

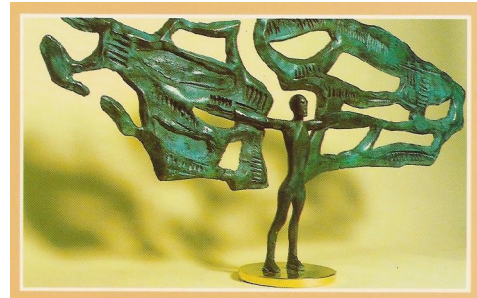
Waxwing Poems to urge the total abolition of war

sent by email:

with greetings , *John Deane* , July 2007



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If the notion of the total abolition of war may yet appear absurd, that is because humanity remains locked in its own carelessness and egocentric concerns. What may appear absurd in one age can become possible, then probable, and finally obvious in later ages. I still believe it is our duty to move the notion from the absurd into the possible, towards the ultimate hope of ending the great obscenity that is war. If Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin and Ian Paisley of the DUP can sit down together to discuss power sharing, then anything is possible. These poems are offered simply as spur and hope, as prayer and key. With all good personal wishes from

John F. Deane

July / August 2007

The President

I have been watching cormorants on the rock
clustered like old-fashioned mercy sisters
waiting for a bus. Here in the easy west
Valentine's day has been, champagne, roses, the still
throbbing heart of the saint, love, it says, for love.
Whispers come from the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, sighing
from Babylon the source, where human beings
rose out of blood and dust after thunder-battle
between the gods. Fulmar are soaring out
and back again to the cliffs, for sheer exuberance
and the gold-bloom furze gleams under warming sun.
The president, we hear, is casting eyes
over Iran, while praising the newest, intricate
hardware, sophisticated stuff for the directorate
of atrocities. There is little to be said; crowds
in the marketplace burst apart like plump fruits,
dread blossoms on the face of a Sumerian mother;
the president dreams of empire, of his god-at-my-back
ego-warriors. Nearby a stonechat comes to perch
on a fence-post, silent and watchful, its black head

cocked towards the blossoms, not yet mating-day,
not yet singing-time. The president strolls
self-consciously from the president's helicopter,
buttons and unbuttons his airman's jacket, searching
for the president's smile and the president's
knowledge of his powers: to levy war, for instance,
on the ancient countries. He has not learned, it seems,
anything from the centuries. The cormorants, suddenly
disturbed, lift off in a confusion of black feathers
and silently head together for the safety of open sea.

John F. Deane



Irresponsible Leadership

– a particular case

For a while it seemed merely anomalous
that with the range of choices available
the final choice, with his clear limitations,
should be the one chosen for real power.

But it seems that to those who are not within the system

Nothing is known of the real nature of things
or of what goes on in the regions at the top,

and that the needed qualities were there:

the family background and the right connections
– business and political; the great wealth.

With other personal capacities:

a deadly skill in management; a craft
keeping him separate always from the pack.

The physical: the sharp features; the exact hairline;
the neat frame, for the strictly tailored suit.

All put together from expensive components.

Even the apparent limitations

playing their part: the use of certain terms
repeated, imprecise, in public speech

to our amusement – so that we remained
unsure of his intentions;

a direct behaviour

centred on self, without self-criticism,
childlike: as if playing with big blocks
and moving them about on immediate impulse

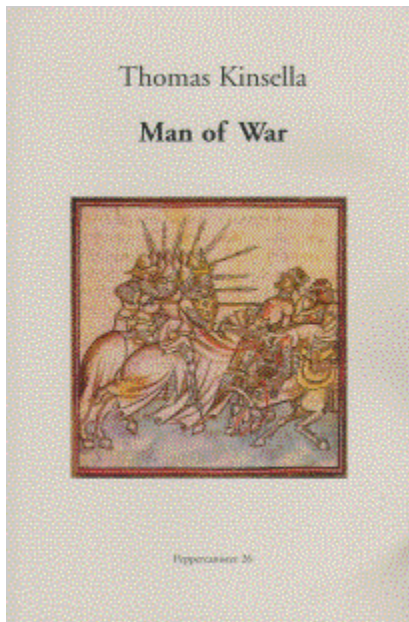
– deploying his huge forces with fixed ideas,
careless of the carnage and destruction;
disposing of the cost in human deaths

with simple rhetoric and a lack of feeling.

Thomas Kinsella

from *Peppercanister 26*, published June 2007, "Man of War".

(See www.dedaluspress.com where the booklet is available)



"The Kingdom/Reign of God as Jesus described it and of which Shalom is a key characteristic will only be completed in the eschaton, beyond history. Yet the historical responsibility of Christians in particular is to promote the coming of the Kingdom, including its central feature. In this they will be serving as well as seeing to engage the whole human community, the whole family of God. In this century at least we should accomplish the minimum conditions of Shalom, the abolition of war and devising of alternative methods of personal, national and international security. If all that could be accomplished within so many nation states so quickly we should have the courage and creativity to establish the same internationally in the century which lies before us.
" -- Enda McDonagh, from "**Immersed in Mystery**" (Veritas)

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