

Broken Equipment

He took refuge in a bottle
Made him forget the nozzle of his gun
Went out and got him one, a shot of rum, potent as a Gatling gun.
Now he's on the run, slowly son, hand on the rum,
try not to wobble, just keep up that hobble,
keep your hand on the bottle, sotto voce whispering,
a prayer for an éclair, a funny thing but maybe like a succession ring for an old King,
The chocolate, a sling into the wellspring of safety and prosperity
that this soldier fought for in what was thought to be solidarity with humanity
now in his return the unit they call Veterans Affairs shows him no concern
as the urn turns, another can be spurned, leave him to be burned
Deny the rewards he's earned, the knowledge of a fell hell that manifests its shell in pain.
He's broken equipment.

So telling him his wounds are not service related, that he can't be compensated,
As if there could ever be a dispensation equal to the following:
Giving a friend in the tents a last breakfast, remaining steadfastly dedicated to ending the
premeditated violence gripping countries like a medicated side effect.
Shaken finances, few prospects to collect as he projects a dismal future.
Necessarily variety in impropriety, actions steeped in the low possibility of sobriety
The view is blurred but presents no pew reserved,
none for that heavy interjection of systematic rejection.
A sheer, sheer, perpetual fear, relief disappears, no one sees it when they volunteer.
Years and years.
Broken equipment.

Don't dwell on this shamble, toss him aside way by the wayside on the slippery slide
Straight down to the down, inverted rickety ride to places beyond,
where the budget will not suffer from the mutters of one sent to the gutter.
The sun and the glare, sights of the starved and the spare,
as he journeys throughout slums reminiscent of the horrors survived since he made it out
alive, chance to arrive, with no fanfare but the neglect, a direct disrespect that infects the
spirit, a son we disinherit, a whole nation complicit.
Because society and the instruments of governance forget the price paid, by those who
trade opportunity for unity, the fighters who give immunity to their community,
from the violence endured by the stricken, who march on a desire to serve,
and inject the long, long, ceremonial gong process of peace
with a bit of that personal power that quickens the release.
This doesn't matter anymore, ignore the specter of the gore he wore that never leaves
him, surviving the war and now sinking to the floor to be buried at home in uniform.
Those are the only clothes he has left, for that most deftly executed theft of a life
One he offered to service anyway.
It's the ignominy of anonymity when no one knows who you are.
Broken equipment.

And he declares his despair with the current state of affairs,
chooses to swear, which used to be rare,
flies into a rage, a purple-faced rampage, this beast who one day was sage.
So expressive of dismissive sentiment, intensified since eviction from his tenement
The shame when he sees a picture in the frame, of departed souls,
who passed down a family name.
Not much left in this life but the gunner's aim,
And the right to lay claim to a cane and lessen the pain of physical debilitation
Crushing of existence, proclaim the reign of a sorry vein of thought, the hope is revoked,
The acclaim of a pain sustained and not contained remains,
honor in a suffering demeanor.
Welcome to the hell lane, the train that remains takes the designation of Defeat,
"Look Mama, look what I became
So sorry Pop, but I lost the game, I lost the game.
This game was fixed, indexed to the peals of a boxed ideal, reality's dominatrix,
My number placed upon a list, prepared to be nixed and sent into a descent
as I lay affixed to the events that were promulgated by those planning within doors and
barriers thrown up by a collection of protectors such as myself, unabatedly."

He never thought he would make it home.
He made it home.
Now look at him, he's all alone.
Broken equipment.