

Salute!

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No, I am not speaking, friends, comrades, non-voting
Cats, compañeros of that particular Kennedy. Haven't
I been there--
Canoe of dialectic shooting the rapids of his careful laughter.
Don't I know--and I'm telling you now, fellow-workers:
Here's instant Ivy sprung from the Old Oaken Head of Eisenhower
agog in all winds

Well--the tic-tac-toe of class consciousness is faster than Univac:
There's no harp in this harp's house and no salt in his dolor!
Scissorbill, meat-head Nixon-head HARK.
Plutonian diseases of the mineral world
Rust the green monies of this springtime king!

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No, lads, sweet ladies, I'm talking about Sam Kennedy--
Size Aleph Three halo--man too big to fit in--
To fit in his own novels -- hey there old moonfitter! I see you,
Great cock of light on the swinging vane of your petrified song
Blasting the wizened sun from the black entrapments of the dollar-
circled sea!

What fever of unloosed light did you bring to the fifty-star dark
Of these benighted States! What diamond ponies of radiant love
Stampeding out of the badlands of a glass guitar!
And against the statutes of popcorn and the protocols of chrome
Eagles of smoke and whiskey at your right and left hands fly!

Alas, what colors have bled from our private flags since you went
Single-footing down the blazed trail of cold lang sign
Towards Deads Town. . . Bituminous anguish in the early snow. . .
The Bomb sings in the Counting House. . . The Companions discuss
The merits of the demirep Agony Man of the double-headed
Party of Death.

It's a long time you been gone old man a long time.
I remember you, helmsman, at the prow of your chisel,
The soft things that shelter in stone I remember your
discovering
luminous journeys
Into the night of mahogany. I remember the working class heroes
Which your prying and rebel eye led forth from the prison tree.

Times change. Fellow-workers, this sculptor and singer once
Built him a harpsichord for love of the music in it.
Let the President, fellow-workers, build him a voting machine
For the love of the abstract polis. And let us, fellow-workers,

Cast up our ballot. For my dead man alive, or that living in
love with the dead.

GONE AWAY BLUES

Sirs, when you are in your last extremity,
When your admirals are drowning in the grass-green sea,
When your generals are preparing the total catastrophe--
I just want you to know how you can not count on me.

I have ridden to hounds through my ancestral hall,
I have picked the eternal crocus on the ultimate hill,
I have fallen through the window of the highest room,
But don't ask me to help you 'cause I never will.

Sirs, when you move that map-pin how many souls must dance?
I don't think all those soldiers have died by happenstance.
The inscrutable look on your scrutable face I can read at a glance--
And I'm cutting out of here at the first chance.

I have been wounded climbing the second stair,
I have crossed the ocean in the hull of a live wire,
I have eaten the asphodel of the dark side of the moon,
But you can call me all day and I just won't hear.

O patriotic mister with your big ear to the ground,
Sweet old curly scientist wiring the birds for sound,
O lady with the Steuben glass heart and your heels so rich
and round--
I'll send you a picture postcard from somewhere I can't be found.