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Hill's poem is a dirge, rich and morbid, that strikes its reader not with a wealth of expression, but with the absence of over-wrought words. The ability to capture atrocity is one that writers have succeeded and failed in for years. Plague, famine and war have peppered the literature of the past five centuries chronicling events, reactions and effects, yet the human mind's inability to comprehend the sheer extent or horror of such hardship precludes the effectiveness of the word the writer selects, because that is all they are: words. Is it realistic to assume that shapes on a page will translate accurately to the extremes of human suffering? The more a writer writes, the more a reader reads; the more one relies on the signs that occupy the page to evoke, the less one turns to the only thing that can ever capture extremity – the mind.

It is here that Hill forces his readers. His first two stanzas, five short sentences, are all he gives to depict the experience of the Holocaust. The compassion of the first stanza is seen in the second person pronoun with which he addresses the dead. In doing so, Hill identifies people, persons with whom one can identify and relate to. He ties together 'undesirable' and 'untouchable' in the first line to suggest contradiction. He collocates them by way of their shared negative prefix, each beginning a short clause that plays against the other. He brings to the fore the hypocrisy of both labelling as undesirable yet simultaneously the giving of such attention on the part of the 'labeller'. He uses 'passed over' as an allusion to Judaism to reflect on the loss of mercy, the failure of divine intervention in a time of need, again invoking the contradiction that whilst a people was watched by the world and by God, neither moved 'at the proper time'.

The first stanza which invokes Jewishness is starkly contrasted with the imagistic second. With 'As estimated, you died', he begins another personal address, yet here, the first verb suggests business in a one-sentence transaction that ends the humanity. The detached, clinical tone continues with the language of efficiency that permeates the stanza – 'sufficient', 'routine' – to allude to the nature of the Nazi regime, but also to dehumanise it. Hill gives no names or faces here, just images that he accents with caesuras to cut up the lines and to separate the flashes of description in a syntactic montage. 'Things marched', 'patented terror', these are the faceless snapshots of horror that are given to the reader. One sees very little, has no time to concentrate, as the crowd is pushed and jostled into order and place. The debasing effect of Hill's descriptions turn his Jews into animals, predictable livestock whose 'routine cries' are inconsequential. They become pests to be exterminated; execution is minimised to fumigation in a poem that continually detracts from the enormity of the situation described. As such, the reader imagines and identifies; he or she is superimposed into the verse to assume the role of the dehumanised subject, just another unit to be packaged. It is in doing this that one can see terror because the mind is the key to realising reality; there, words cannot sully appreciation or force interpretation. The words that Hill omits from his poem, his reader replaces with image and emotion, lifting to a horrible level that which will never be achieved with signs.

The input of the self on which the poem relies is suggested in Hill's parenthetical intrusion in the third stanza. In making an elegy for himself it seems reasonable that the descriptive cues he uses are springboards for the imagination intended for himself, signals with which he identifies mental images. Yet this is partially revoked in the pastoral imagery of the poem. The smoke that blinds him is that of an imagined society or the series of personal preconceptions on which one draws into any interpretation, the tinted lens that we see the world through. He

becomes distant therefore as suggested in the geographical gap between the Nazi German concentration camp and the idyll of the rural vineyard. Distance is further created in his rose imagery. flaking from the wall inconsequentially, a beauty lost forever and soon forgotten. It is an insufficient symbol – perhaps intentionally so – that poeticizes the loss of life in the Holocaust. It is a hiatus, nothing more, that removes from the ultimate horror of death by clouding it with comparison.

Hill finalises this fall into idealism in his closing line ‘This is plenty’, telling himself he is going too far with ‘more than enough’. This recognition of excess reflects upon the inability of the poet to depict true horror without resorting to image, a realisation that whilst highlighting the forgivable weakness of his fourth stanza image, also turns the reader back to the essential commentary and description of stanzas one and two. It is here that Hill stands back. objectifying events to allow reader input, minimising his influence on interpretation, and forcing an audience to use their own experience and imagination to capture that which words cannot, words which will ultimately be distant and inaccurate.