

BEING ONE

Alfred A. Yuson

All ...

All I can offer
is the fun of an antic
mind, will o' the
wisp
of notion and imagination,

a sense of joie de vivre,
a few au courant
suggestions
that may masquerade as
nuggets of wisdom.

Do we tell on one another's
extras, ensembles? Maybe.
Dunno if it's best,
but could be so.
The moral order of aesthetics
I like to think we share dictates we do.

On the other hand, all those may serve
as further test of
barriers, parameters
of emotion, to see how much the other
can take,
without going haywire. Aiee,
aye, there's the rub and the fear.

Then
again,
if we find that we don't mind, either it enters
an even more
special niche of relations, or catches
itself slip-sliding away. Maybe we
say, how be jealous
when one is not possessed, yet how be sane when
obsessed?

* * *

I am sorry for being a double-edged sword.
One blade cuts to the quick and pares off all raiments
to arrive quickly at joy. The other drags the core down
to now dull, now sharp extravaganzas of misery.

Why, if *querida* in Spanish means dearest, beloved,
must it be downgraded to mistress in our understanding?
Does there have to be another room, so secret,
When one crosses the border from colonial to native?

Questions, questions. When all that matters
is the hour the minute the moment
when you are all there is, all
that can be.

Being One

In an era of inappropriate content,
we need a group grope
towards white noise.

If you just crash into me
or upon the collective meme,
conundrums of net loss
may strike the strangest dude
—the way Nadal grunts, almost
with venom, biceps bulging

adroitly for a southpaw. Gauche?
Always get them to surrender
without a firefight over any bridge

above sludge and muck.
Equipoise of execution
is all that's needed

for a crossover above rivers
of demarcation, between nations
and genders. Toss in genres.

In an era of viable alternatives,
the gavel may be banged
on duplication of simulacra.

As discontent providers we have to look
at the moon a different way,
and imagine missing the spittoon

with our phlegm of gravitas.
No matter. We are bridged.
We are one.

The Long Poem of Faith

All faith begins with a little flame in a cave.
The dark is dispelled, but it only opens up
greater dark, dancing shadows, more fears.
The heart leaps to illumine imagination.
Where did the fire come from, where did the fire begin?

It was from the sky, a swift great light
that struck a tree, turned it alive—
into what seemed at first as horror, crackling
tongues ablaze, like the spirits we conjured
before we learned of nights aglow.

That spark created warmth, heat.
That spark had no beginning but sky.
There was a brave one among us,
there is always a brave one who
approaches mystery as if it were food.

There is a branch afire at one end.
A human hand grasps the other
and becomes that of a hero. This starts our faith
in something beyond us but with which
we can share, with whom we can share.

In the open, in the cave, in our hearts
the sparks speak of more mysteries—
how the fire only honors wood,
how it singes fowl, how the burnt taste
precedes softness, and it is as if we invented angels.

From candle to brimstone is a leap as mighty
as we made over centuries of abyss.

Until we came to the gist of the narrative.
And the shadows disappeared, after telling us
this, this, and this—a myriad of tales
that spun around and defined the truth:

There is a savior and there is the story of a savior.
There is a flood and there is a rainbow.

Love begets family, brethren, gospels and wars
for bragging rights of sundry gods.

Water and wind assault our bodies
but it is our brothers that hurt us.

We need to keep going back to the source
of our courage, the little flame in the cave
that painted pictures for our solace,
stayed our sorrow by giving light.

This earth, this weather, the temper of the season
will divide us, sunder our myths and fables
until we speak of the same flood but vary
in our measure of water. And that arc of colors
in the great sky will precede vendaval or scirocco.

Terrain will separate tribes, monsoons whip
boats and ships towards new islands
and the recognition of sin. Hail the burgeoning
faith in prayer and moral compass,
in astrolabe and hands clasped together.

The fervor may burn through slow march of ages,
or swift killings when cross and crescent toil
across deserts for the clanging of blade and bone.

And everywhere the weakness spreads,
the submission to felicitous vision.
And everything breaks apart, for millennia—

burning bush stone tablets preach sermon
great cathedral spire nave altar belfry
bodhi tree the lotus the six-armed goddess

and there are those who will deny creation,
give the lie to serpent and apple
man and woman weeping wall synod synagogue

rabbi muezzin mecca pilgrims beatitudes
divinity as power tongues of fire seraphim demons ghosts
bogeys messiahs saints in frescoes canticles scapulars

incense and gongs sticks clapping the blood sacrifice
dark bowels of the earth rockets to the moon
space suits from blue planet heliosphere chandeliers

bonfires witches at the stake hymns missals
crucifix martyrs heretics nailing paper to a door
the virgin adored the woman as friend

the woman stoned for going beyond friendship
with other than her other
the pious mother ...

All these stories have a grip on our inner recesses
from the time thunder bade lightning to strike the tree,
burst it into flames — thence the food bones flesh wine

miracles marvel amazement credence

the flint

solace

sorrow

Voice

The human voice
in sheer ether of adroitness
can be, must be
the loveliest sound in the world.

Do not tell me
the sea's susurrus
is lullaby for all ages.

Or that birds
prey on lament
on our tenderest mornings.

The human song, the human cry—
no accident of nature—
is learned, applied,

when sunrise is all silent
or twilight turns terrible
with time's own pause.

As marvelous alone
As sob, whisper, aria,
Scat, searing spit of love.