

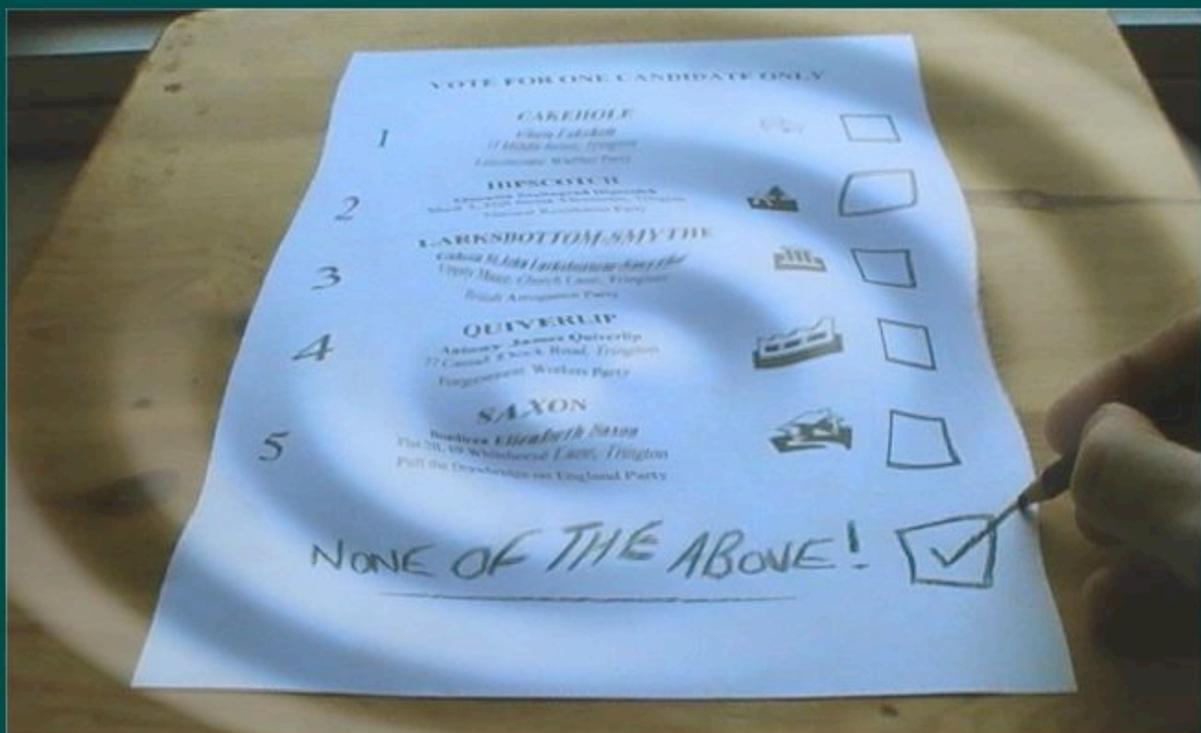
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# DEMOCRACY:

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## AN EPITAPH

POEMS BY  
LALLAFA JELTZ



WyrStar

# DEMOCRACY: AN EPITAPH

Verse by  
Lallafa Jeltz

WYRDSTAR BOOKS

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# DEMOCRACY: AN EPITAPH

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***Democracy*** [noun]

*From the Greek demos 'the people', -kratia 'power, rule'.*

## None Of The Above

A cascade of names, list of candidates,  
Your hand hesitates, you can't place your cross,  
You've heard their pledges, promises, slogans,  
Which one inspired you? None of the above.  
They tried their best to prove they are worthy,  
Attacked their rivals, debates on TV,  
The world they live in is cold and distant,  
Who might you vote for? None of the above.

You picture those who preach party dogma,  
Career politicians, no real-world CV,  
Millionaires who won't tax the wealthy,  
But snatch from the poor, an iron-fisted glove.  
Safe in their mansions, why back cheap housing?  
Eton idealists meddling with state schools,  
Friends of big business won't back fair wages,  
Who should you vote for? None of the above.

Where are the people you can relate to?  
Architects, thinkers to build a new world.  
Where are the farmers, plumbers, street sweepers,  
Social-care angels who strive to bring love?  
Doctors and nurses, artists and teachers,  
Call-centre workers entrenched in real life.  
The butcher, baker, candlestick maker,  
Who can you vote for? None of the above.

