
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Raymond P. Hammond: Three Poems

Raymond P. Hammond · Saturday, December 23rd, 2023

Susurration

You were supposed to outlive me
to hold all my secrets for me
when I am gone to know, be
a witness to my entire life
just as I had dictated it
during long winding forest walks
and those longer cold winter nights.

That subtle canine smirk you showed
each time someone pried hard to ask
about my life, you knew it was you
I chose to be my sole, silent
biographer. So, as the vet
administered the second vial,
I knew when your eyes closed, breathing
stopped, you took my memories
along with your memories, too.

Sitting in the 5 o'clock sun
the shadows long across the lawn
I ask you, what was it all for?
Your first romp through your first, fresh snow.
Your first romp in the surf, the leaves?
Everything that I pointed
out to you, and you out to me,
these things you patiently pondered
you would sniff and study and sniff
your tail registering varied
levels of your wonderment
like needles on a seismograph
recording precise magnitudes
of impacts you had on this earth.
Your dignified self sitting stone-

still like one of those high-hatted
King's Guard at Buckingham Palace
only your eyes shift side-to-side
like paintings in a Scooby Doo
episode, you watch a squirrel
with false sense of security
trying to elicit response
like an American tourist
lacking respect for tradition.

Your cantankerous self sitting
and staring at me from mid-path
when you wanted to go this way
and I wanted to go that way
you would always win, but I would
always learn things novel and new.

Now you have turned down your own path
where I cannot yet follow you.
I sit steadfast in the middle
of the path watching you look back
at me and I can tell that you're
on the scent of something bigger
than life. I put my ear to your
urn and hold it like a conch shell
that plays not surf sounds of the beach
but whispers of wisdom from you.

*

In Rapture

the racing scull glides lithely
across the mirrored stillness
of lake lackawanna, oars
slicing open the surface
with surgical precision,
a low flying swallowtail's
tail etches the glimmer glass

the silence shattered only
by the count of the coxswain
keeping the rows of rowers
precisely synchronized
as on an ancient trireme

the tick tock tick tock of clocks
music before the downbeat

*

Catching the Rabbit

“I want more life, fucker.” —Roy Batty in *Blade Runner*

If there is a god, goddamn him. How dare an all knowing, all present being create a world based upon servitude where we are forced to work our entire lives. And not just work hard, but work hard at working harder than others just to be rewarded even a little; to get even a whiff of pie slice; to get a watch; to get a badge; to get nothing after spending most of our years working. This in a society so centered around work that to be the perfect citizen is to drop dead on the day of retirement. That way we do not spend one day on the dole. The dole we earned. All the while being subservient to ignorance and stupidity in other people and their superficial beliefs who are superior to us because they claim to worship you more. Do you really like having your ass kissed regularly by these people who enslave everything to competition including who loves you more, who loves you correctly, whose getting into heaven? To explain why we work so much, those better than us invoke the christian work ethic. This makes our work virtuous and spares us from the idle hands of the devil. This marriage of religion and capitalism gives capitalism your blessing and makes it a holy thing while capitalism fills the coffers of your most ardent shysters and it keeps us inline and quiet and working sheep because our work then has a bearing on our salvation. What a fucking mess. That is not love. Pass the goddamned collection plate. That is why the constant fear and intimidation and competition shoved up our assholes on a daily basis is the modus operandi of both preachers and politicians selling the magical and mysterious nothingness of you as an old man sitting on a cloud pressing buttons. And then—then—when we reach a point where we are allowed by this minion-based society to take a step back and enjoy life we are too infirm or tired or medicated to enjoy it and then like moses only being allowed to see into the promised land just before you smote him for simply smiting a rock. We, who do not even have such a trivial offense on our record at birth, are just like a dog at the race track: the only way we will ever catch the rabbit is when the race is over. Looking back before the finish line we realize that we were condemned from the get-go to never really make it, but just glimpse a paradise called retirement before sinking back into the earth clutching a filthy, fake rabbit.



Poetic Amusement by Raymond P. Hammond

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