

## THE BEST MINDS

I have seen the best minds of my generation burned bleached  
and electrified

Spread-eagle on the screen, the jugular mic in their throat  
Giving blood to the crackling colossus

We were the children in the laugh track, the friends  
of Howdy Doody;

We were the believers, and the buyers, sleeping secure  
in the arms of the toothless monster;

Dialing away bad dreams, witness to the  
the endless triumph of righteousness in white hats;  
Chasing drug-crazed mobsters who murdered puppies  
in dark alleys;

With clean shaven barrel chested cops who never suffered acne,  
victory was consistently sweet.

Would not life?

How rude the interruption of the world.

Television portrayed a grunt, but it could not be one.

It did not shit Wheaties or soap or houses or beds,

It did not discipline the government or the corporations

It could not give massage, or hoe vegetables.

There were our necessities.

We disciplined the government with television discipline

Our only known resource

With moderate success and devastating result.

My kind army of friends, moral actors, stormed not  
the enemy, but the media,

The chosen word was precise and correct

to demonstrate, and demonstrate our righteousness

And watch on channel seven our sound and light fantasia

Warriors in the maelstrom of public opinion.

I have seen them in the video garden conversing

with the lens on the telescopic horizon

Striding purposefully to the X and feeling proud.

I have seen them interviewed and analyzed and forgotten

I have seen them interviewing, probing with polite questions  
staging moral dilemmas

I have seen them on reruns

I have forgotten them, as one must with reruns

I observe them watching therapy sitcoms

Now content.

I hear them on phone-in shows speak their mind  
in edited paragraphs.

Where is the enemy? On another channel?

Where are the people, or is there only audience?

The struggle has perished. All the brothers and sisters have  
perished

Strangers and friends have perished.

Our secret campfires have been covered.

The colossus has us all; we have all perished.

We are all stars, and no one can see through the glare.

There are no advantages here in the belly of the beast

No advances –

Mumbling, fumbling, milling, crying, sighing, dying

We can't hold hands, or sing or make love.

Should we even speak about those minds and these times

Destroyed by television, raging dreaming gutted  
babbling on?

Should we talk at all? Who would we tell?

Who will make another Special, another Study,  
another Investigation and stick it deeper  
in and make us dance?

Could I pass silently in the dark corner of the  
studio, do something insignificant on air?

Talk into a blind mic? Do I dare?

Let us go, you and I, go and hide someplace ugly and boring  
dull and uninteresting, on a used set, in the  
rerun library.

Down in a cellar without electricity

Pretend to be dead, close our eyes,

talk only to each other

And then, perhaps, go hunting other friends.

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