

FORCING THE HAND OF THE "ONE ABOVE"

Erev Tisha B'Av 2014

בְּאֵתִי לִגְנֵי אַחֲתֵי כָּלֵה אַרְיֵתִי מוֹרֵי עֵם בְּשָׁמַי אֶכְלֹתִי יַעֲרִי עֵם דְּבָשִׁי שְׁתִּיתִי יַיִנִי עֵם חֶלְבֵי אֶכְלוּ  
רָעִים שְׁתוּ וְשָׁכְרוּ דוֹדִים:

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My father in law  
struggling  
ICU  
ventilator  
dependent on others  
so alone  
staring silently  
bearing all this  
these horrors  
at the end of this life, 89 years  
now tubes  
the indignity of examinations  
constant poking  
needles  
X rays  
screen settings  
beeping machines  
noise of purring technology  
exposure  
artificial light  
the absence of day and night  
interminable horror.

Knowing all this  
powerless over all of this  
the IMPULSE came to me  
to force the hand of the powerful  
One Above...  
such insolence!  
but then watching him  
in this state of powerlessness  
this powerful man  
larger than life  
who influenced so many people  
most of all me (at times begrudgingly)  
his mastery of texts  
his oratory  
his Halachic judgement...  
where is the way out of  
this American inability to let go?  
once the technology is in place.

Are we not simultaneously both  
beneficiaries as well as victims of medical wizardry?  
And where is the exit strategy once we embark on the machines  
that breath and maintain blood pressure artificially?

Something needed to be done at this point  
out of the mechanics and physics of the inescapable decline.  
Something meta-physical

So off I went with my trusted pal Allan  
since I had no clue as to what I was doing  
merely that I would create  
a perfumed garden on my deck  
so that when he would be brought home  
he might enjoy the beauty and privacy of the deck  
enclosed in green.

Buying the pots and earth and chemicals  
the hose and sphritzer the small garden tools  
Reminded me of 6 Claremont Park, Finchley  
back home...  
parents working sundays in the garden  
the pond, the goldfish, the forts incessant croaking,  
the ten apple and pear trees in the back  
facing the meandering "Brook"  
which overflowed one year submerging the garden  
in a rain-drenched summer.  
I had never shared their passion and delight  
but now returning to my deck

our garden-less plot on which our townhouse  
stands  
this is my garden.

Carefully patting the soil into each container  
with the help of my grandchildren  
who take these tasks very seriously  
the plants go into each side by side  
then the framed containers are screwed  
(by Allan, who, of course, has power tools)  
into the bannister tops around the deck.

Finally the deck is enclosed by 9 black-potted planters  
and I feel as proud as farmer Giles<sup>1</sup>  
and every night I emerge to water them lovingly.  
This by any standard is a modest attempt  
and I have no idea what prompted me to go out  
and commit to this project  
yet deep inside  
the impulse to “force the hand of the One Above”  
kept ringing in my ears.

For having created the vessel the “*kli*”  
*surely spirituality too hates a vacuum!*  
surely Abba will come home and be present to this mini Garden of Eden  
awaiting him in its privacy and greenery.  
He used to like to sit out here in the sun drenched visits  
away from the enclosed dark West Side apartment  
absorbing the sun on my deck  
So now all is ready for him.  
All is prepared  
the “*arousal from below*”  
has been initiated,  
we must but wait for improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> Beyond Our Ken 1958-1964 BBC, featured characters such as Betty Marsden’s Fanny Haddock (which parodied Fanny Cradock). It was also notable for Pertwee’s Frankie Howerd impersonation, Hankie Flowered, and Hugh Paddick’s working-class pop singer Ricky Livid – the name being a mickey-take on contemporary pop singers’ stage names such as Marty Wilde and Billy Fury. Another favourite was Kenneth Williams’ country character, Arthur Fallowfield, who was based on Dorset farmer Ralph Wightman, a regular contributor to the BBC radio programme “Any Questions?” Fallowfield’s lines were full of innuendo and double entendre – on one occasion Horne introduced him as the man who put the sex in Sussex. **Fallowfield’s reply to any question began: “Well, I think the answer lies in the soil!”** <http://rokradio.com/beyond-our-ken/>