

FIRST ETUDE FROM THE SEVENTH EPISTLE

“Don’t you know, most excellent of princes, and don’t you see from your watch-tower up there where the fox of this stench skulks in safety from the hunters? . . . her drooling jaws are always polluting the Arno—you can taste it in the water you drink—and don’t you happen to know? this evil plague is named Firenze.”

Out of the instituted authorities and worship of the Presidency, the heart
of each man in turn grown false in that power, each will in turn fattening
upon the power, each mind
sick with the swill of long accumulated crimes and
mounting pride
begetting itself upon mounted pride;

out of the side-lesions of Congress,
the bills and appropriations breeding their trade,
the mounting flow of guns, tanks, planes, fires,
poisons, gasses, fragments of metal tearing flesh
from flesh, thermonuclear storings, outpourings of
terror even unto Zion

that now swells and bursts asunder,

the remnants of the old Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, of that
rule of Jealousy and Wrath the Father proclaimd,
advance, divided against Itself,
the two identities
Yahweh and Allah in one conflagration,
America’s industries feeding the abscess.

She . . . O where is my beloved Nation?

“She is the sick sheep that infects the flock of her Lord with her contagion . . .”

out of the people, out of the milling electorate,
the millions at work at the sick breasts of the Covenant,

the hosts daily consuming their lives at the churning
factories of war-goods and stacks of commodities,
feeding their energies into the vast
machine of the emptying production,

riding, battling the wave, going under, drown
in the undertow, all, ever, gulping at the medium
for air, breathing the fumes of the soupt-up tide—

*“She is striving to tear at her mother.
She turns upon the entrails of her mother.
She burns for the sickend embrace of her father.”*

So does she arouse in us apocalypse

and in Nature the furies stir

*“. . . Then, though they be unjust deeds,
Yet are they recognized as*

just penalties”