

Three times seven prime times prime
 Sunday Primetime off the Red Line
 twenty-one times twenty-four seven
 times fifty-two equals hours seven rhymes
 in a sonnet's fourteen those lines
 in time do grow equals twenty-one.

A personal twenty-one from nineteen
 eighty-six: in that small durance
 I buried my mother married the other
 begat and begot forgot and regret
 more than I know to know but know
 to show you that writing don't make it so.

Like nineteen ninety-two, I saw big trouble
 from the Middle East and in a poem
 chanted: *Go away those who plot bombs
 call with threats bring locusts spread plague
 arm our enemies* while America choked
 on the throatbone of consumption

is choking still with a will to wall
 the world and call the new century
 American – *Americain* like Cain
 slaying Abel because Abel
 had too much time on his hands Cain
 saw Empire in smoke which would not rise.

Abel is the smoke that rises –
 the able poet deflects Cain's blow
 like kung fu, Basho, Lao Tse, Do Fu,
 Li Po, my local buddy Seido, they turn
 the strike away to reverse the curse
 of Empire's id-ee-o-lo-geee.

Twenty-one years of poetry
 the curses and reverses O Muse!
 Name the poets and number them
 twenty-one in my song: sonneteers
 cavaliers the obsessive confessional
 and ever-oppositional natural pastoralists

the academic oulipo syllabic
 the programmatic and rhetoric's addicts
 performance found overground hip
 hop underground the new formalists
 neo-Nohists Language Poets
 flar-sophists queer theorists

and the poets who say, "Nee." Those who
chill eternally in Dickinson's death
freeze the twenty-first gather here tonight:
the blam-a-dam trochee trochee bing-bam
slam poets you can't deny evolution
when you hear spoken word revolution.

But Empire says war and war and war
in the Middle East as it was in nineteen
ninety four years after it was twenty-one
years ago Sunday Primetime the mic was
open *this* Mike was on where I am now
prime times a past prime both nownow

now cubed and growing here lit up
green glowing in the capital of the Middle
West follow the poem flowing
twenty-one all that history burnt and burning
all that spacetime twenty-one and like
the earth the verse keeps turning.