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What Now Is

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What Now Is

by Robert Parham

In what seemed a silent, confused battle,
that, if on television, sends us
groping for some control which would startle
us back into full sense of sound,
then comfort, then the fat ennui
which will not allow the picture
of ants scurrying atop carrion,
even that of humans, to stir
us for long. We eat pot pies
and pop the corn, toss back the beer
while before us in Mitsubishi
color the attack goes on.

Let us look again, leave the sound
off, deal with discomfort a wee bit
longer than we like. The door is locked,
we are undressed and have nowhere to go.

One ant, quite shiny black, is larger
than the rest, but only for a moment.
He (she?) darts down and we see what
must be jaws, for flesh dangles
from its front in what cannot
be accident. No close-ups just yet,
no Blakean monster for the dreams.
The pinchers we must imagine, the teeth
only the stuff the brain will supply
from its ill-spent reason. We feel
the tickle, the rise of thought
against the back of the head.
They think it is something which drugs
will care for, cause to desist.



This will not go away. It has been
there a long, long time, you see,
and stirred must make its way
complete throughout this circuit
we named thought and believed
was always intact and practiced,
like goodness and will and breath.

We climb upon this bicycle
waiting to be ridden again.
The body leans at gravity, rights
itself, and the blood in our cheeks
is part embarrassment. What we learned
we learn again, we must, and know
it better than before.

the ant
looks up; the meat is gone. The camera
races in to see the jaws. We shut
the vision off, we close our eyes,
we dream our monsters properly.
