

CABO DAYS



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I

Gliding effortlessly through customs
I am instantly met by the jackals, the vultures,
that feast upon the innocence of tourists.

Make no mistake, these are professionals,
savage in their determination
to relieve unsuspecting pilgrims
of their wealth and prosperity.

“Do you wish to see the whales?” an earnest,
sincere, and impeccably groomed jackal asks.

“Senor, I know where you can swim with them,”

another jackal offers, hurriedly trying to place
brochures, pamphlets, leaflets,
all manner of brightly printed propaganda,
into my now sweating hands.

The late afternoon sun beats down upon us.

I am not used to such a climate, coming from
the North, where snow and cold is the order
of the day.

But here in the land of the Olmecs,
the sun shines bright upon its children.

I admire these tenacious devils
and their enterprising offers
of help to an intrepid traveler.

Their actions provide
a fine breeding ground
for future politicians.

Gleefully searching for the sad victim
that lags behind the pack,
the pathetic soul that attempts an honest discourse
with the predator before them,
they unmercifully rape their victims
with their smooth banter and deceitful lies.

Politicians the world over
cannot hold a candle
to these jackals as they
ravish the innocence before them,
deftly seizing profits
ascribed to them by the Gods.

I roar to the jackals surrounding me,
"May the blood of Christ anoint you!"

A parting of predators quickly takes place.

They abandon me in a flash,
tossing signals to their brethren ahead of them,
telling them *"leave this gringo alone, he breathes
the language of our Lord."*

II

As I arrive at the end of the gauntlet
I am approached by a slight child.

Approached, however, is a rather awkward word
as she merely stood to the side and whispered,
"I have what you desire."

Amidst the cacophony of noise
I almost miss her call,
though in truth I now admit I could hear her
over all the others.

I find myself drawn to this child
dressed in a plain white dress, sandals,
a bright pink ribbon in her hair.

I look down at her, assuring her
I am not interested in any *"desires."*

She reaches out and holds my hand,
softly telling me that she alone understands.

She recognizes my desire to find
the hidden writings of Hermann Hesse,
the long-fabled tome of his notes,
poetry and early prose from his youth,
all collected in one reverent book.

The sun is beginning to set.

Taxis are beginning to thin.

She leads me to a dust-covered sedan,
giving instructions to the driver.

I notice the language she speaks
to the driver is German.

His dark glasses make him appear
to be blind, which is nonsense,
as he is the driver.

Nonetheless, I enter his opened door
and turn to say *"thank you"* to the girl.

She is gone,
replaced with a blinding spot
of light where she once stood.

One last vulture calls out to me,
"sir, a tequila for the drive?"

I fish for money with which to pay
but he will have none of it,
handing me my Don Julio Blanco
with incredible joy.

"For you, senor, for your journey."

Placing the drink in my hand he vanishes
back into the playa.

As the taxi driver accelerates
I notice the tequila is in a
cut crystal glass.

Why would the vulture hand me such a thing?

I begin to ask the driver if he knows
where my resort is.

He answers before I can make a sound.

"Yes, everything has been prepared".

III

Hermann Hesse wrote his first book
of poetry in his early twenties,
following the publication of his poem, *Madonna*,
in a Viennese periodical.

Though a failure financially
it did open doors and his first novel,
Peter Camenzind, gave him fame
by his thirties.

So much fame, in fact,
that he could continue as a writer
due to the popularity of his novel
after Sigmund Freud praised it,
declaring it as one of his favorites.

Hesse went on to write *Beneath The Wheel*,
Siddhartha, *Steppenwolf*, *Narcissus and Goldmund*,
and many others, and then he wrote the book
that won him the Nobel Prize in Literature,
The Glass Bead Game

All of this, of course,
is history, found in any number
of perfunctory books
for learned readers.

What is not found, however,
are the illusive tomes, the letters
from Hesse to his mother.

When she died in 1902
Hesse did not attend her funeral.

Despite his love for his mother,
he could not bring himself
to attend her funeral.

The resulting writing that ensued
from the psychological break
of having his mother die

and not having the stamina to
bury her, attend her funeral even,
has long been rumored
a treasure trove of literary excellence.

I ponder these thoughts
while traveling dusty, winding roads
that lead to the Pacific.

My driver has not said a word
apart from his original statement,
and I have not asked further questions.

