

6 O’CLOCK NEWS

“The news is on soon, turn on the TV.
There’s a fire downtown— and I wanted to see.
And I want to know how my Yankees are faring . . .”
(and he wants to eye what the weathergirl’s wearing).
“And now, the news!” And soon he’s just staring.

As the broadcast begins, it seems little has changed.
The same news as yesterday, just neatly rearranged.
“New research says . . . ” a reporter was braying,
heralding what the man in the lab-coat was saying.
(And *who’d* doubt a lab-coat with hair slightly greying?!)

He’s eased himself back in his favorite chair,
comprehending but little, he continued to stare.
As mischievous alpha-waves take over his brain
and the well-groomed anchorman tries to explain
why we continue to spend *so much* in Ukraine.

Like daydreaming through a long-winded sermon,
he’s half-listening now, as he tries to determine
whether we’re *winning* or *losing* that war—
(*yet, he couldn’t quite say what they’re fighting it for*)
—*hey*: did they get to the Yankees? *What was the score?*

But they hadn’t yet gotten to the local events:
the teachers on strike; the preacher repents.
Yet minute by minute the newscaster droned,
he uttered and spluttered, he declaimed, he intoned,
with his “newscaster voice,” his skills finely honed.

“And now for the weather,” his tone grown exotic,
and the cute-little-weathergirl (whose dress was erotic)
pointed and pranced in front of her chart
displaying some measure of meteorological art
(or perhaps she was simply such a *sweet little tart*).

Now the anchorman turned and he chattily flirted
with his female co-star who excitedly blurted:
“New polls show . . . ” — then the palaver proceeded,
. . . and watching the news was all that he needed.
His attention rose up, his attention receded.

So, what are the newspeople selling today?
Politicians or toothpaste: its the same either way.

They are tricking the brain, their technique refined,
a screen for the eyes, a voice from behind:
they have directly connected to the human mind.

“Now *this*,” seems be the 21st century way
to grab one’s attention, to direct it away
from the death and the wreckage that day in the news
to the excitement at Disney, or the joy of a cruise,
or the monumental decision of which car to choose.

Hail to the *screen*, it’s a powerful potion.
It makes us susceptible to most any notion.
Trust in your screen! Trust in it well!
Images have *power*: the power to sell

—and the *kick* to deliver us directly to *hell!*

~Asa Plinch