

## **The War Of History, or The History of War**

Humour is a stick used to measure the depth of the village well  
the widow leans on as the moon dips a pail into her nous.

The street past the village well enters into an alley  
and never comes out, that corners on philosophy and religion,

the very corner where children gather who've eaten their dogs.  
There, on the street, where wisdom is only old people.

History is an emptiness set stars to by the humour of infinity.  
What we couldn't get them to remember, we did for ourselves.

## End Of Days Report

Gentle seeker, I've been to Burkenport and back. The light fails, the darkness seeps and illuminates, offers cover for the rich to starve under, provides mantels of silk for the poor, an intoxication without drink for those who are so diseased, who have promised "Never again," who reach into their pockets for a book of matches, open it to a page of illumination, satisfied to never be lonely again, if just for a moment.

As I was leaving the city I had just arrived at in the morning, I took a moment to shudder, to exhale, although I couldn't think what it feels like to breathe, although I had just witnessed a sparrow untangle herself from a flock, then enter the priesthood of singularity, only to slip back into groupthink as a flutter of impale on a branch of wisteria. Having let my breath out, there was nothing to do but sigh, there at the moment of last chance which would bring me home to lie down among the dead and the beautiful, o prophets of what went wrong in the beginning.

Gentle seeker, Burkenport was a gamble, a failure to exaggerate, a reality pushed down deep inside a felony slowly turning itself into a memory where the real and fictitious are twins shorn from the same egg, born in each other's arms, and seeming, at first, until they can be torn apart, to be sharing a leg, perhaps a spinal cord, surely a hope or two? Burkenport played out as you thought it might, predicted through a cast of broken street glass. That the dogs returned, as usual, just before dawn, their heads tired from what the moon does to the bones of the mouth, well... Ah, desire.

At noon I found myself looking into a goblet of wine, wherein a white feather was seen, almost aggrieved with floating, and this is what I had for supper as well, a small wisp of a meal, the equivalent of a kiss between mice, for in Burkenport all hunger is fundamental, a joke between cousins involving the history of their own invented language, a language that will never be spoken again once the younger one dies unexpectedly, leaving the other to whisper before clocks, and catch a wildness of eye when she looks askance into a mirror. Then, the afternoon was spent in search of the newspaper we had talked about, Gentle Seeker, with the headline regarding our nation's space program, the one launching philosophical quandries toward the skirts of blue stars, hoping in the depths of the quiet of space to gain a purchase on the mathematical problems of grief...that longing heard in the absence of sound at the other end of the telephone.

I must report my search was a failure, so I spent the rest of the afternoon conversing with poets who had done nothing wrong during the occupation, and later sat for my portrait rendered by the husband of an important official of the Council Of Nine Virtues, which official later sat with us discussing the philosophies of Benjamin of Aramire, who died, as all great philosophers must, in a car crash involving the twentieth century.

Who knows who is an inspired fool? That's the question she posed to us before she took the last bottle of wine and went up to bed with a young lawyer.

## **When There Is No Political Solution**

At the outskirts of my village a small army rises up...perhaps  
a soldier wakes in a room from which a blue vase has been removed;  
or a squadron of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders leaves a school room to assault an angel.  
Maybe a dog pulls a rag out of the garbage and shakes it.

In one month's time even the most reserved of our pacifists will dip  
a rusted spoon in the gravy, stirring chunks of meat and grinning  
with a mouth full of missing teeth and rage.

Had I not been alert to the rise in temperature that attends the spirit  
as it moves from light into dark... well, the signs were easily missed.

But yes, I knew from the beginning. And so my trigger finger  
came to attention in the black, lamb-skin glove of the suicide,

even as I trapped a farthing sparrow in the corner of my left eye  
as it fled the granary with a bead of stolen wheat.

## **Between The 1<sup>st</sup> World And The 3<sup>rd</sup>**

In the 2nd world, the president believes in ghosts  
and tectonics, in magic and coal.

In the 2nd world a millionaire's dog gets rabies,  
senators marry gypsies, plays are performed on the radio  
and everyone, including beautiful men, ride bicycles.

If you and I lived in the 2nd world, we would meet  
late at night, at an outdoor café. I'd cultivate basement  
mushrooms. You'd sell stolen window glass.

The second world, located provocatively,  
mysteriously, inside the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The second world, composed of the hopes and aspirations of the poor  
combined with the awarenesses [of the existential pointlessness  
of fulfilled desires] of the rich.

The second world which is born, for just a moment,  
when a tourist enters a hotel built by the military;

where Europe, Russia, India, China, Indonesia,  
and America struggle over the moon.

The second world, whose dentists sink the teeth  
of the poor into movies of the surreal,

whose Santa Clauses murder turtles using cattle prods,

and whose children take the milk from their siblings  
and use it to water lemon trees.

I'm sure you've guessed by now that a safety deposit box  
in the 1<sup>st</sup> world is a novel in the second and a waste-ditch in the third,  
each world having its own special relationship with the truth

so that a lie told in the first becomes a ghost warrior in the second  
and a stadium where bodies are buried in the third,

such is the progression of laboratories into museums into abattoirs.

## Modernity

How the kingdom of God comes unto us  
but we come not unto it, even as it rises, countless times  
to the occasion as birds form into a flock, but we persist  
in our solitary ways, creating and destroying the world.

And God says unto us through the creature, through such science:  
“Behold.” And God speaks and is content, but we can’t abide such  
contentment but rather travel and see things. And in that way suffer.  
For have we not declared “This and that?”

God has been found in our throats yet we stammer, confused.  
God has issued from the honeysuckle but it is not our time and never will be.  
We are the last to know. Yes, yes, we are sane and name our dogs.

But In our pockets there are many keys.  
Even so do we carry bags of groceries in one hand as we reach into such pockets  
for said keys. We then drop the keys, kneel, curse, rise and unlock the door.

We enter through the door but are not saved.

Even as we have separated ourselves from God and called “God”, we have become  
a miserable people, exalted, holy, able to answer even in the absence of questions.

I, for one, have laughed and coughed and expected doves only to find sparrows.  
For we are unable to move through space using the gaps between words.

Come, let us now pray: O brains, we hear ourselves. Amen.  
O, congressman and technocrats. Amen.  
Is there money in our banks? O Lord, make warehouses available.  
Super-amen.

O physicians, and estate sale auctioneers,  
restore us to the youth we remember, and not the youth of our facticity.  
Amen (with hands clasped and eyes squeezed shut to indicate we are praying).