

On
Pegasus'
Wings

Kit Cain

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ON PEGASUS' WINGS

The Poet's Perspective

I don't know how one would set out to be a Poet. It was certainly one of the very last things I ever thought I'd be. It was rather something that happened "along the way" ... that is to say, along my own long and arduous journey to spiritual understanding. I found myself thinking and talking in sentences and words that rhymed without any conscious effort. With that impetus as a start, I then began to add conscious effort to intuitive impulse to bring the intuitive impulse into a more universally coherent or storied form.

An intuitive impulse would be, to me, a single line or a catch phrase such as: "Bore the brand of the Captain's hand"; or "Stepped into the firelight and impaled me with his eyes". Phrases like "Chains of Freedom", "Released from the manacles of matter", "the Blind Musician", and even single words that carried some emotional power within them, like "Released", "Lost", "Power", or "Tears" would be cause for me to write them down immediately, along with the frame of reference in which they occurred ... and most often in the early hours of morning just prior to full wakefulness.

These instances have been, to me, as fleeting as the wind, and so I always carry a pen and small pocket notebook to catch them before they vanish into "nothingness" and a blank memory. Restricting my efforts to those widely separated instances of intuitive/inspirational motivation, the joy of composing and writing has never become a burden, and thus, for me, quality has replaced quantity as a result. Neither money nor fame have ever motivated me for long enough to be bored with their accumulation.

In my earlier years of private schooling I had been given instruction in some of the basics of poetic construction, but the only words that have stuck in my mind are "iambic pentameter", couplets, and sonnets. Far be it from me to define them any further today. If I can attribute my poetic capacities to any factors whatsoever, they would be to the genetic factors resulting from my father having been a very

excellent drummer and thus having given me an inbred sense of rhythm through genetic transfer and childhood association. Secondly, to the fact that I come from two generations of schoolmasters who specialized in languages including French and Latin, but particularly English and English grammar. Both my Grandfather and Father were very excellent public speakers and communicators, and that cannot help but transfer through close association from birth and through life.

I know that my father had a fondness for certain poems, and I recall having him read them to us as members of his sixth grade class at Calvert School in Baltimore, Md.:

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree
Where Alf, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunlit sea"

This first verse of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's KUBLAKHAN was one of his favorites ... as were several of Kipling's poems. Dad also loved to sing, which he would do without hesitation whenever anyone could play the piano or was willing to listen. He also had a repertoire of bawdy songs and ballads which embarrassed me no end whenever he had more than a nominal share of alcohol because the major portion of my being seems to have been inherited from my shy, modest, gentle, retiring, but extremely able and creative Mother.

Though trained in early childhood to have the manners and dress of a Boston Brahmin, as had been my father, I inevitably opted for the companionship -- and dress -- of the less staid and more adventurous souls who seemed to find a greater freedom of both movement and expression as tradesmen, self-employed individuals, and whatever it is that keeps the renegades of life alive outside the bonds of social integration.

My favorite poets actually emerged from the '60s as the protesters and balladeers who so aptly expressed their own poetic views of life through their folk songs. I still firmly believe that they are the true Poets of our turn-of-the-century times. To name just an exemplary few: Peter, Paul, and Mary; Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Judy Collins, Tom Paxton, Don McLean, Paul Simon, Steve Gillette, John Denver, Leonard Cohen, and Gordon Lightfoot. I mention only these names



because I either knew them personally or happened to feel an affinity for their particular choice of ballad and medium of expression. There are many more, and I apologize to those not mentioned here for not being able to call them instantly to attention.

Still, there is something about poetry WITHOUT Song that stands in a dimension by itself. The power of words alone, when spoken by an actor who can PROJECT them, seem to reach into different dimensions of the human psyche than when accompanied by music. I would call these dimensions the upper levels of the "mental body" of man, or the "Soul" of man. Music seems to distract from the pure power and mental imagery of the words ... reducing them to a more emotional or entertaining response. Not that there's anything wrong with great entertainment through poetry and song, I just don't have a word to describe the power and depth of feeling of universal or mystical words and concepts spoken alone. One thing is for certain ... this category of communication has a decidedly narrower audience than almost any other.

