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NEVER IN THE SUN
John A. Wilkins III

It's hard to say but I think Gregor was a bit taller than most of the hairless apes that would walk among us. He would pass among us in his narrow white drapery three times a day. We could tell when he would come because the sun would be in the same place when he would enter the garden. Seldom would he not have a yardstick and clipboard in his grabbers. Those times when he didn't possess these things, he would scream fearsome sounds and run about his cage. We didn't understand what these things were for, but it had something to do with our existence. He was our maker, yet we dreaded those long days when he would walk among us.

Fortunately there were those days which we all waited for, when that awful stench would linger above the leaves of our world. Those days when Gregor's body lay in the garden lifelessly sprawled upon groups of helpless plants, we could have peace. The sacrifice of those few plants was worth the period of rest for the masses of us. The stink of that awful grape shit that polluted Gregor's roots was no bargain, however. His behavior on those days was not accepted among his scientist friends, but they all knew of it. "You make a better wine than you do a scientist, Gregor Mendel, and your wine tastes like yak piss!" as they would say at one of his garden parties. They moved about the garden bending, inspecting and groping around its members. They would chat about how futile Gregor's work was.

"Straighten up! Gregor's coming!"

With this, the neighborhood rustled and jockeyed for good pasture, stretching towards the ball of light. This was what we feared; this particular period of light when Gregor would come. Certain information passed by way of the vineyard, for the grapes were not ones to keep secrets very long. We knew he would not have a clipboard with him. In one of his grabbers he held "the reaper" and in the other he had a "clayp". We shuddered at the sight of this. "This can't be happening" one of my friends said, "not to me". The fear of uncertainty crept through my phloem. Uncertainty of life beyond the garden and past our comprehension.

Gregor was growing higher and higher until he finally covered the entire ball of light. One of his powerful grabbers came from the sky; I had no place to run. I felt a sharp, piercing pain which ran up my body. The lights seemed brighter now as I looked down upon the rest of the plants. I felt very light and it seemed as if I was floating on air. My leaves seemed so hollow. As Gregor passed his grabber over my body a dark tunnel began closing upon me. It was absolute blackness. I was afraid no more . . .



i was sitting on a park bench when the most honorable Harold D. Stoll, du jour, high chancellor U.S.A., walked up and sat down. the amazing thing about these street people is that they don't stink too bad. Harry was no exception. the pigeons stayed away. he took out his cigarettes and gave me one, too. we sat smoking.

“. . . her name was Esther . . . she was the first . . . all my life . . . a victim of bamboozles . . . that son of a bitch . . . hey, get out . . .”

a bus came by. from our bench i watched a small crowd board. i named them anonymous, to myself, and said to Harry: “Jesus”.

“. . . agghhgibah . . . they should've called me Jesus, i'da shown 'em . . . that's right . . . all my life . . . i went to work when i was twelve years old . . . the old man . . . look at that . . . the bastard . . .”

i thought about trying to direct the conversation. i wanted to ask him his age. his story. but when i stopped and thought about it, i knew questions were pointless. i'd serve best as listener.

“ah shit . . .” i said”.

Harry just sat there awhile. i think i caught him at a good time — 5:00, the sun was in its decline. a couple more hours of good light. hot sun puts a man like Harry to sleep. the fact that i had nowhere else to be felt o.k. i shifted a bit in my seat — shuffled my feet. all this against urban decay. time is allotted. laugh at ambition.

“i didn't go to the war. i just didn't”

“Harry, how 'bout some whiskey”

“o.k.”

the light went from “WALK” to “DON'T WALK” just as i entered the intersection. i stayed in the crosswalk. a Nova waited to turn. he looked at me like he was in a hurry. this didn't faze me. i could see the liquor store waiting. Harry probably still sat there. i stepped onto the curb. the light turned yellow. i entered the store.

“hey, how ya doin'? half pint please. Canadian mist”

“two twenty five”

“thanks”

i crossed the street with no problem. there sat Harold. i sat down. we drank, passing the bottle. enlightened prince. just god. strength of men. brink of

everything. suddenly the bench fit. across great fields, empty, we tread. i caught myself . . .

“Jesus Christ”

“ . . . absolutely . . . have you ever been to St. Bernard’s? . . . what time is it? . . . i’m gonna be late”

“for where” i said.

“what?”

“late for where”

“i uh . . .”

the sun kept moving. who cares. all the things we bleed about are so personal. Harry told me. you’ve got nothing. nothing but what you think you’ve got. the sun kept moving. Harry stared straight ahead. my words started, wavered and stopped. he sat regal as the plains

Andy Ostrowski



Bev Janoski