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How to Die in America

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How to die in America

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Slip away
go to the end of the line and keep going
make sure you're alone
and unknown
go by bus, train or plane
just keep going
don't let them know

First, take a train to Trenton
then rent a car to Philadelphia, the airport
abandon it
take a plane to Santa Fe or Seattle
makes no difference
keep going till the money runs out
then use the credit card
you can only fly to a big city
the small towns aren't on the schedule
soon they'll all be suburbs of Chicago
As this country hardens into concrete,
Los Angeles, New York, and New Orleans
grow together at the center.
Center of what?
This state, without a nation.
Without memory
Only capital went west
until there was no place else to go.
Neither horizontal nor vertical
destination nowhere

After Seattle
doubleback
take a train
a sleeper
and ride it
all the way down to Fayetteville
extinct except as a junction
and otherwise unknown
and drive to Raleigh
Take a bus to Nashville

then to Dallas
 Fly to Yucatan
 Disappear beyond Uxmal
 whittle yourself away
 but keep moving
 Back to Merida
 Sign on to Polynesia
 destination Singapore
 sew your money into your shirt
 throw away your wallet
 your keys
 the pocket watch your grandfather gave you
 your wedding ring
 the golden strand of your daughter's hair
 the hat that had become your friend
 In that last year
 then discard your fear
 begin to empty out your brain
 cut long thoughts
 remember then dismember your humanity
 and buy your way on a junk
 to Penang
 Walk dumbly through the city
 keep the last object of identity
 for the snappy pink police
 speeding past the turbaned beggars
 in their blue Hondas
 crazed with disaffiliation
 traditions become crimes

So walk like a white man
 dissimulate importance
 and on the edge of the city
 put the last mask behind you
 slouch quietly
 on dirt roads
 becoming trails
 destroy the last paper
 stop eating
 stare carelessly into the sun
 remove your shirt
 fling the cash into the bush
 collapse slowly for another hundred yards
 then crawl as far as you can go
 into the tall grass
 and with your hair on fire
 and your soul somewhere else
 close your eyes
 for the sake of those who will find you
 neither hating nor loving
 but beyond their grasp