

"It was through writing ... that I first sensed the true dimensions of our plight: an entire generation was floundering in the shadows of this sudden epidemic. I then convinced myself that by lighting a candle in the darkness I might dispel a few of these oppressive shadows with the faint illumination of my diary. The torchlight parade..." Mortal Embrace, Emmanuel Dreuilhe

The Light Parade (Letter to Dreuilhe)

Emmanuel, the pages of your book burn life into my hands.

Where are you now that each flaming finger knows the warrior, the guerilla may be the purest source of light when the world's turned on its side?

Translator, magician, may this pacifist writing become brave soon.

What can I tell you? Claustrophobic to a fault, I have just been camped along fringes & only feeling the core when small tremors rose. For you they've been enormous, clenched in the thick, & for others, beached in crossfire, the trenches are filled with casualties blood.

Nothing's as visceral, nothing save touch, the instinct, the true virtue capable of loving any man without prejudice, beyond flesh, muscles, those other sacred things. Perhaps that's our state of grace & also, a sort of torture when double-faced memory, both savior & interrogator, saw Oliver, saw lovers, held so many angels, & so many fell...

Are their remains ageless?

I try to go for soul-work while real drama taxes facts, disorders senses, gets Will to distrust: Paranoid, paranoia, a rationale in fever.

Talk of good causes; we've breathed all of that: the rations, the tubes, the catheters, the bitter pills spilling, erupting, roaring, that hoary vacuum: harsh winds through this void of opinions, experts, crackpots, the public, the political----

Betrayers, deceivers, vandals of confidence, a masquerade ball...

Who, if not the suffering, the existing fine but shell-shocked, will re-right this fool's ship as the antiquated ignorant commentators, & as the well-wishers, the indifferent, on rocks, just watch?

The cameras are always ready to film which way the vessel goes, the T.V. eye, the voyeur who creeps in, feeds on every traumatized house. We are so interesting to look at, under siege, on our stretchers, we, the ones told to feel sick in our spirits, & that the illness is biblical, is God's vengeance, is...

Well Emmanuel, you know how far the lies lie, & how via friend's kindness, by candles in protest, the Life March still rises, & how you'd gladly be a human toad, noble-hearted, for Research.

This would be your shield's crest: the picture of a temple, half plundered; the picture of a homeland, half-bombed.

But green is underneath the bleeding, our community never dismembered because, like Job, we refuse to stand by, cursing fate, refuse all but devotion & this torment, embraced, if not slain, perhaps wrestled down.

Emmanuel, crouched behind parapets, your diary's torched my cowardice as now, another flair in battle, I shoot this poem over the wall.