

Hey You Paradoxical Buddhists!

By Robbie Swales

I came to Nova Scotia with lovely people
With aspirations tall, like a steeple.
Would I gain in Buddhist wisdom?
Would Shambhala change the system?
Would Meg Wheatley light my fire?
Would new science take me higher?
Would the edge of chaos ring my bell?
Would complexity help me sell?
The vision here is total change
They want to move a mountain range,
I just want a conceptual model,
To make my consulting work a doddle!
Something to stuff in my tool-kit of tricks
And dazzle my clients with a magical mix.

Intergenerational world café
Lots of us got lots to say,
I've travelled four thousand miles to here fresh views,
Then I'm told I'm talking bullshit! You think that's news?
God bless you, young Dane, for spotting a fraud
You must forgive an Englishman abroad
But if I don't drink tea, when the clock hits four
My powers of rationality hit the floor
If I'm speaking truth of bollocks, I'm not sure
Because I'm missing tea, which I adore
And meditation doesn't fill the gap.
Hey, you paradoxical Buddhists, meditation, now what's that?

Told to be still, just like a cat,
Yeh, like the cat sat on the mat.

Ring that gong and off we go
Stop being fast, gotta go slow
Straighten that back and flop that belly
I sure hope my socks ain't smelly.

Oh my God, I want to fart
I'm going to blow this cushion apart.

But no, I'm saved, the moment's past.
But now my heart is beating fast.
Mindfulness comes largely in disguise,
It's not as if you win a prize,
Oh Dear Jesus what's happening now?
I feel relaxed, I feel somehow

I've reached a place I like to be
It's almost as good as a cup of tea.

And as I imbibe this lovely feeling
It seems I'm in a place of healing
And I suddenly realise that I feel fine.....

And then the gong rings twice and its dinnertime.

We gather daily for leadership news
We try and assimilate everybody's views
Wells Fargo Bank and Nokia phones
The dialogue continues, I make no bones
That sometimes I hear so many stories
It's a Tower of Babel, with many glories
But that's why, at the end of the day, you'll hear
Me asking the barman for a very large beer.

I'm a postmodern existential Christian astronaut
In my journey through life I'm largely self-taught,
So imagine my total and fantastic joy
When I realised I knew this place as a tiny boy,
For we westerners call this land, that's near and far
Not Shambhala, but Shangri-la!

Yes, Shangri-la, the place of my dreams when I was small
The place I went to when teachers would shout and bawl
"Swales! You are a mischievous and naughty fool
This isn't play, or fun, it's SCHOOL"

So, fifty years later, I'm here in your presence
The mischievous fool, an actor in essence.
And I love you all, and I'm thrilled to be here
I've dialogued endlessly, and lived with my fear
That this won't be the tipping point I hoped for so much.
But it has been, and it's glorious, and I'll keep in touch.

But this place can't compare
With the real love of my life,
So I must go home
To Helen, my wife.

I started writing this poem on Wednesday June 16th, and completed it about two hours before I performed it at the closing ceremony on Friday June 18th. I was absolutely thrilled by the response that the poem received, and for me, that was sufficient reward. This poem is now, therefore, in the public domain. Anybody who so wishes can reproduce this poem in any form they desire. I retain no copyright in it, whatsoever.

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