

THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN AMERICA *James Arthur*

Cap will be buried in his costume, in his half-mask,
with his bulletproof shield of blue, red, and white,
and the Invincible Iron Man is inconsolable,
now that Captain America is dead.

If the man inside the coffin was a symbol, what ideals
did he represent? Did he believe in the right to bear arms,
or in big government? Was he disfigured from battle?
Did he have a schoolboy's face?
For some, he was an authoritarian endowed with physical
grace,
but this morning even the paparazzi
seem moved by the manly grief of the mighty Thor.
What will become of the Pax Americana
now that Captain America is dead?

If he stormed the beach at Normandy
was he in the shadows at the hanging of Saddam Hussein?
Cap's enemy the Kingpin is here,
leaning on a diamond-encrusted cane.
Cap never drank, never smoked, was straight
as a bug-collector's pin,
but many a crooked man will walk a crooked mile
now that Captain America is dead.

The escalator's been broken since August.
The drinking fountain is full of cement.

Will the train stations descend into ruin
now that Captain America is dead?

Some people want a moral. Some, only a refrain.
Some want to go on injuring themselves
in the way they have
time and again,
but who will speak for the man inside the coffin—
his love of slapstick, his wide-open grin?
Will anyone speak of the man himself,
remembering what was best and worst in him?

Into the ground, the indestructible shield,
the myth, the one-man legion. Into the ground,
the man, the boy, and every toy or comic book
that ever pleased him. Into the ground.
Into the ground. Into the ground.
Captain America is dead.