

Travels, Observations, and Prayers

Poems

by

Mark A Husk

Chapter 4

NATURE

Winter's Pain

(Written one cold winters morning, thinking of a friend who has been in pain for quite some time. 2/26/14)

Winter's pain cannot last,
nothing ever does.
So endure the Cold just a little more
and watch for signs of Spring.

Stop It!

(Written after reading of the death of an Iranian poet for speaking out against an unjust government 2/7/14)

Dear oil, gas, and coal producers...

What the hell gives you the right
to talk about progress
to talk about energy
to talk about jobs
when all around you
the people,
the animals,
the very planet itself
is screaming
STOP!
You're hurting me!

The Dance of Snow

(written one frigid morning during coffee. 1/25/14)

The snowflakes have each other,
even in their coldness.
Drifting in their dance,
carried by the whims of the wind,
now together,
now apart,
laughing all the while
as they float along
their destined journey
together,
towards the frozen ground.

Virginia Iron Furnace -- Built 1847

(Written around 2004. I stopped at a roadside park to see the historical site, and found a creek sick with mine runoff.)

Muddy creek
Popsicle orange
almost glowing
in the fading Fall light.

Multicolored leaves grace the cloistered path
down to your shallow bed
silent witness to your dying whispers.

The trees bow their heads
the rocks mute
the animals have all departed
the sky weeps
as the poison rages in your veins

Such a small thing in the world
yet so much bigger than I

Lies dying
Victim of progress
Victim of greed
Victim of us
Victim of me.

The Death of Summer

(written in a restaurant 11/14/07 Fall always bums me out.)

The still quiet final gasp of the year
the lonely solitude of winter coming
barely noticed by people who go their separate ways
zippers fastened, windows closed
against the numbing, piercing rain.

Even the Sun itself has turned
his shining head away
unable to watch
as his beloved one gently goes to sleep

I alone keep vigil over her
as she slowly slips away.

Sounds of November

(written in a restaurant 11/14/07 Once again, a dark gray day)

The chatter of raindrops on the window
the long moan and cry of the wind in the trees
brings the snap of the winter cold
and silences the jubilant shouts of summer
with a hushing whisper of mist and fog.

Katrina

(Watching the disaster unfold, and our even worse response horrified me. Supposedly a great superpower, yet we can't help our own...)

What is it about Nature that
brings out the best in us,
the worst in us,
shows us Beauty beyond description,
and Devastation beyond imagination,

and makes of us fragile human beings
Angels and Demons
Gods and Monsters
Saviors and Sinners.

It shows us who we really are,
and who we truly can be.

Bunny

(6/16/04—home. I know it's only natural, but bunnies are cute.)

Little bunny in my yard
your life don't look so very hard
Radar like, your great big ears
search for sounds of what you fear.
Swift of foot, you can't be beaten
How can you fear of being eaten?

My cat in the window though, she knows
how to move quickly, quiet and low.
She'll hide in the bushes, dark green and deep
and when you get close, she'll suddenly leap

So I'll keep her inside, away from her prey,
and you'll live to see one more summer's day.

Hello, Little Squirrel

(Squirrels are one of those kinds of animals that start out cute, but can quickly become a pest.)

Hello, little squirrel.
I see you looking at my food
with round baleful eyes,
full of lust.

I know what you're thinking.
"If only he would leave,
just for a moment,
the feast would be mine."

But you see, little one,
I do not wish to share what I've won
with my sweat and stress and strain.
I paid for it by my self,
with a part of my poor weeks wages,
and I jealously guard it with all my might.

And I'm bigger than you, little one,
and I'll keep my portion all to myself, thank you,
simply because I can.

Perhaps I'm not so human after all.

Racing Leaves

(I wrote this at Cooper's Rock State Forest, and thinking of the non-competitiveness of children and it's relation to Buddhism. I really don't like competition. I'd rather just do something for fun.)

Leaves racing each other
down the forest path.
Who will win?
Who cares!
They're all too busy laughing.

Run for your life

(Written when a small animal skittered away
from me through the underbrush at Coopers Rock State Forest
6/12/07)

Flee, little one,
run for your life.
For even though I am
a gentle soul
and mean you no harm,
I am still accursed
by the Mark of Cain--
by my humanity--
which has shown time and again
its will to crush and destroy
all that you hold dear.

So flee, little one,
run for your life.

For even though I mean you no harm,
I am still very much Human.

Hello, Ant (I)

(Another poem written at Cooper's Rock State Forest. During this time, I was contemplating the Unitarian-Universalist points of view towards nature and religion)

Hello, ant.

You scurry along, mindless
over lichen and rock
halting briefly, looking
searching for---what?

As you crawl along on my foot I wonder

Do you know who I am?

What I am?

Can you comprehend you are walking on a living being?

So much larger and yet

not quite so dedicated in his searching?

Hello Ant (II)

(Again, written at Cooper's Rock State Forest but at a different time. I didn't set out to write this as a second part to the first "Hello Ant" poem, but it worked out nice.)

If I were your God--
what kind of God would I be?
Would I smother you with laws and rules
and punish you with death and pain?
Would I hold you in my hand, hiding you
from your kind, protecting you from your experiences,
your life?
Would I expect you to know me,
to understand me?
to worship and love me?

No, I think it better, little one
if you live your life as you see fit,
and I will try to live mine.

The Song of the Corn

(Written at a poetry workshop, 2001. This was the first poem I actually sat down to deliberately write. I liked the technique that the instructor taught us, but I still let the muse write for me. This was originally published in Whetstone Issue 26)

The rows of corn blanket the field
divided by a lonely moon-lit road,
singing their hymns softly
as they are strummed by a summer breeze.

The black birds in their black beds
are waiting for the dawn to draw away the cold
so they can call forth once more the challenge
to begin life anew.

For a moment, tonight, however
their worries and struggles are laid to rest
on the matted dew damp grass

and they close their eyes in brief repose
to honor this night of gentle peace
with the holy song of the corn.

Fall

(Written at the Industrial Home for Youth while working the gatehouse
one beautiful fall day, dreading the onset of winter.)

The wind plucks the children away
from the grieving parent
and takes them on a soft slow dance
to their final resting place.

The autumn sky is silent
sharing the loss,
as friends and loved ones gather,
witness to the beauty that once was,
remembering the laughter of summer.

The sun shines warm and bright,
a passionate wake to the dead,
before the children are laid to rest
in their silent shrouds of white.

Spring

(Written at Coopers Rock State Forest on a warm spring day. As I read these poems, I can remember exactly where I was at Coopers when I wrote them)

The trees are all in bloom today
grown up and out from their winters sleep,
waiting patiently for the touch of the sun
as it passes a slow moving cloud.

Far above a hawk plays in the breeze
with a slow dancing pirouette.
I can almost hear its laughter
carried on the sigh of the wind.