

Flowers for the Shadows

I wasn't there the day
the sun came to Earth
I wasn't murdered body or soul
in the name
Of politics and science
I never had to weep
Over the burnt-in shadows of loved ones
In the shadow of that hideous cloud
That changed everything forever

No, I am much less worthy of absolution
Than those whose sins were
washed away
By radioactive rain
I'm a son of the town and country
that did it
Without even knowing it
Of those who brought the sun to Earth
Of those who murdered
Innocent people and the souls of survivors
In the name
Of politics and science
Of those who turned people into shadows
And created that hideous cloud
Changing everything forever
I am one of them

Born into their legacy
Into the history of my hometown
I am a modern-day American artifact
A product of the secret city they built
In the desert
Displacing man and
Disrupting nature
So that they could turn
uranium into plutonium
And plutonium into evil
I am a son of Richland and its people
My inheritance? Their guilt.

It hangs over me like that hideous cloud
And maybe that's why

we keep that cloud so close
We wear it on our clothes
And we call ourselves the Bombers
And we say we are Proud of the Cloud
Maybe we do it to convince ourselves
That it's ok
And that what's history is history
We put that cloud everywhere you look
But still it looms over us
Just like the guilt we bear
The guilt I bear

Across the Pacific,
The scars of our sins
Are forever
And my guilt is forever too
I can't go back and stop
the sun from coming to Earth
I can't resurrect the innocent people
Or the souls that were murdered
In the name of politics and science
I can't turn the shadows
back into loved ones
Or wipe away the tears of
those who wept over them
Or erase that hideous cloud

But

I can create a new cloud
A cloud of flowers
One for each burnt-in shadow
And pray that the shadow of that cloud covers the whole world
Forever