

Two Poems

Stephen Gibson

Gettysburg Stereopticons, Unknown Authorship, Palm Beach Jewelry,
Art & Antique Show

Gardner moved a dead Confederate from where he fell in Devil's Den,
then repositioned his weapon so that it seemed to better tell the truth.

Gardner's crew had earlier photographed corpses from various angles
in Culp's Hill woods, exactly as they fell, to show unvarnished truth.

Weaver, later, as the Soldiers' National Cemetery was being dedicated,
had Union soldiers pose as corpses in Devil's Den—to hell with truth.

Former slaves and free blacks, accused of being unwilling to fight
for the Union, were photographed in uniform to dispel that untruth.

O'Sullivan photographed the area around Abraham Trostle's farm:
a dozen dead artillery horses have begun to swell, the simple truth.

Portrait of Hermann Göring at the Nuremberg Museum

—for R.G.G., New York, PFC 8 Tank Destroyer GP
World War II, d. Jan. 31, 1959

My mother would see my father in the hospital
and I would wait for her at the top of the stairs—
my mother would only say my father wasn't well.

This was in the Bronx—I'd look down the stairwell
and I'd see her cloth coat, sloped shoulders, and hair
after she had gone to see my father in the hospital.

My mother hated court: a hearing could lead to trial
whenever my father violated his restraining order—
my mother would only say my father wasn't well.

Irish-American, Catholic, my mother believed in evil:
my father went to City College; then came the war—
and convulsive-electroshock for him in the hospital.

In the closet was a suitcase: I looked at his V-mail,
photos, documents, the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper—
my mother would only tell me my father wasn't well.

I remember this photo of Göring dead in his cell—

I was glad he committed suicide for what he did to my father.

My mother would go to see my father in the hospital

and all she would say was that my father wasn't well.

Stephen Gibson's latest poetry collection, *Self-Portrait in a Door-Length Mirror*, was selected by Billy Collins as winner of the 2017 Miller Williams Prize from the University of Arkansas Press. He has published six prior collections: *The Garden of Earthly Delights Book of Ghazals* (Texas Review Press, 2016), *Rorschach Art Too* (2014 Donald Justice Prize, Story Line Press, West Chester University), *Paradise* (Miller Williams prize finalist, University of Arkansas Press), *Frescoes* (Lost Horse Press book prize), *Masaccio's Expulsion* (MARGIE/IntuiT House book prize), and *Rorschach Art* (Red Hen Press).