

How Would You Know

How would you know? Because you once were young?

Forget that - this is another day.

The words they speak are as meaningless to you as the words you speak are meaningless to them.

The pain they inflict upon each other

is more than you could bear even in your wisdom.

Simple acts—walking a corridor, eating an apple— more dangerous than all your long-gone marches.

Their middle school days are spent on the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Their graduation procession is a steel strike in 1937; guns on every side, killing only the innocent.

Can you help? Are you serious?

You built this wall. You drafted the slaves with your interstate highways

and confined them with your tax policies and flogged them with your mandates from the comfort of your entitlements.

You burned these villages. You fired the cannons

for entertainment. You drank the blood of the victims for your evening cocktails. No,

you cannot help. Not even in your death can you relieve them of the sorrows

you forced into the crevices of their survival.

Better silence than the spectacle of shame.

In every word your spirit demands the limelight: mea culpa!

I am sorry. “I!” “I!” Always and forever I, I, I.

Better that you should not act

unless your act is to spend what remains of your ungracious life
cleaning up this vomitous inheritance.

These are not your children. They are your victims.