As we crest a small hill
I can view the wide expanse of ocean
that is the Pacific.

To my right, and at a great distance,
there appears to be the silhouette
of a coyote, howling.

It is dusk now
and the light is extremely dim
but it seems as if i can view
friend coyote as if he were sitting
next to me.

I can feel his breath,
see the multi-textures of his coat.

Just then a great gate opens
and my driver gives out a coarse,
“we have arrived,” in German.

With no further fanfare I gather
my belongings and notice,
with quite a shock,
I still hold the cut crystal glass of tequila.

I have not touched it the entire journey
and down it now with one great gulp.

“Ola, señor. Welcome.”

IV

The land of the Olmecs
has greatly changed
in these modern times.

No longer is the land barren,
devoid of life,
at least life that a gringo
would know.

There is water to nurture the landscaping
brought to this place.
Radiant and blossoming hedges
filled with multi-color flowers.

The earth rich, dense with growth.

Commoners, middle-class citizens if you will,
come here from many countries to escape,
if only for a week, two at the most.

I am told the wealthy frequent it as well,
though commoners such as myself
are not allowed to view them.

In town there is still much of the gritty
fishing village to wander.

There are many streets to explore.

Many shops that offer refuge
from the midday heat.

But on the outskirts of town,
away from the fishmongers, the tourist shops
with brightly printed shirts screaming CABO,
it is a different world.

Here, on a peninsula where ersatz
revolutionaries once took summer breaks
in canvas lean-to's,
paying Federale's token payments
to “camp” on the peninsula,
agreeing to buy drugs only from them...
yes, it was all an elaborate game back then.

Who would want to come to a desolate place
where water and food were miles away
and Mexican Police were the only law
you needed to be occupied with?

Unequaled madmen that understood
social isolation comes with a cost
as they reveled in the hot, barren sand.

The ersatz revolutionaries saved,
all year long, to finance the cost
of a summer in paradise.

Dry, arid, with the ocean on one side,
a magnificent bay on the other.

It was as if this peninsula was created
from pure magic.

Those who understood magic,
or so they told themselves,
would make their pilgrimages,
bringing money for the Federale's
in order to enjoy
a few weeks of enlightenment.

But as with all things magic, society took over.

Developers paid the Federale's even more money,
creating ways to charge pilgrims far more
than the Federale's ever asked.

Developers turned arid, what some saw
as wasted land, into an oasis of luxury,
building hundreds, thousands of rooms
on the beach, and on the hillsides
overlooking the ocean.

They created their own utopia.

Created their own water supply
by using the sea,
their wits, and the pilgrim's money
to provide people a place
where their fantasies could become real.

A place where meals and beverages
were to become *all-inclusive*.

Time-sharing would become the new norm.

A dreamed utopia, to be shared
here on earth.

A shared utopia, I must admit,
is a false statement
as we readily pay money for it to happen.

I chose it, it did not choose me.

Perhaps, in some twisted, Jungian way,
me being a part of it and
it being a part of me,

a collective Zeitgeist experience designed
to humor the gods
collided, there on the peninsula
where the spirits of Olmecs
danced in the heat.

So many thoughts running through my mind
as well-dressed waiters, their uniforms starched
and immaculate, bring endless glasses
of Don Julio Blanco, chilled to perfection.

“No, *amigo*,” I wave a dismissive hand,
“*I do not need a lime.*”

V

The image of a small girl
and her pretty, pink hair ribbon
is stuck in my mind.

How did she know my fascination
with Hesse?

How could she possibly know?

The driver that brought me,
why did he speak German?

Was I hallucinating?

Was it all a dream?

I wake with a terrible sweat,
my body dripping, my sheets soaked.

*“You really should slow down
on the tequila.”*

I look over to where the voice is coming from,
but I see only a couch.

Am I now hearing my hallucinations?

*“Really, you’ve been in a daze
since we left Phoenix.”*

I recognize the voice
but in the dimly lit room
I simply cannot see.

“Where are you?” I cry out.

“Show yourself to me!” I demand.

A dense shadow rises from a chair
on the opposite side of the room.

The shadow reaches to pull back draperies
as morning light spills across a familiar form.

It is my wife, Mrs. America.

"Can you see me now, you crazed bastard?"

I sink into the wet sheets of the bed,
my head swirling, my vision blurred.

"You cannot be here...you're at home," I stammer.

