

## Beethoven at the Wall

we walk down from the parking lot  
a tank rests rusting  
steel stupid  
on the edge of the cornfield  
a Soviet Hook or Hank or Hound  
red and olive drab  
profoundly asleep in the weeds  
to Modlereuth  
Little Berlin  
chopped in half by The Wall  
now a museum

my right ear is screaming  
no, music I don't want to hear  
                  is screaming in my right ear  
                  nausea sweeps me  
fear swells to sound  
like the phalluses of dead white Destroying Angel mushrooms  
growing from the green grass of the Verboten Zone

it is only a museum  
a monument  
a dead tank, some barbed wire  
a bit of concrete  
it is not alive...  
cannot hurt me  
drive me screaming up into the sky for a Father

Gabi playfully puts the chain to her neck  
that used to tether vicious German shepherds  
a dry heave of anxiety pukes my heart into my throat  
we walk around the remnant of the wall  
across the little creek at the bottom of the valley  
that used to divide East Germany  
                  from the West  
a black cat adopts us  
follows us up to the museum like the shade of an escapee  
shot trying to scale the wall

in the dream I followed you  
short  
ill tempered

your long hair tousled...

Gott in Himmel!  
into a verboten zone  
a million mile moat  
the Styx  
Lethe for infinity  
the Fiery River of mental illness  
pouring though poets' brains  
a mine field of nightmares  
a thousand miles of psychoses  
black holes on leashes  
guard towers for escapees from the script  
pill boxes  
killer demons in cages behind churches to sick on true creators  
a black site five world ages wide  
where you, Beethoven, loosed us  
Creatures of Prometheus  
to fight

## The Rite of Spring

& Stravinsky came & Stravinsky  
 was terrible  
     the Cossack composer  
 the Scythian musician  
 the White Russian Beast  
 with his rank Turkish cigarettes  
 & his polytonal insults  
 his prehistoric face  
 a passionless mask for terrible rites

when I was six I danced to the Dance of the Sacrifice

& Stravinsky came & Stravinsky  
 swept down from the steppes  
 and worried the defenseless, well-bred ears of Paris  
 & what carnage what cacophony  
 what pitiless clangor  
 what ear rape in Europe

when it was 14 the Twentieth Century danced to the Dance of the Sacrifice

& what euphony  
 to Stravinsky  
 the primitive dandy  
 the tormentor of cellos of oboes  
 uh!  
 the cold-blooded murderer of E  
 roicas  
     uh!  
 iconoclast of Les Sylphides  
 torturer of swans  
 defiler of fugues  
 de  
 Sade of the second rate violinist pornographer  
 of the Passion ape of the Apassionata letting the fast & dirty  
 sweet  
     spill  
         into polly uh! polytonality uh! polymorphous perversity

uh!  
for the knock kneed virgins  
in olive drab tutus

dying in time to the dance in the trenches in France

it was orgy porgy orgy entropy  
the rhythmic beast of Heisenberg Uncertainty  
the Rough Beast  
let loose  
in history  
boys by the millions  
doing it doing it  
the lewd pas de deux  
while the gaggle of brass cop  
ululated

in every possible playing position  
and an animated T. Rex  
stomped out their deaths on the kettle drums

which is why

at 60  
I no longer dance to the Dance of the Sacrifice  
tough guys don't dance to Le Sacre du Printemps  
real men  
real women  
real governments  
real religions  
real musicians  
don't bring the spring  
by dancing their children to death  
for the gods

## Mahler

Mahler wanted to get the hell out of here  
first, he had to bury everybody  
six brothers and sisters  
then the unpleasant task of putting the unquiet Titan  
to rest

Mahler wanted to win wings  
before the century turned...

for the worse

Mahler wanted to sit in the corner  
sucking his thumb  
humming  
are you sleeping are you sleeping  
Brother John? Brother John?  
morning bells are ringing morning bells are ringing  
bimm bam bim! bimm bam bim!

