

Run from the Stillness

By C. Angelo Caci

...riddled with cancer. That's what they—everybody, for that matter— says when they describe those of whom each breath is tentative, as well as the “She may not recognize you,” and oh yeah the all inclusive, “She may be a bit out of it...pain medication, you know,” offered as a sort of recompense, for your having disrupted your “...lives of quiet desperation” to “Pay your respects,” to the nearly departed. The fresh onshore breath of thought that someone ELSE'S cliché—Thank god it's not me!—would make the top ten of the obituary column is enough to tickle the goose bumps of anyone's sweat-drenched epidermis.

However, this was different and what relief it was that She wasn't—not so bad anyway. When I arrived, the vaguerity that was once a sharp brilliant brown did register recognition...of the sort only I could have perceived...a gift that's given to you discretionary, behind the backs of others...the imperceptible relaxing of facial muscles, like what is lost in the blink of an eye wasn't lost in her's and

I would have missed it had I blinked as the image of her face on the screen saver of my laptop was instantaneously superimposed—ghostlike—upon the window of the train as we passed by the same beach we used to take sunset strolls on—sand heated by the afternoon sun still warm to the touch of the bottoms of my bare feet—her image on the screen evaporated like mist—like life that is only remembered.

I didn't wait after paying my...after that last visit. That's what it was. I try not to deceive myself. Perhaps that's why I left before and

I thought, as I walked away, leaving her room that last time that I saw her, she wouldn't have understood the waiting. She never waited, not for death, like some, she always ran, feral feet kicking shore sand toes curled feet howling with the pangs of joy...

Doesn't seem possible...this, now...How fast the time etches its passage, running always running. It occurs to me that it's not the dark we fear. The dark is only a masquerade...something unreal to focus upon to avoid the realness...the stillness. Afraid of the stillness.

Something else occurs to me now...long time passing. It was

that look, the one of recognition I saw, only I saw, only I thought I alone saw in her eyes...recognition of a different sort like her face reflected afterwards, or was before, in the window of the train superimposed upon the scene on the other side of the window. It was like the illusive green flash at sunset, one of those things you pine to see but don't see until that time comes when the seeing can be comprehended and that was my own eyes reflected in the glass of the window that reflected all on the lens of my own eyes...that image that's sent directly to the brain or the other way around perhaps the brain's where it originates from and if that's so and I believe that that's so then it would follow that that's the self-same recognition I saw in her eyes that day, what she was trying to tell me, what her eyes couldn't say her body told because as I turned to leave her the last time, she broke from her stillness and sent me a subliminal message by the soft thump of her tail upon the carpet, once just once and then blinked her eye, again...just the one time, that flash of green upon her sunset.

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