

Part One An Expression

19.April.2007

It is 4:00am on Thursday, the 19th of April, 2007. On the web is that face of abject terror and fear and loneliness turned to mechanized death, the farewell diatribe of the one who changed all our lives on this past Monday. On the web also is a partial list of those he killed, with some brief bios about their lives, some very young, some much older, all very much alive, some of the brightest and most creative – and also well-liked – and an amazing cross-section of not only America but Humanity.

I am struck by the words and even more so by the voice and Life and Power and Light expressed by Nikki Giovanni, the poet from Tech, the poet who took the black scythe out of Death's hands and shaped it and cast it, in her (truly an archetypal one, she) bard's voice into a staff of light, a vajra lightning bolt, that brought a coliseum full of people to their feet chanting a song, a cry, that is usually heard not in a memorial service but in a lively game, a cry that made me and thousands around the world cry in each our own and somehow collective, shared way.

And I am not a Hokie but now I am.

And I never met Liviu Librescu but I love this guy who gave his life to save his students,
and I never met any one of the lively geniuses and bright lights
who were made known to so many of us
not by their hard work
or by their bridges or their wings
or by their poems or their diplomacy or their biomechanics or their programs or their dancing

but by the sudden silencing of their breath and pulse,
the uprooting from our garden,
like roses and lilies uprooted
by some – some something, I can't say what, but only, only that it was no longer human.

And I have to have these pangs of wonderment and wondering
and doubt and pain, simply pain, raw pain,
in the third and in the first, every which way and in between,

these pangs that wonder what it is that brings us together into One, that helps us carry through, to overcome, to re-find our common-unity, and also what it is and how it is

to lose it all, to lose our human-unity, and to disappear
like one into the black hole
of deepest fear and hate
and rage rage rage rage Rage
until the very vestiges of being alive are gone
and there is only the Machine, the Killing Machine,
bam bam boom bam boom bam you're dead
but no, it isn't even you (thank God) it isn't even you
he thought it was you but you he could not cannot kill
it wasn't even a he that was killing, already he was gone long gone
but nobody saw or nobody said or nobody had the heart to stop "it" and
and now it is all so much and so many "if only" - but
isn't it so true and sad and awful

the killer was in fact the first to die,
even as he walked up the new Golgotha with his gun

he was (dead soul) not only dead before he shot the first shot, he was in fact more dead than any
of all the sons and daughters brothers sisters fathers mothers lovers friends who died,

in fact (Amazing Grace!)

not one of them was really dead today not yesterday not on Black Monday
in fact and I mean really
in fact You are alive more real alive
each one of you bright young old white black all shining
all more alive than any machine that stopped your day your words your breath

and we, our lives, we stopped, too, forever changed, forever to remember,
that day, unforgettable day, day turned into our night, and You, and Us,

and now what to do, now, to not forget you, of course,
but also not to forget us, and who we really are,
quite human, still (we really hope), human and alive,
and with a common-unity, and really real,
not just some machine, not just another robot walking through the killing fields, the killing halls,
not just an eraser but a creator,

and more real we are because of you, all thirty-two of you,

each one of you,

a be-ing made and ever-making in the Image of the Light,
unerasable and unforgettable, You,
each and every one of you, I love you all.

19.April.07, mjd
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