

Sorrowing World and UN General Debate

by Brandon Marlon (March 2018)



Untitled, Nicolas Carone, 1957

Sorrowing World

Zealous to consummate credal demands,
the wolves of evening sod in blood a globe
of suspecting yet effete civilians,
torpid fodder awaiting their fate,
unsure of their means, wavering in their resolve.

Apologists sated with a surfeit of massacres
turn reticent and no longer default to excuses,
refraining from the quondam claim
that our murderers are depraved because deprived,
merely seeking redress for valid grievances.

The whirlwind's reapers sowed no wind;
innocents slain were unstained to the end
that met them abruptly on a whim,
at the pleasure of hellions who connive
to unnerve, terrify, slaughter.

We have become benumbed and inured to the scourge,
idle bystanders to our own piecemeal demise,
resigned to a grim regimen convulsing the civilized
with wretched regularity, impoverished by loss
while still at a loss as to how to stanch the hemorrhage.

Though we weary of chilling eyewitness accounts,
horror's array will unrelentingly hold sway
until budding homicides discern

that none are ever sanitized by bloodbaths,
not even those ideologically inspired.



Detail of *Mankind's Struggle for a Lasting Peace*, UN, Jose Vela Zanetti, 1953

UN General Debate

Assembled in bespoke garb, grandees
ostensibly exercising a modicum of decorum
take turns at the marble-backdropped rostrum
to flaunt identity and allegiance, saber-rattling
and rodomontading, touting stances
and espousing views for which they aim to gain
purchase and traction if not approbation,
a parade of grandstanders challenging
the patience of their captive audience
of professional seat-fillers.

Here where First and Third worlds rendezvous
heads of state have their say,
lavishing kudos or spewing mordant critiques
regardless of their capacity for rapacity,
nonchalantly blathering platitudes
despite incriminating enormities and excesses.

None is stunned when little is proposed
in the way of solutions generable and operant
to address global plights; ultimately some
succumb to the stifling atmosphere and faint,
a time-honored excuse to be excused.

Once all is said and said, delegates swarm
corridors to wheedle and wangle,
threaten nemeses with démarches
worded "in the strongest possible terms"
(or else thermonuclear war),
and elbow for priority in bathroom queues.

Ambassadors of nations routinely sidelined

then silenced shoot dirty looks at counterparts
along the urinals, comparing length and girth,
mumbling epithets in no need of translation
before fleeing the zoo in chauffeured sedans
en route to fine dining and a musical.
Thus ends another marathon speech-fest
in a tower tragically and ironically ivory.

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