

Lisa Arrastía / THIS IS/AMERICAN AND STRANGE

Uninterrupted killing . . . So that the better may live.

It is the cruelest thing I ever heard/a man is a person if he has a reputation to fulfill/Mr. Weise/was a young teenage/r/gunman/a heavily-armed 6-foot, 250-pound 16-year-old/He/wore eye makeup, a black trench coat that fell to the ground over his frame/user of name Todesengel ("Angel of Death" in German)/a contributor to a forum on a neo-Nazi group's website/Mr Weise had been held back in school/teased because he was larger than most and, Mr. Tahahwah said, because of his parents' fates/Everyone at Red Lake knew about that/

A man is a person/an armed schoolboy/the gunman/a local/when/we think the last time is the worst/Someone's shooting/This is it/a story/to decide and act, to experience the world and be free/On one end of that continuum are those fortunate enough to be able to live fully/on the other/are those who can do none of these things/who are merely existing/Mr. Weise/it is the/era of exploitation/

About 1750, the Chippewa migrated to the Red Lake area from the Great Lakes/1804 Lewis and Clark visited the Red Lake Indians/1863 Red Lake cedes/acres to the U.S./1889 Red Lake cedes/acres to the U.S./1902 Red Lake cedes/acres to the U.S./The violence that ripped through Red Lake High, on the reservation of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, will probably always be on some level inexplicable/to the U.S./

1877 U.S. boarding school/student/established/adopting gothic dress style/He did no crime/the shooter/has rights/dressing like that/1914 First hospital built/the Chippewa/talked in detail about anti-depressants/40 milligrams a day of Prozac: 20 in the morning, 20 at night/the only antidepressant found to be safe and effective for children/Acting alone/he had asked/the U.S./for help and didn't receive it/he had urged everyone to make a difference/that can make all the difference/Sharing their methods of recovery with Red

Lake/Columbine High School students/did no crime dressing like that/
Where was the help from the outside/Give me the money to help/Education
funding cut beginning next year/and/cuts grow larger/before the crisis/

Uninterrupted killing/this is/American and strange/As we help the families/
restore the feeding tube Bush/figures in the budget show that child-care
assistance would be ended for 300,000 low-income children by 2009/Funding
for H.I.V. and AIDS treatment/cut by more than half a billion dollars over five
years/It is by their reasoning/that the better may live/food stamp cut would
terminate food stamp aid for approximately 300,000 low-income working
families with children/so that the better may live/cut by more than half a
billion dollars over five years/Support for environmental protection programs
would be sharply curtailed. And so on/so that the better may live/I'm sure if
this happened in some school in Texas and a bunch of white kids were shot
down, he would have been there too/so that the better may live/This is/the
President's proposal:/As we help the families/food assistance for pregnant
women, infants and children/cut/As we help the families in this community,
we must do everything in our power/so that the better may live/sign
emergency legislation/to break off his Texas vacation/He should have been
the first one to reach out to the Red Lake Indian community/Bush's response
came too late/to force the reconnection of the feeding tube/to prevent
tragedies like this from happening/

As they were waiting they met with a disappointment all of a sudden/After a
bit there was nothing that would be sudden in a disappointment/Three sat
when four were agog/Survivors of/another 11,000,000 acres to the U.S./a U.S.
Government (BIA) boarding school/another 2,905,000 acres to the U.S/Act
for the Relief and Civilization of the Chippewa/(?)/Another 256,152 acres to
the U.S./Western/Townships/(?)/This is it/a story/survivors of Public School
education/survivors of high school/rampage/massacre/shooting/left with
injuries and questions/They wait[ed] without a

chance to sing/Jeffrey had fought back and tried to stab Mr. Weise with a
pencil/This is it/a story/This is the cruelest thing I ever knew/people pass
pre-judgement/without even hearing what you have to say/This goes double if
you're ethnic/

Believe it/it is not for pleasure that I do it/shoot up the school/I'm being
blamed for a threat/I support what Hitler did/This is/American and strange/
that his motive was unknown/First Mission established at Red Lake/cedes
11,000,000 acres to the U.S./holding guns to the heads of/ethnic/children/
gun battle with a boy/black box warnings of/suicidal thinking/of suicidal
behavior/in/the/children/Blame/Food and Drug Administration/Blame/
President Bush has proposed/ideal/The tribes Public Safety Commission/
hiring untrained, uncertified officers/carrying guns on the streets/holding
guns to the heads of children. Like Contras/like Taliban/like Abu Ghraib/like
Guantanamo/Under the dictator/symbols of death and torture/American/
Trained/police/maintaining/enforcing/social norms/the uniform/the
badge/like white skin/the person who wears/it/allowed to enforce laws/he
doesn't himself intend to follow/the violence/inexplicable: Chicago PD/
NYPD/LAPD/Cincinnati PD/

This is/American/Mr. Weise/Ducked into a classroom and shot himself/This
is/the evidence/

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- Two quotations in particular deserve separate identification and source citation:*
- Hitler, Adolf. "Uninterrupted killing . . . So that the better may live" quoted by Jeff Weise, in David Hanners and Beth Silver, "Troubling Internet Postings Clash with Family's View of a Happy Weise." *Pioneer Press* 24 March 2005.
- Weise, Jeffrey James. "People pass pre-judgement without even hearing what you have to say. This goes double if you're ethnic." Posted by "Todesengel" at *Nationalist Forums* <<http://www.nazi.org/current/forum/YaBB.cgi>> on 19 March 2004 1:15 am under the title, "Native American Nationalists?"

Note on the text

All of the words in “This is/American and Strange” were taken from the sources listed in “Words Cited.” All spelling (correct or not) and most syntax were retained from the original source. A pause or full stop is represented by a “/”. The impetuses for writing this essay were the multiple contradictions I heard in media accounts and analyses of the Red Lake High School tragedy on the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians reservation in northern Minnesota. There was shock that “such a tragedy could occur” even in light of America’s on-going invasive military and “reconstructive” tactics in Iraq, and on-going American arrests of teenagers for crimes of youth and crimes of rage. James Byrd was dragged from a truck, Timothy Thomas murdered by his city’s police in Cincinnati, Rodney King, Amadu Dialo, Abner Ruima. A woman raped every nine seconds. All the people and places America has committed crimes — I was bewildered and befuddled by my culture’s (my country’s) confusion and consternation. The essay, then, is an attempt to illustrate some of the more ironic or hypocritical elements within the false consciousness under which American culture lives: that we Americans are egalitarian yet ignore and support policies that permit and extend racial and economic inequality; that there are no American consequences to American culture; that we are not Americanizing foreign police forces when they use our weapons, our devices and wage our economic campaigns; and lastly, that we are attempting to love kids when we are not even attempting to understand the quality and character of their Americanization and its devastating impact on the bravery of their youth.