

I break my leg and am spared the draft,
and I stay home and live and am shunned
when
the army returns with its spoils.
I will not
have a career
in government service,
although
it seemed when I was younger
that I was made for politics.
And yet staying out of politics will spare me
an early death
From stress
Or will it?

What is good leads to bad, and what is bad leads to good --
what is there to mourn? But I mourn the deaths that were
somehow the occasion of my personal growth, I mourn the
deep suffering that was the reality
Of each bad turn in the lives of each of life's players.

--

I read of the English of the 19th Century, who are kin to my
American ancestors, if we speak of race; and I think how sad
those children were, how much misery they foretold, by
looking on the skulls of African people and seeing them so
scientifically as not being kin, as not being adult. Those
children--
let our eyes be opened, and may we survive the
opening, the truth, and may we be quick to repent and quick
to forgive, that we may be forgiven.

--

I mourn that God is limited by our love.
He guides us, he will stand beside us, though we do not listen
to his heart. He helps us with our projects, guides us in
our righteousness, leads us into work for him, but if we
loved more, we would listen more, God would guide us more
directly, with judges instead of kings. God leaves it in our
hands to love people in action and in our hearts, and our
hearts have not loved to their capacity, and our hands have
been directed to half-love and quarter-love.

God acts through his body, but his body is tired, is not

fully interested in being his body. God is love, and love is limited by us. We are so young.

--

Let us mourn for the world, quieting ourselves.

--

The Man of Sorrows said
“Let me teach you,
For I am humble and gentle at heart.”

And I,
I mourn that I have been rough and prideful

The Man of Sorrows was the best man in the world.
We need better men and women in the world. We need
men and women to be better than they have ever been before.
We need leaders. We need people who are further along than
other people.

For those leaders who do not mourn, there is great danger.
We become found, so found, in our own grownness and
maturity and power. And then we become agents for the
Mocker. We mock the poor, the weak, the “less advanced.”

Sorrow fights mocking. The Man of Sorrow crushes the
Mocker, the clever one.

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[Song break]

--

Oh Charlie Hebdo,
I hear of you again
Your cartoons
Your cartoon of a drowning Syrian boy
Your satire of Christians who walk on water
And Muslims who sink
You are called crass
But you are justified
Sadly
Because how else would I have paid attention

To the European migrants?
I might have
But I had not
How sad that mockery
Bitter irony
Wrapped in a smirk
Is more delicious
And compelling
Than love

Our hearts need a new orientation
A new leaven and spirit
There is opportunity
But today I mourn
For as it is,
The spirit of cynicism
Is a hitchhiker on Charlie's virtue

We face realities that attack us
May we be attacked
On the right fronts

These migrants, what is to be done with them?
Could the West take in every desperate person?
Perhaps,
In a heroic way
Perhaps not,
Perhaps it would destroy that which makes the West
desirable in the first place
Its prosperity and rule of law and other supportive
institutions
Its order and even peace

Perhaps,
Heroically,
The West could tear itself down with
Immigrants,
And work itself as a leaven into non-Western cultures
To cease being kings and aloof
To tear down the throne and be a brother,
A sister, suffering with and growing with,
Whatever "progressiveness", "superiority", "advantage"
that we have, chastened by humility and our consumption
in the task of service to others, our teaching; teaching our

neighbors, who are ones like ourselves, our good lessons,
For the West has some good lessons to teach.
Then we would be Christians walking on the water
Because we would be Christians who were drowning along
with everyone else.

I do not see this as an impossibility
But I recognize
That we are
Fearful children
Clutching and clinging
Holding on to civilization and culture
So tightly
That we cannot take the hand
Of the little boy drowning beside us
And so is my dream a possibility?
Is this dissolution into love a possibility?
I do not know
I mourn
And somehow I hope,
Because strange things can happen in the
human heart

Yet,
What do I know?
Could my dream really be a good thing?
For there are wicked men, even wicked women
Who would take power in the absence of
Western hegemony
Such as it is--
More than they already do--
And though the Western hegemony--
Is itself a cloud around wicked Westerners--
And perhaps the only way to deal with the wicked
Is through force
The truly wicked will never repent
Will never be infected by the good infection
Then I mourn
That these beasts in human form
Who can never be submitted to love
These barking and biting dogs
Must be put down
And that in the meantime we suffer their
deadly bites
Their irritating barking
And our paralyzing fear of canines

Although this fear, perhaps,
Is something we can master

Western hegemony is real,
An evil force
Wicked people are real
Evil persons, evil powers
We long for a loving power
For love to be powerful
And it is powerfully attractive even now
But love in its forcefulness
 To the point of coerciveness?
Is absent, invisible,
 Never to be seen?
When we long for love's power
Is it love we want?
Or coerciveness?
Evil lodges in the hearts of those who would
 do good.
And the fear of this evil paralyzes us
Our culture paralyzes those who would do good
With accusations of fakeness and hypocrisy
And somehow we listen
To the point that we give up

And all this I have said
Causes me to mourn

--

Oh Alan Kurdi
You were rich in possibility