

Over The Precipice

A Pale Horse

Quit While You Are Ahead.

I had been unable to sit long enough to stare down its unrelenting presence. In Wild Strawberries the hands had been removed. The Chemistry Professor had been sufficiently irritated by the inexactitude of the Institutional clock that he had asked me to remove the hands. That same professor is now blind. A pale horse, notwithstanding the absence of the hands, is sensed upon the horizon.

The dog had moved, slightly. I had heard some music. Later something had drawn my attention to cast a glance upon the face of the new clock. It was equipped with a second hand. Invaluable moments had slipped by. Its always a race against time.

I had remembered the photograph of her lying upon some sort of trainer's couch, dressed in her running attire. Her head was turned to one side, perhaps to conceal the pleasure she was deriving from the massaging of her precious limbs. She appeared soft and round.

Soon she would become the hare attempting to outrun the inevitable.

Once again they will have divided Time towards infinity. But she had had a cold on the day that she was to have hypothetically peaked out.

The life of man (or woman) is quite often a series of missed opportunities. Time and Tide, Time and Tide.

I, too, had been felled by a cold. The clock hammered away - tick, tock - tick, tock - tick, tock; I could have arrested the pendulum. Oddly the electric clock had started to make a noise after having consumed so much of my life. Imagine!, I had actually repaired the damned thing several times. I entered into its little electric bowel, prying open its crimped sixty cycle labyrinth, removing its time pump, the gummed-up flywheel, cleaning its dirty shaft, tenderly oiling and replacing and recrimping, re-engaging and catching up - you don't get something for nothing. Yes!, back on track towards one's destiny. I remember the somber Albert Ryder on horse back.

Well, while I was ill, it had begun to remind me. The sundial had been of no avail; it had been very cold and foggy outside. There had been a temptation to ask for credit, or compensation. Sickness is not entered on the scrolls. Sorry, No Credit! It's like the man who is obliged to pay his taxes although he has lost everything. **Tough!**

The New Frontier, The High Frontier, The Last Frontier; The Golden Age. I am my Frontier. My speck of future is accompanied by the doppler reverberations of the rider on horseback carrying his honed edge. While I have been under the weather I have grown angry because it was all slipping away. I had finally managed to get myself on the track after a long period of derailment. I know how she must have felt; she will never be as good. However her's is a thing of the body, her pretty, soft, finite body.

Over The Precipice

At least she had achieved an illustrious status as Woman Athlete of the Year. A broken leg would have ended her obligation; she might have been able to avoid the stigma of the inevitable - to lose or to fade. As Woman Athlete of the Year she could still command the most lucrative contracts in the Product Endorsement Industry. Being World Class would have facilitated her entry into the global culture, without roots. She had 'broken' every American distance running record from the 800 meters to the 10,000 meters.

Quit while you are ahead. Its better for the Image and the Endorsements.

If I had broken my leg, I would suffer no greater derailment than having had a bad cold. So much of this is beside the point.

Still - one must create a mood, an atmosphere. And while Hope may spring 'eternally', as we are fond of characterizing her, we find her deporting herself shyly and shamefacedly, not unlike ourselves.

The "Stopped-Flow" Chemistry Professor had been measuring rate constants in milliseconds. He was obliged to contend with 'dead time' before he could begin to mark the beginning of the rate. He was studying the rate of binding of an enzyme 'mixed' within a given 'substrate'. With some other kind of enzyme solution, he might "T" - Jump, confabulating the world with perturbed milliseconds. This latter might reveal what happens within the human body when the popular sentiment demands an 'eye for an eye' in the electric chair; not a cruel and unusual punishment. The former might reveal the rapidity with which the human body could be observed to shut-down when exposed to nerve gas.

She had been running at a blistering pace across Dugway, when a helmeted bird flew overhead; the metal bird let something fall; she stopped as though striking a wall - no fuss, no muss - a stiff. Our understanding sometimes surpasses our understanding. The Coronor's Report: Cholinesterase Inactivation. Quit while you're ahead.

The pregnant laboratory technician who had had suffered several successive miscarriages had requested me to check a malfunctioning machine. She was standing beside me as I had placed one hand upon the metal switch to energize an ungrounded machine which contained a shorted refrigeration compressor while, with the other, touching upon a grounded machine. Both machines had been manufactured by the same reputable firm. At the instant of the simultaneity of touchings I had been whacked a 'good one' by 220 across the labyrinth, leaping into the air in a violent contraction, shouting: **OH BOY!!!** Now what in hell kind of remark is that? An Oversight (before OSHA). The Rider swung, but missed.

I wonder what I would say in the electric chair?

Before you drop this weird reading material, offended by its discontinuity, let me explain. You have heard of the phenomenon of

Over The Precipice

'stream of consciousness' and 'free association' as a manner in which to log one's thoughts, variously attributed to, and popularized in the later writings of, James Joyce: to whom this makes no gesture to emulate; or whose name is not vained; rather does this abide its own peculiar literacy. The various manners of death result in the same end.

I imagine I am involved in a similar process, which I might describe as Free Association (like Free Jazz), or Automatic Writing. This method of writing is not without some utility and merit (like Gestalt Psychology) although apparently lacking in clarity.

