

## Buttress Snarleagle, (Patriot)

*And I told it because I could, and because you wanted me to tell it, and it united us and the fare that extended in your direction was always enough to go around, vaunted crying out loud in the context of merrymaking or the law that lived unsquandered in us, just as we existed.*

Fictitious place,  
martial evidence.  
Who did it? What  
hegemony strikes reality—  
dawn in the desert,  
mud caked on khakis,  
true-blue surrender.  
Endless grievances, you  
get a bum tyrant, your  
land is pocked with oily  
shades of foreboding.

Bona fides. I was a  
glacier cut loose, a  
firebrand, a coolie,  
a protester... War  
was not my formal  
benediction, my coat  
was made of synthetics,  
my wheels formed on ball fields—  
look to inner kinesthesia,  
the marbled dough of rye,  
lights up full measuring  
that plain vocal release  
the stage recalls. Get  
used to so much refusal,  
it is your score, your face  
shining against the chargers  
riding the street's desperate fury.

Mirages of peace, a die-in  
on Fifth Avenue, Bergdorf's  
about to go under,

flights over Ground Zero  
circumference of days unknown,  
bunches of flowers in parkside booths,  
you bring your wrath with you,  
you drive me crazy.

Lump this land mass sideways,  
burn through the bullshit.  
Storage of sweeping ways,  
lengthy lateral unforgiveness,  
still no health care for all.  
Stingy nomad pinhead conservatives  
flying into Kennedy, pumped  
for a stir-fried power lunch.  
*You make money, I make money—*  
tiers of displaced priorities,  
the bungled background uneasy,  
the misguided missal: churches  
crotched full of sorry ringers,  
the utter dormancy  
of the brighter figure.

Teetering ecstasies, Vegas or Tahoe,  
big fish frying in hot oil,  
t-shirt smudged with bonhomie,  
crux of the world's leaders,  
inarticulate gestures, leers  
graduated from sheer stupidity—

But how prevail against bastions,  
plundered tanks, charred bodies,  
agencies of commerce and glory,  
imperium's red stag, Mars  
on fire, burning buildings,  
local color on national TV,  
blight that corners the heart,  
sweep of individual ruin

Days do not let up,  
pouring relentless feeling  
onto the disunion, failed  
diplomacy, hawks, mouthings,  
allegations of nuclear weapons,  
shrewd dealers in arms, industrialists  
corporate powers amok

rebuild the ancient capitol,  
stone by infant stone.

Your equal in all parts,  
the buried confusions  
Bombs away! corrupt warrioring  
as terror mounts in fundamental  
degradation: you die  
yankee dawg, pay  
for your vitriol  
in real time, crumbling  
empires long ago silent.

Where the union hero heads  
his honor undivided  
Causus belli, turn  
the muzzle outward, recoil  
of the driven brain, sleepless  
near Baghdad. Crunch time,  
the final four pivoting before  
the overhead scoreboard:  
what a turnaround spoiler  
in the red zone, tomahawk  
missiles issuing final reports.

You too will pay big  
you too will come back  
dig in and launch  
your best weapon: attack  
that clears out the open,  
makes soft defensive  
maneuvering.

Other forms of power  
(believe it or not)  
{money at least buys, *and there's never enough*}  
but *cooperative* power  
as Schell has it  
*No More Into the Breach*  
could compel allegiance  
your old story hooked  
with Deep Shadow  
bombardments of love  
concoctions of Unremedy...

But looking aghast, wonder  
what you really think.  
Amok in tubeglare,  
the endless repeal of light.  
Sweep saturation-bomb, clear  
the collateral damnation.  
This evil eradicated, plunder,  
torture—  
Old Walt travestied, soul  
that cried for winning interdiction,  
lilacs, gaunt flesh, nursing  
a young soldier's wounds.  
Who was really there, who  
came to say it right,  
the formula that seriously played  
against the grain? Where  
did you stand in all the mischief,  
the phony glossing? Hope  
that stammered beyond sensation,  
the body's own electric standing:  
keep the focus unscored,  
the bottom straining upward,  
the overtone energized, the...

