

Ten Poems by Phillip W. Weiss

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A DIFFICULT QUESTION

“Who am I?”

A difficult question indeed:

**hard to answer;
requires thought;
requires honesty.**

The question

**vexes me;
annoys me;
threatens me;
even makes me angry.**

Why? I'll tell you why:

**Because the question demands
sincerity, openness and forthrightness,
which scares me;
which intimidates me;
which makes me have to grope
for answers.**

**For although the question seems simple,
its answers can be profound,
especially if I am truthful.**

In fact, the question is a challenge

which makes demands of me:

enough evasions,

enough avoidance,

enough rationalizations.

Time to come to grips

with the truth of who I am,

even if it hurts.

WHAT DO SEA LIONS DREAM ABOUT?

The sea lions:

admirable creatures,
swimming to and fro;
posing for the crowd;
barking for attention.

At feeding time,
thronging of people
gather to admire them:
for their strength,
their form,
their gracefulness,
their enjoyment of life.

But when the zoo closes,
and the visitors leave,
and the attendants go home,
and all is quiet,
and the sea lions go to sleep:
what do they dream about?

**The days when they
roamed free in the seas?**

**The days when they
frolicked in the waves?**

**The days when they
swam with the whales?**

**The days when they
caroused with the polar bears?**

What do sea lions dream about?

JOURNEY OF LIFE

I am on a
journey of life,
a journey I travel alone.

I have relatives;
I have friends;
I have hobbies;
I have work;
I have traveled
and have done
many interesting things.

Still, I am alone,
profoundly alone,
a microbe in the sea of humanity,
a molecule in the vast expanse
of the universe,
a plankton in the riptide of life,
subject to forces that overwhelm me,
carrying me somewhere,
I know not where.

NIAGARA FALLS

Niagara Falls,
majestic curtains
of surging water
cascading, never-ending,
onto the jagged rocks below.

Creating a roar,
like rolling thunder,
a tidal wave of sound
reverberating off the cliffs,
both powerful and soothing,
it can even lull a baby
to sleep.

And of course the mist,
floating high into the sky,
like plumes of gossamer silk,
meeting the rays of the sun,
forming radiant rainbows,
each a crescent of dazzling colors,
like a tiara of diamonds
adorning the head of
a royal queen.

**For Niagara Falls
is nature's gift to humanity:
her splendor unmatched,
her beauty sublime,
to be admired and treasured,
like a priceless gem,
for all time.**

THE NURSING HOME

The nursing home,
tomb for the living,
but who are no longer really alive,
a place where people collect dust,
like relics of the past
in a museum,
living monuments to another time,
and place,
when they were young,
and were in charge,
and were strong,
and ran their lives:
they were vibrant
and vivacious,
and had dreams,
and wants,
and desires,
now submerged
deep in their memories,
clouded by age,
and wear and tear,
like their bodies,

all worn out,
just sitting,
just watching,
as the second-hand
slowly ticks,
marking the passage of time,
a commodity that,
in a nursing home,
is in short supply,
yet seems to extend for an
eternity,
as the residents
wait and wait
for that shining train
that will whisk them to
the final inevitable stop,
where they will again be free,
and then be remembered
and revered
and mourned
by those who could only
stand by and watch
as their heroes and

**role models
exited the house of life,
leaving behind mementos
and memories
for others to keep and
treasure.**

NEW YORK SUNRISE

I

It's a grimy city,
crowded,
congested,
filthy,
people pushy,
indifferent,
sometimes nasty.

II

It's a noisy city,
lots of cars,
lots of buses,
lots of trucks,
a cacophony of sights
and sounds,
irritating to the eyes,
disturbing to the ears,
indeed, insulting to
all the senses and

**bodily organs,
especially the brain,
which can barely cope
with all the pressure
and sometimes
breaks down.**

III

**Yet despite the grime,
despite the noise,
despite everything,
that makes
life in the city
cold and hard,
there are mornings
when the sun shines
through the clouds,
like a glowing beacon
on a fog-shrouded beach,
creating streams of light
that beam to the earth
and illuminate the sky,
producing a**

**vista of beauty
that brings tears of joy
to the hardened city dweller
and makes life,
once again,
worth living.**

VOLUPTUOUS

**A woman is called
voluptuous.**

What does it mean?

What does it stand for?

Is it a compliment?

Or is it a put down?

**The word evokes feelings
of sensuality and sex,
of opulence and
physical pleasure,
of basking in the sun
and reclining on a divan,
like the ancient Greeks and Romans
depicted in Hollywood movies,
all senses being gratified.**

Pleasant thoughts, indeed.

But the woman is more
than just a source of pleasure.
She is more than what she is
conditioned by society to be.

She is a lioness, a tigress,
an eagle and a hawk,
whose life transcends the
quest for creature comforts
as she strives ever-forward
in her search for knowledge,
breaking free from those
constraints
that relegate her to the status of
a silly object
meant to
give pleasure without question and
dutifully respond
to the whims of others
who wish merely
to satisfy their primeval lust.

MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS

Majestic mountains,
Jewels of the earth,
Regal beings,
Awesome too.

Seemingly placid,
Just standing there,
Immovable, immobile,
Like they can last forever.

But don't be fooled,
Those mountains are alive,
Just waitin' for the right time
To surprise us all.

Mount St. Helen's a case in point:
She was just standin' there,
Nobody gave her a second thought,
Then – KABOOM!!!!!!
She's never been the same since,
And we've never been the same either.

Then good ol' Mount Hood,
With that snow-capped peak,
Skiers havin' their fun, clueless
To what's happenin' deep inside her.

'Cause she's Mount St. Helen's sister,
The pretty one, like Little Red Ridin' Hood
(Get it?)
And you know how sisters are,
How they like to copy one another.

So hold on to your hats
And get ready to run,
And grab your camera and
Camcorder,
'Cause it's just a matter of
Time before the pretty sister
Blows her top too.
It won't be nice
And it won't be fun
And it'll make a lot of
Noise and scare a lot of
People too.

But what a great photo-op
It will make,
Especially for all those
Guys and gals too dumb
To vamoose, or just
Too hypnotized by the
Grandeur of it all to tear themselves
Away, havin' to bear witness to
What is both beautiful and
Catastrophic,
You know, like a pretty woman
Who's throwin' a mean temper
Tantrum and all you can notice
Is her body gettin' hotter and hotter:
Don't like the yellin' and the cursin'
And all that venom
Spewin' out of her mouth,
But sure do like that bouncin' body,
Oozin' with all that oily sweat,
And all that raw heat.

CREATIVITY

Within you there is the poet,
waiting for the time and the place
To burst forth,
like a volcano ready to erupt
after being dormant for so many years.

But wait not too long,
for time goes by fast
and before long what is
present is past
and is forever lost.

Break free from the
self-imposed restraints
and the paltry excuses
that render you meek
and deny to the world
all that you must share.

For within you there is a
fire burning,
ever hotter and
ever brighter,

**producing a flame so intense
that it cannot be contained
within that furnace of creativity
deep inside your soul,
which, now ignited,
will never again be doused.**

RIVER OF TIME

Don't be angry,
don't be sad,
just be happy,
just be glad.

Life flows
just like a stream,
it passes by
like a sleeper's dream.

You walk your dogs
And you pet your cats,
it gives you pleasure
that you hope will last.

So when you chat
just keep in mind
that life's a-flowin'
down the river of time.

