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## Landscape With Gettysburg Address

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LANDSCAPE WITH GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

1

For my responsibilities concluded with the burnt contract,  
the signature salted in custody, the parchment collars  
of my judges turned up against shaved necks  
and weak chins. When a heel wedges  
in cobblestones we don't yank up the street  
or unpeel the city— but a little blood  
is welcome in any field. The world will little note  
nor long remember what we say here.

2

Scored nature dusts more truly in California, where seasons  
resist old country heuristics. Which is to say  
winter means rain or sun or heat, and fall  
leaves leaves unscorched. I walked out of jail  
and selected my phenomena— tin sea, brick hill,  
rubber skidmark, chrome roadkill, far above  
our poor power to add or detract.

3

And the law is the weak will eat the strong,  
if the strong are weak. Yesterday  
I saw fat pigeons spearing together  
through the fog. I sat on the park bench  
contemplating freedom and the long legs  
of a woman standing staring at the water.  
A man swept up and enfolded her from behind.  
Did she cry? Are we rescued? Conceived in liberty,  
dedicated to the proposition.

4

Seven days now the air has been too palpable to move—  
mornings our beds wet with night's fevers. Some days death  
comes marching through the grooming groves,  
goes flying out of schoolrooms on his endless  
milk holiday. How many times we've sold out music.  
How many desires we've  
surrendered to glass, pitchfork,  
and cloud, we can not hallow—  
this ground.

5

Years suspended. The terms of my parole are: no spitting,  
no gouging, no begging. I am cowed, gratefully folded,  
concealed under the hood  
of a Daimler-Chrysler-Chrysler-Benz.  
Who looks for me in the ground, on the beach, in Hollywood?  
Here am I. Who steals from me steals trash. Who steals  
the proposition that all men are created equal  
shall not perish from the earth.

6

Ago it was we fought the good fight.  
Today's for laundry and ducking  
the cops. Let's kill all the lawyers,  
especially the melancholy one  
who visited my cell, who offered me a bagel,  
who sat there scratching with a steel nib  
while I spilled my guts. Let no dead speak  
for me hereafter. Let none arrest me  
in my dash for the sea-chalk words  
met on a great battle field of that war.

7

It is for us the living.