Clarity has its place, even in literature. But clarity of statement is no measure of its effectiveness, either in literature or in the arena of politics. Not worth a plucked farthing.

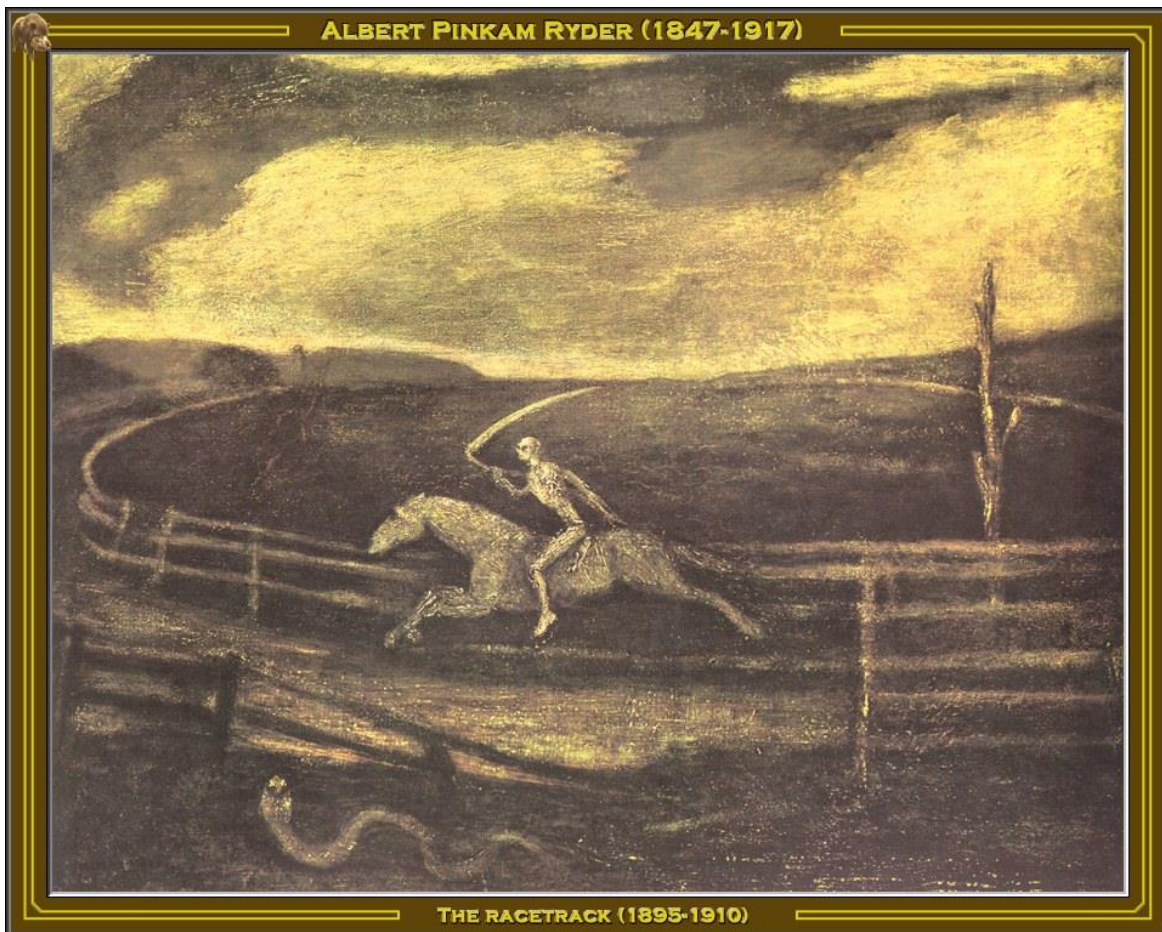
Actually she married a discus thrower; and had a baby; some people simply go to heaven. Quite by accident. Some by an accident of birth.

The Chemistry Professor arranged for a seeing-eye dog.

I nearly landed on the pregnant lady; she did not miscarry, but can you imagine what would have happened.....if I had landed on her.

The Pale Horse is galloping along at a steady pace; he always arrives before everyone else; a spoil sport.

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Over The Precipice

Addendum: The Blind Chemistry Professor's quadrapedic eyes could not forestall his master's momentum as he approached the precipice; he disappeared over the edge, almost casually, without any 'Goodbyes'. Dead Time measured in seconds.

Although we had tried on several occasions, we seldom got together. Our hearts were not in it. There was a recognition; were the pretexts lacking? 'Conflict of schedule' was one of the pretexts.

Only sheep perished at Dugway. The pretty runner survived to lose many races while attempting to win one last one for posterity.

Quitting while you're ahead is like Harold Stassen.

We all finish last in the one race we most desire to win. Small comforts in progeny, lest one feel the seed harbors something. An ego perhaps; all we need is another ego!!

We are presented with cognition, free choice, and options.

Rather than endure, we might elect to be pushed, if lacking the courage to free fall. We are preceded by two others; The Fall Of Man; and The Descent of Man From The Apes. Despite all the pitFALLS and the infirmities, our choice for another chance is precluded. In reality there is little free choice, for we exercise our options within an arena wherein we might choose which horn will gore us.

If I was a quirky Celebrity, I might offer Reincarnation.