

TOM YUILL

COLD SWEAT

Homeless Woman, Central Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts

They told me, “it’s disease, with tendrils, not a sin.”
The clock in the centre of town has stopped at 3:05.
It only took minutes for the judge to decide,
And my children are to be taken by the government.

The clock in the centre of town has stopped at 3:05,
Because, it seems, of my absentmindedness,
And my children are to be raised by the government.
In sleep I hear laughter, it echoes under my scraped hide.

The way I remember it was just absentmindedness.
I hovered, listless as flutes, but I was not a provider.
I sleep in eternal laughter, an echo, under a scraped hide
Where, for a while each night, I rest,

Hovering listless as flutes. But I was not a provider.
I have a disease, it has tendrils. But it feels like a sin.
Under a scraped hide, for a while each night, I rest
Beneath the town clock, which has stopped at 3:05.

INNER LIFE DURING WARTIME

The footprints that lead here are damp and red
Deceiving ourselves, for that one night, was joyous
Then the door opened, and in stormed Menelaus.
I sat stunned and watched my dreams wander ahead

Deceiving ourselves, for that one night, was joyous
(Are we fit for our time, or born sort of dead?)
I sat stunned and watched my dreams stagger ahead
We value equality—we don't value trust

Are we fit for our time, or born sort of dead?
A local guy grinned, said he'd caught his boss drunk
We value equality—we don't value trust
The soldier who lost his leg guffawed as he beat me at chess

Some local guy grinned, said he'd caught his boss drunk
God sees to all. I don't envy His task.
The soldier who lost his leg guffawed as he beat me at chess
What my people will become I cannot think

God will see to all. I don't envy Him the task.
What a joy it would have been to have been comprehended...
What people will become I cannot think
What they are I know; this rhetoric's a mask

What a joy it would have been to have been comprehended...
I hate them all, his father said, but can't say why the war lasts
What they are we know; the rhetoric's a mask
See the here and now: that the moment's apprehended

I hate them all, his mother said, but can't say why this war lasts
The footprints that lead here are damp and red
See the here and now, and the moment is apprehended
But we just opened the door, and in stormed Menelaus

BLOOD PUDDING

American Veteran

“War is God’s beadle, war is His vengeance,” *...the souls out there
Are sent back here to try living again...* “and love is charred coal,
Love and hate are the same.” She feels old,
Like she’s letting him down as usual. At night they’re a choir,

Greyed minds trying to live again, pissing charred coal.
A chorus of North and torn South fire
Feelings of being let down as usual. At night they’re a choir,
Indignant at knowing themselves now so well.

Along with the chorus of tears and warped air from the North
Come rage and torn lace. To hell with scholars
She hisses. I wish I didn’t know you so well, he mutters.
Speakers keep blaring “Hey Jude.” With war come forth

Traditions, rage and torn lace, and scuffed scholars
Sighing down the wind so sadly. Listen and you’ll hear
Them moan as speakers keep blaring “Hey Jude,” and new war,
And old choices: balm of kissed lips, or

Scuffed scholars sighing down the wind so sadly. Listen and you’ll hear
Them moan, even among lilies. You didn’t stand by me,
The soldiers sing. No balm of kissed lips, just senates full of heat
And in the desert, before the march, not only fear

Of death but of lily-shaped scars in their faces. You didn’t stand by me,
They know they’ll think a year after they’re home. Like a husband or a wife
The soldier marked for death in the desert also fears life,
Scarred credit, student loans and depravity

The entire first year home. Staring at his cell phone, dreaming
Of open ovens into which whole freeways
Stream. *The souls out there are sent back here to try
To live again.* “War is God’s beadle, His vengeance,” he laughs, tears streaming.