

AMERICAN PROTEST

by Keith Wilson

bullets demand water and light.
 the body's slope is more valuable than oil
 (if you'd believe it). let us pray. admit
 we mustard seed the earth. might
 could have saved a child. love is a weed
 that dandelions up the hill. the house is still
 white. what does god need with ammo
 when he has lions? heaven-sent
 that god doesn't hold to amendments.

here lies a post
 emboldened with our writing.
 how we quicken to overthrow a taste
 that took a thousand years to make. like a root
 that disrespects the blacktop,
 we've been made to move. or how trees ignore
 stop signs, live around the red, or swallow
 casings. we could stand
 to crack granite. granted, we be.

we haven't been made
 afraid of the trees, nor the bottoms
 of cars, the clouds, the gavel, the sea.

what is a group of the aggrieved?
 it is an unkindness
 of ravens, for instance. for instance,
 a dole (an offering)
 of doves. we've arrived as congregations.
 been glorious in the off-white of wings.
 what is more godlike than peace,
 than quiet, as of the breathing of evening
 birds. the warble with our sisters, our brothers, in the trees.

we not allowed to kneel. we are not allowed
 to walk to the streets,
 and our chests are riddled with patriotic birds
 and patriotic shells. there is a surefire
 way to discriminate the ravens from the crows.
 painfully slow, a feather
 falls forever in the eyes of my people.

because killing is never out of season,
 especially when the leaves are brown.
 because oak trees grow slow and rope drops quick.
 how different the drawings of our people
 if we only had that kind of time.
 when the wind tasted nigger, our families
 formed a draft. when the snow stacks
 outside the window like a set of dinner plates.

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