



PHOTO: MILES TITTLE & INGRID HEARN

When Mourning Turns to Day

Upon yonder cliff's doth fall
Thy tears and false emotions,
Tears which fall in vain
Upon the vastness of the ocean.

For in such false interpretations,
Silent raindrops fall,
How can fate or destiny
Contrive such senseless expectations?

For me to you like a slice of bread
Yet you to me unlike;
Unlike the one who draws you near
From me you merely thrust away.

You thrust away like steam from fire,
Like from a vulture, prey,
Incestious light of mourning brings,
The turmoil of Today.

For if today is not unlike
Such others came before,
Then I will sleep in limbo's bed,
And you will sleep in mine.

Jeff Arsenault

Ali, the patient, and the secret...

CONTINUED FROM CENTRE

"The air is as good as you said Ali. I decree this air to be the only kind fit to breathe."

"Just wait until we hit the lake. Man, what a beautiful day! It's at least sixteen degrees, you're gonna be hot in that coat."

There was a lunch packed that Andy grabbed from the backseat.

"After lunch, will you tell me?"

"Wait for the Isle of Innisfree, my son."

The boat sat rocking gently as most boats do when they are in the water on a picturesque day. The two made their way carefully along the shore to the wharf. There, a small ledge for water skiers would provide a crucial stepping stone for Beaty. And the two dove off in to the boat.

"Before we shove off, I must say Ali, thank you."

"Wait for lunch, I've packed a couple of ales. Anchors away!"

The boat just sort of sat there. Moving slowly out of the shelter of the private lagoon onto the wider body of water. The white and blue sail was at full mast, poised to grab a lung full. The boat was now under way.

"Look to the left Beaty, that's the island of Innisfree."

"It's as grand as you said it was. It's as grand as Yeats said it was! But it's port, I thought you said you could sail."

"Then prepare to come about, first mate Beaty!"

"Preparing to come about sir!"

"Coming about!"

"Aye that's the skipper!"

Andy noticed an amazing colour change in Beaty. He lost the hospital-grey pallor the moment he stepped into the boat. His cheeks were flush and impossibly tanned. Utterly impossible, Andy thought, but his skin was alive with sun drenched pigment. Beaty's attention span was back and he practically stopped shaking and stuttering as well.

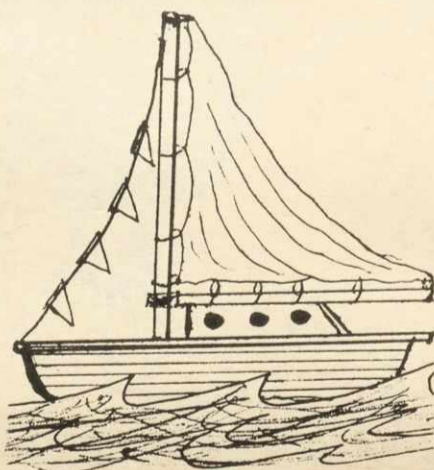
"Arrgh, this makes me feel like raiding some Spanish booty! Arrgh, matey!" They laughed and carried on like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn (except there was no cross-dressing on either's part).

The sailboat was run up against the sand bar, that they had merely stepped out onto land. The lunch was roastbeef and English mustard on rye. They each sipped McEwan's malt on the sand of the uninhabited island and let the afternoon be swept gently away like the air itself.

"A deal met half-way, Beaty..."

"You still want to know the secret of the universe do you?"

"Yes, Beaty."



"And you trust me?"

"I trust you. I never had a grandfather."

"You're an educated fellow Ali. I like that."

You've read to me some of the greatest works of the minds of man and I know you are a thinker. Just in the way you go about your day, I can see that there is a great amount of God in you."

"That spirit is ours. What is the secret of the universe?"

"Now open your mind Andy... In the zygote there are twenty-three chromosomes which comprise the double Helix."

"Right."

"Now from that mass, the first spark is fired. It is a light that followed a nothingness and it is the first human memory. Remembering only that it

was a light that witnessed itself as a light. Then the cell separates... you know anaphase, telephase, metaphase... and when there are two cells, the second neuron of what will grow to be brain activity is there. Now we can see that here, in this form, the distance between the two sparks is time: that there is now one for the memory and one for the observation. But a special observation: an awareness before we have eyes! This continues to grow in to a pre-set structure: the normal human brain. And now look at the stars Andy, close your eyes, do you see them?"

"Yes, Beaty I see them, are you saying that they are one in the same?"

"I am saying that the stars are as significant as they are to us because we are universes, or rather have universes inside, before we have eyes. We know there are structures because there are only so many emotions, there is only so many capacities of the brain to the body."

"Wow, Beaty!" I thought you were going to tell me that 'Girls is grief' or 'another way to skin a cat', I wasn't expecting this..."

Imagine that the head on your shoulders is filled with electrically charged particles, now imagine yourself looking at the stars on a clear night."

"I will need some practice."

"It is the most inward possibility and it is the most outward possibility."

"How did you come across this?"

"Well, nothing before life or after death makes any sense, right?"

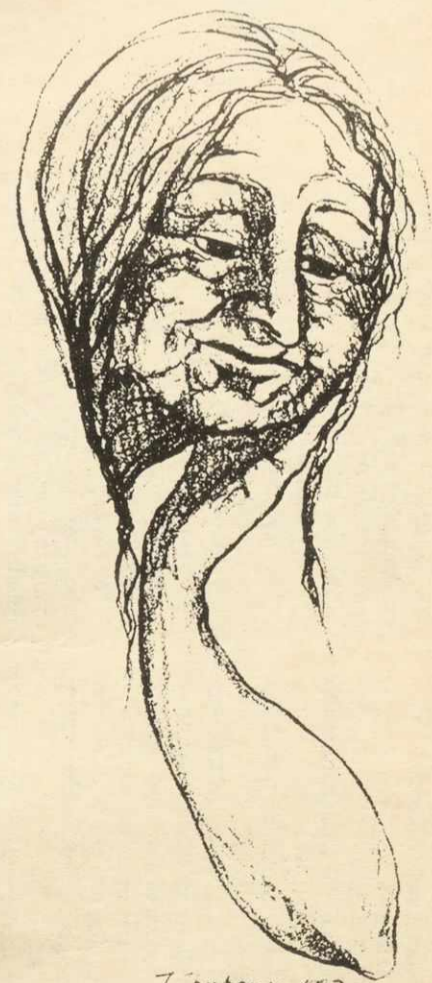
"True."

"But we still read the Biblical notions of Heaven and look for it on earth."

"Right."

"Well I found my bit of Heaven just now. I am leaving you now, Ali... ahhhhh."

Andy placed Beaty's body in the boat and sailed back to the wharf. There he stood in silence and wondered if he should load it up with wood to have a proper Viking's funeral. But no. Although Beaty was gone and his body would turn up a hundred kilometres from where it should have been, there was still a responsibility to the next of kin.



T. H. H. H. 1992