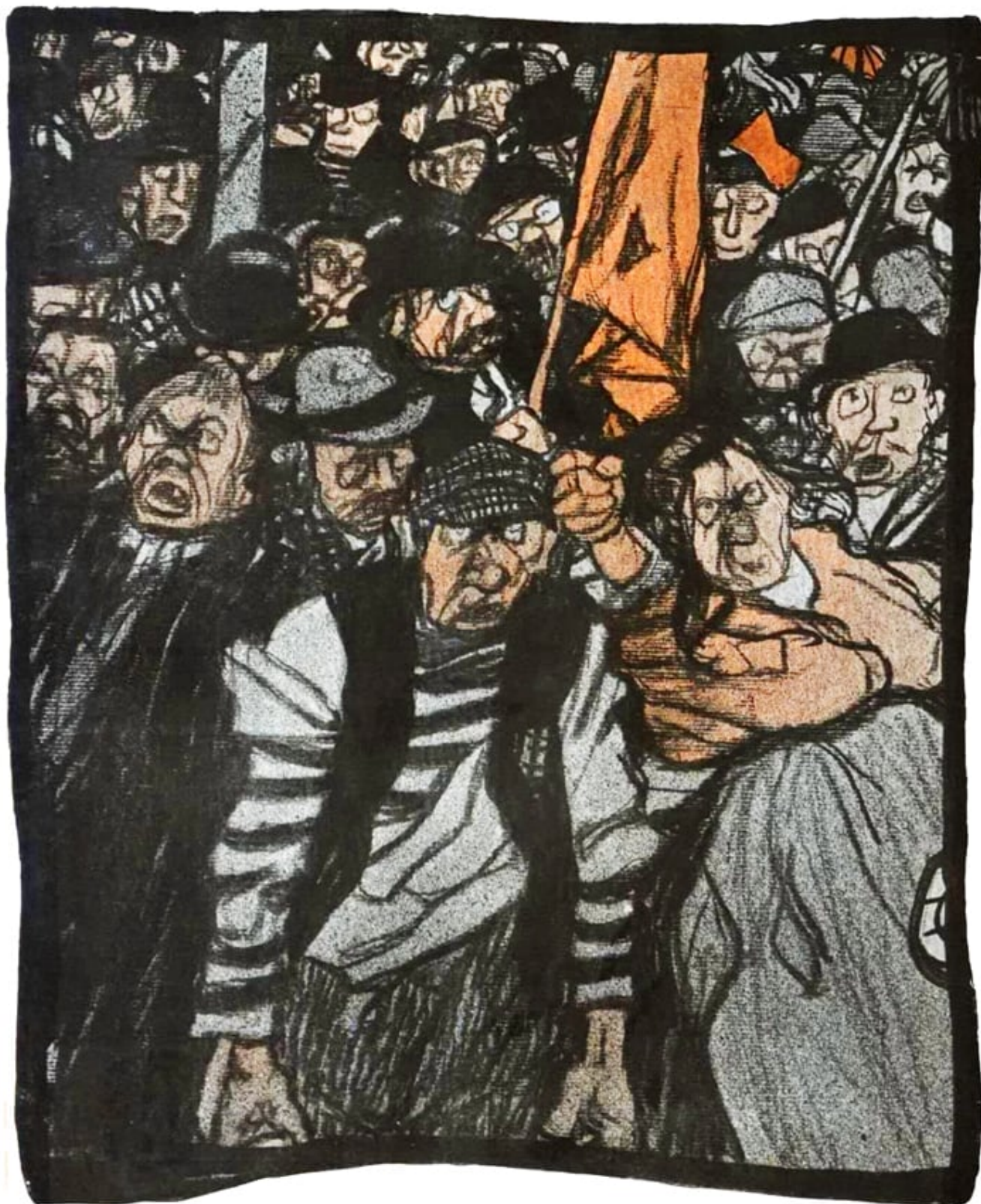


Three Poems

by [Brandon Marlon](#) (July 2020)



Les Manifentants, for L'Assiette au Beurre, 1904.

