



becoming

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“Didn’t they always say we were the lucky ones? But luck will leave you ‘cause it is a faithless friend, and in the end when life has got you down you’ve got Someone here that you can wrap your arms around. So hold on to Me tight...we are stronger here together than we could ever be alone, so hold on to Me, don’t you ever let Me go! I believe in you and Me!”

~from *Hold On*

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prologue

Sometimes all we simply want are answers to our life's many dilemmas. But, even if life came with a manual and a promise of help, how many would ask for it, how many would actually use it?

Is there some scientific methodology we can use to explain the universe, the beginnings of man, and the purpose of our life? Perhaps these are questions for the philosophers; or just maybe they are the questions each of us should be asking?

For more than two thousand years man has walked and questioned on this earth...yet, I fear he is further from the solution today than at any other time in history. But—as odd as this may seem—these very answers have been placed in the hearts of every person!

How can this be? Answers literally under the nose of every human being? It is precisely because man and woman comprise such an intractable species that this is possible; this and self-righteous arrogance which has created a vast abyss capable of diverting even the most genuine of seekers.

Then there is the epidemic of blindness and deafness that perpetually engulfs man. Not the kind that comes occasionally at birth or from infection or disease, but that which comes from viewing and listening to propaganda about political correctness and a society bloated on its own self-aggrandizement.

To see clearly we must either listen intently to One or conversely be deluded by ones with opinions formed in the bowels of self-importance and the teaching of a collective society's ranting. To be precise, what are the questions and should we be asking them and expecting answers, or are we merely meant to ponder this great

mystery until one day our life demands solution to the only relevant
query: are we truly

becoming

the one we are meant to be?

chapter 1

I always liked the look of Caryn McGee. Most people called her beautiful, but I just enjoyed the way her hair fell below her waist and grazed her shoulders when she peered up at me. She wasn't arrogant like so many gorgeous women are, but she possessed a certain assuredness of purpose and humility of spirit. Yet, something was missing...me (or at least I wanted to believe that); because nearly everything about Caryn was perfection. I could go on and on, but let's begin when she first noticed me...

Caryn was walking across campus to her European history class and there was just something about the womanliness of her gait that attracted me instantly. She wasn't classically beautiful, but no one ever called her anything but. She was my first choice and once that choice is made, there is no going back. It wasn't even like I could accept a reduction in quality and select another girl, it had to be Caryn...those are the rules; and I don't make them.

She was a difficult pick from the start, because there was nothing I had to engage her. Simply put, she had everything she wanted at this point in her life. Why would she even look my way more than once; I could tell we were in for a struggle from our first conversation, and I always appreciated a challenge. But, it's so much easier to "gain access" when the participant is "willing"; but this was definitely not the case.

Needy people I can engage with the snap of a finger, but the less needy were something altogether different. So, there I was with the challenge of all challenges without even a good "pick-up" line. What would I do now?

The heart knows words that can never be expressed in any language on earth; and particularly when it is silently breaking, its language is powerful. The tears that follow are filled with the anointing of innocence and break forth from a crack in our most vital of organs. I would tell you never to open your mouth, but listen to your heart and merely sing from the depths of a soul that speaks volumes without ever uttering a sound.

You see, we attempt to feel with our words, hear with our ears, and see with eyes blind so long that images pass unnoticed. Have you ever been driving aimlessly and wondered at your current destination and how your car got you there? It is only the heart and its soul sounds that we should heed; it was so long ago that our tongues began their incessant banter that no one really listens anymore.

At times like this I think about my mother and her vanishing from everything real on this earth, so my heart cries out for solace that I can never find; and the missing is a near crushing blow to my heart. I expect to see blood seeping from the cracks that have formed as it silently and deafeningly breaks into all the pieces of a lost and precious love.

I loved that which is now forever vanished from this earth and I cannot retrieve it no matter the tears, the blood, the wanting, or the regret. This was something so precious that measurements cannot contain it. It is not held to mere earthly bounds, for love is infinite and extends to the boundaries of time and beyond. And it will always be, for time and love march with hands clasped tightly... never to separate.

Perhaps you have never known a love like this and some say you would be fortunate, but I say you have no capacity to view a crashing wave or encounter a child on a swing and be mesmerized by their intrinsic beauty. There is not the possibility that a sad movie brings genuine tears, or a cry for help elicits concern. One will always

be constrained and contained by the boundaries and the degree to which we have loved. If we have not loved and lost with tears that seem never to abate...we have not truly loved.

chapter 2

Barbara Minkhoff was a different matter altogether. I found her on the streets with rat feces embedded in hair so matted no comb could find success. So, she framed her face with the discarded tam-o-shanter found years ago in the dumpster behind the Irish pub in the downtown square where she roamed. Roamed was the more accurate term because she really didn't have a home address to call hers unless you consider the corner of Callaghan and Demarco Streets.

Barbara was born with her name attached to multiple trusts left by grandparents, parents, and a lone uncle. There was more money than even she could spend, but somehow this seemed to push her further into the convoluted world of drugs and mental illness. She wasn't arrogant or demanding but sensitive and sweet and life had somehow found in its darkened corners a means to deny her the privilege she had been born into. There sometimes seems to be such inherent promise in certain lives, though each life is unique and wonderful. Yet, I would have predicted success for Barbara, but I never was good at predictions.

Unlike Barbara, the Puerto Rican immigrant's son raised in the bullet-riddled inner city seemed destined for failure, but instead became VP of the largest textile manufacturing plant in the United States. There just is no certainty as to the success of any one individual on this earth. So, I have ceased with any kind of preconceived notion about this many years prior.

It was on a sunny day that I encountered Barbara pulling a half-eaten slice of Sicilian pizza from a sidewalk garbage can, when I merely introduced myself as she voraciously continued gumming

the stale pie. She actually cocked her head in my direction and I could tell by her hint of a smile that she was listening. I gladly allowed her time to finish her first meal of the day then continued my verbal banter.

She never looked away from me after that first encounter and slowly the dim light which had faded nearly to black behind each blue iris brightened to reveal the intense color of an azure sea. She was gradually coming back from the lost and after she found scissors one day which had fallen from the trunk of a traveling seamstress from Bloomingdales, she began to comb the shortened locks and finally the matted nest on her head took on the appearance of human hair.

It took several years to transform her visage from street wanderer to productive citizen and many years longer to convince the courtroom judge to restore her inheritance. Yet even now, as I watch her with the bloom of love ever present, I marvel at her transformation. Hope is only a four-letter word, but truly given to much larger proportions in reality. And Barbara is the walking proof of its testimony.

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