Mahler  
wanted to tell everyone  
what the children know  
that imagination is king  
and conductor of the world  
before Revelation put its lightning bolt in there  
in that tiny place  
no bigger than the hole in the flute  
to ejaculate Hitler

Mahler wanted to sit on a stone in the Alps  
conduct cowbells and yodels  
ask for the sun full fortissimo  
soft landler from the trees in the rain  
Mahler wanted to conduct  
the symphony of the whole damn universe

barrel organs blaring from roundabouts  
swings, shooting booths, Punch & Judy shows  
the hurdy-gurdy mixed with the strains of a military band  
a male choir and all the birds singing

a searing contralto  
not what the drum tread told him  
about jackboots

klieg lights

oh, mensch, what can you tell me?

man told him the hammerschlag  
a sound that had to be invented  
bimm bam  
wham!  
the ax stroke  
Big History's acceleration march  
its machine waltz  
its drum tread  
                    through alpine meadow nostalgia  
where music  
                    sat tranced on a stump  
as the birch stick  
lashed symphonies into concentration camps  
a future that stared back  
                                    cold fish eye  
the Castle Bravo bomb  
an E Minor chord  
held till it screamed  
Extinction Level Event  
to the world

## Bach

Bach trudged down the dirt road  
Baroque now  
with March-muddy ruts  
on his way to the loft  
where, alone with the organ, he sired his musical brood  
each day  
he walked this way  
and each day now  
the melting snow  
revealed further the as yet unresurrected ground  
in the remnant grains of dead snow were lessons  
Bach, the good Lutheran, would teach them  
Kyrie, eleison  
but not today  
today, there were wisps of Magnificat in his mind  
today, he would put off the weather's stark aria

& each day  
Bach passed a bull  
a great, black, full fortissimo beast  
impounded behind a rough-hewn log stockade  
today, Bach paused and studied the brute  
as it stood buttress dumb  
yet also flying  
hooves sunk fetlock deep in dung  
black wet nostrils flared wide as the 32-foot pipe  
bellows chest heaving breath angels of frost  
cow eyes inflected with dissonance

but it was not the eyes that riveted Bach  
it was the sex  
the testicles round as Genesis  
as swung censers  
as rounds sung by a boys' choir  
taut with dark power  
and the improbable tool  
organ for impregnating the cow eyed stars  
or all the generations of this dung stench day  
for firing the force in the unresurrected grass  
or for fathering the monster

in the center of a Labyrinth

the bull raised its head then  
but not to Bach  
more to God  
bellowed anguish like a slave  
                                  into stooped gray scud  
Bach suffered a recognition  
for an instant  
he saw his head  
his plump burgher's face  
in pomaded ringlets  
where the bull's head should be  
his eyes wide and terrorized  
by the vast curse  
in this church organ body  
his mouth slaving  
goddamn you!  
at cursed Genesis

later in the loft at the great beast of the instrument  
Bach fought that bellow to bell perfect praise  
the bull torso toccata and fugue rebellion  
chained beneath the sanctuary  
without resurrection today  
or tomorrow  
or tomorrow



## Shostakovich

1906 -- 1975

every note

the sharks of The Presidium tore from the breast of your music

every note

every bleeding bit of fugato

every bloody song for the spinal flute

every note

back!

from Shostakovich to the Presidium: NYET!

for Shostakovich

a nude lady cellist

a nymphet for the instrument

to play his concerto

for you, Dimitri

the blind and exterminated Banduristi to sing Babi Yar

for you

a free exercise

Olga Korbut to dance the Golden Age Ballet

from Shostakovich:

one obscene yawp on the trombone

to stuff up

The Central Committee's Collective Critical Abilities

From Shostakovich:

the Fourth Symphony

scored for the Gulag

scored for the psych ward

scored for the terror

scored for the little old man with no nose

who froze to death on Leningrad's streets

while Stalin rose and pompous sheet music

for rejected Soviet Anthems danced in the wind

scored for the left hand of nothing

for the minor party bureaucrat who made a slip of the tongue

for the endless unsung

every note a tombstone

every movement a mass grave

& played for the Kremlin creeps

the pogrom punks stinking of vodka, onions & paranoia

whose every memorandum was an execution

a knock in the night

for the creeps a musical kick in the teeth

& the critics

sit down and don't hear

the fine strong music

don't hear Stalin loose in the Tenth

don't hear the "forced gaiety" of the Fifth

don't hear the Dostoevskian-Chaplin of the Ninth

don't hear

the music

that has endured everything

like Russian women