
by Nicholas Heacock

Shots fired
across social media as the news
breaks
Ahmaud Arbery Rayshard Brooks George Floyd Breonna Taylor Amani Kildea
onetwothreefourfive (justlikethat)—

And I'm in quarantine wondering how—
Rent due. Hours
cut. My neighbor hangs
the battle flag
of the Confederacy. Calls it history.
Down
the block I hear people playing
“All You Need is Love” by the Beatles.

Rent got raised. But I keep thinking
it must be someone's job
to stack the bodies. Thousands—
and counting. Even more
sick. We sanitize
our groceries.

Love is all you need.

They say we didn't
see this coming. Profit
is down and they say we're all alone
until relief comes.
The President arrives
at a church for a shoot.

Peace
at the sit-in protest: *We want black lives
to matter.*

V
I
O
L
E
N
C
E

2020

Answer: they're gassing women and children now.

There's nothing you can see that isn't shown.

A power
walker struts by and speaks
loudly to someone on the phone, saying *there's weakness
in masks*
and complains that she *can't breathe*.

Gas
gives way to smoke in Minneapolis
and the cops fire into a crowd who repeat
I can't breathe.
A man lays bleeding on the concrete.
Is he breathing?

It's easy, all you need is love.

The media pundit
who *loves the boys in blue* attacks
the protestors and wonders how
we got so violent.
He claims *all lives matter* but in the white
space, fails to hide the subtext.

We're running low
on our essentials. Essential
workers are expected
to return to work and risk their lives.
Are we to continue
to fatten this beast that's killing us
and nail ourselves
to this cross—this runaway train—called America?
Jesus—

All together now—

We need to fight back.