

Apolitical Intellectuals by Otto Rene Castillo

One day
the apolitical
intellectuals
of my country
will be interrogated
by the simplest
of our people.

They will be asked
what they did
when their nation died out
slowly,
like a sweet fire
small and alone.

No one will ask them
about their dress,
their long siestas
after lunch,
no one will want to know
about their sterile combats
with “the idea
of the nothing”
no one will care about
their higher financial learning.

They won't be questioned
on Greek mythology,
or regarding their self-disgust
when someone within them
begins to die
the coward's death.

They'll be asked nothing
about their absurd
justifications,
born in the shadow
of the total lie.

On that day
the simple men will come.

Those who had no place
in the books and poems
of the apolitical intellectuals,
but daily delivered
their bread and milk,
their tortillas and eggs,
those who drove their cars,
who cared for their dogs and gardens
and worked for them,
and they'll ask:

“What did you do when the poor
suffered, when tenderness
and life
burned out of them?”

Apolitical intellectuals
of my sweet country,
you will not be able to answer.

A vulture of silence
will eat your gut.

Your own misery
will pick at your soul.

And you will be mute in your shame.

–Otto Rene Castillo

