

A Blowhard Drops By

by John Olson

The wind is blowing. It makes a kind of music in the trees. It is like something living. It has a being. It knocks on the door. It tries to sell me a vacation in Rio. It wants me to sign a petition for the dissolution of Arizona. It wants me to contribute money to the fund for aimless existences. I invite it inside. It sits at the table. Everything blows off the table, including the cat. I pour the wind some coffee. The coffee shivers in the mug, then disappears.

So, I say, what is the answer?

The answer to what?

You know. The song by Bob Dylan. The answer is blowing in the wind. You're the wind. So what's the answer?

Who's Bob Dylan?

A singer. He plays the guitar.

You should ask Bob Dylan.

I don't know Bob Dylan. I don't have his cell number, or email address.

Well what is the question?

Dylan had quite a number of them. How many roads must a man walk down before you can call him a man?

Thirty-two.

Are you sure?

Yes. Thirty-two. Twenty-three for women. They catch on to things faster.

Here is another: how many seas must a white dove fly, before she sleeps in the sand.

Doves don't sleep in the sand. Mourning doves prefer nesting in trees near human habitation. The laughing doves of sub-Saharan Africa like nesting in fruit trees, pomegranate and olive in particular. At last that's what my sister Simoom tells me. Don't you have any questions of your own?

Yes. A few. Which makes a better use of language: poetry or prose?

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Prose. Anything else?

Really? Prose?

I don't know. I guess it would depend on the poem. Have you heard the sound I make in the trees? What would you call that?

A sound. A soughing. Or a susurrus.

Susurrus. Sounds like poetry to me. Anything else?

What is next week's winning lottery number?

I haven't the faintest. I can't tell the future. I live in the present.

What is the mind?

The mind of what? A zebra? An oyster? A cow?

A human being.

How would I know that?

You're the wind.

Wind, yes. Ok. The human mind is a form of energy, like bioluminescence. It is similar to the sweet dumpling squash, with a yearning for light and glory. Some say it is a great soup for making negotiations. I saw one once, rolling down the hill like a wheel on fire. It had jarred loose during a birthday celebration. Too much tequila. This is good coffee, by the way.

Thank you.

Sure thing. Anything else?

Not now. Maybe later. I've got to clean up this mess before my wife comes home.

Sorry about that.

No problem.

