

Castle and Bell

by Brian Michael Barbeito

The bells are ringing once again. They are three sets of bells, but I can tell them apart. It's cold up here, and I never thought I would end up in such a high fortress surrounded by the grey and dark and the moat and the flora and fauna foreign and slightly brutish. The whole landscape is somehow antagonistic. I thought I would go to Hawaii or else Bermuda. You end up where you end up. Osho says that freedom is like that. He tells the story of a man who asked the guru about freedom and the guru instructed him to lift a foot off the ground. The man did. Then the guru told him to lift the other foot, and of course he couldn't. See, said the guru, freedom is like that. You have some choice in that you could have lifted the left or the right, but then you are on a restricted sort of path after that. I understand. Osho was right to tell that. I wanted to go away- to the warmth and the salt air- smiling pastel painted abodes and stucco walls in the preternaturally bright light that calms the seaside and witnesses whitecaps. And I went- that was the one foot- but it was not for me to choose where. No matter, I am in a purlieu and am one myself. Ever on the outside and the outskirts. Only mildly involved with people and mores and such. Well, the bells. I shall tell you about the bells. It is too tiresome to tell all. Nobody can tell the whole so we should be happiest with parts. Maybe the whole is contained in the part. The macrocosm in the microcosm. The bells turn on in my ear- but it's not tinnitus. It's something of the other world. That I am sure of. It was stronger when I was a child- much more pronounced- but it has come back again. The second bells are the door of this old ancient structure- there is a man- a wanderer of the hills- a village idiot- frail and ashen, sunken eyes shell shocked and what is even more disconcerting is that those eyes look as if they do know something indeed. He rings the bells and runs back to faraway fields. I don't know why he does it. The third type of bell is such like a death chime. I can tell it apart from the others though I don't know if it is physical or psychic in origin. You would hear it

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also if you were here. It is for me. It announces that the end is coming to meet me. Like a guest. Wanton. A bit sly but not so much so. I am not worried. It is dank and cold and foreign here. I have fought the elements- the outside ones and the inside ones. I have lifted one foot towards a truer freedom but cannot lift both. What the sound is announcing will come soon to lift the other. Death is a cinch. The bells are ringing once again.

