

# Reflections

by [Ehud Sela](#) (July 2024)



Willard Hotel, Dora Fugh Lee (2004)

## The Grand Hotel

The lobby shone with its past  
Hanging down from the large chandeliers  
Crystal waterfalls  
And sounds from parties gone.

The front desk staff stood behind  
Mahogany polished wood, staring  
At guests with blank eyes filled

With boredom and despise.

A Beaux-Arts arts hotel on the Grand  
Avenue by the White House  
Where presidents' dreams  
End like junkyards' cars.

The churches tolled their heavy bells  
At the strike of midday  
And in the grand lobby  
The onyx and tile were polished

By immigrants' hands  
For whom snobbery was alien  
As Saturn's moons  
Or the scent of power or fame.

I was told that some nights at the bar  
A grand judge or Congressional Prince  
Has been spotted  
Laughing with liquor in hand.

And young women at night  
Dressed for the part  
Drink from the waterhole of wallets  
With all the right cards.

The elevator went up to my floor  
A bit dark like a tomb  
Where a moment before  
Money and sex embraced  
And shook hands  
Their scent lining the halls  
Where I entered my room  
Alone as before.

*Washington D.C., The Willard Hotel.*

## **A Supermarket Sonnet**

Today by the produce section  
An old man sneezed a few times  
Very loud, abrupt, intrusive  
It invaded the space around,

Disturbing infused sounds  
From over-head speakers,  
And squeaking carts, rusting  
At metal wheels, pushed

By elder Jewish women, crooked  
By time-lost-calcium,  
And their sight  
Glazed by cataract's veil

That nothing hides, forgets, forgives  
Of other days.

## **Pavlovian Dogs**

Of what has been said  
Endlessly repeated, trumpeted  
The truest of all truths:  
But of it only one exists

Despite their convincing tones  
And if not these, their powers  
And if not these, their glitz and glitter:  
Snake's oil.

Go on living, go on trusting, go on...

Think no danger lurks as all  
The streets are well lighted and  
The radio sounds happy tunes

The pundits go on explaining  
And the president wants what's best  
And the congress knows best  
And do not worry they are smartest

They are experienced and they watch:  
Our health secure, Our borders' safe,  
Our planes' secure  
Our ports with detectors:  
Newest fastest seeing through.

And at home go on watching  
TV shows that sweeten up  
The bitter, bitter truth, so  
Well hidden, make believe

And go on, listen to the  
Union's state, hear him speak  
Hear them applaud and stand  
In fake ovation, or in pretentious

Anger sit and silent watch,  
But mainly see them rub their slick  
Mouths against his sweaty hand  
And making sure you see too

As they are there for you,  
And only you, and their coffers  
Fill with power, more and more,  
And they spill at golden rim  
Down on plush carpets  
Where the less fortunate of  
Their collogues quickly downward  
Leap with their tongues protruding  
Pavlovian dogs, Pavlovian dogs.

*A State of the Union Address*

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