

The Shadow of Brainerd Hills

JD Pirtle | 2007

Here, overlooking battlefields,
Two like-cursed made two doubly so;
As the novelty faded you were cast off hurtling toward destiny.

Here, covered in a bamboo copse beneath the village,
Two meek, too soon exposed,
As the novelty-lover spun unbound.

It was Easter when they found you,
Crumpled tux, near Chickamauga.
Baskets of chocolate and cap guns were that morning a slap in the face.

In doll clothes with painted finger nails,
You never lost your rifle leaping from the trellis,
Dodging the train, as did your older brothers.

Your secret life in Rossville ended
The moment the fool
Became the last to know.

How suspicion makes a trusty template,
When used again and again
So naïve was the child.

What could be so important?
Night after night
Hissing at each other in the closet.

How were you, the man of the house
To know that
Their village became Los Lomas?

From a cave on the Hiawassee,
Down the Warrior's Path to Brainerd
Came my model.

A creator, a Great Pretender
My mother's secret sister's father
Is just a man.

Flight from the Fight,
From the lee of the ridge
Where my hero waits to die.

Safe, away, hidden, far-flung, removed
From the dark cast
Of the Shadow of Brainerd Hills.