

Gloria Frym. *Solution Simulacra*. United Artists Books, 2006
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Gloria Frym's new book of poems *Solution Simulacra* is a yowl, *a scream and a stamping* of the foot at the U.S. government and its stupid citizens. Murder, mayhem, destruction and we go on shopping and believing our myths about freedom ("I don't understand why I can't buy a burka in the surplus store. Did Milan or Paris get hold of them?").

Frym opens the book with an overture, looking back on the present as many historians will surely see it: Afghanistan occupied, the US terrorizing it's own citizens and others, the whole world fracturing into a state of hostility, violence and suicidal activity. And it doesn't have to be like this. She invokes Emerson: "A rush of thoughts is the only conceivable prosperity that can come to us." Frym uses all of her poetic tools, repetition, rap, word play, concrete manipulations of the alphabet and symbols in an active engaged response to daily news, reports, overheard conversations, hammering away at those words, fracturing the glib lies and excuses.

Homer's rosy fingered dawn reappears when the heroes return after ransacking other far off places. But here there are no heroes. "Dawn seemed as though it would never arrive. . . . One's empire [is] choking. One doesn't believe one's president who attends church, his slightly perfumed wife by his side, his daughters stoned out on downers. He read the bible in Cliff's Notes.. Forgot the past about gluttony as a sin." (23). She imagines punishing the politicians for catapulting us into a disastrous future.

And we're standing there like a bunch of dummies. Frym ruminates, "Why should dawn want to face the day, considering its quiet, fragile light? Dawn can't save one civilization from unraveling, or another from erasing words for a living." This is a classic Frym move, a spiritual understanding segueing immediately into a political observation. I stand back watching the sun rise and then set again, as humans do what humans are doing. But while I stand here on my porch, shop for groceries, read the newspapers, groups of people are working in think tanks to come up with ways of maneuvering and manipulating the public. "A government goes after an enemy it installed itself" (38). "Frustrated with one's adversary? Annihilate him. Otherwise one will remain impotent, and that will disturb one's sleep" (42).

You can put your finger into this book, begin anywhere and experience a type of revelation, the work so witty it might make you laugh, but it's that kind of laugh that in the next second, hey you're shaking your head with your tongue stuck in your mouth. "I is mad at I's country" (68). Yes. Yes.

Day-by-day, poem-by-poem, Frym cracks apart the way we talk and the lies we hear. In the title poem, "Solution Simulacra", she elaborates on a recipe for empire building.

First, suck all the money out of the house to fashion the haute couture weapons. . . . Color in the sections of the world one would like to have. . . . Demand that first adversary hand

over his arms and the arms of all his doubles, and send them Fed Ex. When they arrive, thank him, and demand he do the same with his head and the heads of all his doubles and theirs. When they arrive, have these parts well-photographed in color and printed on the front page of The New York Times and every other medium will follow suit. Eliminate the text. No one wants to read seventeen pages about reasons. Reading is treason in a simulated solution. (42)

Solution Simulacra is cathartic, as well as an exposé. This book should be required reading in as many college and high school lit and poetry classes as possible. Then there might be a chance that some folks might actually start to read the *world and the word* as the great Brazilian educator Paul Freire advocated, their thoughts and dialogue rushing in between Gloria Frym's sharp analytic thought twisting poems. Maybe then dawn could come sooner with a lot less grief.