Words which speak to the soul require a capacity to see life with deep insight ... and deep insight seems to require a breadth of experience beyond the normal, coupled with a perspective beyond the normal -- powers not easy to come by, and which require a price few people are willing -- or capable -- of paying.

The great poet seems to be an "adept". He or she is adept at blocking the mind ... at performing a certain kind of "leap" beyond the mind into the mystical regions of the soul, while at the same time not negating the essential nature of the mind. Looking down from this high perch -- this Eagle's roost -- one sees afar with a sharp, totally objective and unbiased discernment. One sees, if the capacity is there, the wholeness in Duality. This kind of vision seems divorced from -- and at the same time accepting of -- the travails and traumas of life on Earth. He or she FEELS the vision first ... and then has the unusual capacity to almost by second nature put the vision into words that are simple words which a large portion of humanity can connect with their daily life experiences and their own personal inner being.

This poetic transition through the mind and into the soul is not easy and I don't know how one would practice doing it. It's almost a desire one has that one waits patiently for and the fulfillment gradually emerges as though it were a gift. However, without a concept of the soul and dimensions beyond the soul, one



has no point of growth to reach toward or expand into. The mind then tends to get lost in the sheer volume of information within the mental realm, becoming more and more highly specialized -- and with a narrower and narrower frame of reference -- so that it must manufacture new words to describe the never-ending discovery of new phenomena. There is nothing wrong with this pursuit per se, as long as the discoverer (observer) is at the same time cognizant of where all things originate and where they finally lead.

To my perspective, the mind is simply another kind of experiential body for soul's imagination to play in, lose itself in, empower itself within, and eventually tire of when the time comes to take that inevitable leap into the unknown realms of soul and beyond.

To me, the ultimate Poet is one who has reduced the complexities of life to the simple ... has developed a complete and whole vision of the artform of the universe and the ultimate source of all Being, thinking, ideas, and even of souls themselves.

It is my hope that you enjoy these poems, short stories, prosaic writings, and insights as much as I do constantly, day after day. Though they have rolled off the end of my pen, and seem to be a product of my own life experience, I still cannot rightfully say that they are "mine", for yet do I still grow into them.

.....Kit Cain



Pegasus

The Poet's Wings

I climb upon my trusty steed
and on his back I ride,
my view now from The Source of things,
my seat so firm astride.
His wings of power raise us up,
each leap a chasm wide,
until we merge into the Sun
whose light doth banish pride.
His journey's end...
....mine just begun,
All words now versified.

See also Author's Commentary, Page 122.

My
Own Personal
Favorites

The Captain

The Captain of the ship I sail
Is merciless with me,
his teachings all designed to foil
the unforgiving sea.
I cannot be the victim of circumstance
nor leave to chance my vigilance
It's honed to the Nth degree.

About the time I think that I
have everything in stride,
I'll be caught between a strong wind
and a quickly moving tide
that bears the brand of the Captain's hand
to stay my indolence and check my pride.

The Captain of this impeccable ship
is a stickler for detail.
He'll not abide a rope untied,
or a worn or tattered sail.
His constant exhortations
make strong men from the frail.

I remember the roaring forties
and the test I know as nine.
The storm came up out of nowhere
and covered the ship with brine.
The lee rail went down 'till I thought I'd drown
So I tied myself on with a line

I stood before the wind alone
my death perched on the bow.
I noticed not that grim ergot
who seemed to say, "What now?"
I'd assumed the role of the fearless soul
Had taken the "Captain's Vow".

I'd trimmed the sails; I'd tied things down
I'd covered every hole.
Put every man of the crew below
I couldn't risk a soul.
And, cold to the bone, I stood alone
The sky as black as coal.