## DEMOCRACY: AN EPITAPH

A list of names, cascade of candidates,  
Your hand hovering to vote with a cross.  
Parliament's hopefuls and their policies,  
Which one convinced you? None of the above.  
The right to vote is a right to fight for,  
Your pencil moves to the end of the page.  
A new box is drawn, a cross inserted,  
Alongside you scrawl: 'None of the above!'

## Ode To Magna Carta

On The Occasion Of Her 800th Anniversary

Remember Magna Carta!  
Did she die in vain?  
The lad from East Cheam's  
Immortal refrain.  
The joke is on us,  
Magna Carter's but a name,  
Born from defiance,  
A monarchy to tame,  
Symbol of democracy,  
Pawn in the great game.  
Weathered by centuries,  
Now destitute and lame.  
Was she fatally wounded?  
Does her spirit still remain?  
Remember Magna Carta!  
Did she die in vain?

## Civil Disobedience Of The Third Kind

A friend from afar, he came to England,  
Seeking adventure, new freedoms and old.  
Apathy met him in our capital,  
The streets of London were paved with fool's gold.  
He saw life was good, bad and then ugly,  
People accepted the truth they'd been sold.  
"Consumers," he cried, "of the world, unite!  
"Rebel, disobey! Don't do what you're told!"

"Firstly," he said, "your boss treats you badly,  
"Why not rally staff, protest and parade!  
"Take a lesson from union action,  
"Withhold your labour 'til changes are made!  
"If that's too daring, cast your gaze further,  
"A new job with prospects that's much better paid.  
"Don't wallow and stew, walk and take action!  
"Bad bosses are leeches, cruel and depraved!"

"Secondly," says he, "you moan about trains,  
"Cancelled and crowded and late, you complain.  
"What if passengers really revolted?  
"Protests at stations are not that insane!  
"Networks closed down would earn no more money,  
"Share price would tumble but you're not to blame.  
"Wrath of commuters, elections looming,  
"Can England's railways be great once again?"

## DEMOCRACY: AN EPITAPH

“Thirdly,” he exclaimed, “your rent is too high,  
“Refuse to pay and declare it obscene!  
“Join with your neighbours and other tenants,  
“Laugh at the landlords, no money is seen!  
“Are there the bailiffs for mass evictions?  
“Courts to handle your massed anarchist team?  
“Property hoarders brought low by squatters,  
“Nursing their broken investment wet dream!”

“Where there’s a will, there’s a way,” he told me,  
“Defiant acts keep arrogance at bay.”

I was not convinced and just smiled meekly,  
“England,” I told him, “does not work that way.  
“Not in our nature, not in our culture!”

I struggled to think of what else to say.  
The traveller’s eyes blazed with fierce fervour,  
Revolution, here? Maybe not today.

## The Road To Number Ten

Eton to Oxbridge, reading politics,  
Or student lawyer who turns from the bar.  
Aide to a Member, intern at think-tank,  
Make those connections and surely go far.  
Learn the rhetoric, stock party sound-bites,  
Woolly warm words from split peas in a pod.  
Learn the trade and await an election,  
Vacant seat beckons, the party men nod.

Constituents swayed by quips and a smile,  
Sick of the other, they vote for the new.  
Seat in the Commons, a whip to follow,  
Parliamentary aide, a Minister's pew.  
Memory fades of doorstep promises,  
Words on employment, immigrants and drugs.  
Forget the pledge on hospital closures,  
Political stock means vote for the cuts.

Faithful Ministers vie for promotion,  
Loyalty on show, governance played straight.  
Cabinet scuffles, leader is weary,  
Minister becomes Secretary of State.  
Surprise reshuffle tightens ambition,  
Discarded rivals are not worth a sob.  
Party rebellion, PM ejected,  
Number Ten offers coveted top job.

## DEMOCRACY: AN EPITAPH

Here at the summit, fear is of falling,  
Gilded policies now look like cheap tin.  
Party fractures are deepening canyons,  
Media backlash draws claws at thin skin.  
The road to the top turned from the people,  
Voters who wanted a chance to make mend.  
Instead it bears a dreary carnival,  
A brash caravan, the same old dead end.

## Blameless Tiers

A brisk morning walk, the capital's streets,  
Miss the cracked paving, trip over and fall,  
Pride hurt and wounded more than sore kneecaps,  
Demand recompense from borough town hall!  
Councillor blames the London Assembly,  
Assembly Member says talk to MP,  
Member of Parliament writes to Government:  
"That's one cut too far when safety is key!"  
Government says the street was refurbished,  
Through an EU scheme; it's MEP's call,  
Local MEP writes off to Strasbourg,  
Who send back advice on how not to fall...

