

The Messenger

Volume 2012

Issue 1 *The Messenger*, Spring 2012

Article 37

Spring 2012

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Recommended Citation

Liming, Addison (2012) "Pell-Mell World: a sestina," *The Messenger*: Vol. 2012: Iss. 1, Article 37.

Available at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger/vol2012/iss1/37>

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Pell-Mell World: *a sestina*

By Addison Liming

The town men had been waiting though their faces remained pale,
and the sky did not speak storms though its hue was morbid grey.
The men would all be punished, now victims all the males.
It would do no good to fight, they saw no other path
than to be taken for the deeds once done in rooms where they now laugh,
to be taken to the trial when the world is split in half.

They protest: “The world is splinters, it cannot be in half!
As if the world is but two liquids, balanced in two pails!”
A notion so ridiculous they cannot help but laugh.
“There is more than two to every side, just shades of vaguely grey.”
But the force behind the splitting has already paved the path
and has sent them all their sentence in typed letters through the mails.

The deed which was committed by the town’s own set of males
divided men from women, split the town in two, in half.
The deed they planned together when they started down this path
has led them to this letter, and the consequence makes pale
and sickly all assumed in a world presumed grey,
their chuckles merely pleas to stop the judge’s final laugh.

Oh there were cackles, there were chuckles, at that deed each one *still* laughs—
Each had forced love on a woman, to prove that he was male.
Each had thought he'd be forgiven in the somber sunlight grey
by the generosity and need of the lovely other half,
their cheeks and lips so red and their foreheads deathly pale—
but in the ash grey light of morning men saw just a new nasty path.

And they'd forged their own black chains to clank along the path,
but the moral grey they saw in life still gave them gall to laugh.
Now each reads his sentence in letters typed on paper pale.
It is calling him the criminal, him the forceful, him the male.
It summons him to where he will be tried by the world in half,
proof of all the colors—a world not merely grey.

*While It's nice to paint the world into shades of moral grey,
your deeds, you men in town, have built up walls upon your path
that divide you from the brightness that would have been the better half.
Your rooms will not protect you and neither will your laughs.
So spoke the judge's letters, received by the town males,
the letters which colored their world and made their faces pale.*

Laugh do not the women, though deserved are the males
as half the world turns colors and half the world turns pale.
Form their path it's all still grey, though—all is play, but all is grey.