

# BERLIN --- JUNE, 1945

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You could not see the death floating in the Under-  
ground.

But it lay there still in the stagnant waters,  
and the bodies drank of the corruption, deep.

You could not see the high-ranking in the Chancellery.  
A few had been taken, but most were under its gardens,  
by poison or by fire, some weeks consumed.

The passages, however, were open for inspection,  
the long halls under the palace of contaminated rule.  
Where they lived, the Reichswehr, in their last days,  
the tables that they sat by, the helmets that they wore,  
the cartons full of medals that would not now be  
awarded,  
all these you could see,  
if you carried a flashlight in the noisome corridors.

Up the Unter den Linden,  
with a swagger that was not without a thrill to the eye.  
paraded a company of Russians,  
poplar straight, good-little-boy neat,  
singing, as they marched, with a certain grace,  
towards the Brandenburger Tor.

Other Russians, and they were the majority,  
sidled and idled through the sullen side-streets,  
sporadically shooting at no-one, or at someone;  
not too shaven, not too good-little-boy.

Some of us allies, who had done no actual fighting,  
bargained with the hungry in the convalescent Tier-  
garten,  
gaining cameras and watches for cheap cigarettes.