

ELEGY FOR ATLANTA BURNING

FIRE

Atlanta burns as General Sherman chomps on a cigar
combs his beard, sips whiskey, exhales amid light flickering from his buttery skinned
tent
sky as a serene inferno silhouetted amidst the strobing
shadow play and husky palpitation of a midnight blaze,
this is the final stomach punch to humble the Rebel

An inky somnolent pond
by the moaning rip-rap of soldiers
the aroma and the sweet musk of smoke
from long rifles

Oh, you sons of manhood, cheated by rhetoric,
cotton and the free labor
of dark skinned, kidnapped immigrants and the
distant cannon break that roils the sleep

ASH

When this swollen ground exhales it is sheeted in mist
as it is lonely to die in these unnatural postures
thieved by predators and profiteers, vulnerable

This once was a mother's son
snugged in the pilot light of her breasts
though in these quiescent embers and among the undigested ghosts
this blood rich hummus, this blood stuccoed clay,
War has such a short memory, a tricked amnesia,

that wind and carrion flies will dispense
the smell and pressured grief
as gleaming coals in the dying campfires sleep

LIGHT

Roosters, muezzins of morning break
Reveillie horns muster flags, banners, pipes, and bugles
the rank and file say churchmen and politicians
hid behind the iron stoves during combat

history tells about the suffering and quietly
atrophied scars, as geese mock the captured,
limbs stacked like dusty, surplus library books.

And great Generals
pose for statues from melted artillery

The microbes and the ceaseless appetite of earth's under story

celebrate victory

This morning light marches to a new rhythm,
as a bell on puffs of sheep, climb a thin road to a
disappearing trail.

A drum stammers, a nurse tends to infected lesions,
a poet writes letters for the illiterate and battered
and the squinting light cannot resist the blessing
and hope of a future peace.