

Coffee Grinds

The coffee filters through a porous paper
cupcake jacket capturing the grinds,
yet allowing the liquid to pour through
the tender gauze, coloring and flavoring
the tempest of water agitated almost to a boil,
piping out the national anthem of morning.

The aroma of AM quenches the thirst
for snooze buttons and beckons for the frying pan:
eggs-over-easy with a side of bacon sizzling,
splattering, and squealing like a greased pig.

The corporate knight prepares for his day sniffing,
then puffing on his dark elixir, wrapping his lips
around the cup-rim then tilting his head back
as if receiving Communion, swallowing whole
his dawn ritual, administered to alleviate
the pangs of conscience and uncertainty
which crop up along his chosen path.

The only time and space he reserves for his self
is here where he sets his agenda for the workday,
gulping down breakfast without chewing, without taste;
the nervous excitation he swallows provides the impetus
needed to live in servitude, exchanging time for benefits
and distant rewards in the hereafter of 401 k,
hopping a walker forward wondering where life went.

Paradigm Shift

Old man, bitter and lonely,
why do you think you're the only one
who knows better?

Old man, why do you complain
so much of society's ills,
when it's your attitude that festers?

Old man, you mock protesters
and unfruitfully compare your apples of discord
to orange flames of passion and liberation.

Old man, your golden age never existed
except in your stagnant imagination;
you suffer from dementia and conformity,
blind loyalty and a sentimental sense of nostalgia.

Old man, you have become deaf to the tones
of evolution, out-of-tune with reality,
thinking your reactionary beliefs
will incite counter-revolution rather than ridicule.

Old man, you don't understand the world
doesn't revolve around your solitary experience;
a consensus reality exists beyond your grasp
containing a deeper truth and the seeds of growth.

Old man, you have existed throughout
all the ages of mankind's ascendancy,
and you have always been the same character:
the conservative paragon that stands
in the way of social justice and progress.

Old man, you survive as a virus
inside a host of different bodies
living vicariously off the energy of youth
through indoctrination and idealization
promoting a noxious strain of selective individuality.

Old man, your days are numbered;
I shall commence the countdown,
and watch you disappear as irrelevant
without a flag waving atop a pole
or any monuments sanctifying your mythology.

Old man, meet New Man...and Woman;
let's call us equal.

A=A

Cast into a maelstrom,
we cling to any object
providing ballast, security,
safe-passage to the craggy beach
where we crawl ashore
into open roles awaiting us,
stifling our development.

Once these early scripts
are internalized,
they become us, us them.

As we falter into adolescence,
we look up to no one,
so we look behind for guidance
to navigate the vista ahead,
if not already shipwrecked
by early travels, games played,
circumstances inherited.

We look up at role models
playing parts against each other,
modeling behavior unworthy of emulation.

Lacking...we measure ourselves
against ideals exemplified
only in their absence,
the equation never adding up,
never balancing, yet remaining
the standard by which
our emotional calculus
derives conclusions,
values integral to self-esteem,
and functioning.

We apply our formulas to relationships
forming binary pairs with our own kind
where we tend to divide, and be divided,
into mixed fractions, irrational numbers
unable to fully express
our true nature without resorting
to endless repetition.
Or we overextend ourselves

pursuing an infinite class
of substitute objects,
using them up,
the endless pursuit
using us up;
then we seek more,
failing to see
the Law of Identity
in operation, binding us
to a distant longing
forgotten long ago.

Unlike salmon,
ordained to swim upstream,
few make an adult pilgrimage
back to their point of entry
in search of a lost identity;
they flee their briny source,
their origin and early environment,
forgetting that water comprises
the largest portion of our bodies,
our minds, our unconscious depths.
They fragment further, forever finding
no rest, no closure, no peace above ground.

But those who do return, drink-in
the salty breeze washing over them,
wallow in the warm, grainy deposits
of Time's wisdom clinging to their feet,
and take in the entrancing waves
rolling across their vision,
knowing there's a solution within.

This sea swells within us all,
the mindful toe the tide, testing the waters,
building up strength to swim
in a turbulent, surging ocean,
careful not to go in over their heads
for the undertow may engulf those
foolhardy enough to underestimate its power.

One mustn't dive headlong into the churning swells
of the deep when embarking on a voyage of discovery.
Charted courses are available upon inquiry;
remember to take a compass, an atlas,

a life-jacket, a loved one or two – at least
in your heart, and every resource you can fathom.

Overcast

The sky has fallen,
my head is in the clouds.
When I cry, I sprinkle rain
down upon you, to nurture
the seed planted long ago
deep in my Earth.

I hear you calling,
all I can do now
is hold on to you
as dearly as I can
while your new roots
reach out to grasp my hand
so we may grow together.

Be patient Little One,
you will have your day
in the sun.

Just Noticeable Difference

Indifference,
in your defense
I cannot speak.

I could whisper
in your ear,
but you don't allow
anyone too close.

I could shout,
but you still wouldn't hear.

My words make your eyes
scramble for defenses—
replies that contradict my pleas—
but those windows
never make contact with mine;
they just keep looking
for a place to hide.

Before you react, listen closely
to what I'm saying;
despite our disputes,
we still need each other.

The survival of mankind
depends on us working together;
even if you don't quite conceive
how this is in your self-interest.

Healing begins once we recognize
our mutual concerns and see eye-to-eye
through the blinders of vested interests
and resentment, beyond differences
into a future of open reconciliation.

I respect your right to choose
but remain wary of your tendency to co-opt
censor, and smear, subjugate, ignore,
and instill fear: History is on my side.

I come in peace at the outset
but will not go away until I'm heard
and action is taken to right wrongs,
rather than cover them up under a deluge
of rhetoric and coached public relations.

You will not save face without
a face-to-face meeting, negotiating
terms and conditions on equal footing
where each party's rights and responsibilities
are spelled-out in advance.

This is in accord with an open civil society,
not the norms of gated boardrooms
except for those at the table with a stake involved.
Those without a seat have shares in the consequences
of decisions without representation of any kind;
and these voices have assembled to address you now:

We are not alone.