

Wilderness House Literary Review 5/2

Zvi A. Sesling
The Joke

The President tells jokes to a press corps
dressed in tuxedos and gowns
they all laugh at the jokes
while on the other side of happiness
soldiers die in suicide attacks, ambushes,
friendly fire

The President and the press corps mouth
words of regret for the dead, fat lips swollen
from insincerity, shallow thoughts about
deep issues, sound bites and quick quotes,
journalists who are hacks, vapid news anchors
chosen for looks not brains

Three thousand people attended to hear the
President, the comedians, the jokes and mingle
with Hollywood and television stars, the ones
whose fat wallets opened for the President and
now they pose for news photographers and
television cameras.

It is the event of the week or the day: see, be
seen, smile and laugh and be sure to wear high
fashion, high priced designer clothes while in
Afghanistan or Iraq a bullet enters the body through
a camouflage military uniform or a bomb tears a
body and uniform to pieces

What is "news" at the moment disappears faster
than a bullet curtailing a young life, a bomb exploding
in a crowd and we ask who was the last journalist who
really cared, who stayed with death, who smelled death
up close who did not view it on a television monitor in
a New York city studio

And who as the last President who cried for the dead