

Dreams-in-progress

by Ann Bogle

I noticed that on nicotine patch I dreamt of celebrities and sex. These were men who knew me in the dreams but not in life. All of them were extremely famous, except Dan Fogerty, who used to be more famous and who kissed me like a teenager. Redford came in a limo. With Dylan the embrace was of friendship for my real friend, Jack. A team of reggae journalists played and an unknown man came after work for me in a kilt.

Perhaps it's due to Wellbutrin — who knows? -- that I dream now of celebrities I have met and who might argue against it, their fame, as a false claim, one that means (no one besides poets and students, colleagues and friends knows them) a familiarity related to but unlike widespread fame.

I walked into a party. Men I'd heard of were there and more than "heard of," whose intimate veiled thoughts revealed in pages of risky avant garde literature I had read. I was wearing new shoes that were a half size too small. My feet had grown from pounding the pavement looking for someone. The homelessness had broken open in me without interrupting shelteredness.

I had slept with a dry head in a soft bed, alone. It was as if I had always slept that way. I might have resorted to holding a stuffed animal. There was a reason for this celibacy but it was not religion or disease. It was society. I had exceeded a limit placed on all of us -- how many hands we are to hold before picking the hand we most wish to hold for life. I had thought it was a numeral but it was a resonance, one that happens early then recurs.

I hit upon it with a musician, a famous man married for decades, a soul already spoken for, enough. I was poor (despite my shelter) and I had learned that "poor" is different from "broke" which didn't apply

to all poor people. "Broke" described the nouveau poor. And "clarity" I suggested we use when "enough" had been reached.

I dreamt in three dreams that we were at a poetry reading and at two AA meetings. In the second dream of the meetings the married musician suggested that I read seafaring novels to help the alcoholic I had next met. The alcoholic had rejected AA as brainwashing. Enough, enough, enough, but it wasn't yet enough: clarity in action.

In the earlier dream about the meetings — the rooms change — I am bottomless under the table and must cross the room to find pants. My fat shows, fat that wasn't there when he met me, vantage he would not have seen.

In the dream of the poet there is a wide sweeping lawn, and we flirt, but it is or is not the same thing, and we have no words for it: "legislation," "negotiation," "foundation." I collide with him on a hill and knock him over. I recircle the hill to see him but by then he is busy.

Earlier, not ten years of it, I had walked into Keillor's bookstore and the word "clarity" was written across a banner under the ceiling. Enough, I was thinking, but the furtive position of one seeking clarity or enough, quietly or alone, was barely enough when I couldn't see those brown eyes or pass a guess.

