

Heaven

Daniel Zimmerman

At first by degrees or stages of the heart's delight, then by astonishments undreamt of, one turns to a station furnished with gifts--embodied recognitions, by those in eternity, of the sublimest virtues one held fast in life. Labor there discloses those appreciations which adorn the stations of all one meets, and prepares those of others on Earth or elsewhere whom one pities or admires.

In Heaven, where that God follows when you die who led alive, emotions, intuitions, thoughts hidden in life even from oneself by fear, shyness, incapacity, foolishness, or rules of decorum and taboo unfold dramatically: whole natures stride, infernal and celestial, depraved and sublime. Expand or contract at will to any dimension, moment, age; intermingle with any being ever extant, for all are there, angels to algae, in shimmering lakelight, firelight, waterfall, rainbow, fog and crystalline clairvoyance.

Anything possible elsewhere is possible in Heaven, though its reality is always most transparent. Each thing resembles only itself there, lit from within, and thus a countenance of its Creator; in this way only can that face be seen, though one can know its presence in those of angels; they, regarding each of Heaven's citizens, see always also the Creator's universal face, and theirs reflect that joy. The spoken awes her audience, which speaks, in its turn or unison, to a man.

None are excluded or ejected; still, some incarnate, contracting, temporarily, the sensual to the organic, spirit to flesh, God to code. Conduct proceeds allusively: Heaven is inflected, not syntactical. All one might have desired in mortal life is but a stale hors d'oeuvre: love's the word, and copious the table.

In this life I strive, by its subtle and occasionally incandescent glow, to be

mindful of Heaven's offices, the greater to savor its immanence. My view of its precincts is never more than a cinematic still or sculptural arrest, yet even the dullest of its angles or its frames is parabolic, quintessential--the conversation of the famously beloved.

Not belief, but perception; once, but twice.



Echo

B. Cass Clarke

I was eight, and on the way home from the races, Nanny said we were going to make a special stop. Aunt Letty was passed out in the back, beery and soft, and dappled shadows ran off the windshield of the blue chevy Nanny drove hard on the gas pedal, squinting in the sun. My hands and feet and lips were dry and cracked from sun and sand and all the day's colors were finally bleached.

She pulled the car over and I unstuck from the vinyl seats. She walked through tall grasses into a stand of trees, and called to me to follow.

I will never forget the green, blue, the wet moisture, the rich earth Nanny showed me as she pulled the leeks up from the secret place she had found, she said, years before. The whispered treasure of trees and wind, sun, sky, guppies in shallow pools, water and light streaming into eyes' delight echo to this day.

I Always Thought It Was China

Fred Wah

These days I never have "Wet" rice. And why Gramp'd eat such muck, or drink it, insist on it, I couldn't figure.

End of meal, homework, cleaning up the dishes, and there he sits still at the table while mom or dad gets his wet rice. Boiled burnt brown crust in the rice pot looks sludgy but smells sweet. Dad had it once in a while but not often. I tried it a couple of times but I'd never get hooked on it. It was going. Gone now, from him, to him, to me. We weren't forced to eat it, as we did the salt fish, the ginger, the slimy sea weed. When he slurped his wet rice things got quiet, we didn't have to think of all those starving people in China. Him though, his long

grey side-hair slopped over his bald head old and shiny brown smacking his toothless chops, lifts his bowl for yet another. Authentic. Like health. Diuretic. Not pissed off. Not him. There was a great distance in his face. Even when he walked into the cafe high muck-a-muck, his eyes smiled through us all to something else far away. I always thought it was China. And sipping that wet, burned rice after dinner in his gaze was some long night far away on the other side of earth in other eyes and other pots burned hot in the charcoal clay stove flickered light from the lit dry grass under the same stars fields of water the Pacific ocean end of murmured concern which has jumped the intestinal interstices, circulated taste's track, crossed into gut, guttered.

"he who walks with his house on his head is heaven"

Maximus IV V VI

"Heaven is, mental."

Maximus Volume Three

Heaven

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