I'd done my part from the very start
Yet still I could not see
The seventh wave was the killer knave
and it was headed straight for me.
The vessel shook; I dared not look
as water foamed by the lee.

And then up spoke the Captain
from his seat behind my brow
His presence there in the calm and still
And the storm which faced us now.
"Your part's well done; now I'll do mine;
You do not question how!"

And so we roared on through the night
No longer did I tire.
On the mast of the Brig, at the top of the rig
I saw Saint Elmo's Fire.
It bore the brand of the Captain's hand
How else could such transpire?

And when the seventh wave arrived
It smashed on the starboard beam.
I roared aloud above the din
Then heard a stifled scream.
My death had fallen off the bow
Had passed me by...for now.
What efforts fail from human travail
The Captain can redeem.

And when the foam had settled
The wind began to die
The damage to the ship was nil
I did not question why.
For it bore the brand of the Captain's hand
The knot ...
... I'll not
... untie.

~

See Also Author's Commentary, Page 128.

Chance Encounter

It was late in the fall of '62
The weather'd turned bad and I couldn't fly through.
Hemmed in by mountains on all sides 'round
The fog and the clouds forced me down to the ground
Down into the valley of the Wind and the Peel,
Wild rivers of the Yukon whose feel is surreal.

The wind howled down from the mountains tall
So I tied my ship down to keep it safe from a squall
And there in the shelter of boulders huge
Built a fire of driftwood for the night's refuge.
The fog settled in when the wind died down
And I sat there alone a hundred miles from a town.

I had radioed in while still in the air
That I wouldn't be back 'till the weather turned fair
For t'was often the case of the Bush pilot's fate
To be plagued with bad weather he could not but outwait.
The roar of the river soon put me to sleep
But the wild was untamed and my sleep not too deep.

As I lay there quite lost in my dream-like bliss
I suddenly felt there was something amiss
Then out of the night a man emerged
His presence so strange my adrenaline surged.
He stepped in the firelight bold as could be
And impaled me with eyes that could do more than see.

I reached for my gun, but could see he had none
His hand raised in friendship, wide smile as in fun.
Two wolves at his side, yellow eyes in the light
Whined and shrunk back to the cover of night.
I smiled in return, but could speak not a word
His appearance and presence all seemed so absurd.

Wore a dark sheepskin coat that hung down to his knees
Tall leather riding boots well-oiled for his ease.
He looked Scandinavian, blue-eyed and fair
A dark Crimson kerchief tied round his blond hair.
No Indian, trapper, or hunter was he
And his words were as strange as any words could be.

"What is the purpose of life my friend?
What happens to YOU ... when it comes to an end?
This I can teach you and many things more
Things you can't buy at the corner bookstore."
So he sat on a log while I brewed him some tea.
The wolves lay at his feet... all the while watching me.

Then I sat next the fire and bid him talk on
As though he were the chess master and I the pawn
For long had I sought what he offered to tell
Long had I labored under Earth's blinding spell.
"I give you this warning about what I say,
Your whole life will be changed, beginning today."

I nodded in agreement and so he went on
That dark, foggy night in the northern Yukon.
"If you contemplate my questions then you'll have the first clue
The answers are confusing, but not none-the-less true
This world is not one ... it's divided in two;
To reconcile its perfection is the job we must do."

"Of what value the demons which cause us to cower?
How can they be seen as the source of our power?
When you work in the gym and sweat hour after hour
Is that not the source of your physical power?
What part of your being makes your countenance glower,
But events of the mind and heart building their power?"

"What is this "Soul" that no-one can see?
Do you think that it dies ... has no reason to be?
This I can tell you with full certainty
When the body dies, the Soul goes free
And keeps coming back with renewable glee
Till it finds what it is...

... and becomes like me."

