

Old Diseases

The diseases declared extinct by the World Health Organization began to make a come-back, next the diseases associated with poor countries appeared in scattered American suburbs;

cases of tuberculosis were reported in New York, smallpox and meningitis made news in the midwest. At first the speculation was that third world immigrants crowding the inner city ghettos

were responsible for what was comfortingly concluded were only isolated cases, but when the children from the affluent suburbs came down with mysterious ailments the six o'clock news ran stories with old

footage of the victims of an unstated epidemic in Africa to illustrate the national problem. But who could screen the thousands arriving hourly at the airports for the unknown carrier of a hidden bomb?

Some said these were prophecies coming true— predictions made before the New World was discovered, that a future age with its belief in its own perfection would be made to learn

it could not escape old forms of dying. Ever stronger drugs attacked the hidden virus in the blood like smart bombs hitting their target but new cells developed where vicious rogues

regrouped to resist any advance, intent, like stubborn fundamentalists, to make the strong and seemingly invulnerable body collapse. Old, old this, oldest of all the old diseases.

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