

Faithless Mission¹

The fine grains of snow fall gently on the roughly hewn gray stone fort. Inside, amid the harsh lives and broken thoughts, a procession silently and fleetingly mourns. Those who can know, learn that one has passed and they mourn, not for him, for themselves and for each other.

They mourn for lives that are lived without hope and must end without meaning.

They mourn for a soul used in his lifetime as material, whose bones and meat continue to serve science.

They mourn for those deadly years and, now, this restless death, swirling in gleaming vats at Harvard and Yale, waiting for bright lively boys in white to perform one final necessary obscenity.

They mourn for their wasted lives that shall end as this one ends, not cleanly, neither in sympathy for the living survivors nor with respect for the immortal spirit.

But, they mourn more for the creations of God and obstetricians than the final indignities imposed by chairmen of medical school cadaver committees.

For, the law requires that their bloated, mutilated and sewn flesh must be scooped together someday and returned to the earth they long for, the earth that will treat them more gently than the world that spawned them.

For is there a law, is there an authority that can do for one--- in life---what all beings achieve in death?

Is there a mundane justice that, however infinitesimally, compares with the equality and brotherhood of the ground?

Dare we believe that there is a faithful conclusion, even for one whose life is as faithless as his mortal mission is senseless, as it is a violation of his right to be faithful?

¹Based on infrequent involvements with medical school cadaver committees, experiences the reader may wish to forego. I have observed that certain deceased state school residents are selected for medical study as they were selected for institutionalization and are treated in death as they were treated in life. On the average, each selected corpse involuntarily contributes one year of his eternal life to society before he is permitted his rest; he, of all people, who owes so little to society, from whom society has exacted so much, and from whom society has made his entire life--- and now makes his death---a sacrifice.