

The Genius

by Spencer Troxell

The Genius has gained so much understanding that there is no one alive who is capable of comforting him. He knows there are people who are perfectly serene; some through a deficiency in understanding, others through what is generically called “enlightenment.” The genius would accept either of these methods to happiness willingly, were someone able to convey their essences to him in a language that didn't sound to him like:

1. A peacock plucking out it's own back feathers.
2. An engagement ring in the garbage disposal.
3. A herring being swept up in the claws of a grizzly bear.
4. An overfull zit, rocketing itself onto the surface of a mirror.

Since no one can comfort The Genius, he just stares out the rain-specked window in his study. He sits in a comfortable red leather chair and looks at the wet blue grass, the streaked gray shed, and the absorbent brown fence in his backyard.

It is always raining in the genius's mind. When he's standing in his kitchen, talking to his wife—who herself only has one small way that she can connect with him on such a high plain—he sees rain. Sometimes it pours, and her hair and shirt are soaked, and he can clearly see the outline of her plain cotton bra and her unserious bellybutton . Sometimes the rain just tinkles, just a small bout of heavenly whizzing. He can hear it chink against the tile, and it sounds with an echo in the deep set sink.

Once, when the genius was in the throes of desperation and willing to toss experience and reason to the wind, he went to see the world's most renowned Psychotherapist in a small gray flat in Switzerland. The flat overlooked a gray field, a small pond, and a medium-sized wooden shack that probably held lawn equipment.

The Eminent Psychotherapist began the session fully aware that he was, indeed, taking The Genius himself down *the road less traveled*, and so proceeded with deft attention, erudition and care. By mid-session, somehow, things had gone upside down, and the

Genius found himself lecturing the Eminent Psychotherapist (mouth agape, upturned palms supporting his soft chin), on the fundamentals of String Theory.

The Genius has since abandoned all hope of seeing full remission of the Great Descending Haze in his lifetime.

One thing will occasionally lift the influence of that golden demon/ will swat the black-eyed dog with cold newsprint:

A casual human touch. A brush of fingers through his graying hair. A hip-bump on the subway car from a careless stranger, or two hands reaching for the same dropped object at once, colliding.

The touches work best when they are accidental.

An accidental human touch—now and again—will appease the insidious beast of woe, and will allay the dull ache that accompanies The Genius through the flak-starred night of his bleakest desolation.

Sometimes the rain smells sweet.

