

Nine Black Robes . . .

. . . occupied (I have been told)
by human beings; we
were hopeful for a while
but in the end discovered:
It cannot be true.

The human beings, instead,
remained, for the duration,
standing vigil outside
the prison's gates.

Nine black robes
occupied by those
commonly referred to
as "Justices." Yet how
can this be

when the human beings
search for justice
throughout the evening
but still cannot find it?

Allow me to recall a time, long ago.
I was too young, then, to understand—
could not, therefore, explain it,
not even to myself, certainly not
to my teachers as they lectured,
enthralled by "the rule of law," which,
we were informed so often, stands
in contrast to "the rule of men."

and so Troy Davis waited
for more than four hours
in a death chamber built
according to their rules.

Today, however, I comprehend
well enough to compose these lines,
appalled by a "rule of law" which,
it is revealed once again, stands
in contrast to the rule of justice,
so that we may attempt, through poetry,
to consider the depth of our tragedy.

The medical team waited too,
poised to begin its infusion
of the lethal potion.

Nine black-robed Injustices
of the US Supreme Court
deliberating deep into the night
 while a nation
 of human beings
 holds its breath and others,
 who merely masquerade
 as human, drum fingers,
 impatient to proceed.

Finally the word comes down:
You may carry out your execution.

And so the choice
 is revealed once again:
to continue with this masquerade
 or finally become human;
to welcome murder
 or embrace life;
to accept their "rule of law"
 or impose a new rule, of justice.

And it says here that this choice
is up to you, because today
the word has finally come down.

[On September 21, 2011, the State of Georgia, the US Supreme Court, and a host of other
co-conspirators--including President of the United States, Barack Obama--murdered Troy
Davis by lethal injection.]

Steve Bloom
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