

Reflections

by [Ehud Sela](#) (July 2024)



Willard Hotel, Dora Fugh Lee (2004)

The Grand Hotel

The lobby shone with its past
Hanging down from the large chandeliers
Crystal waterfalls
And sounds from parties gone.

The front desk staff stood behind
Mahogany polished wood, staring
At guests with blank eyes filled

With boredom and despise.

A Beaux-Arts arts hotel on the Grand
Avenue by the White House
Where presidents' dreams
End like junkyards' cars.

The churches tolled their heavy bells
At the strike of midday
And in the grand lobby
The onyx and tile were polished

By immigrants' hands
For whom snobbery was alien
As Saturn's moons
Or the scent of power or fame.

I was told that some nights at the bar
A grand judge or Congressional Prince
Has been spotted
Laughing with liquor in hand.

And young women at night
Dressed for the part
Drink from the waterhole of wallets
With all the right cards.

The elevator went up to my floor
A bit dark like a tomb
Where a moment before
Money and sex embraced
And shook hands
Their scent lining the halls
Where I entered my room
Alone as before.

Washington D.C., The Willard Hotel.

A Supermarket Sonnet

Today by the produce section
An old man sneezed a few times
Very loud, abrupt, intrusive
It invaded the space around,

Disturbing infused sounds
From over-head speakers,
And squeaking carts, rusting
At metal wheels, pushed

By elder Jewish women, crooked
By time-lost-calcium,
And their sight
Glazed by cataract's veil

That nothing hides, forgets, forgives
Of other days.

Pavlovian Dogs

Of what has been said
Endlessly repeated, trumpeted
The truest of all truths:
But of it only one exists

Despite their convincing tones
And if not these, their powers
And if not these, their glitz and glitter:
Snake's oil.

Go on living, go on trusting, go on...

Think no danger lurks as all
The streets are well lighted and
The radio sounds happy tunes

The pundits go on explaining
And the president wants what's best
And the congress knows best
And do not worry they are smartest

They are experienced and they watch:
Our health secure, Our borders' safe,
Our planes' secure
Our ports with detectors:
Newest fastest seeing through.

And at home go on watching
TV shows that sweeten up
The bitter, bitter truth, so
Well hidden, make believe

And go on, listen to the
Union's state, hear him speak
Hear them applaud and stand
In fake ovation, or in pretentious

Anger sit and silent watch,
But mainly see them rub their slick
Mouths against his sweaty hand
And making sure you see too

As they are there for you,
And only you, and their coffers
Fill with power, more and more,
And they spill at golden rim
Down on plush carpets
Where the less fortunate of
Their collogues quickly downward
Leap with their tongues protruding
Pavlovian dogs, Pavlovian dogs.

A State of the Union Address

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