

Daniel Whitlow, P-31994
WordsUncaged Submission
(Poem)

“Soldier Becoming Pessimist (Part 3 of *Becoming*)” (2012-2018)

So, I'll go about extracting gold from my enemies' teeth,
busy myself with slaughter to disconnect myself from loss,
implants to mechanize – lost right to recognize
that which made I; individual; gave value and purpose to one more robot,

wearing a skinned man, tan and misused, as a defense against being shoved into a dark place,

my faith is weak—my wealth is fake,
my riches consist of more enamel than coin,
unnatural and restless, a parasitic host,
an empty, kerosene ghost,

covered by—bathed in—trapped beneath a snowstorm
of identical, mangled rotten corpses, wearing my face

bearing my mark, smiling my teeth, shrieking my name,
blistered by my brand, broken by my hand, raped by my loneliness
and left to stand naked before a nameless throng of drifting shadows
intent on wringing the hands that clutch my throat,
that hold my head still, that breathe into my veins and stimulate my circuits,

a reminder, a survivor and condemner,

a torched-still-burning beaten beacon, a black blaze in a blue sky so used to birds
and bastards and eulogies written in secret rooms of wallpapered eyes,
a living lie that suggests separate truths, openly synthetic
bouncing off the glass, leaving its smudge, its print, its shit smear
on the broken mirror I use to cut my wrists with, where I eat my food
and gloat over my victories to myself—always alone,
eyeless sockets once traded for penniless pockets
in an attempt to share pilfered molars with mortals of flaw's best design.

Can't you see? It's to my friends I belong, to my family,
you may not harvest me with your compost cataracts of malice
sold to high-bidding treasonists,
leather-tongued wandering martyr mongers, locust glistening,
riveted coldness, detached...