

## **Fearful: Rob Simes**

Words, letters, phrases, tumbled from the ceiling, slid down the walls, pooled at my feet, gathered by the door, and in the corners. They would bury me, suffocate me. There was a weight to them. There were too many, unless I could give them voice, and so cull their numbers. They made demands, they were fearful masters, or worse still, slaves.

I looked out the window, in the direction of the great city. My friend, who gave birth to me, and would, I am sure, calmly watch my death. Dirty, desperate, riven with disease and debate, but defiantly full of life and beauty.

The morning air was brittle. The winter sun struggled. The cold through the wide-windows made me shiver, and I wrapped the rug a little more tightly around my legs. And my hand obeyed my motto, *Nulla dies sine linea*. ('not a day without a line')

It was at least clear I had to write, to summon the words, to speak up, to speak out, to defend him, but ...

My pen scratches across the paper, but, the words sag to the floor defeated, fall through the page. Lightning from brain to lungs, up through the chest, forms in the mouth, and dribbles out, defeated.

Their purpose, to soar, to change, to surge, to be crafted lightning. All we have, and action so driven. Our essence, whispered insight, our choice, dare, a brave smith, our only purpose, a modern Hephaestus.

Bright light, revelation, or the dim dark places. Constant clarity, or the calming cloistered cave. Masks to meaning, or careful, considered, choice, never-ending. Mere slogans, or the loving embrace of visions of what might be.

All the shapes, and words, in infinite variety, continue their fall, all around me.

And, I felt, in one single moment, of blazing damascene clarity, I was a single dot, and my path was entirely of my choosing. Move just a little, and again, and again, and every word and shape was before me.

And so I wrote.

And then I waited for a title.

And, finally, it came, *J'Accuse...!*

And, fearful, and proud, and, mostly, relieved, because the clamour was, at least, lessened, I signed it, Émile Zola.