

Pleasant Distortions

Yeah grandpa. What a guy. The only man I ever really met who could look at each day as a treasured gift from Jesus. Look at that sky, the trees, feel the air how it flows through your hair and caresses the scalp. Tears would creep down the sides of his cheekbones 'till they made their final leap to the ground he worshiped.

"Have ya ever seen anything so beautiful."

I could think of nothing. He was an angel. A delicate man with a clean slate. Placid, he lay in the oak finished coffin.

"Your grandpa was a great man. He was my favorite uncle. I'm gonna miss 'em."

My brother in tears, timid of the confidence of the natural order. Weak and innocent like a child. Undisciplined and unwilling to accept the day's event.

It's alright, man. It's alright.

Perhaps coarse, but not shallow. I'd had my cry when I told 'em I loved him only a day before he died as he layed idly on his hospital bed. I know he heard me 'cause he mouthed my name. He layed stunned in near paralysis in his final days.

"It's alright, honey," my grandma assured me.

She was strong still. A far cry from reality she stood. Her hands upon my shoulders.

"Your grandpa loved you guys so much."

I knew this because I heard him say it a half dozen times every time I was with him. He was more than just a sentimentalist. He was damn near swallowed by emotion, crying at the drop of a maple leaf upon the snow laddened ground. A true Christian constantly bewildered by the inherent inconsistencies that polarize human behavior against his faith. Plagued by his own hypocritical intolerance of the lives around him that he viewed with disgust.

I was well prepared to stand firm and disciplined. It was something I could not control and would allow to transgress without agitation. A true rationalist begotten not by emotion, but fearless of the unknown for I needn't know it. I would concur this as I do all that attempts to make me weak. It can beat me! No problem. Invincible, tigerlike and ravaged by nothing. For in death we find the renewal of new life. A life whose pleasures far exceed those we are due to experience in the one herein. Where's the faith you all profess to have saved this man? Where's your reassurance of the "great beyond?" Aren't we all just consciously displaced from reality? Is there really anything other than a

plagerized comfort in the belief of an after life? What's the real reason that we believe this man to be great?

"Goddamn son-of-a-bitchin' motherfucker. Shut up goddamnit."

The hurendous utterences that would escape from the basement dwelling. Cursing at what I pondered. He must know that we can hear him. It wasn't infrequent either. It made no sense. This house my grandparents owned was no fuckin' mansion. It's not like he was in an airtight wine cellar at the east wing of the property and we in the west. It was a fuckin' small house with a stairway that spans the length of about thirty feet tops from the kitchen table where my grandmother and I were chuckin' down soup and shit. It would be preposterous for him to think we couldn't hear his ass. It was damn ridiculous. Go the fuck figure. He'd like argue with my grandmother for a couple a minutes and then the sunami of rubbish would be slanderously spit out all over again. He was pissed as a motherfucker at something, but what, or who? I just couldn't imagine what could be so irritating to such a well-mannered, disciplined man.

Grandpa. I know you can hear me. I just want to say that I don't give a rats ass what anybody says or thinks. I know you tried to be a good man. And there ain't no Jesus, God or Mary who would fail to give you full atonement for your sincerity. Ain't nobody here who knows shit about the world beyond, what's right or wrong, or where the fuck they're goin' when they perish. Anyway, adios amigo, I love ya. Out!

Like a stone-faced soldier without compassion, I turned from his coffin and marched towards my onlooking family members who seemed to be poised to detect my demeanor. Strong as a titan. They had to notice. Yet ready to catch me if I crashed and burned. Bewildered with anquish and insecurity they fought to find the same in those around them. For when the mind is weak, only the acts of contrition can build strength.

"Are you gonna be ok," my father inquired?

"Yea dad, I'm fine."

It was my father's emotionally deteriorating capacities that brought the greatest sorrow to my heart. It was easy to deal with the death of my grandfather because I knew in my heart that he was satisfied by life and secure in its end. I knew that he loved me. I knew that he knew I loved him. My father, on the other hand, had apparently not had such a confident resounding with him. Unrehearsed or perhaps just not prepared to face the day's injustice, my father stood in the shadows of the afternoon's event swallowed by grief.

I went to the funeral parlor's entrance and looked at the green grass that grazed with the westward wind's current. The sun glistened off the early afternoon dew. Birds chirped. Bees spiraled. The day was fresh with new beginnings. This day was meant for celebration I thought. A great man is celebrating the end of a life and the onset of another. Who cares about the unknown? Who gives for the fears of uncertainty? Let the

living live and the dying die. Things happen for reasons. Ignorance causes our feelings of animosity. It stands firm behind our tears, our frowns. If we knew our fate, we would live in peace and courage would be obsolete. Faith allows us to do the same with courage. Stand upon your convictions in the valor of a knight. Fear not what you can't see. Fear not what you don't know. For in order to live, we must allow the natural order of the universe to flourish. Just as we will inevitably allow our natural inclinations, whether they be perceived too good, bad or ugly, to do.

sful. Secondly, it is not the State's responsibility to put anyone through school. Again it is up to each

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