

CASSANDRA IN THE LIBRARY

*Blood is simple books complex:
the drone of professors drowned by the roar of sex*

Plato's dust before Virginia's thighs
Shakespeare pales beside her breathing breast
Voltaire's wit wilts beneath her eyes
Poetry nor wisdom withstands the test
of blood: when mind and body clash
the mind's the one whose opposition's rash

*Killing's liquid work's dust
our craving for passion quenched by a crimson lust*

What can an office offer but a cursed
routine an inane trivial bore?
A water cooler doesn't slake the thirst
of blood that rages for a taste of war:
a horde of disappointed men have dreams
fired by bursting flares and female screams

*Action releases thought confines
we'll burst into blood again O see the signs*

The cauldron seethes boiling black white
yellow red and brown in a poisoned brew
swallowed by nations spoiling for a fight
The last great sword tilts like a rotten tooth
so write down this write it in blood
to guide the creatures crawling from the mud:

*You who inherit the earth after we drown
learn to walk on water or turn around*

GENERALISIS I (I-3)

In Florida mottled birdwatchers screech brakes
to see an ivory-billed woodpecker bang away
on a dying bay *Not many left Peter not many*
left Forests shrink flocks disappear Birdwatchers
worry where we're heading
but over all our hills the birdlike generals are
spreading . . .

In Sunset Lake a thick pike trailing hooks and
leaders bends stubbornly in diminishing circles
jaw locked in its Nemonian smile Water tastes
different now: so do fish Fishermen claim
their schools are thinning
but under all our seas the fishlike generals are
grinning . . .

In battening churches God's crowded out
The pulpits reflect the pews reflect the
pulpits reflect the . . . Who's the Warden
to teach us how to choose? Coarse Christians
muscle in: Hey Big Fella move your Ass
and throughout the firmament the godlike generals
make things come to pass

HABEMUS PAPAM

O goodum! *Habemus Papam*
who'll soon intone
the usual crapam

and the poor poor will weepum

and the rich will yawn
and eatem
like pablum

ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS

Now that I've reached the age
when I stumble up the stage
for my job-concluding pin
every evening out's a chore
Looking forward to my gin
I think with resigned regret
as I trip the final step
my *vita's* not so *brevis* any more

Mortuus my youthful storms
all melancholy gone
those clouds are sucked away
on soundtracks of Marianne
and Eleanor Rigby dreams
I remember a ribbon on the floor
but what were my girl friends' names?
My sweetheart isn't *Mavis* anymore

America rolls like a pig
in dirty oil and gore
My country my pig I shout
to the stars whose blinking snouts
and planetary snuffles
uproot the universe
as they gather galactic truffles . . .
My *mentis* isn't *compos* any more

Looking around the world
why do I feel so gay
when I'm not gay at all

A martini's not strong enough
to block the world's fat fist
so what's the olive for
and the lemon's bitter twist?
My *gravitas* curls groveling on the floor

I dream of my old aunts still
bending over their cards
Nana and Lizzie and Lil
They pressed me against their hearts
I could hardly get my breath
Then they shooed me out the door
to my certain death:
My *vita's* not so *brevis* any more

HABEUS CORPUS

We used to sing Pete Seeger's
"Guantánamera"
meaning 'woman from Guantánamo'

but now the men there
have stopped eating
and sing 'Where's my *corpus*?'

while doctors push pain
by enteral feeding
which doesn't stop the bleeding

from their non
existent
veins