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Rawson Square: Prologue

Ward Minnis
anthuriumcaribjournal@gmail.com

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Rawson Square: Prologue

On the twenty-fourth day of the last month
I, John of Patmos Street,
stood on the cobblestones of Rawson Square,
between the passing cars, circling potcakes
and swirling debris,
where I could smell the black blood flowing just beneath my bare feet,
blinded as I was, in the bright lights that shine at three in the morning
that make the darkness bitter;
I stood at a moment in time
at what could be called the crossroads,
but my body ached from bearing the burden of my filth
and the filth of this nation
the navel of my world,
for I had walked the length of this street,
both ways on the funeral route
and I felt surrounded.
Surrounded by the signs of the times
for clearly the lines had been drawn
in the war against my people.
I stood now in front of those front lines,
trenches lined with aluminum siding.
No silver lining to this tragedy.
This square had become Babylon,
bacchanal with bleachers straight up to heaven
where at half-time
the seeing follow the blind straight into damnation
and we let them, we who should know better,
we who should see by now that
we is only dogs to them
pawns in their plan
cogs in their economy.
I felt surrounded
under siege by the halls
that frame the decrees,
the walls that house the hooligans in raccoon suits,
the red-eyed albino crows,
and the hoodlums from high priced slums and ghettos,
the protectors of this democracy where we, the people, have no say
All that and now, this seductive silver love vine was entangled over it all.
I was surrounded
on all sides.
But I remembered.
Once upon a time

when there were no wages
this was pure,
our enemy was clearer
and our rebellion was sure.
we knew 'why'.
Surrounded everywhere
now by walls and chain link fence
reasons not so easy to find;
we only know that this what we must do every year,
go through the motions
make mask and play the ass;
We hollering for another rush out,
for yet another cop out
to grab more Yankee dollars.
How long before the devil come and take what is his?
I was surrounded
by the total futility
the mindless stupidity of it all.
What was I to do?
How do you repatriate the sea
or revoke the moon's passport?
The whole thing had the smell of inevitability,
the sound of fate.
I could only do what a crazy man would do,
any artist worth his salt.
I chose to say no.
So I took a chalk stone
a paintbrush of lime, blood and bone
and drew a line
across Rawson Square
through the front lines
from the high priced luxury suites
to the space
behind the barricade where my people would be
to show the real division of this apartheid
to negate their power in my own mind.
A single chalk line.
I stood and looked
at the product of my rebellion in the quiet moments before dawn
before the blackness was pierced by natural light
at this solitary line.
For its part equally futile.
I know.
But we need a symbol,
somewhere to start.