

Unremembered Loss

For all the news and information from the world of Rathrae, and for the story Unremembered Loss

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Four years, it is hard to believe for more than one reason. Four years of writing a monthly newsletter. Four more years and my novel is still far from being published. Four years of deadlines and soul searching. Four years with all of you, for which I am thankful.

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Douglas G Clarke

Alone With My Thoughts

Clinking - metal on metal. Repeating every second or two - a squeak between every third or fourth clink. The leaves rustling in the wind - a jet's engines echoing from a dot in the sky. The rush of cars on an unseen freeway, a hundred cars blending into one sound.

But then, a bird's song cuts through the rest - answered by another. A chirp, a whistle - sharp and shrill. The sound of a motorcycle rises above the hundred cars, the bark of a dog.

I sit alone, letting the sounds wash over me. Washing over my own thoughts, until one rises up like the bird - or the motorcycle. Calling out for attention.

My eyes are closed, the sunlight throwing reds and oranges before me. Sometimes a blur, other times shapes forming out of the randomness as my mind tries to bring orders from the chaos. A chair. A table. Splattered blood. The colors swirl as the beating of a bird's wings travel by.

The reds fade to whites as I hear my breathing slow, feel the cool breeze against my skin. The smell of concrete - the table, the bench - reminding me of where I am - of where I'm not. An accent on the hundred - on the clinking - on the jet.

The aching in my head - in my neck - speaks of the lack in my arms - my legs. Trading the work of the body for that of the mind - the mind causes the body to ache. A choice. But the work of the mind is valued more than the body's. Until the mind can take no more and retreats to observation. No longer wanting to work - just to listen - to see - to feel - and perhaps to taste. Not working on a puzzle - not solving a problem or proving a theorem - just cataloging the jet and the bird and the rustling leaves.

The reds and oranges and whites become blacks and sparkles. The cool breeze becomes a biting coldness. The bird songs are replaced by the those of crickets. But the rush of the hundred does not fade. The world chooses to sleep, but man never stops.

The ache remains, joined by that of hunger and cold. A day is done, but what is its value? An afternoon spent listening - does that have value? Will tomorrow be better for today's interlude? Or will the toil of the morrow have no more value than the contemplation of today.

So the mind begins to fade as exhaustion overcomes it, but the hundred continue their racing from here to there. The jets trace across the sky, having traded their white streaks for flashes of red. The black of the unseeing eyes explode into fields of green as the mind releases the now and escapes to a place it imagines is better. The peace of a mountain meadow with no thought of where the next meal might come from or where a bed might be found.

The night's escape brings freshness to the following morning - a hope that things might be better - that the ache might not return - that life might be like the bird's, who's song rises above the dim. More like the bird's than the motorcycle's - that does not sing, but drones out its work.

The new day holds a promise that the next night of rest is coming.