

BAGHDAD APRIL

Who would have thought even minutes ago
Black Hawk swept from the taupe
Medieval California Kuwait to the quivering sandust of Talil
Sweat, Al-Hilah, Marine bird, older than damp crew, machine
Smell, vibration ammo cammo scraped paint web belts, still
Tighten gray roar and chaos, nose down, brown. Just get us there.

Now green. For ten thousand lives this river ran brown with blood
Helping reeds limber bodies once passed as blind. Just get us there.

Down, then BIAP, destruction for glory
Spurts and unthinking tremors, the shakti of nonduality,
Bills unpaid as crushed planes kneel lame,
Torn tarmac shattered with dust
Fade, then the comic book cantos: a prince of
Babylon, sword of Assyria, builder of Ur, heavens perturbed,
Trauma hung close in crumbled glass, a facade (yet more)
Meaning deep to those who looted that brief cosmic day
Missed by those who watched.

Stories, reprise, thunder run
Endless dust nights of expendable men
 blind (they must have been)
To spin a rusty truck against a tank
With only, what? passion? hate?
 fear?
Perhaps no thought at all
Except to hope the engine would start (or not)
 and no one else would see.
No matter. They are now mist, counters in a game.

We hurry, are watched, relief, no love and
Bomblets are toys, slipping through dry canals with a last black smoke
to please a small hand as
Green towers turn red, mating in the night.
Somehow we must have known (even a
first summer wind will dry the eye). Yet
Rank on file is an army of shrouds, mist,
And hot days turn gray, crafting wry smiles.
Then fade. Finally,

 to destroy and build, Shiva in web gear
While somewhere a bridge is lost. But what?
Who is destroyer, who a builder? We know
Often great power is only owning the detritus.
Still there is BIAP, flight out, home, strong shoulders and
Hiphop, path to insanity and relief.
And then, a tiny point of blood receding on the glass.

— Dr. Steven Metz
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