

Sandstorm

Hard hard days. Sometimes I just see myself curling up in a ball on the ground & turning out the lights. Too many memories of the Vietnam Era. They're all coiled up into the bitter pill I see on my plate each morning since Thursday. It's all there in concentrate form. The ancient theorem which has never been disproven: **WAR = HELL**. If you're 18 years old, in an armored personnel carrier hunkered down in the sandstorm right now with mortar rounds coming in, you're in Hell...Strange to think that the location of the Garden of Eden has been supposed by biblical scholars to be not far from there. It's not Eden now. One of the big battles today took place very near the ruins of Babylon. THE Babylon, Babylon of the hanging Gardens. There was a photo in the Times today of some herdspeople with sheep & donkeys, wrapped in ancient clothing...you could guess 4000BC and it would likely have looked just like that. The Arabs are pretty new to that land, 700A.D...But: mujaheddin are streaming towards Baghdad right now from many countries...Baghdad is a great city of Islamic history, the city of Haroun alRaschid who is such a wonderful figure in the 1001 Nights of Scheherazade. Basrah was the port from which Sinbad began his voyages. Baghdad was a great seat of learning and art..don't underestimate what "the Battle of Baghdad" might mean to young Muslims all over the region. Not what CNN is thinking at all. Saladin, the bane of the Crusaders, is a living figure to those people. And here they are, the infidels again, and by the sweetest irony, here are those damned Brits again! The noblest tales in the region's history are the resistance to Crusades and British colonialism. Heaven help those young guys from Utah who are destined to subjugate Baghdad and then govern it ...?

On the weekend we stood with a dozen other peace activists against the tide of 400 raving flag-waving patriotic yahoos in the downtown plaza of Santa Rosa. The radio stations affiliated with Clear Channel Inc. had called them out & provided the placards. Clear Channel owns a few thousand stations nationally and is controlled by Bush cronies from Texas. They are very rightwing. The signs said: "Liberate Iraq" and the hand-made signs were like this:

"WHAT WE ARE SAYING IS: GIVE WAR A CHANCE"

"PACIFISTS ARE PARASITES ON FREEDOM"

"WAR FIRST: PEACE AFTER"

"WOMEN IN BLACK GO BACK TO IRAQ"

They made a lot of ruckus and tried to provoke us and get in front of our signs. Many of their supporters drove repeatedly thru downtown honking like mad. One of those guys was towing a trailer mounted with a civil war cannon. They were obscene in their lust for war. Although it could be pointed out(and was) that the young men weren't exactly walking the walk. In some of the arguments it was stunning to hear how naive people were. There were a few real thugs, brownshirt material, but mostly it was like a football rally at Windsor High. I wondered the

next day after all those grim ambushes and POWs if the grins had left their faces. They, like their chickenhawk leadership, have their physics wrong. They somehow came up with: "War = Glory"....

The next day I needed a long hike in the wetlands watching jackrabbits & vultures to get over it. Nobody out there is in the least disturbed by the ravings of the Biped. In a thousand years when our works will have rotted away the breezes will still sweep across here in the spring and the small white flowers dot the vernal pools.

It's no consolation to enter the "We told you so!" dimension. We said it would be catastrophic... But it's agonizing to see it come true.

There is a great mental fatigue from absorbing warfare news. I went through nine straight years of it, every day the newspaper, the Evening news. Villages napalmed, GIs on stretchers, generals lying in their teeth. Eventually you adapt. You can't be in a rage every day. But the adaptation is a kind of madness.

We don't have an opposition party. The citadel of freedom & democracy! We have no representation. Woolsey & Pelosi caved in. The junta flat out murdered Paul Wellstone, never doubt this. He would have been a lightning rod against them. Our only recourse is to protest & resist. That is, our clamor puts tremendous pressure upward on the social order. Someone might pop loose like Ellsberg and blow a whistle. The thieves might fall out as things get worse. Don't believe it is ignored when millions are protesting. Why do you think they are going to such lengths to portray themselves as "defenders of the civilians?" We have already saved many lives. In the last Gulf War they just destroyed everything, bombed for 40 days & nights. They let hundreds of thousands perish. If we get tired, the murder will surge.

What is our future to be? What even of the next week? We are in an elevator that just dropped five floors. If you know some history you cannot but appreciate the magnitude of this Invasion, aside from the diplomatic wreckage. This isn't the first Empire to charge across the sands of Mesopotamia. But perhaps it is the most ignorant. That makes it even more dizzying because they really don't know the deeper chambers that are resonating as they decide. They can't hear the teeming spirits of the oldest land of civilisations, of the cities under cities under cities. They are between the Tigris and the Euphrates! Marched up past the Sumerian ruins of Ur & Erech! Already handing out contracts to rebuild what they are destroying. Already saying they will use the oil to pay for it. Already counting golden geese & haven't found the egg yet. I have no illusions about their Illusions. All I know about the immediate future is that we will resist. How and when they come crashing to Earth is not known...but that they will come to grief is a certainty.