

An Inconvenience to the Insouciant

By A.Valliard



There is a corpse in his doorway, an unwelcome mat.
Blood trickles from his Breville Barista.
There is a dusting of gunpowder on his mochaccino.
When he speaks, silence comes out.
A strange howling interferes with his Bach preludes.
The world burns and the Insouciant knows precisely how hot,
Thanks to his Apple watch,
He knows how many beats his empty heart has left.

There is a channel of humanity in his brain but he has switched it off.
Goosestepping around him transforms into flamingo legs, oscillating in the azure
Shallows of his mind, the colour of small, cobalt-dusted hands
Pushing his electric car down to hell, or Harrods.
His Herringbone has osteoporosis, but new ivory cufflinks.
His purely ornamental conscience is folded like a handkerchief.
When death comes for the Insouciant, it will be as banal and inconvenient
As opening a letter from the tax department.

Should some desolate, harrowed-eyed truth shake him,
An image of childhood ruptured by shrapnel,
Or of life writhing under flaming comets of white phosphorous,
The lungs of the world black as the ink in his Montblanc,
The bones of famine piled high as his croquembouche,
Crunched in darkness like a meal of drowned songbird,
He would slip from its grasp as though sliding from a silk jacket
Held by a soothing waiter, anxious to relieve him of his monstrosity.
The bill will come, and the Insouciant will have eaten everything
And tasted nothing.

Image: "[Anniversary dinner](#)" (CC BY-SA 2.0) by [Kent Wang](#)