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## Observed From Abroad

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## Observed From Abroad

and did those feet in ancient time  
walk upon Nauvoo's meadows green?  
and did that voice in ringing tone  
wind through the crooked rows of maize?

and out of that rich black earth  
rise the plain folk,  
how rigid straight they stand!  
against the wind that whips across the land.

mired in the rich black earth,  
the plain folk  
with blue-gray eyes and apple pies,  
do their whites reflect  
the fatherly tolerance of the east?  
do the sharp boston observations dissipate  
into the black western horizon?  
or do the plain folk know and not care to say

I have taken tea on a sarcophagus  
and in exile watched the sun set on the west.  
I have seen those on the brink of the grave  
rise from the moist earth, lean with age,  
to feast on stillborn children,  
the moon gleaming in their eyes  
and empty skin clinging to their bones.

dollars floating on the sea,  
once satiated, sink.  
the unemployed in a line  
sagging with the weight pounds gain,  
these plain folk,  
lost as the wind whistling through cornrows  
and steel mills empty as toothless smiles,  
lemmings queuing to eat what they have not planted.

cattle stare into the horizon,  
silently chewing their cud.

bring me my arrows of desire!  
that demand may birth satiety,  
and chariots may once more draw horses.  
but the voice whispers in the corn,  
"I shall uncover your nakedness  
and you shall die in a strange land,  
your children, born into the debts  
crossed out in skulls strewn over every hill and valley"

I have seen the stout men in rows  
of helmets and uniform  
springing from the black earth,  
bored, and waiting for the ecstatic monsoon season  
of fire and technology.

I have seen the stout men flee our shores,  
the alabaster fragments of our cities,  
and the fallow meadows of our middle kingdom.  
and will heaven's mandate come home to us,  
if we bring the covenant  
out of our camp, to the fields of war,  
while golden tumors grow  
in the lazy, plain folk?

fragments glimmering in the western sky,  
only bitter reminders of the sun  
that has set, not yet there.  
I have seen the white  
separating the letters of our law.  
will our heroic blue-grays rest before  
they carve the quarters of Jerusalem  
out of our green and pleasant land?

[*Jared Campbell*]