The shadow moves towards me.

*"I gave you a sedative in Phoenix, as I know
how anxious you become when you fly."*

The gravity of her words slowly sink into me,
pressing down upon me as if they were great weights.

*"Our layover took much longer than expected
so I put a couple more in your drink to tide you over.
Obviously, I gave you too much."*

I recall drinking a rather sweet-tasting tequilla
as we sat in the airport bar, sweeter than any
I've ever had.

*"I thought for sure you were going to get us
both thrown out of the country when we landed,*

*but when customs checked you for fever
you became lucid when I needed you to be lucid."*

"Fever?" I whisper.

*"Yes, fever. We're traveling during the time of
the RONA. Did you completely fry your brain?"*

Images of laughing with a customs agent
begin to appear.

We joke about drinking tequila, and flying, and how
his brother gets the same way.

A clarity is forming,
as if a great caul has been removed.

*"You're a fucking lunatic, my dear,
but I have to hand it to you the way
you cleared out the over-zealous vendors
as we left the airport. Sheer genius."*

The morning light grew brighter.

A tremendous roaring ran across my mind.

*"It's morning, babe. Our room is right
on the ocean. Look, there's the ocean,
not fifty feet from our patio."*

I look past the draperies and see waves.

What I thought was a roaring sound in
my mind is actually the ocean.

I'm hearing the ocean!

I can smell the ocean!

*"I'll call room service and have them
bring us coffee. Perhaps a bread basket?"*

She talks with them on the phone
as I stumble to the patio, falling into a chair.

I cannot remember ever sitting
in such a comfortable chair.

I look out onto the ocean,
the sun is just rising.

I watch it crest the horizon,
illuminating the day.

Mrs. America joins me on the patio
where we watch the sunrise together.

A knock at the door from room service
brings me back to full consciousness.

Mrs. America brings out a tray with coffee,
and an assortment of breakfast breads to the patio.

The image of the girl remains
burned into my mind.

"But...the girl," I begin to stammer.

*"That was a lovely thing you did,
offering to help her like that."*

I cannot recall offering to help anyone.

*"Really, it was very sweet. The way
she looked after dropping her ice cream.
She was devastated. You were very sweet
for offering to replace it."*

"And the cab driver?"

*"What cab driver, dear? There was only a driver
for our shuttle. That little girl thanked you repeatedly
for replacing her ice cream, even as we drove off.
It was really very touching."*

*"But she said she knew what I desired.
That I desired the hidden writings
of Hesse."*

Mrs. America sighed.

*“On the flight down from Phoenix
a group of college boys were arguing about Hesse.
One of them thought he was a terrible writer
and you flew into a rage.”*

In the deep recesses of my mind, I recall
arguing with the ass end of a horse.

*“I am so sorry I gave you those pills.
I had no idea you would react like that. I’m so sorry.”*

So the whole thing was a hallucination, a dream?

*“I didn’t realize you were sneaking shots of tequilla
whenever I was not looking. The tequilla and the pills
had you in quite a stupor.”*

This was incredulous.

“So, the driver was not German?”

*“No, he was a shuttle driver for the resort we are
staying at. He’s from the Yucatan. You were making
a bit of a scene and he was going to say something
to the manager but I tipped him well and he drove off.”*

We sit together, in silence, drinking coffee
on our patio in Cabo.

As I gaze out over the ocean a grey whale
not more than fifty yards from me
breaches the water and turns,
lifting his mighty fin as if to welcome me.

To Cabo.

To consciousness.

To home.

He splashes back into the ocean
with a mighty spray.

I turn to my wife but she is gone,
disappeared into the room
to order more coffee.

I sit there, not certain if I really
saw the whale, or not.

Was it all in my mind?

Was it a holdover from the drugs
she had given me?

From the tequila?

From my overactive mind?

*“Was that not the greatest thing
you’ve ever seen?”*

There is a well-tanned, and
extremely fit man in work-out shorts
wearing neon red tennis shoes
yelling at me from the pathway
next to our patio.

*“My God, I’ve never seen a whale
up close like that before. It was beautiful.”*

“It was,” I shakily agree,
not quite certain if he is real.

*“My name’s Dennis, I’m in the room
three doors down. Welcome to Cabo.”*

He steps towards me, reaching out his hand.

I shake it, breathing a sigh of relief,

feeling that it is

indeed

flesh.





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