

Scorch Marks

Some variation of sepsis
(with conditions obtaining)
the infinitely inscribed (scorch) marks made
on the physical frame found
as the only stark patterns not in disarray

illness births and broods across borders—
a congruency of contamination—
the equation figuring
as over national/natural endowment
past heritage (now mirage)

prognosis: no progress, just more vile vectors
of transmission How to cauterize country?
Is triage possible now?
Does *burn* bear synonym with *behavior* and
should fire, disease, violence shape

our reaction and our course of action, no(w)?
Will the real blowtorchers come
forward, whether Hephaestus-esque inventors
of new worlds or some hellions
to turn the fiery wheel? Questions, questions...

Occupy Generation

Oh, all begot or not, to nought?

Not so?

I shall sew the clothes of our new names
on my wrist and fist.

Resistance is the sweetener
of the game-changer,

your self, person, pelt...

Up in smoke goes their plot
when we get our action together.

To gather and not surrender in the force-
field of our energies—

Serge's 'miracle of solidarity' surges
in our day now, now that we run riot
against our ruin.

Avant-Garde Imperatives for 2017

(To be exclaimed with gusto)

To the barricades!

To the lampposts!

To the lighthouse!

To the light show!

To the funhouse!

To the showdown!

To the off-shore accounts!

To the screensavers!

To the screenshots!

To the barracks!

To the bar backs!

To the edge of the abyss!

To there and back!

To the accountants' necks!

To the rip-off royalties!

To the wall-builders & their cement setters!

To the crushing logic!

To the pain and suffering!

...into the pain and suffering, never retreating, never abstracting, never bending, never, never allowing 'never ending' to pitch its tent into the International Utopia, a nascent reality of solidarity and communality, a mutual trust strong enough to defeat the Elite and overturn them before they burn up the world.

There is proof of climate change.

Finally Got the News

The greatest obstacle in the way of the American people beginning to behave like human beings rather than like animals is the great American illusion of freedom. –James Boggs, *The American Revolution*

Let us discourse on the desolate plain
and retract the alternate facts. Let us as well
confront this protean disaster for which
this current administration is but symptom,
a symbol. Agitation by cogitation recommends
itself only here and in theory. Time to redeem
the unread vision aerobically. Become like
the figure in Millet's *The Sower* (completed
two years after failed European Revolutions):
The seeds the Sower scatters are revolutionary seeds,
frozen in the painting's scene, awaiting to be dispersed
by the viewer across the expanse. Time to be good
citizens and better animals (*pace*, Brother Boggs).

Red and Black

The two-tone of red and black
used to convey Stendhalian vistas
and mirrors or Spanish anarchists
opposing fascist bastard-battalions;
now those colors only consistently create
a map work of historical dead-weight:
blood on bodies brown and black,
a map subject to daily revision
and expansion, a contour map
swollen and shameful, its seeming
Rorshach blots expended selves
from exploded shells featuring
those two colors, red and black.

May Day

(Lincoln Park, Newark, NJ)

for Whitney Strub

Hooray for the fumigants—
also known as immigrants—
reviled for being delivered
here to exploit the potential
for not being exploited!

(This is the irony of the state's
making, not this poem. A pox
on irony unless it reverse-flows
mendacity in or out of the poem).

All my come-one, come-all comrades
converged at the intersection of Broad
and Better, refusing resignation,
moving the margins closer to
the center, consonant with revivifying

gestures of bringing eventual hygiene
by warding off contaminated language
and its concomitant actions of cruelty
sanctioned by this unsacred, hijack state.

Immigrant fumigants, let me hand you
some accelerants to burn off
the impurities of the puritans
whose repression weeps like the wounds
of the disenchanting, those always so pure

and ready to put kill in their cynical.

A House Divided

PEN American Event on April 30th at the Great Hall, Cooper Union

All the speakers posed
parentheses of silence
around their arsenal
of antic, anti-state rhetoric,
so diverting, effusive, hope-
inducing. What was not
spoken, already broken
on the spokes of this regime's
insistent malice, was this
suffering thought: how can
that which is writ guide
us away from this room,
the sight of Lincoln's lectern,
an abiding fever dream
of democracy, into a new
trust, of ourselves, our
words, and this frantic
world susceptible to shock?¹

Notes:

¹ “I conclude my report with the slogan: we must dare, comrades!” Nikolai Bukharin, “Poetry, Poetics, and the Problems of Poetry in the U.S.S.R.” (1934). (www.marxists.org)

27 April

An improbable late April sun today,
given the white-out residual winter sky
wearing a mantle of malaise as a kind
of objective correlative for a mood I
acknowledge as my own and perhaps, too,
a certain fraction of my non-patriotic
compatriots. Today is the 80th anniversary
of Antonio Gramsci’s death in a fascist
Roman hospital. Awfully hard not to muse
forlornly about that long-suffering historical
figure and also be more than slightly sentimental
about his power despite weakness, captivity.
Mood is dialectic: Hope against hope, one
tries to think estuary, not obituary, of
the currents of dynamic thought
spilling out of the *Quaderni*, those 33 Notebooks
saturated in life-force, smuggled out by Tatiana
and continuing to instill, insist, that struggle
must be woven twin-leafed, dynamic with doctrine,
green action against abstraction right along with
theory. “Against Byzantism,” you wrote, Antonio,
and you encourage the natural commission of
both brain and arm, together, comrades in verse
or vanguard, art as against artifice, whether mechanical birds
or mechanized bombs. There is homage in the fragrance of the day.