

Searching for Another We

They named the convict going to death
The dead man walking.
Were the namers naming our names?
Or distancing themselves with their gallows' humor?

The child, strapped inside explosives,
Hairpin trigger in hand
They named the suicide bomber.
Were the namers terrifying us with those words?
Or denying their own mortality?

Great men in '46 declared colonialism
A dead man walking.
Then crowned apartheid,
Presented Palestine to other Europeans,
And kept that dead man walking on past.

Am I just a namer naming names,
Distancing myself from their gallows' humor
And their death defying stunts?
Am I the child strapped into my explosives,
Trigger in hand,
Intent upon shredding body parts?
That others might live without
collective pain and grief?
Am I a cause, an effect, a means, an end?
And who are all these theys,
Who speak for us, to us, against us?

May we reclaim ourselves
From them,
Explicit namers, naming names?
Those who walk dead inside us,
Their bombs strapped to our hearts...
Placing our mortality, and our humanity
At the behest of markets?

From those investors,
Producing work inside our guts?
Their pounding death walk
Smushing our brains til we
Deny the beauty of life's mortality.

I have a dream, you know.
And empty, hollow, ego dream.
There is nothing in this dream,
Except a word...death...and fear.
The dream presages my own ending.

Would that I might ask
Martin King's help with that dream,
He, murdered in an Act of State*.
Another dream I have,
That I will not live to see
The American social revolution.

This is where the I waits,
Questing for We that will help us be,
TRUE...you know,
To know our blues, and
To become ourselves.

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*An Act of State—The Execution of Martin Luther King, by William F. Pepper, Verso;
2003.