

The Abandoned Shrubbery

By Drew T. Noll



The Village, DrewNoll 10-2013 © דרונול

We could see the trees rustling from where we sat, perched atop what was once something old, now just defunct. It was difficult to climb up here, to the top of the contraption we sat upon, but its creators provided steps and bars of hard metal that were perfect to ascend. We all had gravity to contend with, unlike the ancients; if you can believe the stories told. Myself, I think it was all make-believe. “Hee-haw...!” Um, excuse me, I’m a donkey.



“Quiet! I can almost hear the edges singing; just one second more and I could have heard the sound made once again!” bellowed the bull, clinging to a swinging bench glowing red with raised horns. The bull wanted to catch any tiny sonic wave perchance approaching. “The sound I hear in my dreams will come, if only I can stay seated here long enough,” the bull droned on.

“Hee-haw...!” was all I could say in return, my bottom uncomfortable swinging next to the giant ass on the bull sitting next to me. We struggled to the top, just to get up to see the edge of the world that had almost been. The sound of its demise is storied galore from the top of the world to its bottom up here. And the bull sitting next to me believed in it all.

I am more of a cynic. It’s always served me in the past, as far as I can recall. And I remember it all, or so I’m told. Our story begins with upright walkers, claiming to own the world; which is strange, because they left it to begin with. At least that is what’s told. “Hee-haw...! I suspect a rat. Twitchy and small, alert, adaptable, and observant, I suspect a rat. Tar and feather them all, I say! But, the star rats always have their day.”

“Not so!” says the bull, his ass twitching and meandering my way. “The slithering snake may have had the last say, it is said, as it once flew high in the sky, twirling and soaring, mouth in tail, like bubbles floating up and disappearing beyond the world’s veil.”

“Bull,” I think aloud, “You are quoting from lore, just talking some more. I wish and I wait, someday we’ll have proof for sure. Hee-haw...!” *The snake,*



AKA – the serpent, spent no time in the air... “From up here we can see nothing more; the serpent is far down below, snaking its way down to the shore... Can you see it yet, you bull sitting next to me?!”

“A shor ... is me, is mine,” said the bull inching its bottom ever closer behind.”

“Hee-haw!” I yell back, as if in protest when it really is not. From up here we ‘could’ see the edges, after all, the world floating by that we at one time saw. Others climb the ruins to see it as well, like the porcupine below grasping a treetop, or that alligator on top of a mud-hill, wishing it could play its sax without bubbles popping. “I see hippos bobbing up and down, water splashing with each quiver of blubber, jelly muscling its way from one shore to another,” I mumble asunder.

“Yeah, I see the hippos,” said the bull. “But, the snake is all that it took for the world to partake. The hippos are happy, bobbing the way that they do, as if they always had, and do still too.”

“Hee-haw! Where do you think they went? The walkers left us, and the snake rode down in their wake!” brayed the donkey, (that’s me!).

“But, you said the snake was seen down below, meandering to the sea!” snorted the bull. “I see it now, moving east towards those little hills.”

“Those aren’t ‘hills,’ those are damn rides that the walkers built before they slid down the blue shoot—there was once a tiny dragon with a fiery breath, but now it’s stuck like cupid’s arrow deep in our neck ... a bottleneck, the



exit turnstile, allowing others not present to sink ... what the heck?" I shouted back, and only then began to think.

"You are insane," flummoxed the bull, its bottom ever-present hovering above all. "I dare you to jump and fly down to the hills wandering beyond..."

"MOOO! over... that is, you cud-chewer." *And the name-calling begins*, I think to myself as I said it, all along the rust falling down from the rides that they built. By chance I look up, eyes slanted in disarray, to see lofting above a cloud on display. A single puff designed from above, like quotation marks guiding the way. There must be others... my mind thinks as our bench on the Ferris wheel sways.

A creak sounds out, moving the air around our swing in the heavens. Collapsing into ourselves, the ass on the bull next to me gives way and falls—flying to meet the snake I see rising! *It wasn't a rat, the bull was right*, I think outright, my thoughts coalescing into a bubble above. Then my seat below me unseats and scatters into rust droplets falling. "Hee-haw!" I ... yell ... out... as I fall tumbling down.

"I see the bubble evaporating!" yells out the bull. "It was never real, any of it, and now it all is falling. The rust turns to powder at every turn, the powder then vanishes without having learned. One is just calling, shone brightly burning, askance it all is, fulfilling the past while building the present-turning."



“The edges are singing,” (that’s the bull still talking)—there is a little bull in us all. So, I fly down, too, flipping ass overhead, just catching by a breath to descend once again. The trees rustling below remind us of whence we all came, tumbling into a future as time attempts to still, and the treetops rise overhead.

Indecision is rampant, building with turns, and time falls to the roadside as we watch ourselves pancake into grass. Reentry into reality really sucks. The snake bubbles up. “Hee-haw,” I say, but it delivers weak punch instead. We drink anyways, savoring the future and stepping onto past momentum, squashing it under our treading. Full circle we’ve come.



Etrog in Space, DrewNoll, 2016 © דרונול

And we continue to fall, rising up with the bubbles and plummeting down. The gates have reopened, letting us in, and others have joined us (the ones that once fell). That sound echoes out, the ramshackle horn, and the bull next to me falling grins widely. In the end, all I can think is: *all along I thought it was bull, but in reality I was just being an ass*—the end.

