

CREATING A CORPSE

it wasn't a body that decayed
from the inside
but the amassed and mindless
parasites that festered
to kill a nation

they invaded
collectively
permeated the soul of a society
and did
what no congress could
until a shroud of suspicion
was able to descend
and mask the land
with either fear
or justification
or rationalization

the inner rot came from outside
with a destruction
brought on
one by one
until tens became thousands
to destroy the body politic
with infected thoughts justified
by clinging to affirmed beliefs
poisoned by certitude
of those who
held the approved thoughts
who
carried the right signs
who
wore the appropriate hat
or the most fitting outfit

subversion doesn't need spies
just a marauding cult of zealots
taking action
like the innumerable insects
that can fell an elephant
with a parade of slight
but poisonous bites

PARTING PICTURES

A spotlight shines, center stage,
over a dozen white folding chairs
arranged in symmetry, waiting
for mourners to gather.

Front of house, facing a screen
between the seats, is the silhouette
of a wheel chair where an old man sits
bent from the weight of 98 years.

He has already buried a wife,
Rose of his life, and now faces
the visage of his namesake,
the young man framed on the screen upstage.

The face looks out, peers through the tight
shaft of light, a Playbill facsimile,
previewing a life of accomplishments,
now another casualty of cancer.

Even four decades of difference
residing between them cannot obscure
the similarities that fasten these two:
the pyramidal nose, the tapered chin.

Two Toms, frozen in time, framed
in someone's lens: the one who remains strains
against age, defying gravity to lift
a weary arm to wave a final farewell

to his son.

SOUVENIRS

Waiting on the promised end times,
the erosion of age absorbs
but does not erase all remains.
They are out there all around us:

Skulls piled high by centurions;
blackened bodies, impressions
scorched into earth by flame throwers
of the Great War. Then,

glazed eyes gaze at the world from men
draped in aprons of skin and thrown
in wooden wagons like human
debris by soldiers of the Reich;

and wretched blood retched on sand
from biological weapons.
Feeling feral charm, men with clenched
fists and clenched minds descend

into woeful revenge, and passion
waxes as we join the westering sun,
and the heat of living flashes
and fades into desolation.

SPELLING THE NAME

All-consuming
Indefatigable source of
Destruction of
Someone, somewhere

All the time; an
Insidious
Dragonnade
Summoning

All other
Illnesses to
Destroy its host.
Since its start,

Almost inevitably,
It has become our age's
Disease: our cancer, our polio, our
Scarlet fever.

As
It
Dives into an immune
System,

A feeling of absolute and terrifying
Impotence
Demands
Satisfaction,

And
Its greatest ally may well be the
Diminutive minds of
Some who,

As
If
Deaf,
Shush those who speak.

Anyone
Is vulnerable; to assume safety,
Dependent upon hope, is entirely un-
Safe.

THE PRODIGAL FATHER

Somebody told me
how you had grown
as a man worthy
of honor on your own.

I wasn't there
avoiding the weight
of giving you due care
forcing you to live enate

as I surrendered
to another life
that was false and rendered
me to live like one who died.

Now I come to you
to be absolved,
hoping to mask or subdue
a lifetime uninvolved.