

## DOG DAYS OF THE EMPIRE

something about my fellow citizens  
worries me  
I see them fill stadiums with their  
singing of  
patriotic and religious songs  
and I am worried  
they seem capable of excesses  
they seem capable of extremes  
I can conceive  
of situations wherein  
they would stop at nothing  
in the pursuit of their ideals.

I read in the papers how  
they have been banning and  
burning books, and tame stuff  
too — Kurt Vonnegut, Stephen King —  
we're not talking about hardcore,  
and not just sex books  
but anything they see as  
disturbing,  
unwholesome,  
distasteful,  
anything that presents  
a world view or philosophy  
that's different from their  
own.

and this uneasiness  
goes with me  
everywhere, it's with me  
in the frozen yogurt shop where  
I sit by the loud hum  
of the refrigerator fans,  
at a table with my kids,  
eating a frozen  
chocolate ice-cream-like dessert  
and I am scared silly,  
I'm so terrified  
that I can't say a word.  
no one else looks worried  
no one else seems the least  
bit concerned. and that  
makes me all the more convinced.

you will say I'm shell-shocked,  
that a life of adversity has made me  
a nervous wreck, and  
there is some truth in this,  
but I tell you  
there is something bad in the air.