

# Sorrowing World and UN General Debate

by Brandon Marlon (March 2018)



*Untitled*, Nicolas Carone, 1957

## Sorrowing World

Zealous to consummate credal demands,  
the wolves of evening sod in blood a globe  
of suspecting yet effete civilians,  
torpid fodder awaiting their fate,  
unsure of their means, wavering in their resolve.

Apologists sated with a surfeit of massacres  
turn reticent and no longer default to excuses,  
refraining from the quondam claim  
that our murderers are depraved because deprived,  
merely seeking redress for valid grievances.

The whirlwind's reapers sowed no wind;  
innocents slain were unstained to the end  
that met them abruptly on a whim,  
at the pleasure of hellions who connive  
to unnerve, terrify, slaughter.

We have become benumbed and inured to the scourge,  
idle bystanders to our own piecemeal demise,  
resigned to a grim regimen convulsing the civilized  
with wretched regularity, impoverished by loss  
while still at a loss as to how to stanch the hemorrhage.

Though we weary of chilling eyewitness accounts,  
horror's array will unrelentingly hold sway  
until budding homicides discern

that none are ever sanitized by bloodbaths,  
not even those ideologically inspired.



Detail of *Mankind's Struggle for a Lasting Peace*, UN, Jose Vela Zanetti, 1953

## UN General Debate

Assembled in bespoke garb, grandees  
ostensibly exercising a modicum of decorum  
take turns at the marble-backdropped rostrum  
to flaunt identity and allegiance, saber-rattling  
and rodomontading, touting stances  
and espousing views for which they aim to gain  
purchase and traction if not approbation,  
a parade of grandstanders challenging  
the patience of their captive audience  
of professional seat-fillers.

Here where First and Third worlds rendezvous  
heads of state have their say,  
lavishing kudos or spewing mordant critiques  
regardless of their capacity for rapacity,  
nonchalantly blathering platitudes  
despite incriminating enormities and excesses.

None is stunned when little is proposed  
in the way of solutions generable and operant  
to address global plights; ultimately some  
succumb to the stifling atmosphere and faint,  
a time-honored excuse to be excused.

Once all is said and said, delegates swarm  
corridors to wheedle and wangle,  
threaten nemeses with démarches  
worded "in the strongest possible terms"  
(or else thermonuclear war),  
and elbow for priority in bathroom queues.

Ambassadors of nations routinely sidelined

then silenced shoot dirty looks at counterparts  
along the urinals, comparing length and girth,  
mumbling epithets in no need of translation  
before fleeing the zoo in chauffeured sedans  
en route to fine dining and a musical.  
Thus ends another marathon speech-fest  
in a tower tragically and ironically ivory.

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