"The total of wholeness is the sum of two parts:
Man, King of power, and Woman, Queen of hearts.
Each soul must learn both like the horse learns the cart.
One lifetime brings only this knowledge in part
In no other way is one soul split apart,
Nor is it meant to be fun from the very start."

"From whence come our thoughts ... inspired or vain?
Are we always the cause of events filled with pain?
We have thoughts from within which we have to sustain
And thoughts from without which we have to re-train.
Each travesty in each lifetime that we cannot explain
Is a lesson that teaches us to restrain or abstain. "

"The purpose of life has to do with the soul
The sole part of you that can make you whole.
And now, who can tell you who it is makes the soul?
Who can tell you its reason and what its role?
No man can do more than peek through the keyhole
For the Source exceeds mind ... is far vaster than soul. "

"There's no end to the known, but we still have to try
For only with effort can the grounded bird fly.
Fear not to ask questions that others deny.
Seek out the things of life money can't buy.
Does the wind really blow? Can you tell me how ... and why?
Who are you really ... and who am I?"

“The purpose of Life is to be what we are.
What we are is the knowledge of any great Avatar
Who has gone beyond mind in his journeys afar
And discovered the Source of the most distant star.
For the Soul in its body is like the driver in his car
The Soul goes on, though it may seem bizarre,
‘Till it shines like the soul of the Knight Lochinvar.”

So profound were his words that I fell off to sleep,
Or was it all a dream that arose from the deep?
And when I awoke as the dawn light appeared,
I was snug in my bedroll....and the weather had cleared.
I looked all about...no sign could I see,
But two boot prints in the soft earth.....
.....and they were not made by me!



AUTHOR'S NOTE

See the poem “Lochinvar” by Sir Walter Scott to fully appreciate the reference to the gallant, fearless, audacious soul of the Knight Lochinvar....though a “fully-developed” soul he may well not have been!

Alas, only portions of the above-described event occurred to me in my bush flying days.
Would that I could have met such a man in true person rather than in my imagination!

The View From Soul

So you say that it's all too much
You enslave yourself for your freedom
And when it's finally within reach
You're too old or too infirm to enjoy it.
Your beautiful body that moved so freely
Rising to each challenge,
tasting with sensual thirst,
Has become ugly.
It moves with difficulty and with pain
And cannot resist the earthward pull.
Now, I ask you.....
Can you dance to it?

And though you cannot single-handedly
Bring peace to a war-torn earth
And you cannot staunch
the lightning-started fires of renewal,
Or guide the Tornado's path of Destiny;
Would you really want to.....
.....If you could?
Do you have so vast an intelligence?

Have you risen high enough
To see the order in the chaos.....
To see that it is your own beliefs
.....or the lack thereof.....
That place you in the storm's path
Because you have ignored
The subtle tap on your shoulder
.....or your neighbor's words.
Have you failed to see that the outward
Inevitably...
... disintegrates

Leaving you Naught.....
But the integration of the inner?
Can you make beauty from your aging ugliness?
Can you laugh about it?
Can you hear the music it makes?
.....And can you
.....Dance To it?



RELEASED

I have been released from all the manacles of matter
The shackles and the tyrannies of having to survive
Released from reams of busy thoughts ,
And ceaseless mental chatter,
Lust, and greed, and vanity
Their measure do derive.
And yet as long as I remain
within this frame of clay,
My freedom's just a point of view
From well above the fray.

I do hereby release myself
From holding on too tight,
From good...
...or bad...
From being sad
or choosing wrong from right.
I do hereby release myself
To ponder greater things
And find I do
Prefer the view
From whence the pendant swings.

I have been released just like a soldier from his battle
Or even like the dairyman
Who's freed from all his cattle.
I have been released just like an inmate from a prison
Who finds, in time, his freedom blocked
Where newer walls have risen.
"Up" cannot be "Up" without some "Down" firmly attached
Wisdom does not come unless...
.....from Ignorance it's snatched!

