

POEM OF THE WEEK

POEM 500

CAMELOT

That's me in the corner, quiet and shy;
a lopsided grin, sharp and probing eyes.
You might think me aloof. Don't be fooled.
Speak to me, your presumptions will be unspooled

Tumbling like old reels from too many B-grade movies.
I remember them, S & G; feelin' groovy.
I am old as winter, younger than spring;
The discontent of Autumn, awaiting Summer's sun.

I am old beyond my years; young as my memories.
Once I was wild, with long hair and a beard
(The photos are gone now, someone else's bonfire) -
a regular flower child (albeit some years too late,

things took a while to get to New Zealand back then).
Believed it all: ban the bomb, the Age of Aquarius
(saw "Hair" twice). Let the sunshine in. All so different
from the dull grey world of my birth. Open the doors,

The Doors of perception; no, it's not The End,
come on baby light my fire. Hold my hand,
mould your body against mine; ain't gonna be
a funeral pyre; damn right, we gonna get higher.

Remember Vietnam? It's a country. There was a war there;
Many died; a dirty and secret war engulfed surrounding countries.
Partisan politics playing with deadly boys' toys. Is your agent orange?
Divided a nation, galvanised the world. How much longer can warmakers lie?

Who shot Kennedy, I mean JFK? Don't feed me the official line.
It was a coup d'etat. The industrial military complex won.
The world has been darker for it since. So, it is of Camelot
my thoughts dwell: a mythical time and place, in which

nobility dwelt, it had the measure of the foe. Be it Arthurian
or the time of JFK, the strength of legend does not pale.
Of the Age of Aquarius, a joyous explosion of vitality and hope.
Everyone knew the energy would dwindle and subside.

It is the nature of exultation. So, what remains? The Big Chill?
Look into my eyes, if you have an interest. What questions do you see?
There are many. How can one be wise when there are so many "why's"?

Where are those days: those terrifying real, living on the edge of understanding,

drown me in intoxication and dance me to the end of love days; the first time
for everything, I am immortal (apart from the time I didn't want to be) days?

I doubt any of this will be evident in my vague, unfocused gaze.

So, don't bother; don't look deep. What you see might make you weep

or back away, hysterical laughter: "How can you be so stupid, so vain?"

You might ask me. "It's over, gone; Camelot's dead. Welcome to the future,

it's grim and it's dark; big money reigns, and does what it likes: buys the military,

and places and replaces governments at a whim. Greed and presumption never died.

Changed clothes. learned a new language; dressed itself in respectability,

bought some philosophical clout; and enraged the religious Right. It was hard

You are old and outdated; get with it". I will smile, I heard it before, in 1972.

Me? I'll stand in the corner, quiet and shy, with a lopsided grin,

sharp and probing eyes

Leslie D. Bush

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