But full disturbance  
Death in our name—  
US—what goes wrong  
'only world superpower'  
hovering attack helicopter  
power of industrial munitions  
manufacture—Defense policy  
in the orifice of leaders'  
officialspeak—do our darndest  
to give freedom a chance  
or *keep the peace*  
Michael Moore talking of fictions—  
fictitious presidents, presiding over  
fictitious reasons for war—  
weapon systems monitored  
by teams of UN experts—  
You who sneer at hypocrisy,  
keep the dialogue alert,  
ongoing, break in the action



come true to origin, splendor  
unadorned but resonant  
esteemed in distant array,  
an object bent into motion,  
the vibrancy of eye in daylight  
or a wilderness in flight,  
the occasional exotic bird,  
multicolored or crimson-chested,  
anchor of pure legitimate hope.

2.

Buttress shook off the grumbling  
of mourning & got his shirts  
tucked into baggage, left  
while winds of war freighted  
the nation's spirit. I'll live  
in the distances, anyplace  
but here, Mexico or jungles  
of the Latin south. Tropical fruit,  
strong drink & heat swelling  
the bloodstream, dampening  
the dry complexion.

There was this flowering, Allen  
and you were its ageing child,  
cosmic Jew of beard & beads,  
cymbals & chants & overdose  
kind flesh-warrior with friends  
who woke in your loft  
kept promises with a new generation,  
spoke of sentience against war,  
stood for the rich chivalry  
of a Whitmanesque pride, a voice  
rich in its treasury of variations,  
keeper of the age's coalescing spirit—

Say it, ideationless.  
What? Keep it up,  
your torment, sadness  
& powerless evocations  
of event. Nobody cares.  
The self inviolate, obscure  
a keen edge of loss—  
of what? connection?  
Go fly a kite. Get real.  
Bite off a snake's head.

Curious whipping sound,

the bargain searched for,  
the elemental fury. Petrified  
no one can see the need  
to carry forward...you  
who sat with kings, scored  
in the highest level of competitiveness,  
completed the edgework forms,  
danced in the streets on D-Day,  
wired a diatribe to the prez...  
but not so fast.

This was what stopped traffic  
or pushed the analogy outward:  
against the very nation memorialized  
in sentimental songs, the beautiful  
spacious skies, somber waves  
of specious outtakes—your voice,  
under God, shaving points  
to win at any cost. Steroids  
under the power bars, wheat  
germ jamming the bowel. Get  
what you seek remedied,  
tormented back inward,  
coached to a fine tuning.

Able-bodied knowing  
and first things first.  
Pragmatic forces in the brain,  
trusted to bring matters homeward,  
the plenteous rush of equipage,  
dark lifting off the vast sea.

This what you do here,  
this faithless wheel of fire,  
this phony putsch. Crumbling  
ruins long in the making,  
soft as melting snow. Watch  
what's been given life, & how  
uncanny the undoing.

Buttress worked his backhand  
incessantly. Still, his forehand

was the biggie, and then the  
overhead. What would it take  
to even out the game, develop  
more confidence at net, break  
The A player's streak? Practice?  
or a new attitude toward the world,  
those quaint reveries of power  
initiated in the mind, the subtle  
purposes of spirit enmeshed  
with uncertainties trudged up  
from mystical sources...

See here, Snarleagle,  
we've had enough indecision,  
we want action from you  
or we'll drive you from power!  
You bear consequences for  
your words—every interview,  
every speech to the choir,  
every dip in the stock market  
lies squarely on you, Buttress  
and you know it. Discipline,  
dear chump, your Waterloo  
or perhaps your opportunity—  
Now the choice is yours:  
Give up your ambivalent weaponry  
or be disarmed: we have  
the means to make you cry havoc  
and we will use them utterly:  
this is fair warning & the outcome  
is in your court: snipe wrong  
and the relationship will be destroyed.

