

Wilderness House Literary Review 2/2

There are Men with Guns Coming this Way

It's Friday morning. Democracy Now is halfway over, Amy Goodman is interviewing a reporter that was chased by "coalition forces" (American soldiers) in Iraq while filming babies that had had phosphorous sprayed on them in a night raid on suspected insurgent strongholds. The small contorted bodies a shiny black with boils of white forming rings on the otherwise incinerated bodies. My eyes jerk away, stinging from the tears that were forming. I look over to my wife curled up in the recliner busy with her crossword book, as usual.

"God, look at those children. They're just a pile of ashes."

She looks quickly and just as quickly drops her eyes an irritated look on her face. She knows she's told me that I am not to tell her to look when something that graphic is on the screen. She looks away in movies when someone is about to be killed or someone is injured or a scream warns of an impending ugly scene.

"I wonder if that is the freedom George is talking about when he says we're there to spread freedom. Looks like those kids are free of want and worry in their lives."

"Sickening."

"I think I read that the death toll in Iraq of civilians is somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 men, women, and children. Isn't that about how many died or were wounded in Vietnam?"

"I don't know." Clearly she didn't want to keep talking about such unpleasant things while reading the clue for 7 across, six letters meaning abstinence.

"It isn't very manly to kill unarmed women and children."

She has learned that if she quits responding, eventually I'll quit talking and expecting a response.

"Those kids never hurt anyone. What if that was our granddaughter all burnt to a crisp while screaming from the pain of burning chemicals landing on her little body." By now I have made it personal and anger was building up over the horror of what was going on in America's name.

Again silence

"Ugly American comes to mind."

More silence

The reporter from the Arab radio station is crying. His cameraman tries to carry on with the interview but his eyes are red as well. He says he only films what he sees. He doesn't know how to doctor pictures.

"Those guys are messed up." I cut my sentence short because I'm caught up in the emotion in their voices and I don't want to break down and cry for those dead children where she can see. So I wait until I'm back under control.

"Surely the Empire doesn't need oil that bad. Besides it doesn't matter who buys it from Iraq we would just buy it from some other OPEC producer, it's a commodity."

Silence

Next a reporter is talking about the Katrina aftermath and how billions of dollars are missing and no one is looking for them.

"I know where they are."

"Where?"

"Simple they're already in the personal checking, savings, and investment accounts of anyone who's anyone in the region. Every penny of the unaccounted for is being accounted for but as financial statements of the wealthiest people in Louisiana and Mississippi."

"Probably."

"We ought to freeze all accounts above \$50,000 and make the person prove they didn't steal the money before they got to use the money, Otherwise it gets deposited directly into the US Treasury to pay off the national debt."

"That's not going to happen."

"But if it did all over the country, not just where Katrina hit, and you included all benefits from contributing to a politician's campaign that resulted in an "earmark" which directly put money in their pocket, then the country would have no debt whatsoever."

"Again, not going to happen."

"And our government refuses to pay outrageous interest rates to the Federal Reserve, a private corporation, for money printed up for pennies on the dollar that keeps our nation in poverty and saps the strength of all poor and middle class,"

"Dream on."

"And the World Bank is dissolved so they can't loan any third world leader billions they can't pay back, so they end up selling all their companies and rights to their natural resources to American corporations at prices well below market value rather than have their families murdered in front of them."

"OK, OK"

“This is to nothing of our leaders killing off poor boys throughout the world to maintain the Empire, knowing there are no jobs for them to get.”

Silence

“Or one of my favorite laws, NAFTA, where corporations are allowed to take their profit in any country they wish with lower tax rates, if any, while practically requiring that they lay off as many American workers as possible to enjoy the full rewards of the law, this knowing their own sons and daughters are assured income by sucking off the corporate nipple in an orgy of corruption and traitorous acts against the people of America.”

Silence

“ How about getting up in front of a microphone blabbering about “no child left behind” while cutting educational funding and cheating in the one study used to judge the program in Texas.”

“Yeh, that’s a joke.”

“What about an election where machines are used to win, including changing the vote right in front of the person, not even the decency to wait until they have left the booth?”

“Everyone should stay home and let’s see them claim a fair election then.”

“That’s right we should all stay home. That way the 6 million millionaires in this country would be free to pick the most corrupt and vile person they know, without the issue of poor people wanting a say. Besides poor people don’t know who the worst people are in the area they live in. They’re actually unqualified to choose.”

Silence

“God, that was embarrassing the way George’s fellow “Bonesman” jumped up and said he wasn’t contesting the

election after it got out Debold machines decided in Ohio the home of Mr. Debold that said publicly he would do everything in his power to see that Bush wins the election, I guess that includes having software written to flip votes in front of voters."

"You don't know that for sure."

"Whatever."

The silence continues for some time.

"You hungry?"

"Like what?"

"You can have a tomato sandwich or I could fry up some grill cheese."

"Grill cheese sounds good."