

The Days We Have

The Internet's made us more sophisticated—
discuss. Or just consider how it sides
with the petty harbormaster who anticipates
the comings and goings within each of us.
Tuned into our grievances and fears,
it broadcasts everything that's best left hidden,
becomes a megaphone for loneliness.
No question that our net worth's greater now,
in terms of being ripe for advertisements
and fluent in the season's silly films and memes.
If you're feeling low, there's always Cialis,
or other enthrallments that "know not seems, madam."
I'm glad that you no longer need gun shows,
you latest killer, but can "add to basket"
semiautomatic rifles, flak jackets,
and ammunition till its spilling out your door.
Stay away from me because I'm bad news.
In the cause-and-effect of online etiquette,
soon enough my mother's sent a link:
"How to survive an active shooter situation,"
written as if it described a tire change,
or how-to for your table's flower arrangement.
"With all the knucklehead gun nuts out there now,
this is good advice," her colorful intro
begins. And oh no, the link! (You were thinking I'd
somehow forgo this surrogate knowledge?)
It opens a primed YouTube video
about to recreate an office massacre.
What were they thinking, the actors falling
in the clip's first frame, frozen on my screen?
That this is how it feels when a polity

is breaking down? As you show others
how to duck for cover underneath a desk?
How you desire it, but can only stay there,
mid-scramble, stalled and still, still full of unrest?
You and everyone you know and everyone
who sees you stripped of any conceivable
countermeasures? Not even quite sure
any longer what *ressentiment* means,
though convinced you too may be acting it out
as the shooter hijacks the video?
Nor sure under which mattress spring
is hidden one's well-being? It's dusty now, and thin.
"This is your thirst," says Zarathustra,
"the gift-giving virtue" that makes a holiness
of selfishness, the robber's value offered us,
the suffering that is happiness's
foundation, and not after all its obstacle.
No one mixes the poisons as creatively
as we do, and that's at least something to do
better and better, to defend our living.