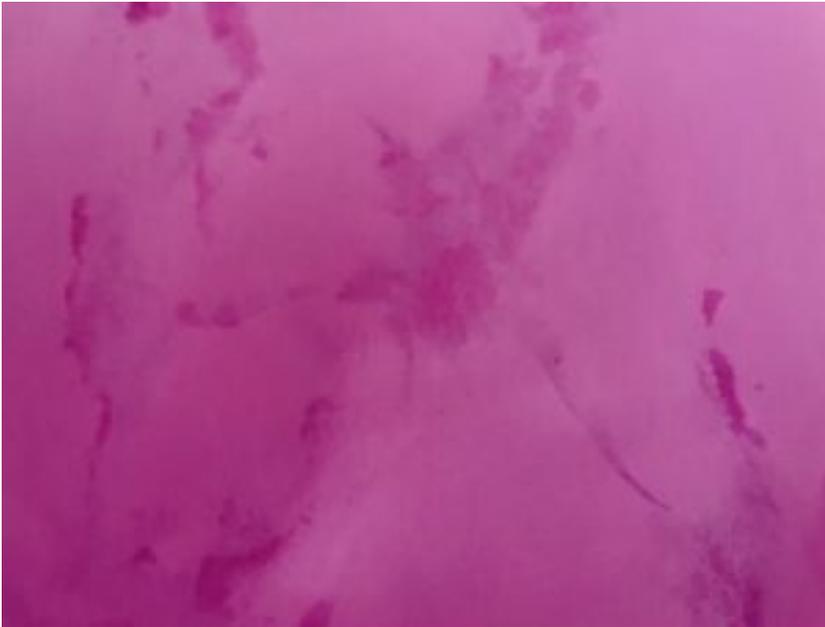


# New Poetry from Galen Cunningham: “Winter of Discontent” and “War Games”



OUR PINK FLESH / *image by Amalie Flynn*

## **Winter of Discontent**

When in the winter of discontent, we disentrall the houses  
entombing our pink flesh; having too long embalmed peace;  
and make war on the money for the money that is war:  
when our liveries of weighted disconcert shake off their  
Judas fears, taking greedily to unholy plots of murder—  
when these “Sons of Liberty” burst their bombs into air—  
then will all cower like we were destroyers from the Abyss;  
then will our gallop into sun be the light’s last remiss.

No delight to pass away the time, unless to sport at people  
who never ask from right to left; who never look before  
crossing the roads to meet the devil and weigh their second  
option as a whirlwind comes down to hiccup debris, leaves,  
houses, schools, hospitals, monuments, and the places of  
worship where the holocaust is never taught, dissected,

and avoided by those inglorious sons of flammable history:

Nothing to be but apathetic in this clime of ours;  
nothing too great, too small, too precious for us.  
War is a necessary casualty; and if said enough,  
like magic, like hypnotism, the masses soon agree.

Since they cannot love, they will waste the pipes of song  
on rhetoric, war propaganda, and budgets to pass before  
parliament, senate; through pentagon corridors; through  
corporate arms that build the muscle;  
and then into the hands of friends who need the bells and  
whistles to break the enemy's spirit. Since we cannot pass  
away our time with undisguised deformity, we shall wear  
the mask of destruction, making all the world  
our mangled, hideous shadow.

The best way to deform is to conflagrate the area, eradicate  
the densities, and chemicalize their rivers, their tears,  
their blood. This is also how you make terrorist: you destroy  
their homes, their lives, their childhood, their parents,  
their  
memories, and bring grief, loud clapping like a thundering  
army;  
like democracy obscuring, choosing what to dictate or who.  
You begin by dashing their infants not with sticks or stones,  
but words like bombs away, martyrdom, or liberation.

## **War Games**

He wanted to play the game of sizzle,  
spittle, rump and womp;

a game of catch the snake in the grass  
before it blows its pesticide—

of sonic missiles from Cape Canaveral;

games of marooning ships.

The hide and seek of people and missiles,  
of the occasional burning hospital.

Fox in the chicken coop, quick game of  
tag; maybe capture the flag:

capture the people, the sky, the water,  
and all those ideal steeples—

those idyllic tundra's, ideological tools—  
like democracy to defend the weak

from the strong, and the strong from the  
weak; from all of us from ourselves.

Our modern world replete with modern  
religions, those throes of liberty

they wash down the poison with; that  
colonizes their capital bundles lined

in island bungalows, chauffeured notes;  
pleasure to steal the sting of thinking

the thinking that is crunching, corrupting  
numbers; laws, taxes to winnow

all the wrong places. It's a game of fierce  
manipulation of rune and language.

A game to see what conscience is or what  
of it be consequence, if any.

Cheating, winning; who is counting? If  
it be not I, then why not gripe;

but if it be I, let I become a monster fang;  
indifferent, with visage ragged—

a mountebank of bust like Rushmore,  
fearless because I am powerful—

a begetter of detonation, destruction; of  
Palestinian desolation;

like Angels of Kuwait breaking the dry  
spell with dessert rending storms:

if pacifism makes little of my destiny, let  
the pathos of the great game inform me.