

## SUBMISSION TO SIXFOLD – 5 poems

### Overall Title: Redeemed Living

#### COSMIC TRAVELER

Looking far, he was on a star  
Looking down, he was on the ground  
Looking near, he was in a mirror.  
Looking here, there and everywhere  
I always saw that pale adventurer of a thousand faces  
A frail traveler from ten thousand places.

I asked,  
from where he comes  
to where he goes.  
He replied,  
from star stuff he comes  
to carbon dust he goes.

I asked,  
about Eden  
and about Heaven.  
He replied,  
'twas a mishap  
never on the map.

I asked,  
about the purpose of life  
and finality of death.  
He replied,  
both are a mystery  
solved only by me.

I asked,  
if I could learn  
about his sojourn.  
He replied,  
no need to ask  
'tis already your task.

Yes, I am the unnamed traveler of all places  
The unheralded hero of a thousand faces  
Traveling everywhere far and near  
Accepting all things and free from fear  
Living a life of changing form  
Where the old die as youth reborn.

I was here  
    as elements of stars 14 billion years past  
    as multi-cellular life 500 million years past  
    as a sun star's energy 8.3 minutes ago.

I am here  
    in the fluttering of a butterfly's wings  
    in name and thought that will not die  
in time that bends back in space.

I will be here  
    through my traits passed on through genes  
    through my feats passed on through memory  
    through the thermodynamic law of conservation.

I will have been  
    in many places born  
    in many faces adorned  
    in many lives mourned.

I am the cosmic traveler.

## MEMORIES

Road to home winding through memories of an earlier life  
Tree of living still standing where the house once was  
Fragrances of home enduring beyond the opening door  
Touching by my mother smelling of sweet perfume  
Holding by my father smelling of pungent tobacco  
A panting, licking dog bigger than me  
First day of school with musty halls and ringing bells  
Riding a bike as master of shaky balance  
Driving a car as master of magical power  
First kiss of stirring enchantment  
Marriage on a windy hill blessed by sun light through clouds  
Shane's crying through his first night at home  
Feeling the lonely cold and austere beauty of winter white  
Feeling the quiet warmth of summer green  
Song of Ave Maria as Schubert smiles  
Words of philosophers speaking of ancient wisdom  
Voices of old friendly duffers echoing in a coffee shop  
Carol's voice and presence always here with me.

My memories of memories  
fade in the receding light  
of days gone by  
the road home longer  
tree shapeless  
smells defused  
words and voices fainter.

All once real  
as I best recall  
but it  
then was  
long ago  
was then  
long ago.

## OLD HAT

I'm old and used to things.  
I like wearing my old hat.

The hat gives me another look  
– good style, fits right, distinguished gray;  
Makes me think how the world looks at me  
– the forties generation, cool like Bogart or hot like Indiana Jones;  
Makes me think how I look at me  
– vintage old school, with personality, a bit European.

Don't think much about it anymore, except  
thought about buying a baseball cap  
to make me great again  
but that's not me, not my look  
not my look to an aging world  
of which I am still living proof  
like twelve-year whiskey forgotten in the cupboard.

After my father died I found it  
up on the closet shelf where it was supposed to be  
waiting to be found,  
old from another age  
new showing no age  
a memory lying dormant  
waiting to come alive  
as easily as being put on my head  
which I did.

I don't think much about the world anymore.  
I like things better when familiar and old.  
I am comfortable with how I look and with the thought  
some day the world will not see me and the hat will be back on the shelf  
waiting to be found and relived  
speaking faith of that given and taken.

I like my hat.  
I'm used to that.

## TERRORIST ALERT

Attention!

As you read this  
terrorist killings are occurring  
among the 7.4 billion people on this planet  
but as an American your chance  
of being killed is one in ten million  
a lotto-winning probability.

Your chance of being victimized is a legalist-dictated certainty.  
as a taxpayer for the world's most expensive military and security apparatus and  
as a presumed-guilty suspect of modern surveillance.

You are now a detected hit in cyber space and time  
a digitalized node on the infinite string of the Internet  
a totalized entity in the cyber cloud of universal information.

You are an open target to spyware and malware  
no password or passage to hold beyond  
no codes or encryptions to hide behind.

You cannot get off, cannot get out.  
No exit exists, no other place about.  
No thing exists outside the digital text.

You are

channeled to  
<www.wifi.com>

figured to  
0 & 1

reduced to  
bits and bites

exiled to  
infinite clouds.

Sleep well.

You are being

Looked after.

## WHAT TO DO WITH YOU

As long as I remember:  
My body was always there  
with me. Good times for us, mostly  
but also hard times of pain and tension  
such as now. It was there to respond –  
looking, hearing, touching, sniffing, tasting  
not enlightened but still there. I was  
the smart one, to be sure  
to learn language and reflect  
provide food and shelter, avoid bad instincts  
build good habits and relate to others. It never  
thought through things – actually never thought  
– instead by seeking pleasure and avoiding pain  
it left me to negotiate the discontents of civilization.  
It was always the child of nature, and I  
the adult of nurture (although  
truth be told I had no choice.)

Now here you are:  
Old, weak, and diseased, you  
a wrinkled skin bag wrapped  
around brittle bones and tired organs  
inflicting your pain and fever upon me  
demanding drugs that dull my thought  
causing me to beg the attention of  
profit-mongering doctors, hospitals and homes  
making your pain and fear mine  
your mortality mine as well. You say  
you want to quit  
again not thinking this through –  
skeletal remains for you, still worse  
nothingness for me. Quitting is final  
no going back to what is gone  
as imagined in memories or movies.  
Away with you and your failing parts  
to be piled at an auto salvage yard  
better yet recycled in the white fire  
of amalgamating ovens  
if only I could.

What to do with you:  
We may go to the same after-life realm  
but you of awful stench and emaciated form  
I'm leaving below with bodies decayed

and ascending to join souls of higher grade.

What to do with you:

You think you're irreplaceable, not so  
I may go robotic – aluminum casing, biometric sensors  
bipolar stepper controller, migarotary actuators  
all with one thousand year guarantee –  
no feeding or messy emissions  
no pain or organ stops (although  
I will miss the eating and drinking binges).

What to do with you:

You too, brain, I may go also  
with AI – the new Model IQ 180 Plus  
smarter than you ever were with  
easy upgrades and everlasting memory –  
an old brain is not a terrible thing to waste.

What to do with you:

Pack you up within me  
to reincarnate as another body – no,  
better to go celestial than bestial that  
is just more of the same and who  
knows of what phylum name.

What to do with you:

I'm off to see the savior  
the wonderful savior of God, but  
because of carnal sin  
you're not invited in  
you've lived a life too odd.

What to do with you:

Still, I will miss you  
and our life spent together  
so let's now spend  
the night together  
knowing we  
will be fine  
will be fine  
will be fine  
for awhile.