I have been released from being lost and being found
From wandering through the forest
In search for higher ground.
I have been released from all the sickness and the pain
I have been released from all this "coming back again"
I see that what I am
Is what I find myself to be,
And in the finding comes the gift
Of being, almost, free

As I look back along the track
Of my journey through time and space
I see no atom nor event
Not perfect in its place.
And though confused and often lost
I stumble and I rise
Each rock and rift upon the road
Expands my soul in size
Until at last I stand before
A mirror bright and clear
Proclaiming to the image there
Without an ounce of fear
I do hereby release myself....
.....from further busyness here!



Of Power & Of Might

What Demon made this realm which says
That I must kill to live?
How quench the guilt that troubles Soul
And though condemned forgive?
Constrained am I by night and day
Like a soup poured through a sieve.

The tide rolls in; the tide rolls out
All pleasures lead to pain.
The days so urgent...nights so dark
I fear the Mark Of Cain,
And I fear that I may never find
My way back Home again.

My weariness bewilders me;
I'm bound by where I stand.
The fog so dense I cannot see
And there seems no place to land.
Alone ... and yet again I feel
The Hand within my hand.

When will the weary night unfold
Into a crystal light?
When will the grounded bird arise
And take to pristine flight
As daily I gather more and more
Of Power and
.....Of Might.



The Blind Musician

There once was a blind musician
Whose music cast a spell
He said it was his intuition
Where it came from he could not tell.
He said it flowed from him like a wellspring
From out of the depths of Naught;
Said it came to him when he was dying,
And only then let itself be caught.
He asked me the source of my perception.
I replied that I'd never been taught.
I "see" said the blind musician....
.....as a kind of an afterthought.

"Then, how is it you've come to this place," he asked,
"That you'd plumb the depths of this well?"
"Oh...t'was not a matter of choice," I replied,
"T'was a force that I could not quell!"
I told him about the dreams I'd had
And how I'd "tolled" the heights of thought.
How I'd come to be the estranged monad
Instead of what I'd thought I ought;
About the many lonely days I'd spent
In the search for what couldn't be bought.
I "see" said the blind musician,
Himself having felt the things I'd sought.

And then as the writer would reach for his pen,
Or the carpenter for his saw,
He picked up his lute and he sang to it
Ohhh.... he played it without a flaw!
It's vibrating strings were like magical things,
His words a clarion call;
A voice that flew through the air on wings
That carried his words through the hall.
I've tried to describe the songs that he sings,
But my words all proved too small.
He could "see", that blind musician;
Knew the sounds and the words that enthrall.

And when the song he sang was through,
He leaned back in his chair.
Though the magic was gone, he still looked on
Through eyes that seemed only to stare.
Who's blind?and who can truly "see"?
Who's lost ?.....and who is found?
What is it that this man projects?
From whence come his words profound?
"Gold's hidden in the silence
Between the silver sounds."
Thus spake the blind musician,
In whose darkness Light abounds.

And, Lo, these many years I've tried
To reconcile the two.
What is this word.....and what the sound,
That brings the Tuza through;
That cuts the dark, and awakens mind
Like the notes of a Bugle's call;
That feeds the heart from a deeper source
So it flies above its prison wall?
I believe in the imagined state,
Though it's oft been my downfall,

.....For I.....
I am that blind musician;
The Fool who sees Nothing in all!
Yes....I am that Blind Musician;
The Fool who knows Nothing....
.....and all!



ADDENDUM

"Nothing", in this context, simply means "No-Thing". It does not mean the absence of consciousness, awareness, intelligence, power, feeling, or the other uncountable potential attributes of the Source of all "Things". Author's commentary: P. 138

Transition

I hear the bugle call me
through the misty morning light
A lifetime ago when I was young and full of life
And going forth to fight the battle
someone else had placed before me
And given me great reason to live....
...or die....

