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Three Zen Anecdotes

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SONG OF HOPE

Monti: Three Zen Anecdotes

Past

by Kevin Langland

Out of me...

Out of the depths of me...

I long for the coming day.

My anxiety is not for those who know all, dear brother —

It's for those who watch and wait and wonder —

For those who long to hope.

You are not so different as you think;

You who set yourselves against each other

Like knights with jousting poles on steeds
of black or white.

You both long.

You both wait.

You both hope.

You both cry and live in fear.

But there is another way.

A letter to my uncle: Dear Lloyd,

You think you know

But there is another way.

We'll no more know the war machine and yet know earth.

There is no way to keep both.

You were young when you fought and loved

during the first world war, when slogans
were still handsome.

You wrote of trenches and battlefields and Bill,

who asked you to get one for him before he
died of the flu.

Who was the one you were to get?

One so far removed?

Did he long?

Did he love?

Did he care?

Did he belong to earth...

As you did?

Why was he to be removed?

The trees are green, and the grass grows high;

The sky is blue and the clouds blow by.

The honeysuckle smell is strong and sweet.

It blows in my window.

Earth lives.

The birds sing.

Earth lives.

How long, O Lord, how long?

Not with a bang — not with a whimper —

But with joy and honor and

Glory to the Lamb that was slain.

This slave earth pours out its truth on us —

Its purity,

Its beauty,

Its torment.

Its soul,

Its fire,

Its ruggedness.

Its trembling...

As it waits for the sons of man to be freed.

The trees are green,

The grass grows high;

The sky is blue and the clouds blow by.

How long will you last, Earth?

How long will you be?

And the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord,

As the waters that cover the sea.

— St. Louis, Mo.,

1971

Walking into an old town bar is like traveling back through a time warp. The darkness that looms inside has escaped time, along with a wooden bar that has black filled notches worn smooth by decade after decade of elbow rubbing. The present view of pickup trucks outside is distorted by window panes of the past to look like horses of long ago. Handcrafted ceiling tiles, and copper taps are impervious to the passing of time. A ghostly image faintly visible in an ancient cut glass mirror never changes. All of them, except the nowadays inhabitants, can avoid the clutches of time.



Joe Oliver

Three Zen Anecdotes

Two monks were walking by a stream one day. The first monk thought he heard a fish jump out of the water.

"Did a fish just jump out of the water?" he asked the second monk.

"Yes" replied the second monk.

MORAL: Things are not always as they seem, but very often, they are.

Two fish were swimming in a stream when a monk passed by. The first fish asked, "What was that?"

"It was a mouse walking by" said the second fish.

MORAL: Sometime things are just as they seem, but fish aren't extremely bright creatures.

A monk was walking by a stream when he observed another monk splashing up and down in the water.

"What are you doing?" the first monk asked.

"Quiet," said the other, "I am a large fish without scales and I am listening for passing monks."

MORAL: Sometimes things are just as they seem, but the people involved are absurd.

Jo Ann Meadows Matehezyk

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by Dean Monti