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No choice but to stand  
against forces, power structures  
bitter anti-Snarleagle, private  
intelligence warned the current  
strain will erupt and nothing  
will put Humpty back together.  
He would have to go south,  
mercilessly rejoining old troops,  
sodden expats, bridge players,

tennis hawks, tortilla makers.  
Feed the hard edge of hope,  
mon chevalier, cheer  
the battlefield of innerness,  
the mote in the private eye,  
Field Marshal Fox mistaken  
in logistics, but support units  
need priorities, still  
keep up to speed, double  
sea & air components, no way  
those armored vehicles will  
arise on schedule.

Unrested children, arrested  
battlezones, stasis,  
long-lived parameters—

Grey rabbit waiting to forage  
eye steady, purposed  
of kingdom herein, desert  
long in the making, canon del agua,  
tracking the forms of us  
here, siding, sunlight  
in early spring—am I reaching you?  
do you see how this feels?  
how we feel, digesting  
in all forms, this quaking hour—  
life in all its grasping—  
No, you can't get more out of it—  
or into it, but look—

Stammering out the hypocrisy—  
we did it wrong, and continue so—  
no sign of consciousness, old friend  
meningitis, brain drain, fooled  
in the heart of aching lesions,  
sent into battle, long nights  
bombs in Baghdad, voices  
of angry protest, beam  
us aboard the spacious outlook,  
trekking across television lands,  
curious parables of remote planets,  
The Borg, cybernetic spectaculars  
odd-shaped humanoids, special

effects in the lab, playthings  
sold with a message,  
and outcasts that starve fealty  
and give back silent states—

Fellini's *Casanova* finally balleting  
with a mannequin, unable  
to find a real mate, only  
fucking cupidity run amok,  
starved critters rejoining the flock,  
dandyific pleasures in the closet,  
dancers parading outback,  
leaning forward now back,  
triggers for a perfect wince,  
obscurity's ripe neighbor. Come,  
old primitive plainsong, be brief  
in your message, no one  
comes with better news, no one  
crosses mountains enfeebled  
or drowns in voices, or...

Whatever makes us prize  
what grows in us to say—  
be it harmonic or stocatto,  
remedies of notes sung  
or played riffed to the rising  
nuance just familiar enough  
to name the key of, the harmonic  
juice stated by and by—

Seldom with as much *conviction*  
and we drive fully *inward*  
but echoing that carefulness  
senses of abrupt longing  
but hope within danger, lasting  
interruption in the looming twilight,  
a cottontail nibbling spring grass  
listening fitfully, aroused  
finding utter momentum,  
camouflage, continuance, animated  
interest in living—

Nothing but what it comes to—  
earnest places that move

and drive forward motion  
or backward, mad  
regression. Stupefied,  
coarse manifests unguarded  
loops back to nowhere:  
begin again, switch  
the aforementioned breed  
and call your purpose *innocence*.

It will last long enough.  
And the curious feeling for transience  
will follow anon. Hope  
that runs so many gamuts,  
that leads the will through and through,  
that pockets investigations, honor  
of prideful incident, roams  
the corridors, the outback, the thrust  
in the meaning we advance

Flummoxed. No steward awards the banner  
we remarked would identify  
what we crave: a reality  
solidly built, cornered  
with a language we admire  
or a necessity. One must *speak*  
or it evaporates, goes south  
for a long vacation. Listen!  
our piecemeal advent beckons.  
Trying to put it down, word  
by word—against time's torment.

Had to perform it—  
ascending, wary,  
exposure in the offing  
stage grown bitter.  
Come through, laughing  
sputter nightlong weary  
bedzone. Dream enters,  
puts time to rest.  
Daylight subscribes,  
tears at the shades  
comes through.  
Were you equal to it?

and what hedged the distance  
you stood for—  
against the grain.

