The fifteenth-century dream vision Mum and the Sothsegger [Silence and the Truth-teller] is also a sophisticated critique of political corruption in contemporary England. What has not yet been addressed in studies of the poem’s political allegory and use of personification is the extent to which its critique hinges upon a medieval theory whose implications continue to haunt us even up to the present day: that a person may be punished for another’s sin because he or she has consented to it by remaining silent. Yet Mum and the Sothsegger attributes this theory of collective responsibility not only to writings by learned theologians and lawyers, but to the common speech of the country. A theory that had often blamed a country’s people for the actions of their ruler now becomes their own to deploy. In this talk I will consider the implications of this radical democratization.