

# Oh, say, can you see . . .

**By William Eaton**

*July 15, 2017 — Genève*

The voting districts are rigged so that choice is illusory

The people live on credit, with interest rates—usury

When they attempt to unite in defense of their interests

They are vilified and fired, blacklisted—communists

The young men of the underclass are shot by the police

Or spend their youths locked up in cells much as beasts

The criminals, “better educated,” keep most all of their plunder

Though a bit goes to fines, and to donations and to lawyers

And to accountants who ensure that to effective government

These fattest of all leeches contribute their 0 percent

Besides telling politicians how the people’s money should be spent

How the people’s benefits should be reduced and public resources at low rents

To more leeches should be given—environmental health be damned.

Did those few who came for justice pick a very wrong place to land?

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*It might be said that what pushed me over the edge was a Washington Post opinion piece: **No matter how bad it gets for him, here's why Trump isn't getting impeached this year**, by Philip Bump, July 14, 2017.*

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in whose hometown I find myself, was rather more far-reaching and pessimistic. A few lines from an English translation of his great **Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes** (1751), i.e. **discourse on the origin and foundation of the inequality among human beings**:*

in the midst of so much philosophy, humanity, and civilization, and of such sublime codes of morality, we have nothing to show for ourselves but a frivolous and deceitful appearance, honor without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without happiness.

*Le français, du avant-dernier paragraphe :*

au milieu de tant de philosophie, d'humanité, de politesse et de maximes sublimes, nous n'avons qu'un extérieur trompeur et frivole, de l'honneur sans vertu, de la raison sans sagesse, et du plaisir sans bonheur.