

The Speakers

By Weldon Kees

"A equals X," says Mister One.
"A equals B," says Mister Two.
"A equals nothing under the sun
But A," says Mister Three. A few
Applaud; some wipe their eyes;
Some linger in the shade to see
One and Two in neat disguise
Decapitating Mister Three.

"This age is not entirely bad."
It's bad enough, God knows, but you
Should know Elizabethans had
Sweeneys and Mrs. Porters too.
The past goes down and disappears,
The present stumbles home to bed,
The future stretches out in years
That no one knows, and you'll be dead.

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