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Liberal Dirge #1

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Liberal Dirge #1

Dysfunction, you said,
is a state of mind
from all you've heard --
"If it ain't broke, don't fix it,"
(and if it is, pretend it's not).
Insanity, you said,
is a relative term
so who's to judge?
on a scale of Gandhi to Hitler
which is crazier, the martyr or the murderer?
Survival, you said,
is the quest of the weary spirit
towed under by the current
in this our sea of troubles;
We live to catch the sun and not be burned.
Death, you said,
is not to be feared,
a place of ultimate sleep
(discounting the worms and decay)
like a gorgeous featherbed six feet below.

I believed you until
I saw you (as in a dream)
wrapped
in a hundred icy rosaries,
stifled
by a thousand prayers,
choked
by a million flowers,
drowned
by pine and third-rate satin,
grounded
by four men you barely knew.
Could I lie with you
once again
and ask you sweetly
"Have you changed your mind, my dearest?"
I learned the difference
between reality and desire
even as my tongue
found your throat
and I pressed cold steel
into your chest
and felt the sticky-salty-liquid-heat
cover me.

Dysfunction
was closer than you thought.
Insanity
slept beside you every night.
Survival
is a beautiful thing.
Death
may surprise you.
Sleep well, my darling.

—Charis Brummitt '96

