

Peace be with you

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Published in Calamities Press

<http://calamitiespress.com/2014/08/24/peace-be-with-you-slippy-realism-by-joao-cerqueira/>

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Jesus returned to earth by walking down the middle of the road, without anyone noticing what had happened. Just another man among the hurrying passers-by, with the only difference being that his face didn't look anxious or morose. On the contrary, he was smiling. He was smiling like someone without a worry, without a cross to bear.

Looking at him, tall, slim, long hair, dressed like a bargain hunter from Zara sales, if having to guess his age, people might have estimated at somewhere between thirty and thirty-three years old. Some evildoers would have said that he was someone who has been under the knife to look younger and had blood transfusions to feel rejuvenated. Others still, would be categorical in their belief that he was a foreigner, from who knows where.

Two students playing hooky took him for a mature student. From her balcony, spying down on the urban bustle, an old dear had no doubts that he was just another carefree youngster, sponging off his parents. For the taxi drivers, who stared at him from the rear-view mirror, that hippy looked a bit suspicious. And who knows what an effeminate old man who winked at him was thinking.

It was all very different from the last time he had been here. However, his amazement didn't stem from the changes to urban planning or to technology, but rather from his discovery of the city's inhabitants. The people were taller, fatter, hastier, and they no longer wore tunics or sandals (at least the majority).

A few questions then occurred to him: would it all have turned out differently if instead of other people from the past, he had met these ones? Would he manage to attract a group of faithful here too who would follow him everywhere, but in the end, just as they had before, would end up betraying him, abandoning him and even denying him before the rooster crows? Would the whole city turn against him again, the authorities arrest him, the judges condemn him washing their hands of guilt, and the mob exulting his death? Or, and perhaps the most probable, would they continue to watch television, drink beer, and send text messages without paying him much attention?

In the middle of all this amazing urban wildlife, where there was no shortage of dogs more ferocious than any Roman mastiff, the only thing that seemed familiar was a group of longhaired, bearded hippies, dressed in purple and selling jewellery. These entrepreneurs that the state will never support, that liberals refuse to espouse and that conservatives ignore through resistance to change may have been the only ones to recognise him, because when he approached them they said “peace and love” to him — a modern, floral and hallucinogenic version of “peace be with you”.

