

The Least of These

by Robyn Williams

The least of these
ones who are them
are we—
and us
surging busward
are metropolised
pressed together
backed to back
to front
leg to leg
roaded—
driven over the scarred landscape of ideology
legacy of romes past and romes present
that teach us the meaning of manacle
and how to ignore
the poor
in favour of imperious oversight,
self appointed arbitrators of worth
sooth saying excess
selves set above
and – staring down from
podiums of social superiority
we wield
our god given gavel of economic condescension
and sweep the least away
with strokes of systematic ignorance

and we say
get them, those, they
out of our way
so we, moneyed, can play
we say
inviting our goliaths
to perform feats of strength for us.
plaster the cityscape with billboards of them
and they
nine feet tall
sell our products and the dream
these mechanised giants
corporate poppet heads
the mouth piece of the beast
that shackles us to
the machinery of sure things
and us, subdued by voices of hierarchical reason
made supine, are sold faith in the fallacy
of wall street, wal-mart, and the world bank—

and what do we do?
we followers in the way
board up compassion's windows
build barriers to hold the blight at bay
-boxing—
that we may
pass untouched by deep set eyes
cadaverous faces
those wrinkles in our world class garment.

and what is it that we do?
we stand on shores of progress
and dive deep into the ocean of greed
swimming, open mouthed,
through the spoils of the capitalist agenda
and we
dressing destruction as development
bulldoze the social ecology
and construct a pantheon of wealth,
a parade of perfection
drowning.

and what, I ask you, do we do?
standing blithely by watching
the troops march in
mollifying the masses
menacing
in their boots
with their big fat guts
and guns
and road blocks
and lists of names
they hold court
legislate silence—hold objections at bay
and squeeze our freedoms to dust.

and what do we do?
philanthropic—
parade a few non-prime time stories
before the press

sanitized for easy consumption
dressed up in the garlands of Christian charity
and given a medal, and wept over,
and spectacularized, and forgotten
in the wake of our grotesque need to placate
lulled into the feel good do nothing
nature of the dream
and gazing out our world class window we see the stick
legged man make his disoriented way through our
unrecognizable streets
and we swat at pangs of guilt
that buzz fly like around our barbed wire hearts
and ask
whenever did we see you thirst.