



FALLING MEN

Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written," John 19:31

"I made the decision with clear eyes, " Joe Biden, POTUS.

The news clip came with a warning
A crossed-out eye icon: "Sensitive content.
The video may show violent or graphic content"
They needed to freeze-frame it and circle
the blur distant figures in red as if to say:
Here be human beings.

Once again it's proven that men can't fly
In Kabul or Saigon or New York
The lesson of Icarus is Greek to us all,
even to the literate
History repeated, men defeated

Pilots, like leaders, can destroy, or save the day
It's all perspective. It's either a cape, or another caper
No escape for the escapee
No refuge for the refugee
But there are no heroes here,
just the quiet desperation of silhouettes in mid-air,
human beings with hearts and hopes and dreams,
now crumpled bodies on the tarmac

I am reminded of the photo of The Falling Man of 9/11,
the sharp, focused outline of another human being in mid-air
against the stark backdrop of black and white vertical lines
of the soon-to-collapse Twin Towers

Uncertainty of who he was still hangs in the air
They say he may have been a staff at Windows
of the World, a restaurant in the North Tower
The body was never found
Amid the ash and ashen all is grey
Sometimes the lens of red, white and blue is blurry, unfocused
We know how we got here, we just don't know how we're gonna leave
It's all perspective. There are no heroes here.

We look out through our own windows of the world now
We zoom in and zoom out, muting and unmuting each other,
depending on who's the host, the pilot, the leader
Sometimes the meetings are recorded, sometimes not
Sometimes people are focused, clear
Sometimes they are blur, or cracking up
Sometimes they are quiet, grieving
Sometimes people fall off the screen
and are never heard of again.

In the virtual world, it's easy to click "Leave" and just go.
In the real world, leaving always, always comes with a price.

by Julian Matthews

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