

Our Navalny

A nation dies in quiet ways—
poisoned by a rich man's dreams
of conquest. People in a daze
give in to his compulsive schemes,
against the wishes, warnings, screams
of challengers he treads upon.
Who dares stand up to such regimes?
Where has our Navalny gone?

A nation's widow cannot weep
until her blear-eyed orphans wake
to what has happened in their sleep—
to feel with her the deep, dull ache
of a state's murder. Too opaque
a crime, from which no heart moves on,
is sinking in. Small voices quake,
“Where has our Navalny gone?”

The conscience of a nation dies
in stages: puke turns green, then black—
as rich men's missiles choke the skies
and troops fall in for an attack,
grinding wheels across the back
of Palestine, Ukraine, Taiwan.
What force resists the beaten track
now that our Navalny's gone?

Reports are bleak. In filthy air,
an incremental war drags on
for people poisoned by despair,
knowing where Navalny's gone.

Why I Love Guns (and You Should Too)

They're great for clearing dancefloors
of people you don't like,
or scaring off the homeless guy
who's sizing up your bike.

How else do you expect to keep
a perv or thug at bay?
Or cut off boring arguments
you can't win anyway?

They're mankind's most effective means
of dominating nature—
and speeding up the process of
a spineless legislature.

Your kids will make a splash at school
with hooligans who hate them,
showing no mercy to the fool
who underestimates them.

Just *touch* one. See? Cool steel. It's like . . .
a drug you've never tried.
Feel how the barrel's weight fills out
the holster of your pride!

It's true that guns won't bring you friends
or end your quest for love—
but they're an out, when life becomes
a war you're tired of.

So march right in to buy yourself
a firearm today,
and grant yourself permission
to blow life's cares away!

A Homeland Fable

They sailed from England, Norway, Spain
and other foreign places.

Vessels from a world of pain
crowded with foreign faces.

Their leaders quarreled, drafting laws
that strangers could agree on.

The theme of every tortured clause
was land one could be free on.

Fortunes were daily gained and lost.
Some prospered; some went under.
As paths and wires and bloodlines crossed,
their children came to wonder:

Who *are* we? Where did things go wrong?
Why must we live divided?
They turned to sports and drink and song
and trudged on, undecided.

Sometimes they march on foreign foes
to find out what they're made of.
And all the while suspicion grows:
Is home what they're afraid of?

Intro to Western Culture

It's curious, how social norms
can spark rebellious dreams
in those who view the status quo
from margins and extremes—

and how those rebel hearts, in teams,
reconstitute the norm,
as influencers plead their cause
and followers conform.

Think of the quiet moral storm
that unhinged Rome's regime,
as sects of Christian radicals
edged in to reign supreme.

Catholic worship, once mainstream
drove zealots of reform
to preach the fringe beliefs with which
America would swarm.

Into a prim, New England dorm
plopped Darwin's godless theme
to fertilize the brave new world
of modern academe—

within whose halls, the civil scream
of flower children would transform
climates for women, Blacks, Jews, queers
from frigid to lukewarm.

No change is ever uniform,
but if you trace the seam
along which history's zigzag runs
(cuneiform to meme),

you'll find in every norm a gleam
of power to deform
the normal—as a new extreme
declares itself the norm.

Legacy

Remember me as one who tried—
whose failures were imbued with hope.
Setting my half-baked schemes aside,
remember me as one who tried.
The soul is never satisfied
by tasks that fall within its scope.
Remember me as one who tried—
whose failures were imbued with hope.