

Atheist Father Caught Praying

aware this prayer
brings peace to the world
builds countless temples
above high mountains
part of heaven not earth

blankets of stars carry his prayer
chase meteors across the meridian
hold cries of suffering
blankets of stars trap woes
hold torments at bay

before they drift down
to disturb me as I sleep

Notes from the THERANOS Trial

I do everything I say¹

We are the hollow men²

I am never a minute late

We are the stuffed men

I show no excitement

Leaning together

I am calm, direct, and pointed

Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!

I am all about business

Our dried voices, when

I am not impulsive

We whisper together

I do not react

Are quiet and meaningless

I am always proactive

As wind in dry grass

I know the outcome of encounters

Or rats' feet over broken glass

I do not hesitate

In our dry cellar

I constantly change teams

Shape without form

I give feedback without emotion

Shade without color

I rarely speak

Paralyzed force

I am – clear and concise

Gesture without motion

¹ Written by Elizabeth Holmes

² "The Hollow Men" by TS Eliot

Sailing Alone

a rattle, a tap and a moan
close the porthole

a rattle and a moan
turn the light on

a rattle
tighten the cleat

two rattles
batten the hatch

two taps
arm the spear gun

two moans
check the life raft

rattle
start the engine

tap
furl the mainsail

moan
crank the windlass

crab
open the porthole

shark
over the gunwale

eel
fire up the blinker

wake
from a deep sleep

reach
in my pocket

remove
a bulging eye

it winks

Sitting Shiva in My Shadow

wear a black ribbon
mourn my misfortune

sitting shiva for myself
my body is for labor

wonder why I bother
to ever use my mind

walk past tranquility
seek a sublime path

dance at the still point
find equilibrium

exalted agony is beyond me

not content to attempt
the mastery of simplicity

when I toil in the fields
every thought is a crime

I steal them once mine
in perpetual solitude

hidden in my mind

now skin and bones
imagine body stacked

jars colorful and hollow
soon without a name

I pretend I am sleeping

on a road of old bones
closed for repairs

so luminous appears my death I die before I die before I

Tiananmen Square 30 Years On

I share my pu-er tea and with Sweeper Ho
the best souvenir salesman in all of China

*we Chinese are a family that suffered a great tragedy
our students exist in a warp of crying time
they avoid mirrors, to not see for themselves
the unspeakable torment that surrounds them*

each morning I stop by his kiosk
to share a cup of tea and read The People's Daily
we speak in code with our friend Fu Weici
who goes on and on about Tiananmen Square

*the blind child is unable to save China
the magic words to free our people
are trapped inside the child's mind
with no laboratory
to experiment with freedom*

I try to quickly finish my tea
but my friend Sweeper Ho joins in

*the backward facing gang of four cowards
brought mayhem to an impoverished land
carrying a little red book and the thrill of revolution*

Fu Weici continues in his despondent voice

*Stalin's minions take to the floor
for the last dance of the Perestroika Polka
the communist man lives on as a statue
while anarchy that crazed fat rooster
wrecks havoc in the hen house*

I share a poem written 30 years ago

*how plentiful are the red
watermelons this year
how carefully the people
on the crowded streets eat
the sweet fruit then spit seeds
like bullets into the gutter
never to drip juice
on the blood of the students*