

The Naming Queue

By Drew T. Noll



Glass House, DTNoll, chalk on paper, 6.2015 © all rights reserved

It was hard to stay on the ground. So boring everything was, and so stupid. Why did everyone have to wait in line, anyways? We could easily all pop in when we were ready to hear our names given. We could just pop in. And, the earth in the garden was so limited. There was only so much real estate available to crisscross across. Why did we have to stand stuck to the earth like this, when we could fly ... and zoom about? It was just not fair ... or so the spikey porcupine said insisting upon swelling quills next to mine, while we all stood, bored to high-heaven, standing in the naming queue.



Word came down, from there, 'up there' ... that we all needed to climb up and out of our lives to collect our names, what we were, directly from the upright walker. The walker had been seen, they had been saying, occasionally strutting about in the garden: "Once upon a time..." was said on each occasion. Back then, the upright walker was only a legend, an apparition, an unreal hole sporadically pocking the garden's landscape; but, today we know better. The upright walker is real, however unreal, and the walker had been given the task of managing the garden, and the world, and had also been given the task of giving each of us a name that we already knew.

It was the way of the world ... to install powers above those that can see. We looked out from our positions in line, and we pined for others to lead. We wanted to grow and to live, but we were stuck ... standing in line. So, we stood, shuffling our feet ... waiting in the queue. We waited to receive our names, names that became that which we were to be, names that we waited to hear uttered from an imposter, the upright walker, and names that we feared but already knew.

Up ahead, we can see ... "Hey! Um... the queue is becoming shorter, slowly ... so slowly, and we are all still so, so bored."

The upright walker had only two legs, but I had one hundred, which evidently made no difference upon high. There was something special about the upright walker, but we couldn't see it, the porcupine in front of me, and me. Once a name was given each creature would widely grin and



fly straight into heaven, the sky above and home for us all. The birds had wings to do so, but others used whatever they could muster to bounce, glide, or roll heaven-bound and skyward. A little yellow lizard changed colors up ahead. And, once its name was given, Lizard flew in a lazy arc up beyond the clouds buffeting the garden's shores. A lion was next, and once the upright walker named it, Lion roared so loudly that everyone in line ducked and missed its launch skyward completely; but, moments later, we spotted it again. Lion was airborne, and then melted into the underbrush about us without a sound, ready to stalk; Lion, a lion to be but not to see.

Up ahead, we can see ... "Um... it's, boring, we know ... but, the queue is becoming shorter, slowly ... so slowly, and we are all still so, so bored."

There is a mushroom, a mere spore, aside the line directly in front of the queue. As I stood back and forth to see, with feet shuffling, the dust began to rise from one hundred ends, in tufts and poofs, and around me the others began to complain. So, I stopped. The spore leaned to and fro with the whispers of the upright walker, I saw as I leaned too, and I saw the naming queue continue to spread out in front of me and down the valley below. When the upright walker uttered a name from up above, the spore would ding like a slot-machine, quivering gold onto the floor. It appeared to be a jackpot in our garden, or so it seemed to those of us looking on in a state of extreme boredom. We waited, under the depths of darkness residing under the roots of the tree of living; in line we all waited, and awaited the receiving of our labels, our names that we already knew.



Up ahead, we can see ... “Boring and stupid, we all understood... it’s, boring, we know ... but, the queue is becoming shorter, slowly ... so slowly, and we are all still so, so bored.”

The hippo behind me just wanted to bounce off its rump into the heavens above. It guffawed at every given name, with flat molars slapping one against the other, as if it knew what would be said before utterance had been given. I smiled then, picturing it with curlers under a hairdryer, and chuckled out-loud ... to myself, which, embarrassingly so, made my toes curl, all one hundred. The giraffe behind the hippo kept stretching its neck in front of me, blocking my view of the naming queue. The alligator snapping its jaws on the other side of the giraffe just laid there, wishing it could get back to the jet-stream to play its sax; the alligator’s instrument ... horribly ... was languishing beneath its leg in the mud. We waited and we waited, slowly moving forward, until I finally stood up on my one hundred in front of the upright walker’s vision. I looked up and over the hard shell lit and glowing around the walker, then turned back and saw the line meander down in the valley below. The only animals hurling through and bouncing about the sky had been named and seemed proud. I couldn’t figure out why. Standing there in front of the upright walker, I remembered being at the back of the queue, where the porcupine’s quills poked me and I couldn’t see ahead because of the giraffe’s neck blocking the view.

Up ahead, we can see ... “Boring into my brain, boring and stupid, we all understood... it’s, boring, we knew ... but, the queue was becoming shorter, slowly ... so slowly, and we were all still so, so bored.”



I know that Porcupine was a porcupine because it was in line in front of me, and I kept getting stuck and entwined onto the spines. Once the upright walker named it, it shot forward, straight at a tree, narrowly missing the bark as the blur around Porcupine swayed branches and roots in a puff full of wonderful dirt. I was next, it was me. I am Centipede, because I have one hundred legs, which I already knew. Porcupine seemed happy about his name, but I knew I would be askance at mine: there was another creature in the garden that had many more legs than me. It was much further back in line, but I knew that its legs counted a million or more. I once relayed my concern to the ant aslant from me, who had been marching to and fro, but antennae went into the air pretending to be busy. *"How rude,"* was all I could think of to think at the time. We were disgruntled, all of us, waiting in line to receive a name which we already knew.

Up ahead, we can all see ... "Boring, it was now completely understood... it's, boring, we knew ... but, the queue was becoming shorter, slowly ... so slowly, and we were all still so, so bored."

The upright walker looked down at me with a smile, perplexed as it was. He ... no ... she ... no... They looked down upon my one hundred legs and grinned from one head to the other. The upright walker had two faces, unlike others in the garden. The upright walker stood sitting on the grass that surrounded the tree, then bent and scrunched over to count my legs, one mouth counting "One," and the other counting "Two." I waited,



patiently ... bored to high-heaven, until the upright walker finished counting the one hundred, a number I already knew. The others in line, in front of me, all having received their names, flew from a mark in the dirt created from feet scuffing earth where we had waited, like me, living in the garden next to the tree. The others in line, behind me, continued to shuffle their feet, looking about ... frustrated and bored. They, like me, knew their names before they stood in the queue. They, like me, standing before the two feet of the upright walker high up above with a hard shell glowing, just wanted to move and to jump, to fly and to zoom.

Up ahead, we can all see ... “Boring... however ... it’s, boring, we knew ... but, the queue was becoming shorter, slowly ... so slowly, and we were all still so, so bored.”

The skies above were cacophonous and full. Hippo was up there, Giraffe was too. Both had skipped over me when I wasn’t looking, at least in hindsight without a view. Yellow Lizard turned blue, matching the sky’s hue. Porcupine trundled its quills into echoing layers of quivering spikes, shooting hither and thither, vibrating air molecules ... and feet in our shoes. Now it was my turn, to receive my name, my own label and designation to call. They spoke amongst themselves, the upright walker’s faces, conferring with the heavens above and my feet down below. The others had gathered to watch, I could see now, the line stretching down was with us all. We were all together in this decision. We were all One with the cosmos to name ‘me’ while standing in line at the front of the queue. I was Centipede. I had one hundred legs, and I flew. Into the air spiraling inside wind, I flew



when I heard the word my name uttered. Boring into my brain, I knew I was one and with them all. And, yes, I was Centipede with one hundred legs, and, yes ... I won One too!

