

Eulogy to Diana

David Herreshoff

1970

Her pallor of skin and her gauntness (both doubtless accentuated by the austerities of the Weatherman lifestyle) and her cool light blue eyes behind gold frames put me in mind of the woman in Grant Wood's "American Gothic." Her vibrant contralto voice and sensuous mouth suggested a tremendous courage for struggle and love.

I encountered mostly the American Gothic in her, for we did not agree easily and I am as stubborn in political argument as she was. But what I saw in moments of sharpest struggle was a glint of determined anger in her eyes, never contempt. What I saw there matters to me.

Diana was the daughter of the head of an electronics corporation. Some will suppose that her lineage detracts from the seriousness of her revolutionary commitment—as if only the poor had a right to hate this rotten system! In truth, there is nothing frivolous or accidental about the fact that children of privilege are turning against the class which can "give them everything" except a worthy reason for living. I still doubt that she had found the way to overturn it, but I see in the life and death of Diana Oughton a warning to the American oligarchy that its days are numbered.

In a few years, Diana had traveled from hope in the country to desperate fury about it, from flower power apparently to bombs. If many in this country do not soon understand how she got to where she was at her death, there will be no better future for our people but only a bloody common ruination of the opposing classes.

In the explosion which killed her, Diana's body disintegrated. All there was to identify her by was a single finger. There is only one thing I can say to Diana: We shall not let your strength for battle and for love perish with you. Sister, farewell. Venceremos.

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