

CALL ME GEORGE, OR NEVILLE
(or a random American gunman)
[Bullets not supplied]

My character's name is irrelevant
Without time or place; it's still a tale with a moral
Scenario 1: I place George as a British person
Living in Nazi Germany, mid-1930s at the time

of the book burnings, repression and massive
displays of foolishness and intolerance
And naked power. There's a line from a book
I cannot find, that describes how George

Witnessing this desecration quietly celebrates
That he has seen his enemy; he has seen their
Behaviour; he is sickened and disgusted
You might think this strange, unrelated

Scenario 2: Neville sat opposite his enemy
Endeavoured to negotiate for peace in 1938
He believed he had when he told the nation
"Peace in our time". He was mistaken

The present tense: The conservative urge is to ban and burn
It is a warning of where their behaviour is going
Ban and burn, ban and burn; has a beat to it
History already has heard that beat, it begins with books

And ends with people, getting banned, banished and burnt
In America? Not yet. Give it time. Will you, like George
Feel sickened, celebrate and say "I see my enemy"
When you see a family member or a next-door neighbour

You can wait if you like; dip into your "thoughts and prayers"
(who are you praying to, if praying is the correct verb?
"Preying" is more like it.). Do what all good gunmen do
Kill children, and shoot up schools. So I ask you, what will you do?

Will you, like George, feel sickened, celebrate and say
"I see my enemy" when you can look into a mirror, and see yourself
Or a family member, a next-door neighbour or a local politician?
Can you? Be brave. Be honest. It takes courage,

it's not for the frightened and the fearful
To do nothing is a decision, as much as participating
To do nothing is an act (an interesting word) of cowardice
To look and see, to see with your eyes open, and act

That takes courage and commitment

Leslie D Bush
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