

THE AMETHYST

1.

The Conceit

It began with a poem about the challenge of creativity
and the inherent insecurity that goes with it:
“Doubt and dissatisfaction dwell deep”, a constant refrain.
Not particularly well written or pleasing to read.

I think to myself, there’s something worth saving.
Let’s try a different approach. Seek a metaphor of sorts,
for reasons unknown an image of an amethyst comes to mind:
an attempt at irony, an oblique approach.

The insertion of two verses changes the dynamics;
extra research is required. Elements of Greek mythology
are always intriguing; qualities attributed to the stone
even more so. Thinks I, we have something here. So here we go.

The amethyst is not a poet’s stone,
a philosopher’s stone perhaps.
Legend bestows on its powers to
stimulate and soothe the mind and emotions.

“ It carries the energy of fire and passion,
creativity and spirituality, yet bears
the logic of temperance and sobriety”,
thus I am informed. Like the sense of contradiction.

2.

The intrusion

“Found an amethyst, embedded in a rock; chipped it out, broke my thumb
(an inoperable preaxial digit, now that’s a drag): leaves me very disturbed.
Am I equal to or greater than the parts that make up the sum?
Now, what was I saying about being petulant and perturbed?”

Neither happened; a bit of dark humour, irony or self-mockery?
I can always blame my Muse; she is capricious;
for inserting the image so firmly into my mind.
an image of an amethyst, firmly embedded.

3.

The legend

The Wine God Bacchus was aggrieved,
he was determined to avenge himself and decreed the first person he met
would be devoured by his tigers. That person was a beautiful young maiden
named Amethyst on her way to worship at the shrine of Diana.

As the ferocious beasts sprang she sought the protection of the goddess.
and was saved by being turned into a clear, white crystal.
Bacchus, regretting his cruelty, poured the juice of his grapes
over the stone as an offering, giving the gem its lovely purple hue.”

4.

So, here’s the problem...

I have two apparently contradictory streams of thought.
Somewhere in there, I intuit there is synchronicity,
a sense of connection. As a process, poetry - for me -
is intensely personal. I can play editor later.

Writing, and creating is intoxication; it's a game, an infatuation.
Dervish dances, dystopian dreams - nightmares;
delve into themes of death, devastation and despair.
It is not for idle diversion; doubt and dissatisfaction do dwell deep.

I do not intentionally bare my soul; in the process, it will happen.
That which is written says much about the writer. So, for the record:
I am a sucker for grand visions, and universal themes; make me feel special;
anything that tells me I am not alone. Stare into a void? I have done that

more than once. Is the hope of achievement beyond repair?
Yes, I've asked myself that. To pick an amethyst to explore such themes?
Then I meditate on the measure of metaphor. is "literal truth" an oxymoron?
I consider the legend, maybe that will give me illumination.

5.

Seeking resolution

The power of metaphor is to express universal "truth".
Through suffering, do my words gain merit,
do I gain your respect? Are my phrases stronger,
the picture brighter, and my song is sung clearer?

I re-consider my stance: "the amethyst is not a poet's stone",
Perhaps it should be. The passion of the moment is nothing
without the contemplation that follows. How can I walk in the dark
without some core of purity, the integrity of intent?

Enough will never be enough; always something more.
The heights of exultation are followed by the fall.
I have been in or involved with many plays
and many projects. The initial burst of energy

and enthusiasm subsides, panic sets in;
so far, so steep; to plunge so deep - play victim
to nightmares that stalk and haunt a restless sleep.
Dark dalliances with demons, in the light of a full moon.

Then I fake it to make it. Tease them, please them,
they are mine to play with or exorcise.
Peace? That would be nice, for a while;
bask in a sense of achievement.

The storm will come again. I will seek it.
The adrenaline rush is addictive.
This is a struggle I embrace with fervour;
an odyssey I embark on heedless of the cost.

The goal is defined but elusive;
persistently beyond my grasp.
I want something spectacular.
People would say, his life was of value.

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