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Two Poems

Alli Warren

Abstract

The world wasn't born yesterday. The past inflects the present, and it is our knowledge, interpretation and use of history that enables us to intervene there. I do not mean the kind of knowledge you learn in schools, but a lived political knowing, in language and action -- this is our natality. In my writing, and in my everyday living breathing body, I want to help to create a map to a future free from the terror of the world we've inherited. I want to write towards a place where we can find each other, now and then.

THE NATIONAL FUTURE

“history is how the secular world attends to the dead” – Saidiya Hartman

Lined up against the pens
in the courtroom
as in the market
the foundation reeks
along an endless
intergenerational chain
of patriarchal provision

Orators and their orations
blame “lower lust
and mere meat”
to reintegrate the runaways

by which they mean their modernity
upon which rests
the whole noxious system

Or the way the folds
of that garment fall
on some of the seeds
of price over promise

My dress drags along the street
in the agora
in the meat of possibility
a lifting hum guides
shoppers to their selections

When debts come inexorably to term
The battered back’s a palimpsest
Ishi walks out into the continental world

SOMETHING IS COMING TOWARD US

Flaunting in the atrium, ostentatious at the gates
I saw a shooting star thru a window on Alcatraz Ave
& cladding struck up among the barriers
& into every tributary, blessed
against those who demand the stick be tended
around the commode of automated life-like loam

They're selling trees in the paint store! trees in the paint store
Datebook chips in the soft skin of our wrists
On CNN, NBC, and NPR, broken windows are weeping
We'll have 35 apples and shrieking in the wolfthickets
Aloft in the air golden and golden the dial among the mounds

So much is stunted in understanding
of what a light can be
The arc end of the precipice grows 1.9% annually
What was classical music like before the crisis?

About the author

Alli Warren's most recently published works include *Don't Go Home With Your Heart On* (Faux Press, 2014) and Poetry Center Book Award winner *Here Come the Warm Jets* (City Lights, 2013). Her writing has been published in many journals and magazines, including *Poetry*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *Jacket*, and *Rethinking Marxism*. She previously co-curated The (New) Reading Series at 21 Grand, and co-edited the Poetic Labor Project. Alli currently edits *Dreamboat* magazine.