
as in England, in Colombie,  
We express our anger clearly, a red square between our teeth  
you talk about the hike, of returning to order, of repression,

Speak red,  
it's a universal language, we're born to understand it,  
in spite of your teargas and batons.

Speak red  
remind them of what Freedom and Democracy mean.  
We know that the word liberty is a red, like student-debt,  
and those who, in Québec and elsewhere, are fighting for their rights.

Speak red,  
from Montréal to Québec relay the message,  
speak red like in Trois-Rivières,  
red like in Rimouski,  
let's be strong, and continue to bravely defend our values,  
faced with those who still ask us why  
and we'll respond firmly : we believe in tomorrow, we won't give up.

We are Québec.  
And we know that we're not alone.