## Democracy: An Epitaph

Democracy; oh! It seems she's dying,  
The fire has gone from a word once so proud,  
Driven to grief by scorn and derision,  
Her guardians weave the final black shroud.  
Sold off her healthcare, transport and prisons,  
Assets stripped bare at the drop of a hat,  
Money is king for short-term crass thinking,  
Privatisation bills fall to the mat.  
Democracy sways, its pillars crumbling,  
Politicians fear to fight for what's right,  
Four masts of power, three unelected,  
Mourned by the people, her death is in sight.

Her first pillar creaks with grand tradition,  
Mother parliament; infertile, in need,  
Half unelected, all unreflective,  
Should be an honour but tainted with greed.  
'First past the post' means most votes are wasted,  
Empty rhetoric drowns those that are not,  
Candidates trapped by crass party dogma,  
Groomed smooth and eager to keep what they've got.  
A chamber deceived by hapless bankers,  
Corporate lobbyists tempt them with lies,  
'None of the above' would clear green benches,  
Smug cronies on red outnumber the wise.

## DEMOCRACY: AN EPITAPH

Her next pillar rings hollow and empty,  
The Cabinet tries to plaster the cracks,  
Privileged class pass reins to each other,  
One eye open for a stab in their backs.  
Ministers bow to big boys of business,  
Market forces, a blind faith that enthral,  
Public services sold to low bidders,  
Executive left with no claws at all.  
Policies spun on thread of a headline,  
Ambition comes first; the government rots,  
Long-term strategies fall by the wayside,  
All eyes instead on the next ballot box.

Her third pillar charred by fires of justice,  
Court in the act as the flames lick the wall,  
Sentences strict for crime judged in pound notes,  
If the poor are wronged it's no crime at all.  
Out-of-touch judges, super-injunctions,  
Lawyers in Whitehall, Parliament and court,  
Justice for all, but all can't afford it,  
Surveillance state where privacy is bought.  
Justice should stand and speak for the voiceless,  
Big money talks but rarely for the weak,  
David falls to big business Goliaths,  
Truth is kept hidden from those who would seek.

## DEMOCRACY: AN EPITAPH

Her last pillar sways in winds of reason,  
Freedom of speech, a sharp double-edged sword,  
The right to debate seized by the media,  
If facts do not fit they're quietly ignored.  
Papers stir passions on benefit scroungers,  
Disgraced TV hosts and terrorist scares,  
Asylum seekers and greedy bankers,  
Make up your own mind but all too few dare.  
A capital's news under one Standard,  
Topical hatred, a state of duress,  
No time for debate, sound-bite the message,  
Take your fill of what you're fed by the press.

Money creates new corporate masters,  
The people they serve do not get their say,  
Taxes pay debtors, contracts and lawyers,  
Private finances become the new way.  
Socialists blamed for seeing the people,  
The elderly blamed for living too long,  
The jobless blamed for shunning slave labour,  
The disabled blamed for not being strong.  
Fingers point at elected guardians,  
Who sold their duties, a right-wing attack,  
Democracy cheated, pushed to the gutter,  
Democracy lies with a knife in her back.

## VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE ONLY

1	<b>CAKEHOLE</b> Gloria Cakehole 57 Middle Street, Trington Lemoneric Waffles Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<b>HIPSCOTCH</b> Quentin Stalingrad Hipscotch Shed 3, Hill Street Allotments, Trington Natural Revolution Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<b>LARKSBOTTOM-SMYTHE</b> Gideon St. John Larksbottom-Smythe Uppity Manor, Church Lane, Trington British Arrogance Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<b>QUIVERLIP</b> Antony James Quiverlip 57 Canal Duck Road, Trington Forgotten Workers Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<b>SAXON</b> Boadicea Elizabeth Saxon Flat 2B, 69 Whitehorse Lane, Trington Pull the Drawbridge on England Party		<input type="checkbox"/>

NONE OF THE ABOVE!



## **About the Author**

**Lallafa Jeltz** is the pen-name of a London-based writer, whose hobbies include confusing tourists, drawing moustaches on newspaper pictures of celebrities and shouting at the screen during BBC's *Question Time*.

*Democracy: An Epitaph* is Lallafa's first poetry collection.

*Also available from WyrldStar*

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