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Clifford E. Bajema

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Visions From The Four Seasons

Clifford E. Bajema

Summer Cottonwoods

“Shshsh,” whisper the Cottonwoods,
their weathered trunks, like a huddle of grandparents, bending
to the sway of deep conversation, reminiscing,
their cottony spray whitening the dunes.

Infant leaves play nearby, clusters of innocence,
all uniformed in green, none outstanding,
fluttering in frenzied dance,
far still from autumn change.

Autumn Cottonwoods

Gazing out dreamily on a splendid autumn morning,
I see through squinting eyes a sun-lit cottonwood grove, its
leaves blinking like miniature Christmas lights, shimmering
and flickering against a powder-blue canopy of sky.
With my age-ripened imagination ambered past mid-life,
I perceive in personified leaves my beloved grandchildren,
some still green with infancy, some turned golden
with the brush strokes of passing years splashing yellow.
Gaily and nimbly, they flutter in circles, prancing in place,
as though wind-inspired into dizzying dance,
while we, their seasoned grandparents, stand stately
in support, yet also slightly bowing and bending
with the knowing sway of earth-bound seniors
holding up the younger generations above.

Winter Apparition

My computer is asleep.
Before I touch the key, returning
to a netscape of automation and information,
to monitors, managers and modems,
users, savers and setups,
controls, connectors and calculators,
I chance to see in the screen
an apparition of white,
like the image of an old man,
snow-covered.

From a black screen,
as though through a glass darkly,
the vision comes.

I see a face,
the likeness of myself,
not a Mt. Rushmore enlargement
of some outstanding nation-founder
glowing in the summer sun.

The face is more Alpine,
more like a solitary peak,
its rocky features barely visible
through the blizzard,
its frozen lines like strands
of a silver chain
running down into the folds
of its white garment
and converging into a lake
of crystal below,
shaped by many decades
into the likeness of a cross.

This seems not to be a time
for more enlightenment,
not a time for brilliant words
and pretty pictures,
for endless news
and petty games.

Let Microsoft sleep awhile,
while I rest awake,
seeing in these winter shadows
a white garment,
a silver chain,
a cross.

Spring Visions

1. The Cross

Iron was not suited,
nor stone,
for making a cross.

Just had to be wood:
pocked with amber, oval eyes,
etched in orange, red blood lines
descending in cardiographic peaks and sweeps.

Just had
to be wood,
to fit the sacrifice.

2. The Antique

Ancient torture-rack,
with awesome history
and thorn-carved signature –
truly a thing of beauty now!

By celestial design,
horizon-stretched,
earth-sunk
and soiled.

Finish, perfect:
blood-stained and sealed,
body rubbed,
with an age-deepened patina.

Time and eternity join
at the intersection of mystery,
where wisdom begins
as life ends.

For All Seasons: Borrowed Eyes

It was the Lord's Day
when my thoughts took flight.

And I saw, as it were, a likeness of God.
There was a huge hand holding a very wide heart.
The heart was crimson red,
covered with a thousand translucent eyes,
like white, emerald and purple sapphires.
Some turned inward;
some were in sabbath repose;
others looked outward in all directions.

And a second hand took me up into its vast strength.
Its warmth and gentle pressure liquefied me,
and I was poured into the all-seeing eyes.

Settled deep into the heart of God,
my sense of body returned,
but I felt no desire to stand.
Lying prostrate on the heart's inner face,
and supported by the comfort of His thousand eyes,
I was amazed at what I could see.

The earth came into view,
and upon it appeared a thousand living things.
Each creature stood out with such clarity
that it seemed as though a single eye of God were upon it,
watching it day and night,
magnifying its every instinct or thought,
tracing its every movement,
hearing its distinct cries, however faint,
peering into its face,
even counting the fibers or feathers on its body.

I saw a baby Robin fallen from its nest,
cowering and chirping in fear of an approaching cat.
I saw an adolescent man in his jail cell
throwing up on the cement floor,
sickened by sexual molestation.
I saw a mother and father wailing in a birthing room
over their still-born baby.

I saw into a dark grotto
where a small pot of watery gruel,
supposed to feed a family of twelve,
was cooking over a fire of burning dung.
I saw a man, behind the closed doors of a plush office,
downloading pictures of his favorite fetish.
I saw an aneurysm developing in a mother's brain,
poised in a few minutes to blow its cerebral fuse,
while children stood by helplessly.

For the brief moment of the dream
I thought: All my life
I have seen heaven from earth.
I have worshipped,
I have adored,
I have praised.

But now, with borrowed eyes
and bended gaze,
my worship is leveled,
my adoration refracted,
my praise is returned
in lament.

It was the Lord's Day
when my thoughts took flight.
I saw earth from heaven.

All was changed
that Day.