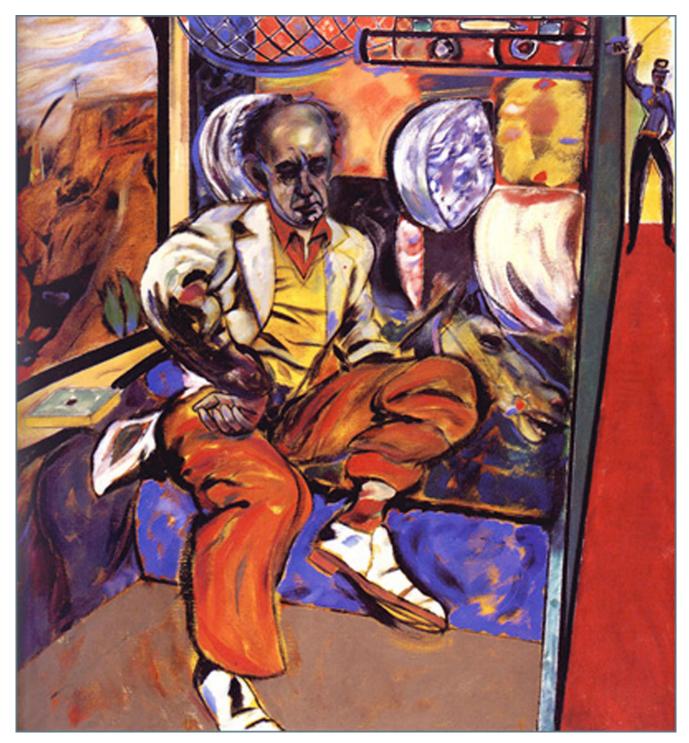
Never Again, No More



The Jewish Rider, R. B. Kitaj, 1985

No more ceremonies No more monuments No more memorials No more museums Please. No more books
Oral histories
Endowed chairs
No more lectures or research papers
Films and definitely no
Fiction written by assimilated children
Of traumatized survivors.
Thank you.

No more reading the names
No more youth groups to Auschwitz
No re-imaginings
By second generation artistes
Or high school productions
Of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.
We really must insist.

Don't try to buy us off
With one more resolution
From Congress, Parliament, or the Bundestag
With another late-night interview of Eli Wiesel
One more empty declaration of Never Again!
And sentimental, pointless proclamation
Of solidarity with those long dead.

Please don't speak
Of lessons learned
Of man's inhumanity to man
Not when evil succeeds again
Because the good do nothing again
And worse, because they justify evil
Calling it genuine, calling it righteous
When they come for the Jews again,
Come not wearing swastikas so déclassé
This time but kefiyehs, exotic
Fashionable cloth swastikas
Complementing robes and beards
Devotional, their righteous pious hatred

We'd never tolerate in our secular selves But admire as authentic in others.

Evil? Let's not being judgmental,
Ethnocentric or hegemonistic
Right, since genuine emotion, felt grievance
When directed against Jews
That is against Zionists
Is not hatred but resistance so "Never again!"
Does not apply again, in fact
Applies in reverse
Right? Of course.

Don't think you can excuse yourself From the future present By weeping over the past imperfect. We won't fall for that again Some of us won't While ayatollahs muse about A bomb or two To complete the work and no one At the U.N. rebukes them, A French ambassador Ah, the French, explains that Europe will not Risk war again for those people In their shitty little country not while in Rome and Paris And ever-tolerant Amsterdam marchers cry "Death to the Jews!" Yes, death to Jews In buses, malls, and schools That'll teach 'em to escape the cattle cars. We've made 'em fence in that shitty little country Like a good old fashion ghetto and still They don't get it in the Jewish state so tiny Every other house is just inside The ghetto wall.

Don't exaggerate, you say When the Secretary General President and Prime Minister Not to mention the Pope are all concerned So concerned they caution the bereaved Not to get angry, not to increase tensions As if the point of "Never again" was a period. Not an exclamation...

... Just don't say this time
In real time and video over and over until
You can't tell old footage from new
When the leader of some place called Malaysia
Declares that after all it was the Jews
Who invented human rights—
And so it was
"Are we not all brothers
"Have we not all one Father?"
Asked the Prophet Malachi
Five hundred years before Jesus
One thousand years before Mohammed
And even earlier Hebrews determined

That in His image God made man
So we hold these truths to be self-evident
But never mind again because
When he insisted Jews invented human rights—
Only to make it seem like killing them was a crime,
The kings, presidents and prime ministers
From 56 Islamic countries
(You didn't know there were 56 Islamic countries
Did you? But we know one Jewish state is threatening)
Stood and applauded.

Mais oui, the French dissuaded
The European Union, that post-Christian
Holy Roman Empire, from issuing a reproach
Though the Torah requires us
To rebuke our neighbors when they stray.

Anyway, it's only a cycle of violence, No one's originally responsible

For blood in the streets
For Jewish blood in the streets.

You cannot say "Never again!"
Or will not say it
So just don't say
Ever again you didn't know
Or that if only you had known
You would have done something
When it's obvious right now
You would not have acted then, either.

You say this time it's different
Maybe this time they have it coming
Of course they have it coming
Living as Jews in Jerusalem
What do they expect?

So no more ceremonies No more monuments No more memorials and No more museums. No enshrined memories of our dead Accompanied by your tears At the price of our slaughtered living Your minutely calibrated Moral understanding notwithstanding. Because it doesn't stand, you know. You know you must assuage your guilt, Your collaboration tacit or declared You must justify yourself It is the human thing to do Not regardless of blood in the street But because of it.

Rwanda, Bosnia and Cambodia were unnecessary To remind us what we glimpsed in October, 1973 Or June, 1967 let alone May of '48, That when push came to shove again,
And it would again
That we would be abandoned again.
We apprehend, though slowly even now
Because we are like you
More than a little like you
You will not say
Never again and mean it and
We refuse to say to ourselves
Again. If a pursuer comes to kill you
It is not murder to kill him first,
So our Sages taught.

So perhaps "Never Again!" really means Never again seeking cosmic significance In something extensive but not profound. Perhaps the unrelenting compulsion To finish with the Holocaust By finishing the Holocaust And shaking off the accursed God-discovering Jews at last So things can quiet down at last With maybe the occasional ritual sacrifice But without undue pangs of conscience, Conscience like human rights Another Jewish conceit Moses brought down Sinai To the valley of Never Again No More Where they worshipped the Golden Calf And worship it still when Moses' back is turned Or Moses not just dead but murdered And the Jews too with their damned "Thou shall nots."

Then you might say "Never again" But you'll have to get past us Who say "No more!"