

I HEAR AMERICA SCREAMING
(apologies to Walter Whitman)

I hear America screaming, the varied cries
I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one screaming his
as it shouldn't be bleak and minimum wage,
The carpenter screaming his as he measures
his coffin,
The mason screaming as he makes ready for
layoffs, or leaves off work,
The boatman screaming what belongs to the
creditors in his boat, the deckhand
screaming over the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker screaming as he sits on his
bench, the hatter screaming as hats go
out of style,
The wood-cutter's scream, the plowboy's on
his way in the morning, or at noon's
welfare line, or at sundown,
The sickened scream of the mother, or of the
young divorcee at work, or of the girl
hooking and whoring,
Each screaming what belongs to banks or the
government and not them,
That day what belongs to insurance companies -
at night the rumbles of young punks, vile,
stupid,
Screaming with open mouths their strong
pathetic cries.

Howard N Kaplan