

The Terminal Century

Pocket Monsters™ strobe
from the Times Square JumboTron,
pixels flaring remorseless as napalm,
revelers bleed out onto the avenues—
Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On.

Noise enervates mindless transmissions
spewed at light speed far, very far beyond
backyard dishes, melding with the snap crackle and
pop of immemorial radiation;
tapes unspool, hissing back and back and back

and blitz kids hurl chairs
into an unstaged conflagration—
even The Killer must abandon his ivories:
"Follow *that, nigger*" don't close this show,
immortalized, scratched and grainy and gray

on a Berlin stage the master of piano wire
spits and slashes and rattles the lectern,
levitated by feral howls and choreographed fires,
gorged on blood and bread and soil and crocuses
flyblown lovers creak and sway,

briefly sating the inverted multitudes—
was like perhaps punning:
"God, what an ignoble end," or
was the germ of MAD already festering around him
as a black hole shuddered open

over that untouched city,
where they looked up to an August sun
for the time it took to fall—
43 seconds
ticking over as inexorably as radium to lead,

silently and infinitely halving the distance
to a coiled point beyond nature—
carbon shades now, heralds of a scorched and
mendacious peace, never knowing the rest of us
had entered an age too cheap to meter?

So come, comrades, fast forward to the crossroads
of Nike™ and Disney®
where the whimpering viruses have supplanted
fat men and little boys,
and where a flabby devil

will teach us all how to play the blues.