

UNTER DEN LINDEN, MADISON AND MINE;
MEDITATION ON A FRAGMENT
OF THE BERLIN WALL

JOHN F. SHERRY

It sits there, on the Sony on my desk
Academic, bracketed by books,
Suntory beer, a cast of Peking man,
Flanked by crayon drawings, woodblock prints
Beyond the cathode glow and windowlight
Above the papers and the Post-it notes
That shuffled and reshuffled slow my work.
Still boxed, still pouched, still born upon receipt,
An art effect of unreflective stone;
A piece of rock, a piece of the true wall,
The very cardboard incarnation of
Totemic cant confirming toys are us.

Nowhere there is that doesn't love a mall.
Good neighbors fence for makers
Who still fashion with a hammer and apall.
Dilated, the new takers,
Eyeglasses empty as a butcher's case
Inconsummate, not needy,
Must hear stoned idylls of the marketplace.
Asbestos and graffiti,

Wallpeckers chisel sentiment and rock
The street, the alley flower
Beyond the gate, no triple witching hour
Glass catches grains from any pock.

Cased presentation pieces, segments large
And small, authentic ornamental past,
Brokered relics healing fissured hearts, all
Tailing like a meteor to become
A trophy, a mosaic on the shelves
Of discount houses and dismantled chains.
Astonished by barbarians at our walls
And hesitant to welcome this good buy,
This last grasp margin call philosophy
Of longing that of late restrained them, we
In our glass houses saved by boundary stones
Consume what's left, the customer is right.

For all of that, this unturned stone is mine;
Around this rock I've built my own small shrine:
A wall of mirrors to pacify the urge
For wailing, mending or for writing on,
For tumbling down or tunnelling beneath,
A great black wall of ages built to scale,
A threshold god, a fitful monument
To kindergarten hordes who couldn't share
The wealth or burden of a new found world
Of bright and shiny sharp and sterile stuff,
Prima materia worn down to clay,
To all whose labor changes stone to bread.

John Sherry is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University.