

Study for Massacre of the Innocents

Richard Collins

*In an odd sort of way I think Francis [Bacon]
thought of himself as a religious artist.*
— John Wonnacott

Christ clings to his cross
Deplorables to their guns
Extremists to their slogans
Escapists to their fun
Talking heads to video rostrums
Killers to the Constitution
Everyone to the news
Another shooting, a few boohoos.

Our logarithms make it so
We loop and loop and loop
Pray and pray and pray away.
Our phones foam at the mouth
Like rabid dogs and dyspeptic babies
Regurgitating viral clouds of glory.
We stroke screens with epileptic fingers
We scroll with echoed nostrums of religion
To cure an original ill we only hope to feel.

The trigger goes click click clickbait because
The more innocent the target
(The better the story
The bigger the headline)
The sweeter the blood.