All the Rage

To protest police brutality and injustice,
I did what anyone occupying the moral high ground would do
and looted a 65-inch plasma TV from Target,
which should teach those uniformed brutes a thing or two
about the repercussions of systemic racism and
which looks frigging awesome in my living room.
You should have been there, the streets teeming
with the rageful fevered by smoldering resentment,
hooligans and gamines honorably rioting to resist inequality,
jiggering with padlocks, bashing in windows like a boss,
diabolizing law enforcement and sticking it to the man.
The sheer nobility of it all leaves me speechless, even now.
Sure, I heard afterwards that on the newscast
they described us as temerarious and foolhardy, but so what?
Hell, my own folks called us every name in the book:
hoodlum, scofflaw, scapegrace, malefactor. Big deal.
All I can say is that from now on I'll be binge-watching
Judge Judy in high def, and they ain't invited.
Main thing is, we made a strong statement and
let the establishment know what's what.

Damn shame that an innocent victim had to die
just so my boy Mikey could finally lay his hands
on Playstation 4 but, shoot, that's how it goes sometimes.
Maybe someday the utter unwisdom of it
will seep into our consciences and stir regret,
but don't bet on it. Caring about and coveting
are two sides of the same coin,
and those of us short on coin
will take whatever half we can get, best believe.
Besides, there's just something about tossing Molotovs
and committing arson that gets the adrenalin going,
know what I mean? I'd do it again in a heartbeat, because
Larceny and Pyromania Matter.
Anyway, it's safe to say we put the cops on notice.
We run things, things don't run we!
I love the stench of righteous indignation
in the morning, don't you?

Leaves from Paradise

With their power, tradition holds,
Elijah the prophet cancelled
the poverty of Rabbah bar Avuha.

I would hand one to you, ma'am,
curing late-stage disease,
making a mockery of your prognosis.

Another would I offer you, sir,
and soothe your sorrows,
the aching loss of ones loved.

Friend, you'd take this from me
to erase resentments
corroding for decades.

One I'd reserve for you, dear,
effacing then replacing fears
with calming peace of mind.

Last but not least, just for fun, I'd give one
to the Angel of Death, who'd surely savor
a sublime whiff of bliss.

Election Season: Televised Debate

Only out of a sense of obligation did I tune in
to this seriocomic harlequinade, a banquet of bunkum
featuring ideologues slinging contumely,
making claims spurious if not specious,
gainsaying the accomplishments of their colleagues,

this one a scurrilous cur, that one ineffectual because effete,
the next louche and, per the tabloids, scabrous,
each flanked onstage either by an orgulous ogre
or a bilious churl with a vinegarish disposition
or a fatuous upstart belching talking points
or a hidebound establishment candidate
afraid of being worsted then ousted,
the lot of them treating us viewers as little more
than halfwits, mental pygmies too obtuse
to recognize piffle even in high definition
on a wall-mounted flat screen with the volume cranked up.
Shoot, I was glued to it for hours for the same reason
fans ogle pugilists bloodying faces for purses of cash:
any affray affords vicarious pleasure.
I was eager to see how it all went down,
to note with interest who would prove
exceedingly savvy or at least unexceptionable,
who would deliquesce in the spotlight
with the cameras and pressure on, what
special pleading took place, which contenders
would whipsaw the frontrunner.
All this is redolent of the Roman amphitheater:

you could almost taste the sweat of those clearly
circling the drain, desperate to avoid relegation,
and I felt willing and ready to garland the brow
of the impressive with fresh laurel.

In the event, I was exhausted by the hokum
that ultimately left me underwhelmed and instead
I recollected Incitatus, who in hindsight
and despite his classical equine countenance
increasingly seems as if he may well have been
at least as good a consul as all the rest, after all.

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Brandon Marlon is a writer from Ottawa, Canada. He received his B.A. in Drama & English from the University of Toronto and his M.A. in English from the University of Victoria. His poetry was awarded the Harry Hoyt Lacey Prize in Poetry (Fall 2015), and his writing has been published in 300+ publications in 32 countries.

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