Samuel Hazo

ACADEMIA SUPREMIA ANEMIA

The chairperson says, “We’re not teaching students to sit and read poems under the trees.”

Shakespeare tells him, prithee, to shut up.
The students cheer for Shakespeare.
“Deconstruct constructions now,” proclaims the critic.

Wordsworth warns, “We murder to dissect.”
To prove his point, he separates one tulip into stamen, petals, stem and roots, then shows us not the whole that once exceeded all its parts but one dead tulip.
The chancellor exhorts the faculty to “total quality performance with every class computerized.”

Socrates sleeps through his speech while Christ’s too busy arguing the sacred once of everyone to hear a word.

Since both lack terminal degrees, they teach remedial courses as substitutes or adjuncts at less than minimum wage.

Enter the Director of Athletics.

He’s proud of victories but says without conviction that losses are “part of the game.”

Emerson suggests he read
again his essay on compensation. The DA says, “I know that compensation is important, but money isn’t everything.” Emerson comments no further. The class president urges the graduates to be successful people. “Successful people,” whispers the class clown, “or truly successful as people?” The President, on whom this subtlety is lost, ignores the comment. Three millionaires, one socialite alumna and a talk show host are honored with degrees and hoods. The alumna speaks of loyalty and leads the students in the Alma Mater.

No one knows the words. By the time she stops, Montaigne has long since left, followed by Dante, Catherine de Medici, Pascal, Euripides, Mark Twain and some who feign acute dyspepsia or urinary urgency.
AT CHURCHILL’S GRAVE

Call it the battleship of tombstones, but amply deserved, all things considered.

After the blunder at Gallipoli, he turned to soldiering and politics and warned of Hitler in the interbellum.

No one listened but Hitler himself. He balked at bantering with Bevan, fearing Bevan’s Welsh wizardry in argument.

Later he wangled Stalin’s armies to the cause in spite of Eisenhower, Roosevelt and Charles de Gualle.

Still later came that business with the iron curtain and his hopes for Europe. No small achievement for a man more portly than most who smoked cigars, wrote English prose so lucidly he won the Nobel Prize for Literature and painted watercolors in the country when the voters turned him out.

After he died, his widow Clementine, refusing all largesse, would sell them, one by one, in order to subsist. Call him a commoner with more than common attributes.

“One of our better sort,” the usher said before rain smeared all the carvings on the Bladon tomb
except for
CHURCHILL
over
Winston Leonard Speancer
and the dates.