

Rich Murphy

Across a Nation

The fright from Boston to Los Angeles
fills the cabin. No fight. War pinned
hungry volunteers with artificial limbs
and rooming houses welcome all
as the CEOs continue the globetrotting.
A rush among jobs to patch together
a living under cameras keeps the mob
from dwelling. The landing gear engages
the threats but not common ground.
Overhead compartments bulge
with worry. Beneath the plane
in the baggage hold, anger waits to be
unzipped: Marketing campaigns contort
and moralize for thieves. But as long as
fears outweigh each fastened safety seatbelt,
the greater community suffers need, greed.

Notes from the Margin

The journey in the dark
from group think to the dawn
where the desert continues
but without an envelope
around the mainstream
that promises quiet consent.
From the vantage point
where paying attention,
reading, and thinking converge
on higher ground, two eyes
watch corporations suck at nipples
in government barnyards
where taxpayers feed on garbage.
The thriving hybrid animal
in a deep state suffers
a military industrial complex:
Yike Ike was right
and correct with the warning.
A psyche for perpetual war
survives on processed news
and infrastructure scraps:
Gay rights, marijuana medicine.
Money mullahs pick ripe candidates
for the ignorant and privileged children.
Distraction drugs while drones dredge
the channel for empire.
The puny voice in the street
during lockdown waits
for rubber bullets and water cannon
until live rounds round the day.
Here corneas dwell, well,
and threaten ink on paper also.
The foundation and wish
may have helped compensate
for the genocide for milk and honey.

Patron to the Rich

Stock shelves, sweep floors,
and flip burgers: the philanthropist
sacrifices a living wage
to fund greed projects.

Guilty venture investors
and corporate board members
wishing to sprout wings,
build onto hospitals,
and attend to the 12-generation
recovery program for withdrawal.

The giver ghost hovers around the city
without until an election-time need
for manipulation heightens:
The capital and commodity creator
counts in the press and in statistics
among the living to add for victors.

The donor and Good Samaritan
eats and sleeps up to the chin in debt.
In a slum without escape or car
the aid worker and Santa Claus
patches together the day for children
or lives in shoes while seeking shelter.

Anger Management

Every state storage chest
dispenses against anger.
Apathy apps and coping mechanisms
display for assurance
while the body performs robotics.

Shrugs, denial, amnesia spring
into action when the meme boys
in sandwich boards rough up intelligence
or the boss boots into order
to reboot for accounts.

The straight face slips on emoticons
and customer service scripts
and everyone laughs – right?

Distance, a running for the hills
burns from the hips and gut
the bitterness from around
bread and circus from around death
that then reroutes into good sports
and the standby, sex.

From a coast in Virginia,
Oregon frustrates enough
so that the drive anticipates to the end.
If a buffalo, learning to lean
on horns for the greater good
may reap after amber waves.

Not (Only) in Kansas

Borrowed from offshore account owners,
billfold cash, savings, and credit cards
pause in transit from purses and pockets

The police may arrive in a moment
with shoplifting surveillance charges

or arm-twisting store clerks point
and the holder releases

Under the capital copula,
the huddled masses thank
while the consumption enforcement
officers rifle and rent among clothing

Burrowed between umbrella ribs
where the rainbow ends

when the productions slow at a dip,

a glimpse appears at the columns

that support with roles enough, Oh my