
FICTO JURIS

Poems, Parables and Paradoxes

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THE NEW LAWYER

He suffered from an odd disease that took him to his death as a young man. It had its onset with a twinge of sharpness and cool competence as a beginning law student. Over the three years of his study it took stronger hold of him as he sensed his coming closer and closer to the circles of power. In practice it took full charge, as he determined the fate of his unprofessional brethren.

On his death bed he was full of resentment and bewilderment and railed, "How could I have been getting sick when all the while I was feeling stronger and stronger?"

The doctor shrugged and simply said, "It was entirely fair. What you took for strength was actually weakness. You were like a drunk who feels more and more invincible with each drink until he at last collapses. You understood your symptoms, but made the mistake of calling your now fatal disease--health."

JUSTICE

A doberman
Half dog
Half cop
Guards the road.

Ten speed
Pedalled too slow
To escape.

Rider checks for bruises
Over a twisted frame.

"Some dog you've got there--
Look at me,
At my bike."

"You've got a point,"
The farmer seemed to say
As he took his rifle
And shot the dog.

THE MONK

There was an old monk walking along a dusty road. He had been on a long journey and his shoulders were hunched over, his eyes glazed with fatigue, his lips parched, his feet encrusted with dried blood from a hundred small cuts. His right hand desperately clutched a shoulder high walking staff. He was mumbling to himself -- a prayer, a mantra, a low cursing of his peripatetic fate, a supplication to the people of the world to listen or to console him -- it was not clear. One could not tell whether he was filled with faith or whether faith had abandoned him and he was travelling to catch up with it. The only indisputable fact was that he was moving ever so slowly down the road.

As he was walking he encountered a man of resolute, passionate action who stood straight and tall, brandishing his consummate confidence. He was impeccably dressed, hair well groomed, teeth sparkling, and he smelled of the finest lotions. He only partially looked at the monk, lest something more congenial be missed.

The monk was almost past him when the man asked in forthright voice: "Where are you going? You seem to have travelled very far already, but judging from your present pace which is measured rather than quickening you are no where near the end of your journey."

The monk seemed to gather his face in from the periphery to the center to frame the right response as to where he had come from and where he might be headed. Despite great effort all that he could say was, "Pray for me."

This surprised the man of action: "And what good would my prayers be to me, to you, or anyone else? Prayer is designed to get supernatural help so that the right things will happen. I make things happen. Action always speaks louder than words, even words to the almighty. I dedicate my life to action -- good or bad action. If there is a God, he gave me my life force and my life force I will use, for more than renunciation or aimless wandering."

He was turning as he spoke, having devoted enough time to such an unimportant interlude. The monk, slower to react, was still trying to make the right response. He had seen both the wisdom and the folly of the man's soliloquy and moved his head ambiguously between agreement and disavowal. The man was already two strides away when the monk said scarcely above a whisper, "Pray for me and I will pray for you." He then continued his slow walk toward where he knew not.

THE TRIAL

Only crusty brown oaks
Still struggle
Against autumnal winds.

The maples
With more sense
Surrendered early
In a crimson and yellow flourish.

Pines
Unmoved
Simply point incriminating fingers
And oak leaves curl up
In Guilt.

If they had not tried to hold out so long
They might have found anonymity
Among fallen woodland forms.

As it stands they will be tied
To icy suffering and death.

Be an oak!