Fred Norman 52 lines

113 Rantoul Circle Armistice Day, 2020

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Driven by the death of my wife and led by our shared

dreams for our Hill of Peace in Lafayette, California,

I write …

Considering our original and forever hopeful goals

for the 7,000 souls memorialized on our glowing Hill,

we continue a dream of Peace to defeat a nightmare.

We try to fulfill promises we made so many years ago:

To our 7,000 we say,

you may have died in pain, but you did not die in vain.

These days I ignorantly and lazily write about 7,000

murdered American soldiers, a two-war effort in a War

Pandemic that has murdered millions throughout history

and will murder millions more in future. I wear a mask

to fight a Viral Pandemic — I wash my hands, I dispose

of presidents, I preach the faith that science will defeat it.

Yes, we will conquer the one, but will we conquer both?

Beware, if we defeat the Viral but not the War, our 7,000

souls shining in the moonlight have, indeed, died in vain.

Pandemic is not a happy word.

It is more the vulture than the bluebird —

more blight than light; more death than life;

indeed, it is mostly death; no pandemic songs

will rock us to sleep on gentle dreams of love.

For those memorialized on our Hill, it is war —

Always war. Forever war and never peace. Never…

The War Pandemic. It is always…

Oh, that there be a vaccination for that.

And yet, it need not be,

if only we cared enough

to put a stop to it;

if only we humans

loved humanity.

Close your eyes. Dream of little children. Yours.

Mine. An Iraqi son. An Afghan daughter. Playing

at a school soon to be bombed. Dream of an old

grandmother. A doddering grandfather. They’re in

a rundown nursing home. Sad enough but Corona

Virus lives there too. For now no cure. Imagine that.

No cure. For heaven’s sake, we are the Gods of Cure.

Shall our 7,000 die in vain? Shall we shackle children

in the slavery chain of hopelessness? Shall we erase

every memory of those we love? Do we have a choice?

Of course we have a choice.

Look around.

Unfortunately, what we see is what we’ve chosen.

Yet it can be so easy to stop the voraciously starving

Virus to which we feed our loved ones so unthinkingly.

We merely have to agree to overcome our ignorance.

To stop War, however, is to overcome addiction to greed

and power, to the curses of human nature. Here we must

search our Hill to find the example of our 7,000 leaders.

They will lead the way. They know what should be done.

END