FULCRUM

an annual of poetry and aesthetics

Samuel Beckett as Poet

Unpublished Lectures by Robert Frost

George Seferis, *Thrush*

Poetry & Myth

Debate: John Kinsella, Rosanna Warren

A Brief History of Noise

Scissors feed on newspapers,
Metal music with some primal grammar.
Snip, snip, snip with harsh, rustic thrusts,
Making mad love to fragile paper.
Staccatos of the oldest sounds emerge
Like naked acolytes of Orpheus, He of the Lyre.
Boorish and basic, loud and lewd,
Without design or filigree or style,
Just stark and severe notes of noise.

Devoid of the depth of chaos with its
Swirling, frothy sonority compelled to
An eloquence.
And shorn of the elegant ignorance or
Scornful wisdom which impales silence.
Neither here nor there—an orphan
Of tone and type.
Indeed, almost with some ghastly
Irony, the jaws devouring the flimsy
And garish pictures come to know melody.

Artfully obstructing the sharp screams
And spry gunshots that the picture it
Is slicing shows; a tiny soldier and his
Toy rifles to perforate tomorrow.
The unschooled shocks of steel
Break the spell of the wizardry that
Captured a moment in a life no more.
The dead chomps of scissors numb the
Barks of the bullets and the yells of
Infant gladiators who fight in an arena
With no armour and no honour. And no love.
Only the indifferent applause of a dirge
In a different world.

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The exquisite geography of Bach
Unfurls its map into the room but
Is drowned and lost in the
Song of the machine—its sodden
Parchment of runic, magnificent
Motifs stuffed in a bottle of barbarism
For some savage pirates to discover.
The joyless spurts of the machine
Stampeding over the genius of a man.
Plato's cave from whence it slithered,
The articulate awesomeness of Bach,
Thudding with an industrial symphony of
Callous cuts and clips; an army to murder
The culture of human brilliance.

The massacre of music. By a pair of scissors.