



Road to War

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cover photo by author

*Worship,
Warship,
Wordship—*

*one ship follows another;
one word follows another;
one war follows another—*

LUIS GARCIA

CONSTRUCTIVE REST

This is magic.
It's the technology
that's real.

The burned, twisted bodies
are real. The beauty— monstrous.

No, Pamela, you can't blow it up
even if it is the damned home
of the atom bomb.

Your feeling is a path,
and when the path splits
sit until the mountain crumbles.

Stay strong for the child of the world.

WINTER FOREST

January 25th , Saturday, 5 p.m.
Sun 05° Aquarius opposed the Moon

Winter transmutes Craig's Hill
dense and gray— a dead forest

Ethan and Barb and Steve
Tom and Sharon and Jill
circle dance around a water tower

When you touch the Earth
red rays rise through your body
when you walk you bring
purple rays down from Heaven

Meanwhile, I'm drinking *Jack Daniel's*
with a little water
while they dance and chant

Explaining how, if you'd let me
I'd let you...
when we go in for the hydrogen bomb
and it's embarrassing
standing there in a white shirt
with debris falling

It's a long day with an extra sunrise
and a long night
with ultra-violet spring
after a nuclear winter

THINKING WITH FEELINGS

thinking with feelings
my voice comes from far away
from within a mirror
where phantoms whir

friend, I see in you
something in me
I fear

a power in us
the cruelty to kill

I have walked through Hell
and eaten my bread
soaked in tears

I am numb
having seen the beautiful
faces of the dead

METHOD IN THE MADNESS

I write, then I type
I retrieve, I retype
I cut and paste
images of real objects

a process of recovery
and discovery
a contemplation of silence
in this maelstrom of violence

ONE SPIRIT, MANY FAITHS

Acts of senseless terror directed against Satan
after years of domination, manipulation, shame
viciousness of attacks, the weak versus the strong
hitting symbolic targets, money and might

Humanitarianism, we relieve our conscience
while veiling our political motive
can't leave the Gulf and live without oil
or leave the Holy Land and lose control

Freedom rings, altruism tainted with self-interest
hard not to have self-interest in survival
there's self, and then there's enlightened self

PRAISE & BLAME, LOSS & GAIN

To be peace, empty, clear, compassionate in this
mad mix of good and evil and not escape through sleep
through normalcy, through wrapping myself in the flag

A prayer tree flutters in our town square
the prayer for war to disappear in this warm breeze
the leaves are prayers blowing in the deadly winds

MY ESCAPE FORWARD

What's up?
What's down?
What's there to do?
What's done?

If I go up the Congo
down the Mekong
or follow Strawberry Creek
I'll loose my mind, if I go far enough

Strawberry Creek runs down the hill
past the Cyclotron through Faculty Glade
I sit by the stream
and my dreams are full of heavy metal

My freshman year at Cal
Professor Parkinson says
my essay "My Home"
is the worst he's ever read

These squiggles are my class notes
for Atomic Radiation and Life—
must be the paths of neutrinos
no mass, just spin

Frank Chin takes off his Rotcy uniform
and sticks the barrel of his rifle in the ground
Walking off the drill field in his shorts
he's no chickencoop Chinaman

The Un-American Activities Committee
is in town— Black Friday— the police

fearing they are loosing control wash
the protesters down the courthouse steps

At breakfast my dad chokes on his coffee
I'm on the front page giving a *sieg heil*
but what he can't see is the microphone
I'm holding for KPFA

A war machine grinds towards Saigon
I hear the litany of the dead
A protest movement is born
the formation of a hive

Released from the darkness
my skull is measured by calipers
Is my brain pan enlarged
by Tibet? by Nicaragua? by Burma?

