Unders

Sal Cetrano

Laziness and pathos, brew of the Unders,
Transfuse inner city in a web of sad canals.
Better to drink, muddy the blunders,
Worship woke witches as fem fatales,

Than to saw the chuck of too modest ambition,
Take the long dive, suck forever the offer teat.
Too many generations back dried the last roots of contrition.
(Had they sussed all this bother, they'd have *given up* the seat!)

And those pedestals? Still bare. Unders shy of figureheads,
Inconstant gravities to heave or to hold.
In lieu, summon gravediggers. Exhume indicted dead.
Pray, reset us, ye least likely to grow old.

Somewhere, Malcolm spins. Old Panthers, brownstone priests,
Burn at the burning, seethe at pillaging for Chinese kicks.
(Jesse Owens made his *own* spikes, out of mountain lion teeth!)
How to build men as once they were with such as these in the mix?

Surely, each African age knew its own dusky Pyrrhus,
Unbending in word and path, oblivious of cost:
"No need to accept us—better you fear us.
All that you have equals all we have lost!"

What people were never enslaved by another? Yet
Sheep still bleat at eagles, instead of sprouting wings.
Souls that burst the bubble of Satan's oubliette
First stand apart, then own what morning brings.

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Else, suicide by sympathy—behold the damage done:
Help Wanted, Victim, F/T. Bring your friends!
For when Unders go over, the party never ends.
So bless us all, Uncle Sam, each and every one.