

My Morning Walk: A Factual Montage

Adrian Ford

I WAS not aware of being born; and each morning I am not aware of the exact moment I awake. For I am reborn from the womb of sleep where God alone witnesses the gestation of warm desires and the soul, like a morning rose, opening to its ultimate flower. Like a secret finding itself out, I pass through the mist of dreams into the gray silence of my bedroom. My eyes open. Beyond the small windowpanes I see the mist still dreaming against the rough side of her lover, the earth. I throw back the covers and go to the window to gaze on their intimacy—an innocence which dissolves in blushing remembrances cast by a scowling sun. But before she slips from him, before the highest hill reaches futilely to hold her fast, I shall emerge into their single dream.

I dress quickly and go downstairs. I have a cup of warmed-over coffee and perhaps two doughnuts. It is usually chilly and I put on my suede jacket. The door is closed slowly but firmly behind me. I leave my dog sleeping upstairs.

I know how to enter their rapport: on the dirt road which crosses the creek and rises on a small grade into our woods. I have often used this way to enter my higher self—walking in the heat of noon, at twilight, even at night. I have pondered many issues there, issues personal and specific as well as philosophical. I shall always associate it with the resolution of my problems and with contemplation itself. On this road where I have traveled much of the journey inward I shall enter the peace of their love.

My shoes are soaked as I walk through the long grass of our back drive, which joins the road. I stop on the gray wooden bridge and stare into the black, sulfurous water. A beaver dam farther along the creek has slowed the flow of water. Green water plants stand erect but gently waving, like huge poplars on an afternoon of mild breezes. A silver fish flashes at the surface, then darts into the watery forest. I see a shallow groove in the sand, and at the end of it a clam. Both men and clams can move with purpose! The trail of any man is a record of his will. And so it is with this mollusk, whose little trench testifies to its primeval need for subsistence. A few minnows dart from the side to the center, from center to side. Sometimes I see a school of them gliding like nerve impulses through the living water. Here and there the halves of a clam shell lie open like fans.

I raise my eyes to where the creek enters the swamp. Two deer are drinking, their narrow heads delicately lowered and alert. Some mornings I see a gray crane following the creek in search of food. Only once have I seen it swoop to snatch a fish or insect. Whenever I see it, I think of those leather-winged pterodactyls which circled high above winding, prehistoric canyons.

I lean on the bridge as I make these observations. It is cool and wet. A drop detaches from a beam and hits the water—plink. Everything drips. The bridge, the meadow grass and the trees are all moist. It seems that Creation is one delicate wet cell of which I am the mobile nucleus . . .

I proceed up the road and enter the woods, pushing aside damp branches until I am surrounded by them. I pause. My brain sponges the green joy of the trees. Like men, they stand close together but each separate and remote in the mist. The mist in which men stand is also a dream of lovers . . . it is the possibility of their love for the person next to them.

I place my palm against the bark of an aspen and stare up the trunk into the foliage. Man today is super-conscious of his growth, but not the growth of his conscience. Perhaps he should, as I do now, consider this tree. It has risen not from knowledge of itself, but because it never recedes. What if all growing trees stopped to wonder if they had a purpose?

I spot a huge, uprooted trunk which has lain across the dry, shale brook-bed for many years. Some kind of vine, like man's rationalizations against God, has sprung from the rotting root structure and twined about the thick arms.

I wander through the woods until I stand overlooking a field. Although I have walked in a dream of lovers, the landscape is not distorted, but softened; not fantastic, but real and expectant. A murmur drifts across these plains of light, these surrounding wheat fields, into my glade of introspection. It is of insects, birds, autos, and the unassignable noises of a community waking up. I must leave now, I must go home to breakfast and begin another day of portraying myself.

The blushing mist is ascending.

Interpreting Socrates

Warren E. Teague

“**T**HE unexamined life is not worth living.” These words spoken by Socrates are a fitting epitaph for this renowned philosopher and inquirer into human value and purpose. Socrates' life was the living example of these words and was dedicated to proving their worth. He felt that human life involved more than the satisfaction of physical needs. Of all the creatures on earth, he reasoned, the human being alone was composed of two completely separate entities: the body and the intellect or soul. Recognizing the shallowness of mere physical pleasure and well-being, Socrates endeavored to introduce man to his intellect. Early in his life he realized that for man to be alive he must seek within himself the purpose and true needs of his life. He examined his own life and beseeched others to examine themselves, for he knew they would be dissatisfied with what they found. He asked them to think, to search,