

**The Face of Evil**

Perhaps it was the howls  
 from the kennels, or the merciless insomnia  
 that grips men of thought, but that night Louis Pasteur had a frightful  
 dream that his little patient, Joseph Meister, was dying.

He knew the symptoms, having witnessed them himself as a boy in Arbois.

The snapping jaws, foam-flecked, the slobbering bite.  
 Then the clumsy attempt at treatment,  
 cauterization at the smithy with a red-hot iron, screams,  
 the smell of burning flesh.  
 And inevitably, later, the faint tingling in the cicatrix,  
 the suffocation at the very sight of water,  
 the paralysis, the coma and death, always the death.

He woke to the wind scratching at the window like a dog.

But had he not been careful? . . . trephining the skulls  
 of dogs, inoculating infected tissue under their scarlet brain-caps;  
 the transfer to rabbits, their spinal cords  
 hanging in flasks, shriveling, like tiny criminals on the gallows;  
 then turning the evil  
 back on itself by injecting it into infected dogs . . . who lived!

Light came, the lion, to the grounds of Villeneuve l'Etang.

And that day, July 6, 1885, Joseph, age nine, hands, legs, thighs  
 purple with bites from a rabid dog,  
 would become the first to receive the injections  
 of the rabbit spinal cord into the skin of his abdomen,  
 crying at first, then  
 submitting quietly under the watchful eyes of "dear Monsieur Pasteur."

What do we do in the face of evil?  
 Consider the exact arc that curved from Arbois to Paris.

And consider this . . .  
 fifty-five years later, on June 14, 1940, a sad day for the "City of Light,"  
 the knock of a rifle-butt on a gate, and the gatekeeper  
 who would commit suicide to avoid opening Pasteur's burial crypt to the Nazis.  
 That gatekeeper's name was Joseph Meister.

*George Young, MD*  
 Boulder, CO 80304

*Requests for Single Reprints:* George Young, MD, Boulder Medical Center, 2750 Broadway,  
 Boulder, CO 80305.