The American Dream?

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Weather Report

It rains, slow and incessant
I accept the drizzle.

It pours
rapid and vigorous
I await its end.

It storms
fierce
and
destructive
i am
thrust
downward
my heart
oppressive
my head
spinning
i cannot
confront
the storm.

There is a calm
his hand extends
There is a need
to grasp, embrace, trust
There is a child
clinging, aware, secure

I am once again reborn—once again alive
with the innocence of a child.
There is a dawn in the sky about me
It intensifies, deliberately, steadily.

Kara L. Gill

The American Dream?

I never understood class warfare until I went overseas.
Never understood America from the outside, my perspective, and hers.
Always tried to comment on, criticize, hate, intellectualize about America.
But somehow it all rang false when still at home.
Looking inside from the outside always makes a difference
just like actually looking does for ignorance.
Maybe I always cared too much about not liking,
that in a way I did.
Except now I can’t stand America.
America of politics,
not the America I call home.
The huge colossus of media and had numbing culture.
The land we’re trying to destroy from the inside.
The land we’re trying to export,
to any poor sucker who will take it.
They’ll take it too. That’s the problem.
They want it, need it, will kill for it.
I once believed I didn’t understand this land
of fast food, drive-by shootings, rap, blues, beef commercials, dogs selling beer, cars
being sold by buxom blondes and slimy bad-suited slicks, 600 channels, 500 sports,
million-dollar salaries for a president of a company where the ones who work earn
precious little, commercialized sport and sex, cigarettes, alcohol, red meat, McDonald’s,
Disney, Pepsi and Coke.
But now I understand it well.
It makes sense, in a strange and twisted way.
It’s easily packaged, neat little bit of pop culture,
manufactured; pasteurized and homogenized;
edited for content and suitable for all audiences.
It is so easy.
Fast money, fast cars, fast women...is this the American Dream?
It is the export.
Drink this and you will be beautiful.
Drive this and you’ll look wealthy.
Wear these jeans, and members of the opposite sex will strip naked for you in public.
Play this sport and you will get rich.
Maybe I did understand it.
Maybe I understood it too well.
Maybe I had assimilated it, like all the rest of you.
We want to turn your cities into ghettos, shopping malls and basketball courts.
The countryside to tract housing, super-highways, drug abuse and social isolation.
We want you to consume our information, fed to you
by this company or that.
We want you to experience drive-by shootings, charismatic psychopaths, and gun-toting
mail carriers, heart disease, cancer and AIDS, smog, polluted rivers, and forests of
billboards where trees once stood.
And you want it too.

Tom Long