Trinity Reincarnate
by Paul Nord

A man now comes to tell the story.
the nervous habits of Oppenheimer
the alcoholism of Kitty
General Groves' weight problem
Perhaps that humanizes them
brings these epic giants down
to our world of anxiety and obsessions

Next the gadget shrouded in white
the spirit of the project
the thrill of doing a job well
of getting the calculation right
of seeing something for the first time

Finally some color on the stage
Far-off the mountains glowed red,
then yellow, green, blue, and violet;
The colors of the rainbow
of Vishnu awesome and terrible power
"Shouldering the sky"

Only at the end of the drama do we realize
we've been three hours without any color
We must have known
Somewhere in the giddy past of opera night
The shoes, the makeup, polite applause
Then the dark
It's been like this for so long
A half-century of reflection and we see
the Manhattan Project in cold dim light;
a black and white history faded
into the beige dust of the Pajarito canyon
And the Sangre de Cristo just
now visible in the morning twilight

© 2008