

The sum of all fears

For Karipbek Kuyukov

In Hiroshima, she fills her scars with rain
counts people sliding off their androids
and remembers humans in monsters falling into the river to die.

In Autumn, she looks at the ground at leaves blowing skyward,
the dead are lifting them through whispers
this flame red air soothes her shadows wound.

In Winter, a scrawny wolf comes to kill her hens, *she lets him*.
His mathematical stare picks the weak ones off,
she counts the wolves and knows they are less.

In black rain she counted the days until he was born,
a strange waxy ink soaked her from the atom-heavy sky
his hand scrolled across her belly like a love-letter and stopped.

Today we are counting the money to keep the rain pure.
Counting Churchill's on five pound notes they named Fat Man after.
In Nagasaki they should not be playing baseball for yen.

Today we are counting the money to build a wall of dead presidents
and lets count the all male presidents which stop at forty-five,
like the doomsday clock at two minutes to midnight.

When it chimes,
who will count the living?
Who will save the hens from the *mad* Eagle and Scythe born of flame?

Antony Owen

Poet and Patron of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Notes

Eagle and scythe symbols of America and Russia. Last line implies "mad" as in mutually assured destruction. The doomsday clock is set two minutes to midnight which is the closest to armageddon since it began.
