
MERRY CHRISTMAS #42

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in which Dave Van Arnam strongly suspects he is going to have more poetry than politics, with very little about NEW YORK IN '67 or the EASTERCON I

And yet it doesn't seem too much like Christmas, or Christmas Eve. Well, there you are. Considering the name of FD/16, p'raps I should have named this issue CHRISTMAS EVE #42. It would have been a pleasant Congruency.

I really shouldn't be going on about poetry here in FIRST DRAFT, since I have been thru this several times now and gotten little response -- and also since I did get response in Apa L, and promised them non-Apa-F-reprint-type poetry and discussion... But I feel like quoting some more poetry. And it gives me an opportunity to see the poetry a little more clearly, too. As I think I mentioned before.

I'm not sure what I'm going to quote, but I assure you of one thing. All these poems have been around for from two to seven years, this stack I'm rummaging through here. Yes, Steve Stiles, they frequently Have Something To Do with my Personal Life. But not about certain recent events. There is also some question as to whether it is necessary to relate a poem to one's personal life. Even if there has been an element of causality there -- as of course there has to be, since Inspiration doesn't work in a vacuum -- I have my doubts that it helps the understanding and/or appreciation of the poem to know anything more about it than the poem itself may happen to reveal. And of course it is also true that the poem does not have to be speaking about anything that actually happened...

Just at this moment
there is no time for laughter or tears,
words or glances, pain and love;
presence of her no myth,
but snowdrift fading away. In spite of magic,
these things are human. While the days are long,
even night at last may not be feared
after the great sunlight of lover's moments.

As if

I had forgotten rivers, dawn, and kittens playing,
a tiny kiss

lips whispering against mine

warm almost as love itself

/-----/

There are no great typographical gimmicks in this poem, you will notice. Perhaps the first 3 lines shd have been broken up a trifle, but on the other hand, their superficial regularity lends more weight to the concluding irregularity of form; the net result, on this level, is to make the last 5 lines something of an envoi to the poem, without spacing down two lines and heading it with the word Envoi. This poem is one of my particular favorites, tho I can't help feeling vaguely dissatisfied with it, a phenomenon, however, that usually occurs between me and written words of my manufacture.

Null-Q Press

Undecided Publication #78

A melody of wander stings in this snowfall,
fringe-fires glimmer round the rising moon beneath
 skeletons and clouds like leaves of ice

 and frosted foam trickles
 through the dusty dawn of stars;
my heart was sharp with longing for this time,
yet, with its advent, rough with memories,
is no great peace

 when she is absent with her own warm sunrise
 set star-like in the west
 not fallen but like sunsets of forever

 and I ...
I stand on rocks
 staring to the heart of some great shrouded oak,
with nothing on either side
 until the fallen night,
 rich snow,
 and cold, cold fires.

/-----/

You might do me the favor, if like anything about the above poem at all, of going back and seeing whether or not you can find any major objection about the way it is spaced out. I myself have a doubt only about the second and third lines, and in fact prefer it better in a slightly different version which I copied from but changed as I put it on stencil. Originally the word 'beneath' was a separate line, just under 'moon'. For what that means to you.

Have you looked over the above poem? Good. Now you might indulge me by reading the following, which is the way it was originally written, back in 12 Oct 58, in Central Park if that's relevant to anyone. Eccovi, judge ye, have I done wrong in changing the following to the above? (The astute reader will also notice a few verbal changes.)

A melody of wander stings in this snowfall,
fringe-fires glimmer round the rising moon beneath
skeletons and clouds like leaves of ice,
and frosted foam trickles through the dusty dawn of stars;
my heart was sharp with longing for this time,
yet, with its advent, rough with memories,
is no great peace when she is absent with her own
warm sunrise warmth now set into the west -- and I,
I stand on rocks staring to the heart of some great shrouded oak,
with nothing on either side until the fallen night,
rich snow, and cold, cold fires.

/-----/

Nothing, perhaps, is so difficult as to express politely one's lack of emotional or critical response to a work which is obviously one in which the creator has invested emotional and critical worth. I find such times difficult myself, and I have been shown poems frequently that I could not react to but which circumstances implied the necessity of a reaction. The other side of the coin is that rewarding moment when one does find one can react to the work. As reader and as writer, both, I have occasionally known such moments. I am not discouraged when they do not occur. But I am hoping that you are the sane...