

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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