

How Fascism Will Come

When facism comes to America it will be wrapped in the flag and carrying a cross.

—attributed to Sinclair Lewis



When fascism comes, it will greet us with a smile. It will get down on its knees to pray. It will praise Main Street and Wall Street. It will cheer for the home team. It will clap from the bleachers when the uninsured are left to die on the street. It will rally on the Washington Mall. It will raise monuments to its heroes and weep for them and place bouquets at their stone feet and trace with their fingers the names engraved on the granite wall and go on sending soldiers to die in the mountains of Afghanistan, in the deserts of Iraq. It will send doves to pluck out the eyes of its enemies, having no hawks to spare.

When fascism comes, it will sit down for tea with the governor of Texas. It will pee in the mosques from California to Tennessee, chanting, *“Wake up America, the enemy is here.”* It will sing the anthems of corporatization, privatization, demonization, monopolization. It will be interviewed, lovingly, on talk radio. It’ll have talking points and a Facebook page and a disdain for big words or hard consonants. It won’t bother to read. It will shred all its books. It will lambast the teachers and outlaw the unions.

When fascism comes, it will look good. It will have big hair, pressed suits, lapel pins. It will control all the channels. It will ride in on Swift Boats. It will sit on the Supreme Court. It will court us with fear. It will woo us with hope. When fascism comes, it will sell shares of itself on the stock market. It will get rich, then it will get obscenely rich, then it will stop paying taxes. It will leave us in the dust. It will kick our ass. It won’t have to break a sweat to fool us twice. It will be too big to fail.

When fascism comes to America, it will enter on the winds of our silence and indifference and complacency. And on that day, one hundred thousand poets will gather. In book stores and libraries, bars and cafes, in their houses and apartments, in schools and on street corners, they will gather. In Albania, Bangladesh, Botswana, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Finland, Guatemala, Hungary, Macedonia, Malawi, Qatar, crying, laughing, shouting. They will wrap the sad music of humanity in bits of word cloth and hang them, like prayers, on the tree of life.



Terry Ehret

September 23, 2011