For thought long days,  
bind the words and shelve  
for future motions—keep  
the heart in tow, let  
the gambler's wheel turn—  
you are here as a calling...

3.

The most reckless war in modern memory  
stampeding darkness how quaint  
bombs from 20,000 feet fair play?  
against the whole odyssey of progress  
the stillborn witness of hired goons—

No clear knowledge, no weapons proposed  
as evidence for this attack, merely  
the apocalyptic surmise of a fundamental mind—  
*We are right and you are wrong*  
and begging to find the mission to remake the world!  
indelible propositions, keening (after 9-11)  
against fierce ignoble positions  
of the collegial bunch uninspired  
to be all you can be, foaming at the mouth,  
dismembered Iraqi children squirming  
in looted hospitals, ancient artifacts  
removed from national museum,  
deals made in other markets fundamental,  
you bet we'll get Bechtel to remake the foundation  
of the liberated land. Ach,  
and listening in on this outrage,  
thinking it through, embattled  
to make sense enough to fend off madness.

The main obstacle to peace  
in the unconscious, the dissociation  
from the equality of all people, for surely  
we are the eagle folks, the chosen,  
the liberators of the dark woods,  
the moves we made never outdone,  
not here or anywhere, scotched

to a temple pole, riveted  
by a *greed* hardly seen on earth before,  
'we deserve all this power and glory,  
our flag on the fender of the sporty thrust  
we paid a fortune to inherit,'  
gas guzzling monsters down the freeway,  
and all the while arguing our destiny,  
the last colossus to walk the earth,  
the president hawking tax cuts  
for the privileged, elites  
cutting fine figures across the empire,  
Armani suits and dangled power  
waving to third world spoilers,  
dancing whiners in the desert.

This is your nation, Snarleagle,  
love it or leave it, single out  
your own specious immunity  
from all this stupidity  
or get with the program,  
put some money down  
and start to buy big. Yes,  
old sport, your wishes  
are in the splashy collages,  
the windows onto the soul of the media,  
your server about to elect you wizard  
of airwaves, your telltale website  
putting you in the highest bracket.

But Buttress knew better, had the drama  
in his soul, and symbols, and livingness.  
*Go, Snarleagle*, he heard as he recited  
the images of his great dream of earthliness:  
The Eros we know is with us,  
our hearts driven furiously into mystery:  
we heave into great vacuities of modernity  
these wild voices, these kaleidoscopic wonders  
and we know our way forward—

Vietnam in memory, an outcry  
against the foolishness of killing  
for unspecific purpose, we're *in* now  
and we can't turn back, not now  
we got the superior might, the enemy  
will feel the full beef of our wrath—

So be it, a journey outward  
when the inner action's empty.  
Test the brain to see where peace  
arouses another dimension,  
where our hopes do not vanish,  
where we see our parties ride homeward  
across the sullen plain. You  
who danced in the furious beyond,  
you who escalated moonward,  
your huge torso implanted with nervous rods,  
your imploded dark brain unraveling in chaos,  
bright purpose to sting the world with *Snarleagle*...

Wreckage that time no longer hassles,  
purchase of stale deliverances, buoyant  
excuses for this stymied condition  
here on earth, true blue belief  
saddled backward and running ferociously  
toward nowhere, no status, no teleology,  
no burnished look in the drawing room,  
but a wayward cross-purpose, a playground

where the world is looted endlessly,  
where promising young marauders dance,  
where you go to the cleaners at last  
holding out against utter ruin  
a claim-check on hostility, a buyout  
that will give you back an unloaded zero...

What you end up with scrawls  
its own power, keeps going,  
in spite of all these faded hopes,  
this is surely what grieving comes to  
round the bend of history's fallout:  
this is your menacing placement,  
here in this corridor of futility,  
this great garrulous prize disprized,  
angling everafter in shadowy parades,  
an estate sale almost unveiled as real

--Bill Pearlman (Iraqi War, April 2003)

