Rhetorical Question

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Rhetorical Question

Alexander Knightwright

Do you know me
Little Apes?
I am old
Old as life
Old as death
(Which should be obvious if you stop
To think for a second).

I have walked with you
On the path of life
Walked it with you
To the end
And kept on walking, leaving you behind.

Seen but unseen,
Heard only in those rare moments of clarity
In your requiem
In your screams
In your final breath

Felt in your heart of hearts,
But never truly known.

I have walked with you
In your cities
And your fields
Silent man
All in black
Silver scythe
Upon my back
Swinging a briefcase with the rest of you
And whistling a merry tune

Because I know your cities
I was there
When the first ape
Laid one stone upon another
And called it Home.

(And I was there
When that same stone
Fell on that same ape
And broke his toes.
He screamed a lot
And ran off a cliff.
He died, of course,
And I was there to see it).

But I digress.
I know your cities
I am in them
In fire and gas and gang and
Out-of-control-taxicab plowing onto a busy sidewalk
And all my faces
Waiting
Watching
Working

And walking with you
Swinging my scythe
Singing my song
And smiling all the while.

I walk with you
In fields and far places
In desolate spaces
All natural
One-hundred-percent organic
Zero carbohydrates
Zero grams trans fat
Zero survivors.

Run, run as fast as you can
I’ll keep walking
With you every step of the way
These boots were made for walking
And walking’s what they’ll do
One of these days these boots are going to walk right

Over there, over there
Send the word to beware
Because I’m not bound by fences
Or oceans
Or lines on a map.

I walk with your rulers
A plague a’ both your White House
None are beyond my reach.

I walk with them
Step by step
Side by side
Singing, smiling, and swinging my scythe
A metal smile and a bone smile
Together with you walking.

I walk with you
Among my walking field
Seven billion stalks of wheat
And I the old farmer
Scythe in hand
Bringing in the harvest
Little apes howling their sorrows
As the blade cuts deep.

Hewn in twain, they rise
Borne aloft on the scything wind
Then fall
Down, down, down, down
To earth
A shower of dry stalks
Set aflame in sunlight
Sparks of gold
Upon the cold
Dying into earth

Trod beneath the Reaper’s feet
To rot beneath the field
And rise again,
To fall again,
Again,
Again. . .

But what a fall!
The russet tassels cast skyward by curved steel
Reach the zenith in a blaze of light
The sun’s warmth upon them
In them
Sustaining them
All the way down to the cold, cold earth
Burning inside with life.

That is beauty,
Little Apes.
I live for it
(or do I? I digress again)
I live for it
You die for it, of course,
But who’s to quibble
I walk with you
Through the field
And you fall in beauty
And I keep walking.

Beauty is deathly
Death is beautiful.
Do you know me,
Little Apes?
I am the smiling one
The singing one
The scything one
The Reaper.

I walk in beauty.