

# Villages

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Gently sloping hills roll into narrow hidden valleys—  
some shallow, some deep and dark as humankind.  
Gushing streams feed into winding rivulets that  
nourish villages scattered along the banks: villages  
of language, memory, movement and sight.

Small pebbles from the ocean swim recklessly  
upstream to become large boulders  
that occlude whole riverbeds. Arid villages  
turn atrophic and black, deaths  
marked by paretic limbs and ataxic gaits.

Thickly insulated wires are elegantly enmeshed  
and stretch far along the ground, permitting calls  
to travel swiftly across a seemingly endless expanse.  
The frenzied cries of a million roaring townspeople  
resonate across districts in restless harmony.

A primeval army patrols the land, savage  
in the slaughter of foul infestation.  
Overzealous battles strip wires raw;  
lines turn sclerotic and slow. All alone—  
the blinded eye, the spastic leg.

From one village, a loud burst of noise  
blazes through the cables and snaps  
the fine thread. The delicate balance of order  
degenerates into a cacophony of clonic jerks  
and pulsing lights and absent stares.

In another, greed gnaws. The hunger  
grows extensive, expansive—uncontrollable.  
Pliant palsied orbs turn in toward  
the mounting pressure, the plaguing pain  
of nearby villages crowded and crushed.

War is waged against the malignant spread.  
Soldiers yell battle cries that ring loud but hollow;  
the senses are clouded by familiar foe,  
innocents battered by the confused  
assault of Sergeants Hu and Yo and Ri.

Too often villages live in picturesque accord,  
rivers rush unstenosed and full, lines of  
communication lay smooth and unscarred.  
Yet, rotten crops sprout from the fertile field—

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paranoia spurs quickened paces and wary glares,  
voices beg for bleeding wrists and swallowed pills.

An archeologist studies the erosion  
of civilizations, evolved but ancient as  
dusted Earth. Hand brooms and trowels  
and EEGs and CTs and MRIs and SPECTs,  
crude tools to brush bare the disease  
buried deep in the dirt of our mortal condition.

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