

## Ballad of the Poet-Intellectual

Capital cities' citizens  
march us to open ditches'  
edge. Joints snapped, that we may not write,  
mouths gagged gainst any speeches,

they corralled professors with shock  
jocks, egg heads with senators,  
pundits with poets, clinic docs  
with human rights infringers

and so on. I am among them.  
As intellectual, poet,  
I am one of those cursed "know-it  
-alls" they herded, bound, condemned

to trek, trudge, through the public sphere  
at gun-point. Still, I overhear  
in my mind's-ears howls, begging, cries  
of teachers beat down, black-eyed,

dragged off during office hours.  
Digital divide disempow'rd  
with sledgehammers, steel toes, flash drives;  
libraries shouted down; houses

ill-filled while kids cabbage-patched  
in the road, burned library cards.  
*Who let these dogs out?* I asked  
myself, sleeve and broken-hearted.

Yes, we, as CDC, BET,  
and so on, are groups they accuse  
of using a blue hedgehog to teach,  
hand-eye boot-camp their children and

pied-pipe them cross the sea to die;  
for rearing them on cardboard, dyed,  
sprayed, seasoned to look, taste, smell of  
food; for high tongues they felt compelled

to use, were told they misunderstood.  
Pupils dilate as pleas push  
out my eyes: *We did what we could.*  
*It's anchorpeople; they pulled*

*wool over your eyes, not us. Team  
Leaders, gen'ral, ad teams. Arrest  
them if you want, not us. O, we  
tried to stop them. In the world's text*

*and the text's text, most of us, we've  
always tried. You're making a huge  
mistake. We've been among you. A few  
bad apples shouldn't deceive—*

A rifle butt to the temple  
zips my lids. One steps forward,  
says: "Now, we, our own speech, simple,  
will have, non-Yoda-like; toward

the sky, soar, it will, metaphor  
-free, as a bird, or pompadour  
-high. A new, jargon-free era  
tends our deconstruction; never

will opaque abstractions taint our  
new, Golden Age of Love, Power,  
Creativity, Freedom. Our  
speech will, plain as oatmeal, empow'r,

be accessible to, all." Talk  
show hosts' knees jellify as the  
rehab wash-out reality  
TV stars level their sights. "All

centuries of mind control are  
truth-serumed today," they say, and  
fire. Doctors, lawyers, are most hard  
to fell, with money clips as guard,

yet die they do. Smoke, gunfire  
bursts before a million remotes,  
cross the continent, they umpire  
the spectacle: On quotes, wits choke,

brokers' bodies collapse atop  
starlets, gov'nors sputter, vow  
vengeance, gasp, media moguls sob:  
cash, like a schizo A.I. ATM, spouts

from chest wounds, and I, sending  
telekinetic appeals *Trust*  
*us* am stuck one-eye blind, ending  
my *O muse, forget not us*

*for we are not of these glit'ring*  
*hucksters whose graves we share* crushed  
neath a corpse, a DJ, spinning  
in heavy rotation, his chest burst.