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In the Republic of Fear

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IN THE REPUBLIC OF FEAR

Glen H. Brown

Wisdom and madness flew together
in an arc of night.
With crazed eyes and clenched toes,
they winged without sleep
and rumbled in a fever of impatience,
launched by megalomania.
Like big-time killers,
the armchair commanders
lit up the international arcade.

"The world could wait no longer,"
we were told, and we rushed
into the unknowable,
our world tilted by a Desert Storm,
slowly choking in a fiery air.

We were not shown the faceless
or dismembered. But we listened
with false calm as sorties unleashed
a raucous sky, leaving behind bursts
of imagination and salvos of fear.

How was it to live among threats
of glass and concrete, mustard gas,
sirens and foreboding clouds
of hydrogen sulfide?
When we dropped our payload,
the smoke rose from behind upturned thumbs.