For a God I knew not,
Or a nation which was, to me,
An impassioned flow of words
describing some unity
Which I wondered who could see.

Reluctantly I pulled my weary, groggy self
away from dreams of home and love
in some far-off, peaceful realm,
to suddenly feel the clammy cold of dew-soaked blankets,
wet boots, wet clothes, wet hair, and fouled mouth.
The bugle call disappeared into the thickened fog
which hid the day's battleground.
Thoughts and fears of mangled bodies,
and blood, and death gripped my insides
like the jaws of a steel trap.

The first rifle shot of the day echoed,
muffled,
through the mist
to punctuate my fearful state
....and....just as suddenly....
It faded into the more immediate smell
of coffee in the air;
and bacon frying on a wood fire
.....smoking over there,
at the cook wagon in the trees.

I feel the moment melt into
A scene I cannot see
I hear the trumpet speak to me
With words of harmony
Oh, tell me; Can you tell me,
If these awful things I see
Can be a part of some great story
I have no choice but to be.
Oh, tell me; Can you tell me,
If all this pain and tragedy
Bespeak the perfect picture
I can only dimly see.

And now in later years again
I hear the bugle bright.
Carrying a different tune
At dusk preceding night
“Taps”
Leading ever upward
Into time unknown
The future
Calling me to go forth into new life
Beyond the life I’ve known
To reach compulsively
And incessantly
For some dimly-perceived reality
Not known to human senses.
Nations, people, Gods now vanished
Into imagined realms of possibility.

Eagerly I pull my ageing bones
and still-young energies together
to thoughts of a new home in some
far-off peaceful region nether.....
and the bugle melds into light and sounds
which give me wings that over-ride all fear,
all loneliness,

and send me out alone (al-one)
to seek all unknown things.

I feel beyond my mind
The canvas that I paint....
The story that I write....
Just for me!

~

Jack O' Diamonds

You thought it was the hand of fate
that brought you down this way;
that dealt you an unknown hand of cards
and threw you in the fray.
The dealer was your master;
the rules changed every day.
It seemed like your little house of cards
Was the only game to play.

Oh, Jack O' Diamonds, Ace of Spades,
their faces always change.
When the deck is moving with you,
You may find it rather strange;
for every winning hand you play,
there's a loser in exchange.
And if gold can buy the Queen Of Hearts,
then Vanity's her name.
And if gold can buy the Queen Of Hearts,
The Joker wins the game!

I have a friend, a gambler,
He lives from dusk 'till dawn.
He plays with money, Kings, and hearts;
He's here and then he's gone.
It seems that he can never lose;
his winning streak goes on.
His mental machinations
Make him master of the pawn.

He always has to push his luck
To ever higher stakes.
He fails to see that everything
Has a point at which it breaks.
His balance is a circus ride,
A car that has no brakes,
A scene that he just plays and plays
He takes....
.....And takes
.....And takes.

Now, wherein does the balance lie?
When does the cycle turn?
For what reason is this man allowed
to pillage, rape, and burn?
Is this the image every man
is seeking with his game,
personified and borne by all
to balance frailty's name?

Though the Queen Of Hearts can pull the moth
Into her astral flame,
She lives in the fear that unearned wealth
Will go just like it came.
Ever watchful in her jealous rage
For the fickle male to flee,
The tighter her grip upon his ship
The more he seeks to be free.

Fame and fortune have no wings
To keep them flying high.
The astral flame runs out of fuel;
Desires always lie.
All the gambler can recall
Are his early days of fame.
The winner is a loser
There's no substance to his game.

Oh, Jack O' Diamonds, Ace of Spades
Their faces always change.
When the deck is going with you,
You may find it rather strange;
For every winning hand you play,
There's a loser in exchange.
And if gold can buy the Queen of Hearts,
Then Vanity's her name.
And if gold can buy the Queen of Hearts,
The Joker.....
....wins
.....the game!

