



“Throwing Punches with Gandhi: A Parody of Billy Collins’ ‘Shoveling Snow with Buddha”

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In the usual textbooks of the dorm or the Hindu temple
You would never see him doing such a thing,
Tossing a right hook over the mountain
Of his bare, taut shoulder,
His toga tied in a knot
A model of fury.

Sitting is more his style, if that is the word
for what he does, or does not do.

Even the lighting is wrong for him.
In all his manifestations, is this gym not warm and slightly hu-
mid?
Is this not implied by his raucous expression,
That punch so fierce it wraps itself around the waist of the uni-
verse?

But here we are, working out way toward a concussion,
One hit at a time.
We toss the white towel onto the ropes.
We feel the hot sweat on our faces.
And with every weave we disappear
And become lost to each other
In these sudden clouds of our own making,
These fountain-bursts of energy.

This is so much better than a sermon on peace,
I say out loud, but Gandhi keeps on jabbing.
This is the true peace, the peace of synergy,
And sweat and smashed gums bleeding into a mouthpiece,
I say, but he is too busy to hear me.

He has thrown himself into a punch-drunk frenzy
As if it were his purpose of existence,
As if the car-key to a perfect life was in my gut.
He could back the car down easily
And drive off into the vanities of the world
With a broken heater fan and a song on the radio.

All morning long we fight side by side,
Me with my counterpunch
And he with the uppercut kidney punch combo,
Until the bout is nearly finished
And the blood-rags are piled high all around us;
Then, I hear him belch.

After this, he asks,
Can we go outside and play cards?

Certainly, I reply, and I will pour some Bud
And bring plates of weenies to the table
While you shuffle the deck,
And our gloves hang dripping on the ropes.

Aaaah, says Gandhi, lifting his eyes
And leaning for a moment onto the table
Before he drives a quick sucker punch
Deep into my unsuspecting gut.