

The Bottle Will Find Me... It Always Does

Question: What if the Chief's daughter is ugly?
I mean, what if you get
to the beautiful island, they let you live
and surf and eat all the shrimp cocktail you can eat,
you design beautiful thatched-roof huts
With sand floors the likes of which
have never been equaled, and the ocean is always
warm and inviting, no sharks,
just dolphins and waves, waves, waves...
and the beautiful woman you were supposed
to have thrown at you is not so beautiful?

What if she's the slop cook
at the island's only burger joint?
Or what if she's beautiful but
has a mean spirit and a cold heart?

Plans are only plans, my friend,
and you're walking a fine line today.
Sure, this side of paradise
is not so pretty,
why do you think Fitzy wrote that book?

Alright, I'm letting it go.
I'm done talking you out of this.

So,
on the other hand
dangling in the ocean water,
why the hell not?
Go,
surf the ocean, climb the mountain,
grasp the brass ring, leave all this behind you
and only look forward.
Make no arrangements--break free
from the weight of your things, let them all go,
forget the job, the car, the house on the corner lot,
even the piano (you'll get another one!)—
leave this life all behind you
and seek out the one you were meant to have,

and when you do,
send a postcard or a message
in a bottle
back to me
in some language other than English,
in some language that you make up on the spot,
or just draw me
a crayon drawing
because I already understand

The Devil's Grottle

I tell a tale, a tail, you'll see,
a tale of adventure and woe
A tale of we three, my friends and me,
of me and Bill and Joe

We three we went away one day,
away from the pub we know
We went to see what else could be,
where else the liquor flow

And just next door, never seen it before,
there was a pub called Suds
We looked around at this new place we'd found,
Seemed all right for me and my buds

This place was very warm, and true to form
The patrons looked a little rough
They didn't dance in the aisle or give us a smile
They did manage to look quite tough

There were no sports pictures or TVs or transistors
The walls were the color of tar
We could hold our own, and people like us at home
So we walked ourselves up to the bar

They may not care who is winning the inning
But if the beer is cheap we approve
We sidled on up to get us a cup
At last we would get in the groove

We got five mugs each--we had to try the place at least—
and that's when things got strange
the barkeep Old Charon said life was just barren,
would we like to expand our drinking range?

He took out a bottle of something called grottle,
the bottle it just seemed to glow
With a wild look in his eye and the grottle held high,
he was not a man, we did know

He said call me friend
and drank the elixir
We watched as he poured what was left
in the mixer

He gave out Howl that sounded like a growl
And his frenzy chilled our blood
But when he grew a tail and horns and eyed us with scorn
That's when we ran from the place they call Suds

And so in the end we did not call him friend
We ran back to our old happy haunt
We told of our plight and no one laughed at our fright
They'd all had their own grottle jaunt

They said we had luck that we didn't get stuck
in the place that was right next door
For they all knew our story was true
That's why they don't venture for more

Since then we've been able to remain quite stable
drinking mug after mug at our pub
We don't go too far, we love our great bar,
We're glad to avoid Beezlebub

Cheers!

Green

Dark green carpet that I remember
Dad installing on his hands
and knees
with his tools and his best friend
on his hands and knees
measuring corners and lengths
while my best friend taught me to do somersaults
and I loved the word
I spelled it in my head the way I wanted to
using words I already knew, summer then salt
and it took me a while to believe that the word even
existed. You see, I thought, in the middle of orange pulled-up
carpet and dark green new stuff half laid down,
that I knew every word there was to know

And there was a painting on the living room wall
Pap says Nana loved it that's all he ever said
while it hung above the green carpet
When the living room turned green
the painting was a gift from Nana
with large pine trees leading back to a small
house in the field in the distance
In the foreground was a giant rock,
marking the path through the trees

But then Nana died and our family moved
and the painting is now in a room
with white walls and plush blue carpeting
and Pap still says how much she loved it

And so, you see,
Now I can't do that
because now I think the rock is actually
a large piece of wood
and that the walls need to be green
for the painting to be held up

As a kid, when I'd sleep over my friend's house
we'd talk and listen to the radio
all night and in the morning we'd be still
because there was this window that faced
the sun in the morning
and my friend loved to sit and look out
because she said no matter what
that red house was still always across the street
and the green tree was always in the yard

and I don't believe her because
I used to sit and look at that
painting and wonder what it would
be like to be behind that rock
peeking just barely
from behind to see the
people standing in my green living room
looking at me

So, now, in the middle of the night
when the radio DJ
finally sets aside his beer and puts down his
cigarette long enough to let me know he hasn't
left the building yet
I think his voice
is rough, like me
It is a rough voice because
he hasn't heard it for a while
and neither have I
and it is new then, too,
Just like I feel