A child might wonder why
the earth seems flat
Note the lines
Connect the lines

Kuwait— Somalia— Serbia— Bosnia
Zaire— Liberia— Afghanistan— Iraq

Finally, they form a circle

LETTER TO SITO IN TIME OF WAR

we find
ourselves
in a new
world
speaking
an old
language

we speak
of beauty
and feelings
while the

machines
blast
the birds
from our
hearts

watch
the words
hear
the howl
come
to the ear
eye
nose
lip

scream
at the
dichotomy
of the
comma—
a dream
an illusion
how time
passes

dinosaurs
dance off
the map
where you
and I sit
drinking
coffee

we hold
down
this loose
end
of the
universe
feeling
at home
in the debris

PAGE OF SWORDS

black on black on black,
black dress, black nails
black eyeliner, blonde hair dyed black
dog chains
and combat boots with 2 inch soles

you want to learn Tarot
but don't care about Ancient Egypt
or what is hidden in the cards
just how to read them

so gothic
my mood, your costume
no need for all this blather
ok, I'll forget the traditional stuff
take you to a coffee house
look at the art

here, play with the cards
go off in whatever direction
from whatever vantage point

with whatever comes next

that guy's tattoo
it says "broken" across his back
in bold letters

the coal miners' strike in Harlem County
Kentucky in the 70s

the war in Iraq
the endless war on terror

war on the horizon
war as far as I can see

no kidding, things get me down
better now we're sitting in this café
note my inflection and the emphasis
put on precision, value, fun

coming at you sideways
first a double mocha, then history
then a balloon

inside, I write, "Poot was here!"
and vanish into air

INTERCHANGE OF TINCTURES

Plutonium has a half-life of 250,000 years
and unless we can raise the tone arm
and get ourselves individuated or differentiated
or TOGETHER OR on top of it
we won't have a millennium to stand on.

In Spring, bud out. Dovetails come later.

This is the later Kali Yuga
The Fourth World
The Iron Age
The Fifth Sun
The IXth Hell
The Age of the Hunchback
The Era of Disillusionment

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN SLEPT HERE

Expanding Our Dominions
With Might and Right
With Axe, Rifle, and Plow
With Computer and Hydrogen Bomb
In the Course The Propagandists
Mark on the Soil and in the Sky
For the Stars of Empire

With the Policy of New Possessions
Beyond the Seas and the Atmosphere
According to the Logic of History
And the Duty of Destiny

All for Power, Sex, Money, and Death

EVIDENCE

whereas a fortress
whereas a mosque
whereas a river
of diamonds, a river
of blood

whereas the fortress
is the mosque, whereas
the river is blood, whereas
men and women are diamonds
I ask what is there
where imagelessness prevails?

whereas some cosmoses are being
transformed, whereas some are
being transfigured, whereas
some metamorphosis continues
I ask how is this possible where
there is no imagination?

TERROR WITHIN, TERROR WITHOUT

Carefully now will there be a grail or a bomb which tears the heart out of things?

—BOOK OF MERLIN, Jack Spicer

I. From 'Infinite Justice' to 'Enduring Freedom'

Cave dwellers plummet beyond what security can cinch
turn sleepy innocence to rabid rancor

Images of violent thrust propel my grief past midnight

froth the tough hours into a flotsam of words

In the time it takes to drink a latté
a rank mist curls over the earth

And so begins an epoch of enforced disillusionment
where invisible fingers control the air

II. The Litany Continues

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense
for Airforce Master Sergeant Evander Andrews

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense
for each Afghan killed in this campaign

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense
for each soul crushed in the World Trade Center

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense
for those dying from sanctions and bombs in Iraq

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense
for all the Israelis who have been blown to bits

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense
for each Palestinian shot in the streets

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense
for Tony Blair & George Bush & Osama bin Laden

III. Praise and Blame, Loss and Gain

To be peace— empty, clear, compassionate in this
mad mix of good and evil and not escape through sleep
through normalcy, through wrapping myself in the flag

A prayer tree flutters in our town square
the prayer for war to disappear in this warm breeze
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IV. Fame and Shame, Pleasure and Pain

