

Conlan Taylor

Musings on a Park Bench

My best friend and I get together some days and share a seat in the sun.
We poke fun and laugh and share our thoughts,
enjoying the breeze through our hair and sunshine on our faces,
wondering aloud what the week might bring and other such trivial matters
which characterize small talk among friends.

But between friends like us, some deeper truths are passed
and interpreted in the silence of our hearts
without the need for any words.
You see, I have this tool – it's a little prism.
My friend has one just like mine, too; they come in pairs.
Upon that bench before my friend, I lift the prism to my eye in just the right fashion
so it catches the image sitting right before me.
Through it, his features are split, the spectrum of his image decomposes.
Beautiful radiance – the spectrum of his soul shines through.
He takes out his own little prism, just like mine,
and sees what I can see.

The colors of a Man.

Two Men we are, then, basking in the sun, peacefully exhibiting our colors
through the experiences we share.
Through my little prism, I see the color of his soul – it's just the same as mine!
My drifting thoughts, massaged by the cozy atmosphere,
lull my imagination back to another age where such a scene is mere fantasy,
where the very bench we sit on now could refuse to seat us.

It arbitrates with bolded words who can and cannot sit,
dictating skin as proof of worth, not soul or character.
I wonder how many friendships never came to be,
seized on a whim in such coldhearted vanity.
Could we not see the colors of Man in days of Black and White,
'fore Technicolor lit our screens with vibrant scenes of life,
'fore yellow flames torched through the night, consuming Northern blocks,
or later yet when red-steeped boots returned from Vietnam?
This age in time, an age of grief, we did not suffer through;
I dare not dream what life looked like for Men like me and you...

We are the inheritors of a pilgrimage undertaken by giants in history,
ordinary men and women driven by extraordinary circumstances
to achieve the impossible,
who sought to bring about a marvelous Dream,
that incomplete promise just beyond their grasp:
A future painted by the colors of the soul instead of the skin.
Like light refracting through a prism, love filters out aesthetics;
it is numb to what is apparent, sensitive to what is real.
It lays wide open for one to see,
the content of another's character,
obscured beneath the limitations of human vision.
The baton has been passed, and we now carry that same Dream
to complete this pilgrimage, and reach the Promised Land.

Many have sought the warmth of other suns to start anew,
but all along the warmest sun was this one I shared with you.
So cheers, my lad, to what we have, incomplete though it may be.
Live in the present, for the future, friend and brother to me.