

## † A Yankee Monk †



Like a stiff wind on a brisk New England Fall morning ~ I see myself ascending  
skyward ~ trapped in concentric circles ~ thrown upwards then downward ~  
careening to the left and to the right with little control of an outcome or better still,  
a resting place.

I have been taken.

I have lost touch with so many elements of my being that they are beginning to look  
foreign ~ like the way we look back to events of youth, it feels so distant that it almost  
seems to be another person's experiences that we are observing from an outside  
vantage point. It is a self-induced purgatory ~ a gypsy's life ~ where emotional  
thoughts are packed and ported like so much baggage cast into a back seat and carried  
by a truck of deep red wine. They accompany me ~ an entourage that is seldom  
opened nor shared.

So I wait along above my true self - looking below in a desperate wish to take root in a spot of fertile earth and unabated sun. My "over-soul", as Emerson would have far more eloquently expressed, - is in need of nourishment - and I find that these months have drawn me to a place so far away from simplicity of heart and spirit. Anger, jealousy, undue expectations, fatigue, rage, confusion, lethargy, and diminished focus have all crept over me with a wretched success and suffocation. I do not wish to imbibe these tonics - nor wear their effects like bright linen. They twist my innards - and have diluted my strength and the comfort I once felt within my own skin. I move - contortedly - scratching - stretching - reaching - trying to make this current feeling wear like something familiar - but the effort is doomed to pre-ordained failure. I was heartened by a plain walk throughout the yard last week - and find myself seeking outside retreats to compensate for the daily absence of nature in my regimen. The burden I carry (amongst the many) is that brevity is sobering - and the inability to immerse myself in such direct and uncomplicated days is at an unhealthy minimum. What I would give for a day cutting wood - any kind - in any way.....rough splintered logs for winter warmth, or the tight dark smooth grains of straight furniture oak.

Each brings its aroma of shaven wood, slightly burned by blade as it releases the scents contained within. It provides a respite for focus - uncluttered and rich in legacy. It comes as no surprise to me when farmers become so attached to their rituals, - their working of the earth regardless of the endless toil and struggle it may create. Such enterprises renew the spirit daily. Fatigue and financial volatility - yes - but to reap one's life from a day to day hand upon the soil and its output is a noble and rewarding one indeed. So while I do not mine my livelihood in such a fashion - I find its sporadic company as necessary as a breath of fresh air. Without them - I have fallen into this unfamiliar abyss of silence. A Yankee Monk. Contemplating and pondering - loss, hope, pain, and futures in a simultaneous, unpredictable dance of collisions. It feels like foggy freeway at dawn, as car upon car careen that build a mountain of continual, unbridled chaos. But strangely - there is no sound - neither scream of brakes nor the shocking, frightful sounds of metal on metal that stops the heart cold - it is only quiet, deathly quiet. My thoughts swirl in a stormy dissonance - but my outward self is now stoic and dispense words only out of necessity. My voice has retreated - my gregariousness constrained, weighed heavy by a cloak of serious emotional matters. Unexpectedly - I had not noticed my own descent into such a quiet situation - but its contrast to my usual vocality was distinct and sharply noted by others. As a result, they try in vain to capture images, as if to prove this silent specter has permanence.

Is it evolution? Have I been inexorably altered for this next phase of my life as one in which I will absorb rather than actively and eagerly throw cards into the center? My only conversational companions surround me with muted utterances of support

- a cold half glass of schnapps
- an alphabet board by candlelight
- - the sinewy rise of fragrant smoke.

We toast each other contently as the night's dark embrace gives way to a fresh morning and we relish in a fraternity only demons, geniuses and madmen can understand.