

FRIDAY: DEATH TO ALL THAT JAZZ

*My friend, you would not tell with such
high zest
To children ardent for some desperate
glory,
The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est
Pro patria mori.*

– excerpt, Dulce et Decorum Est, by
Wilfred Owen

This week has been a long death march. Death to optimism, death to pre-existing notions of political parties, death to futures defined by progressive visions.

Ironically, the march led to today's 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme – the beginning of World War I and the bloodiest day in British military history. The battle lasted five months and cost a million soldiers' lives. The British suffered 60,000 casualties on the first day alone as they fought alongside the French against the Germans.

Among the British dead were black soldiers from Britain and British West Indies, and Indian Army Calvary who came from what is now India and Pakistan. The British recruited from South Africa, Egypt, China, and more to replace their losses as the Somme continued.

One hundred years later they have forgotten all of this shared pain and history, along with Winston Churchill's post-WWII vision of a unified European family, a Pan-European Union which the United Kingdom, United States, and Russia supported.

On that bright and cheery note, have a little Death to Jazz – music which never dies.

Democracy elsewhere

Australians went to the polls on July 2nd for

this year's federal election. They didn't torture themselves with a year or more of campaign crap, thank goodness. I can't tell you much of anything about this election except that like the US and UK, there are two major parties running neck-and-neck – the Liberal/National coalition and the Labor party – while the world might hope for Greens to succeed. At least Aussies have more than two major parties to choose from even if they are more colorful than any of ours. Putting aside my flippant attitude, this election has serious consequences for the globe given the need for Australia's climate change research in spite of its excessive reliance on sales of coal as well as its creeping authoritarian approach toward the internet and surveillance. What policies will the next Aussie government pursue?

Wheels

- NHTSA launches investigation into fatal autopiloted Tesla crash (Tesla Motors) – OMG if you look at the Florida Highway Patrol report sketch of the accident you'll immediately grasp what fail this was. This was a really horrific accident. Tesla's post indicates the sensor read the gap below the semi-truck's trailer as open space. Jalopnik picks apart the accident; they may be right that the obstruction detection sensor is too low on the vehicle. Besides the fact the driver was completely distracted and watching a movie while on

autopilot, something else doesn't sit right about this crash – like the truck failed to yield, or the car was traveling at too high a rate of speed? Truly a sad situation for the driver's family and the truck driver.

- Volkswagen thinks its 3.0L passenger diesel engines can be “fixed” to meet emissions standards (Reuters) – Wait, what? They used “undeclared auxiliary emissions-control devices” on this engine, and not the emissions controls defeat software used in the 2.0L engines, which somehow means they can fix the larger engines. I've missed something somewhere along the way because I don't recall reading about any “auxiliary devices” before now. Color me skeptical.
- June car sales remain on pace with May, except for Volkswagen (Business Insider) – Dieselgate has really done a number on VW brand here in the U.S.; sales are down 22% for the German automaker over last year. Other brands have picked up the slack, though; the biggest winner is Nissan.

Don't forget about China

Fourth largest by area, second largest by GDP, and first largest by population, let's not forget about China!

- ICYMI: Insurance company to CIA employees bought by Chinese company (Newsweek) – You might want to read Marcy's piece if you haven't already. The U.S. really needs to improve the CFIUS review process given this egregious example. It only takes some big iron computing to crunch a match between Wright USA's business database and other breached databases out there in the cyber-wilds to identify...well, you're smart. Figure it out.
- Taiwanese missile mistakenly fired, kills fishing boat captain (IBT) – No words for this, which could have been very ugly. Somebody kept a cool head.
- Taylor Swift's love life no longer the subject of Chinese bettors (Billboard) – Chinese government banned the sale of insurance instruments which paid off when celebrity singer/songwriter Swift broke off her romance. Good move, this one, because

Swift changes partners like some women change purses and shoes. Don't waste your money betting on what is surely a PR-driven romance between Swift and the flavor of the month, British film star Tom Hiddleston. (Better off betting on who will be the next James Bond – Hiddleston? Doubtful.)

Party Plans

It's a long holiday weekend here in the U.S. If you don't have plans, here's a few tips.

- The party moved, dudes; new sandbar this year (Mlive) – Court tossed the monster party held on one of Michigan's inland lakes because it was monster. This year it's being held at Wixom Lake instead of Torch Lake. Poor Wixomites; brace yourselves for 1000-plus partiers.
- Non-Terrible Songs about America (BitchMedia) – This week's BitchTapes playlist is estrogen driven, a nice even-handed, clear-eyed change of pace for a mellow Fourth of July. Kind of like a hug from your mom or sister who love you in spite of the fact they know only too well you're a bonehead.

- Baking cookies for holiday snacking? Don't eat the raw dough! (Yahoo News) – We've always been told raw dough is risky to eat because of uncooked eggs in the batter. But unless you've checked yours against the FDA's recall list, it's the flour that's the potential threat. E coli-tainted flour is still in the food system and could be in uncooked dough products. Cook them well, don't eat them raw.

Holiday mode commences in three, two, one – boom! Because nothing says freedom like incendiary devices at close range!