Everyone I see holds onto their face
What is behind these masks? these headlines?
America attacked
A weekend without games
US girds for war to 'Rid world of evil'
US expands detention powers
Spirits soar as Giants return to Pac Bell Park
'Time is running out' for the Taliban
71 Barry Bonds 72 Smashing!
Uzbekistan opens bases for US troops
US attacks Afghanistan

V. Cowboy Rhetoric

"Slowly but surely we're smoking al-Qaida
out of their caves so we can bring them to justice,"
says the Commander-in-chief

Caves where Jelaluddin Rumi was born
Rumi, who proclaimed, "No boundaries, no flags!"
Caves where Vajrasattva transmitted Dzog Chen

Afghanistan is not a place
but a space, a vacuum created by conflict

VI. A New Geography Lesson

An *AK 47* by a bookcase in bin Laden's study
What is right, what is wrong with this picture?

George Bush smirks at the camera during a briefing
What is right, what is wrong with this attitude?

John Ashcroft says he needs more sweeping powers
What is right, what is wrong with his claim?

An Afghan man holds up a fistful of prayer beads
What is right, what is wrong with his demand?

From Cyrus II to Genghis Khan to Tamerlane to
The New World Order, the Great Game continues

VII. Manic Heanism

Opposition evolves so life can exist
Opposition desires union

This is a barbarous age
Mani is skinned alive

VIII. All the Universe Is Laughing at Us

Overheard, "They don't believe in God; they believe in Allah."
Maybe we can reassemble Jerusalem in the Nevada desert
Pray for Buddha to pop a cap up Mars's ass

GENERAL MacTHUSELAH

Genesis V 27, his days
were nine hundred sixty and nine years.

Forlorn is foul
weather— none

better or

brighter than his
shield.

He returns and returns
and returns again.

Landmines in the sand
are not compassionate.

Lu, I would remake the whole universe for you if I could, but the ghosts are hostile. I'm afraid they're dug in and have lots of ammo. It's all the same war. The generals just fade in and out. Beware of the sharp explodings.

GIVE ME FAG VOMIT

Fucks US
under the stars
and stripes
where the Axis
(no, they don't ask us)

and the Allies
(of course, it's all lies)
create a suction,
an enigma
in the ice box.

You can see
in the dawn's early light
his dong is long
past the pull date.

LBJ keeps poking the obvious member of the sleeping dragon of the Orient because, for the life of US, he doesn't know who he wants to invite to his barbecue. Old presidents don't die; they just bloat up.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The Fookers were revved all night,
grounded
with their canisters of mustard gas.

EXHEXDEXODREAM
SCREAMCREAM

Poor Apollinaire.

Pour Apollinaire was a face cream frantically sought in boutiques in Paris under the Vichy government in that war. These Fookers are Messerschmitts.

WAR SAW

This is how it is, Sir—

Sack and burn,
Rape and pillage,
Every town and every village.

Clausewitz was right— war should not be left to the politicians.

TRAINS THAT COULD

I sing
To cloud to tree to wind to T.V.

I sing
Watusi wa
Watusi wa tu

I see two
Watusis in tutus.

Stopping the troop trains, it was a bad day in Berkeley. Some of it was subtle. Some of it was gross.
All of it was ugly.

DR. JENKEL & MR. BROWN

One man saw another man whisper into the ear
of the president as he was leaving his hotel
on his way to Booker School.
Another man asked the president
if he knew what was going on in New York,
and he is said to have replied,
"Yes, I'll do something about it."

From these reports, another man concluded
the president knew something
about the events of 9/11
before the attack occurred, believes
that the attacks
were organized crimes underwritten by *Enron*

and Mayor Willie Brown,
and that every official
from *Enron* president Ken Lay
down to San Francisco's dog catcher
has been covering up the trail.

I slept while this man cringed in his tattered moccasins
amid the clutter of his mind.
I looked the other way when they came
asking for an explanation.

I wrapped myself in the flag
while angels had electrodes attached to their wings,
were disemboweled,
had their throats cut.

No wonder no one sings any more.