

Alchemy and Holocaust

Alchemy

when Hitler's banshee Panzers raced
across the inkling faith of Northern Europe,
Churchill ordered more steel plate
rolled. two years later, Stalin
converted the giant Kharkov tractor plant
to armaments and began evacuating
industry to the Urals.
our souls, no longer interiorized
in fundamental solidarity with the earth,
were mined, milled, driven
into steel rivets, fired,
their shiny silver surfaces stained
with blood.

it was nothing new: the clanking columns
dragged, fully constructed,
the concentration camps behind,
their barbed wire lit
by the blood that burnt on them,
an unholy leaping light
of Jew-Gypsy-Russian-Polish-
Czech-Austrian-Norwegian-Balkan-
even Italian, German (DutchBelgianFrench
BritishGreekAmerican and others).
and the consecrated
inner ore, fashioned by precision
engineering, smelted, purified,
driven crazy in the molten pot,
leapt toward men, women, children
(in whom it lives, who live
in it, world without
end) –

steel and soul leap
from the broken union
with equal fury.
the soul's
teeth clash bodies,
break bones never broken
by any other means;

it is with the earth that we begin
to do what should never be done

in our own souls. matter,
sacred and profane, possessed
like a woman, refined,
tempered, annealed, smoothed,
stripped from the earth,
rolled into armor plate – the soul
leaps forward
hot to kill; earth,
any matter taken in the absence of sacred
consciousness, leads unsparingly,
logically, to war, the working
of earth, ourselves, suicide.

the same range of possibilities
extends to earth, soul.
made into things,
inhabiting an exterior world only,
our soul left awake all night
in cold steel beams
holding up skyscrapers.
(our feelings
a piston, a tank,
a chemical factory;
our anguish
at one with
the material thing).

Meditation on the Holocaust

*It is prophesied that only through nuclear war
will the creation of Israel be resolved.*

A true prophet speaks of the present –
here, where the future is prepared;
speaks only of the future that will be required
by human choice of human suffering.
A prophet need foretell nothing.
It is enough to awaken to what and where we are.

Diaspora has been the tradition of Jewish history,
to dwell in a different way among all nations. Pogrom
and holocaust are of this tradition; the people of the holocaust.
Hitler had little more to do with it than Eichmann –
two German functionaries stopping on the way home
for schnapps to warm themselves together
in a small Black Forest fairytale.

Prophesying in 1945, who would have warned
to leave Israel uncreate?

That not to do so would be to
tempt He next to whom Hitler
was but an intemperate xenophobe spilling his drink
on companions history declines to name?
And the next prophet – will that one tell the invasion of Poland
as prelude to holocaust of the Middle East?