

'Tis of Thee'

My eyes tear up

My heart pounds downbeat

I slow my breathing to counter anxiety

Threatening to disable me

Remembering that year it was 1970

I raged with pen and paper

Against brick walls about true patriotism

My poetic impotence

Unable to do anything to stop the pain

Of that day

That beautiful spring day in May

Guns answered tattered pleas of conscience

Sprayed with bullets a messiah come

Only to go alone yet again into final spasms

Shouldering antichrist in persuasive disguise

The remnants of humanity awakening in its children

Not dead enough to stop the leaden assault

By a paradigm of perpetual profiteering in war

Criers of pride in nationalism wearing the masks of patriots

I hammered my fists into the nothingness I represented

The everything was crucified in what had become due process

On the blood-sweet land of liberty at Kent State that day

That beautiful spring day in May

America butchered her young selfless lovers

And married out her faith

Walter R.S. Hinton. 1985