

Body Politic

Waning, my father viewed the national robbery
concessively.

His future shrunk to weeks,
he took the long view:

*You've heard of Adlai Stevenson? There was a time
I ached to see that man elected. Maybe, after all,
lesser men make safer stewards.*

Would it were so, my sleeper.

I saw fangs inside that tumbleweed
blowing out of Texas, heard the predatory growl
of lust perennially known:

despotism, taloned and a-grin,

seeded like dragons' teeth in every soil

in every age, its present avatar

(the false embodiment of popular demand)

a bit of oil-sprung sagebrush, lightning-struck,

a rolling, reeling wick of conflagration.

Always a burning bush

flares on the mount, issuing edicts to the credulous,

its fire stoked inexhaustibly by pipelines and the nuclear glow

of family and the green, green kindling from the public purse.

A fine illusionistic hearth, this shrub that baits

the far, frostbitten reachings

of the fresh debased—

radiant,

its half-life long

as the devolution of the human race.