

Laurette Laughs

Prologue

Max looked at Hijack's face and it became large. As Hijack spoke the words his face burst its size and light hidden twelve years appeared. What he spoke about was occurring again, happening now. Pain must be the only vehicle that could pass through twelve years and crash into the moment without warning. "I had to go in front of the Grand Jury for days.", his words trailed off into silence. The event began and ended that quickly but those few words were enough for Max to see into Hijack's darkness. It awes Max, he felt tiny looking into the Giant Easter Island face void of redemption.

Like his nickname, Hijack, everything stuck to him. Jack acquired it after a high school prank in his hometown of Springfield, Illinois involving a local delivery man's beer truck. The best and bright side of a good soul. Max began to understand, Hijack had been born right, everything about him fit into what became the golden age of America. He solved the mystery of why the Great American Novel has never been written, it had to wait for Jack to be born. If his family were wealthy, O'Neill would have written about him and paid, "no worship to the garish Gatsby." A photograph of the American Dream hung on his kitchen wall. A picture complete in Classical forms; Jack running around the competition at Notre Dame, the game was football but the absolute momentum, the surety of its action, the pure intelligence of its thrust were from the original Olympiads. The picture reached every ideal Western man even thought about and it would be enshrined in a sculpture by an artist yet unborn.

All that passed us by. Now that he is gone, do precious few of us realize our witness inside the Arch in the epoch of America's story. Any one of us could write his story, it would be simple, just take notes on Hijack's life, add nothing, subtract nothing. This is the task I have set myself. To tell you the story of America's son, two hundred years in the making. I am then him, will know this joy forever, and you, well --all of you have imagined him on simmer nights in your greening pastures when you first felt the horses of your youth.

People and things reached out to him, his dead father, ancient Celts, his country, his children, friends, and everyone in need of strength. What made Jack different was that he listened to them, believed in them and acted on their behalf. The flaw in Hijack was beauty, he loved beauty and embodied what D.H. Lawrence said about it:

“that beauty is a thing beyond the grave
perfect bright experience
never falls into nothingness
and time will dim the moon sooner
then our full consummation here
in this odd life will tarnish
or pass away.”

Jack’s story begins with an idea, from the Republic on down that became, after five thousand years, America. He had the gift of natural grace, and therefore the curse the Gods only give, to their true sons. And they whispered it throughout Jack’s life, “Imperfection will be fatal!” To create happiness in all others and destroy it in oneself is the ultimate act of humanity. This is what Jack did.

Jack was natural, everything about him fit the environment, his style, his action, his intelligence, looks, compassion, anger, and humor. He had the gift of easy perfection, the genius of rare creation that pleased both Eastern and Western gods. On sunny days in Springfield during Jack’s youth you could hear their bolting laughter across great white clouds. They loved to watch him, their pleasure. God East to God West; “We have done well”; and West nodding heavenly, “and we shall take him away.” “Why not let him live naturally.” East replying in selfish wisdom, “We need him among us. If he stays too long he will tarnish.” “By what act shall we jar him from the beauty we created.” Simple was the reply, “We will allow him one error from which he cannot recover.” Both Gods looked away from Springfield to the path of Hijack’s time, comfortable in their fat

clouds, observing the length of his life, and thought simultaneously, “What ever will we do to help him recover.”¹

Footnote 1 – This is the first sight in Classical literature that the Gods of the East and West Agree. Noted Harvard scholar, W.B. Bainbridge’s Interpretation of this occurrence: “they loved him so”.

The Gods did that to Jack
gave him beauty for his thirst
and they cried while handing down
that awful goddamn curse
We are happy in his knowledge
Jack gave not that – to us

He pleasures us through memories blessed
of gentle laughing hours, aggression come to rest.
He pleasures us now or any day
our access is clear
that gift he gave,
a natural bar,
Hijack has no grave.