

Reflections, And Other Poems

If A Unicorn Comes To A Dishwasher

If a unicorn were to come to me and whisper to me to jump on its back so it could carry me from the mud and the barbed wire and the never-ending dishes to the circus, indeed I would listen to those temptings.

"We would be star performers there, you and I," it might say.

If that happened, then I, as a grateful employee with a faith in the social order and a wish to cooperate with society's rules, might give two weeks notice before I left my job and traveled with the unicorn to that glittering destination.

But instead if I departed with the unicorn in a precipitous sundering of ties to the Hotel and the Union of Dishwashers,

Then I might be two weeks sooner in attaining my circus stardom.

Where Were You When You Learned The Leopards Got Tarzan?

Were you in the vicinity?

Was it possible for you to come to the rescue?

Probably not. I was there, though.

We thought he in his strength and agility

Never would come to harm.

We were wrong. We cried.

I'm not ashamed to admit it.

Stone and blood and silver--

It was a miserable evening.

It started off good. Anyway, I thought it did.

I was in a poker game.

He joined in after a brief hesitation.

He had a strange expression on his face

As if he were calculating odds I couldn't see.

It got down to a huge pot between him and me.

Those chips were a means of salvaging what I'd lost.

Without them I'd be in disgrace.

He won. Stood up. Gathered the precious chips,

Tossed them in disgust to me, another mortal fool to him.

"Let this be a lesson," he said. His eyes didn't seem to judge me.

He drew his jacket about him and exited into the chill.

They'd been waiting there.

We heard the scream and rushed out.

The leopards were surrounding the body.

One of them established eye contact with me.

What did that eye contact mean to him?

The last to bound away, he held it until then.

It's been in my dreams since.

There is a mercy rule in softball games.
It came into play after my team got 15 runs behind.
Could that mercy rule extend to the rest of life?
“Tarzan, despite being Tarzan, is 15 runs behind,
so we’ll spare him from more of our claws and teeth.”
Sometimes in my dreams Tarzan spares the leopards.
The game swirls back and forth. I try to keep score.

Love’s Mental Warmth

Love is a warmth in the mind.
What causes love to make its climate known?
Is it a hurdy gurdy, jingle jangle run for a touchdown?
I don’t know. If I played football I’d be pounded and squelched.

Love’s warmth surfaces in the mind.
Does magic cause that warmth to occur?
Yes, it’s the magic gap junctions deliver.
They’re synaptic brain parts which sense telepathic love.

Are you able to perceive telepathic love?
That can be a great asset to have.
Muddling through relationships can turn your mind wintry.
If the warmth isn’t there, can you find routes to summer?

What happens to evoke that warmth sent from others?
Sometimes it’s merely a matter of luck.
You catch a child falling from a second story window.
Ten thousand people are watching on that street.

Did luck play a similar role in the battle?
Great Hektor fell, temporarily stunned by a rock.
Yet no assailant could reach that defender.
His comrades surged forward and the enemy was blocked.

What might the rescuers afterwards have encountered?
Was it a wall of love as if light years high?
Yes, magic happens, and not just in battles.
Can you sense that guerdon when you’ve done what you can?

Scraped the ice off the windshield, perhaps,
Even though you wanted to sleep.
You weren’t the one going to work so early.
Yet what’s in your mind is a warm recompense.

Do all such efforts end in gap junction love?
A song to a parrot that's begun feather picking
Might stop the short-circuitry due to being in a cage.
But does the bird's healing send signals to your brain?

An ideal universe takes note of such endeavors.
If the parrot doesn't love you then someone else will.
Do the scutwork; don't be skimpish; try to be a superstar.
If the parrots don't love you then millions of others shall.

In Praise Of The Musician And His Song

The piper will begin his piping.
The insects will sing their hums.
They'll find what he pipes so compelling.
The frogs will add their drums.
The bats then contribute their shrillness.
The worms sing in voices so dim.
He pipes and the music overwhelms us.
I am you. You are me. We are him.

The piper continues his piping.
The chorus is glad to join in.
The listeners too begin singing.
The trees begin rustling their limbs.
The lambs sing about the sweet clover.
The exiles cease being grim.
The piper is a friend, is a lover.
I am you. You are me. We are him.

Reflections

Reflections In A Butterfly House

I was sitting on a bench in the butterfly house.
The butterflies seemed intent on being happy little creatures.
Some were fluttering around; some were on flowers;
Some were transitioning between those roles.
I began thinking about a scene from Homer's *Iliad*.
The war leader was talking with his fellow soldiers.
They'd been discussing bird-flying signs and the war.

“One bird sign is best,” the leader said,
“To fight in defense of our people.”
Suddenly I felt moisture on my arm,
And yes, there was a butterfly overhead.
“One butterfly sign is best,” I imagined the leader saying,
“To restore the world in its ever-changing ways to those deprived of it.”
How surprising. Where had that come from?
Imagination can be as erratic as a butterfly’s travels.

Reflections On Experiences Acquired From A Tae Kwon Do Class

The facedown in some athletic matches: each side tries to scare the other with their
glowers, their implicit promises of harm.
It wasn’t like that in the prelude to the non-contact sparring between us.
He was six, and I was his opponent.
“Sparring will freak me out,” he said.
“It will be all right,” I said. I said it two more times.
The match began. We danced around and aimed distant kicks at each other. It was ballet.
It was a lark. It was a game.
The match ended. He was all right. And so, for that matter, was I.
The following week his mother glanced at me approvingly.
I shared her role of being a caregiver to the boy.
Kicking is the instructor’s main focus during a class.
Sometimes in the aftermath I have fantasies about kicking.
I will be able to do a back kick quickly and without losing my balance.
I will be superbly accurate in the placement of my kicks.
But the kicks are only a lesser part of the lessons to be learned.

Reflections On Learning The Rules

We have to learn the rules.
Otherwise we remain misfits all our lives.
I cannot tell you all the rules; I have not learned even a significant minority of them.
(And yes, I’m a misfit, but that scarcely matters now.)
I have learned this:
It’s good to have a nest in which one can lick one’s wounds.
I went to that nest after I performed on amateur comedy night.
Good nest! Safe nest! Healing nest!
In that nest I recovered.
My lost face grew back.
I’ve always known this:
Do not shout at people, including cats,
Even when they’re about to throw up into the toaster.
Shouting at them can blight them.
(Yet on the other hand the combined acoustic power of thousands of singing insects is not
a blighting force.)
I’m glad I learned this:

Love is a warmth in the mind.
My mind feels like an iceberg without it.
I've learned I should try to use my intellect.
I will learn this, somehow:
The eureka shout.