

We are all crippled warlords
Doing our best to force the end
We are all early Christian, Sabbatian Terrorists
Doing our best to force the end
We are all enchanting insurrectionists
Giving you a heavenly enema
Doing our best to force the end.

Narses, an intriguing eunuch bureaucrat
in Constantinople
at the court of Justinian
sixth-century AD
Being a eunuch is a job you have to be cut out for
But Narses had balls

At the age of sixty
He undertook to lead an army
Annihilated the Vandals in Africa
The dog-headed Ostrogoths in Italy
At the battle of Vesuvius
And the Mediterranean was again a Roman lake.
And what was the outcome?
From the Euphrates to the Pillar of Hercules
War, fiscal oppression and religious persecution
Accelerated the decay of life
Prepared — pale, emaciated, miserable —
For the event of Muslim conquerors.

We are all crippled warlords
Doing our best to force the end
We are all enemies of the stars
Confronting the darkness
as a spiritual act
Demonstrating that the outward action
Harmonizes invisibly with
The structure of the cosmos
We are all creative nihilists
Doing our best to force the end.

Timur, or Tammerlaine, or Timur the Lame
Became crippled as a result of an accident
During a robbery in his youth
Say Western observers
More likely the result of a ritual assault
A form of sacred lameness
The eight sign of royalty;
Tammerlaine who believed all human settlement
to be against God's will
Like the yellow serpent
inhaled wheat fields and exhaled dust bowls
passing over the face of Asia like a fire storm
leaving behind him desolation and wilderness
where had once been fertile plains;
Tammerlaine, a paradoxical balance
Of heroic virtues and savagery
Of cruelty and love of art and philosophy
Slaughtered a million people in Baghdad
And stacked their heads in a gigantic pyramid
for his own memorial
Yet spared the libraries, the mosques, the hospitals
Spared the scholars who he sent to his capital
Tammerlaine taught that warfare is part of Nature's purpose
That strife should be the law of our souls.

We are all crippled warlords
Doing our best to force the end
We are the scourge of God, the spawn of the devil
and the punishment to the world
Doing our best to fit those terms
Blood, Frog, Vermin, Infectious diseases
Noxious beasts, Boils, Hail
Locusts, Darkness, the Killing of the First Born
We are all crippled warlords
Doing our best to force the end.

Rising out of Bohemia like a yeast ghost virus
With the image of the chalice on his flag
Calling for a universal dispensation
Communion in both kinds to rich and poor;
John Žižka, a blind general of the Hussite reformation
A fifteenth-century chiliast fundamentalism
Told his followers to make every effort to see
That anyone who could swing
A club or hurl a stone is up in arms
At every hour of the day
Using mobile nomadic circles of wagons as fortresses
He defeated warriors from all over Europe
Sightlessly directed his armies in glorious raids
Against all that was
Holy, Roman, Imperial
In certain parts of Austria even now
Five centuries later cows are kept indoors.
Seeking the truth unto death
Žižka's last will and testament commanded:
"my body be flayed, the flesh
thrown to the birds and beasts
And a drum made from my skin"
And with this drum beating a sound
His Orphans should continue the war
Prophesying their enemies would turn
To flight
As soon as they heard
the voice of his skin.

We are all haunted warrior priests
Following a harsh creed
Doomed to survive a tragic hunted past
In a fanatical drive for destruction
Advancing on a broad front
Through flames of consciousness
Braving the winter cold of being shunned
Crossing watery obstacles of success
And smashing fortifications of healthy desire
With redemption just one sin away
The end of days
Promised us as equally
A judgment and a favor.

Cutsie pie Lord Byron with a club foot
A literalists who fought the war
For Greek independence
Thinking he was reviving classical ideals
When he was really a dupe for Russian
warm water expansionism
But fortunately for everyone
He spent most of his time limping around
Limping around blind drunk
Looking like
Looking like
An an-an-gel.

Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany
Queen Victoria's favorite grandson
Had a withered arm, the left I think;
After he sacked Bismarck
Statesmanship was conspicuously lacking
Crisis followed crisis
The road to war
Depressingly smooth and well-signposted
And the influence of the first of the world wars
Equally cataclysmic on the victors
and victims alike:
Most of Europe of 1000 years was shattered
Three empires tumbled to dust
Wilhelm ended his days a commoner
Chopping wood
With his good arm
In the center of Holland.

We are all crippled warlords
Doing our best to force the end
We are always on the lookout for something
Hostile to the order
We are all ever on the side
Of any wild force
Mystical Redemption with Visible Historical Change!
We accompany each other into deathliness
Though only one may return to report it
Mystical Redemption with Visible Historical Change!
Not one, nor the other, but both
We are all crippled warlords.

It took an alliance of two crippled warlords
To defeat Nazi Germany
The first
Joseph Stalin taught Hitler the techniques of tyranny
Got people arguing over two lies
Had whole nations in slave labor camps
Introduced periodic purges of officials
as state policy
For the purpose of uplifting the moral of survivors
Stalin was born with nine toes
And went to school with Gurdjieff.

The second
Franklin Roosevelt was struck with polio
It left his legs paralyzed
But being confined to a wheelchair
Like the Vietnam veteran of a later date
Did not prevent him from having lovers
Wouldn't you?
If you were married to a pious cow like Eleanor?
Soul in the Earth
Soul in the Blood
My liver shall sing praises to the water and air
And in the end the soil of Europe
was renourished by the blood
Of fifty-nine million people
And the Russian and American armies
By prior agreement
Stood facing each other on the Elbe
Waiting for the bell to ring
Beginning the next round.

We are all crippled warlords
Trying our best to cover the sky
Ye Ye, O lay eye
God on high
Man on earth
Ye Ye, O lay eye
God is God
Man is man
Everyone in his house
Everyone for himself?
We are all crippled warlords
Waiting for the sun to die.

John Kennedy, former President
was drugged to dull the constant pain
and shakes from Addison's disease
Had a self-inflicted back injury
Gotten from crashing his PT boat into a dock
On a bet, he lost
Demanding yet another galaxy of medication
JFK

Botched the Bay of Pigs invasion
Botched killing Castro

Conspired with Cardinal
Bushong of Boston and
Cardinal Diem of Saigon
to send Americans into
Vietnam
satisfying Pope John
XXIII's request to protect
his interest
In the heroin business

Finally Old Joe
His father bumped him off
The sacrificial son had his brains
Hamburgered in Dallas:
As a result of what Jack Kennedy started
but couldn't finish
There was a Cuban army in Africa
And 1500 Soviet "technicians" in Laos
Controlling Golden Triangle opium production
When the USA lost this concession
They no longer had the gold
To pay for oil
Only the bad die young.

Nothing is more powerful than a crippled warlord
Who sees history as a series
Of improbabilities
Of incongruities
Who has the angry readiness to throw
Everything overboard
A willingness, a longing
To become part of dissolution
We are all crippled warlords
Doing our best to force the end.

We are now all under obligation to enter the abyss
Let us surrender ourselves
"Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth
thy little ones against the stones" - Psalm CXXXVII
Let us descend together into the abyss
before shuts again
Let us cram the mouth of impurity
with the power of holiness
until it bursts from within
Bo-rooch at-to A-do-noy
E-lo-hay-noo me-lech ho-o-lom,
matt-sir is-u-rim
Blessed art thou O Lord our God
King of the Universe
Who permittest the forbidden
Who loosens all bounds
We are all crippled warlords
The Word
that heals and
The Word
that kills
Dwells in our mammal flesh
and grows.

From Requiem for Christian Loidl 1957-2001
For Further reading on Christian Loidl:
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