

Occupations

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by Robert Bové (June 2006)

You are here

Maps reassure by corresponding,
lines from those who have survived,
for a time, to write that travel,
along these routes, is possible.

What does it mean to come from afar?
Distance must be overcome, but
what occurs, as road becomes path,
and path disappears, births
true measure.

What occurs marks traveler
and destination both
in memory and in fact.
Intentions may be discrete,
must be discrete to make a start,
but, again, are of little use, even distract,
when path, with memory of it,
evaporates. Where you stand.

The early-retired

Things as they are
are still pretty good.
House is paid for,
commute not too long.

Kids are long gone
to good schools
and we have co-signed
not a single one of their debts.

Tonight, we celebrate
ourselves, again. We honor
each other. And though our ranks
grow thin, we do not, and venues
wax more opulent.

Frustrating, that, to be served
at bigger table each day,
when our commission is
to lick the skin
off the world.

La Belle Magdalena

In café across from cathedral
the wine cellar is padlocked,
seats once taken by neighbors seeking comfort,
conversation, have been taken away.
In shop near café, postcards for sale
go unsold, their scenes obscured by
merciful dust.

A bishop appears far away
and only on TV. He proclaims,
calms no one, not even himself:
“The mosque is temporary.”

He is known, this bishop, and he is not.
He approves new Madonna, shrouded,
approves a new incense, *eau de urine*,

approves big plans for Christmas,
Palm Sunday, and Easter—
just not including Jésus.

Schönes Berlin

Berlin is great.
NYC meets Munich.
Of course, German girls
are whores.

But soon enough, we have them
in chadors.

One long way up

In her day she sat by the loch
that bears her name—
at her feet ducks, geese, and mute swan
feeding on crumbs she brought—
and gazed uphill, past
ancient columnar lava, to
chapel made with ash stone and basalt,
freestone and limestone from quarry,
gulls from the firth circling, on hunt.

And if the mist weren't too thick
above the high bog, she'd see
Arthur's Seat, imagine its vantage.
So one supposes, as far as one can,
musings of a tourist, easy guesses.

She contemplated building churches,
feeding the poor at her royal table,
before she fed herself, her family,

teaching her children to love God
as faithfully as she.

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