

# Alluvion

*by* Iain James Robb

(Let me know if anyone wants me to delete this, in light of events in Paris. I originally shelved this because it was followed a few weeks after I'd sent it to an editor by 9/11. That acrostic running through the 2nd and 3rd stanzas was not really deliberate. This poem is fucking cursed.)

There were moments of madness, the funeral call of an owl in the  
alders:  
Teams of soon-to-be-dead things huddled up and rushed upon  
Impalements, mouths in predatory rain: the vicious instruments  
Which other creatures like to spill the blood with sparkle: wail  
Of orphans the motherless ones, the parents who grieve for spilled  
children.  
The torture continues as young jacks and fallows plead through the  
time of tears.  
The quietus, stark, of senses and stares unhinged and fixed on the  
rustle  
Of other encroachers on leaves, seems to curdle in fear and  
expectance;  
For all of the sermons the elders make by their silence there is just  
The quiver of expectant loins, poised to respond to strange motion,  
Fleeing at approach: the rill on the lips of the cavernous delta  
Where flesh bathes in its own red ink, adrenaline baste in sprayed  
air.  
The tongue and the muzzle, the hunger unspayed, wears a warning  
And an idiot hind wills to kill itself: it rambles from the brake,  
A shutting of jaws on its quarters to follow, no word of advice on its  
falling;  
The bleeding and death of the tree-sheeted causes weeping in the  
space

Where a voice strains to break, reverberates, a whisper on the wind.  
Against the break in a wall overgrown with weeds there is the face  
Of a predator wrapped in a rapturous violence, of deadening grace.

The stench of limp victims, of cordite and asphalt the impact  
showers,  
A flurry of dust that follows the break of the buttress of an office  
block,  
Stings in the bomb-soddened air: the pain of not knowing how,  
beforehand,  
The smell hurts the nerves, hits without preparation, and chokes.  
Endemic to the rape of the concrete on metal, there grow wilted  
stems  
Of weird mushrooms, meat puppets wrenched nape to the stamen.  
Flesh marionettes, drained dolls with ripped strings spill cords of  
red on the asphalt,  
Strange root-forms of vegetable men with torn tendons that bleed in  
the derelict day:  
Or car-crash angels, painting the pavement with arms apart at the  
elbows,  
Mandrakes baptised in the gasoline ashes with no sense to scream  
or to weep.  
Enter the main square and wail at the gate, in ermines of smoke and  
powder,  
Taking the hand of the ghost at your near side who bears the same  
flesh as your own.  
He has held in your hand the faint trinket of blood that will wipe like  
severed senses:  
It reminds us of your sons' cheeks when they rested on separate  
beds than stone.  
None of Hell's hovels have ever emitted some dirge for our absent  
mourners;  
Go to the hole in the road with spare pebbles and make rosaries to  
your dead.

Talismans are taken to the place where lives are lost in lands of  
ramparts;  
Ever and forever, in the citadel mock garlands chain the fractured  
statues  
Rowing stone-caged with split limbs upon the altar: baleful thrones  
Reap clumps of hoar-coloured grass that wraps the hair of  
scarecrows,  
In islands of ordure where horses let drop the weight of their  
wounded riders.  
Below them, kept up by five arrows, the mud breeds new bracelets  
of poppies,  
Low down in a land where the rivers run crimson with semen of red  
gods.  
Even here, where our dreams are defiled by the gabble of verminous  
pigeons:  
And here where they skirt their own danger with flights round a  
private tower,  
New delusions of grace, more paints on Nature, cover its flaws with  
a fallow gauze.  
Destroyers of deeds that make plain your own palsy, I honour your  
destruction:  
Nothing subsists where you sit with your worldly wills and cast eyes  
on the soil.  
Even here, where you come back ashen-winged to wreck the peace  
of dreamers,  
Where your beads of dead souls alight on my pane, I'll poison you,  
and laugh.

