

On a Summer Day with Mary Oliver

*The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from
the innumerable centres of culture.*

~ Roland Barthes

And,

when, some busybody mocks your labour: "What you doing this summer day, first kneeling in the grass and then walking and looking for a grasshopper, on the slope where once ashen trees stood?", i reply, eyes dreamy, face flushed, tone steady, despite being intoxicated with joy: "Looking for Mary Oliver who earlier called from a similar field."

And,

if some busybody of an editor taunts, "Why so many questions and declarative sentences? This, no poem. No images here?! Why don't you follow norms?", i reply, heart filled with pride, " I follow my mentor, Mary. And ancestor Emily Dickinson. *Present Poets* for me!"

And,

when somebody pompous, full of himself offers practical advice: "...why don't you try to earn money or do some side gigs than writing poetry nobody reads or cares?", i reply, eyes twinkling, "Watching the summer day or winter sky; walking in the grass, pine grove; catching frost, spring breeze; listening to the pond and birds---well, a productive task for a lifetime and suited for kindred souls! Tangibles. Words, translucent and green, colours of the vernal hills and glens fed by the rivers. Gliding words on oceans, plains and deserts; the scented winds from the Hippocrene. Vital breath in smog---words, served fresh, raw, intense, refined, for charging the pale-faced post-industrial markets."

At Dusk with Taigu Ryokan

The dusk
hovers
above city's
glowing signs.

A brown-dark bird settles on
dark, twisted, muscular, black
cable, the arteries
making the metro move.

Piles of glorious leaves burn the streets
and sidewalks; turn ugly concrete into radiant
art works of pure golden-russet, pale-yellows, tender scarlets.
The pedestrian
waits for the
traffic to pause, Victoria Park, Kitchner.
The gulls circle in the starless sky,
readying for a flight to provisional homes.

A hermit materialises, adjacent spot,
carpeted by the fallen maple leaves and talks
of a
dusk, and, peak of Kugami
(in the same breath; softer tone of autumnal wind),
and, of some

"piles of maple leaves lying undisturbed".

Separate heaps
Blend into one; electric shock of recognition, the uniformity
of the
lived moments, divided by time and space, in that instant, at
the busy
crossing.

The lights change.
The monk dissolves, a fine shadow of the deepening dusk.

Origins of Poetry

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear
~ Alfred Tennyson: Maud

He springs into view, middle of the computer-screen.

Young and wild, wandering the Somersby churchyard,
shouting his poems to the buried; lying down beside the
graves, as black night hugs
the living and the dead, in an inky embrace.

Poems linger over the space.
Verbal petals scattered over
cold
tombstones; eerie silence vibrates,

the wings
of a bird, terrified.

Alphabets of fear and madness caress taciturn
stones and sods.
A voice unspools tangled layers of dread,
“misery unutterable”, grief, loss, tears wash
the
desolate resting-place of the deceased littered
with
yellowing flowers and few scribbled notes, left
in a hurry.

A poet seeks a sanctuary among the buried, and,
an audience, in the dark cold. The wind screams.
Owls screech. Gate creaks.
Shadows dance. Rustling of branches, amplified.
Hamletian setting. Bizarre balm
to
a fevered mind.

Young Tennyson drowns, resurfaces in the dark.
Finds nightly home and his
Muse in the lonely graveyards, Poe-sque haunts.

To Carl Sandberg and Ways of Seeing

Fog was just a fog. Prosaic. End-result of
condensed water vapours. A cloud on earth.
Physical-chemical-geographic occurrence.

Then comes our dear Carl, writes a poem, and changes
the thing, forever.

He discovers a cat in the fog.
A fog in the cat. The former
lands “on little cat feet”,
looks over harbour and city,
“and then moves on”.

Afterwards, the dull fog,
no longer remains same.

NEXT MONTH is AN UN THEMED ISSUE

send up to 4 poems to

jackcaradoctct@gmail.com on a WORD DOC

sorry

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