

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 150: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, define a dog on it's own terms
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(My apologies for this episode being late. Explanation below.)

I'm not sure if there's ever been a time when we've been able to look at things and see them the way they are instead of the way we want to see them or think we should see them or are told we should see them. And has there ever been a time when the things we look at are what they are or what they want us to see? There's danger in this: knowing is survival, not knowing is something else.

The dog, Sidestepper, had long since stopped listening to the narrative that hung over the path of adventure and new meanings like an eternal lecture that, obviously, nobody wanted to hear.

But there was something he needed to know even if he didn't want to know it. Walking sideways as usual, he was already facing Crazy Man when he said, "Do I look like a dog?"

Crazy Man had never heard the narrative voices that the dog, Sidestepper, heard and he was certain that his travel buddy was playing with less than a full deck. But the question, not it's origin, was fair and honest. The dog, Sidestepper, looked like something out of a paper mache project given to a class of 100 five year olds on acid with each of them using their own interpretation of what a dog should look like...and all of them working on the same dog, taking turns molding it this way and that until...naw...that wouldn't even begin to describe what the dog, Sidestepper, looked like. He was more like a round fur black ball with a tiny tail, tiny head, tiny wet nose...all perched on top of four very tall legs that made him look like a rice paddy hut that barked. But Crazy Man wasn't going to tell him that. After all, the lie not meant to deceive is the good lie. (when you need an excuse to lie by slight twists of initial plausibility)

"You sure do," he said. "A very unique breed of dog."

This made the dog, Sidestepper, feel like a very unique breed of dog and Crazy Man feared that maybe he'd taken it a bit too far and that maybe his travel mate's head would swell so much that his ball of a body would kick the dog's head off it's wee shoulders so that he wouldn't topple.

But that didn't happen.

This did...

"You do realize that I walk sideways, don't you?"

"But you do a great job of it."

"I stare at you all day instead of looking forward," said the dog, Sidestepper. "If I wasn't watching you I wouldn't be able to walk forward. I'd trip and fall down, or I'd wander off into the deep dark scary woods."

Crazy Man thought about this for as long as it took him to come up with a great lie.

"That's more a thing about gravity and physics," he said. "And maybe some optics. See those two spires over there?"

The dog, Sidestepper, looked at two spires rising into the sky behind a much weather worn building that suddenly appeared off to one side of the path of adventure and new meanings.

"So?" he said.

"They point up," said Crazy Man.

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this even longer than it took Crazy Man to think up a lie.

"So?" he said.

Having completely forgotten what he as going to say, Crazy Man scrambled through the maze of his mind until he realized that whatever he was going to say had somehow disappeared behind a cloud of physics and brain theory. So he improvised.

"They point up," he said. "And you point sideways and I point forward and the path of adventure and new meanings points to the horizon unless you're walking backwards and then it points to the past where your mother was a dog and so you must be a dog which means you must look like a dog."

Somehow this made sense to both of them and the spires and building suddenly disappeared, having served their purpose to inspire Crazy Man with a great confusing package of bullshit.

Right out of the blue, the dog, Sidestepper, said, "I don't want to be a dog anymore. I want to be a clock."

Suddenly, something wasn't right along the path of adventure and new meanings. Puffy white things that once were clouds transfigured into comets and took off into space. The trees of the deep dark scary woods transformed into giant cigars and all the bugs and animals turned into smokers and smoked the trees. The sky turned into an immense concave computer monitor displaying the latest rumors and recipes for disaster. The deader squirrel in one of Crazy Man's silly pockets changed into a package of gum and ate itself.

But the dog, Sidestepper, was still an awkward-looking dog that looked like an awkward-looking dog.

"Do you really want to be a clock?" said Crazy Man as he looked around at a landscape changed by wishful thinking. "I think you might be messing with the way things are from a standpoint of not what the way things are."

The dog, Sidestepper, agreed with a nod that, like the wink of a wizard or the kiss of a prince, released the world around them from the spell of his wishful thinking to be anything but himself.

Comets rained down upon the planet as clouds and the trees of the deep dark scary woods unsmoked themselves and the bugs and animals sought healthier lifestyles and all the world's rumors and all the world's recipes for disaster wiped themselves off the sky and returned to the internet where they belonged. However, the deader squirrel remained self-eaten, probably because it was dead anyway.

The traveling duo continued down the path of adventure and new meanings happy in the knowledge that they were who they were and were what they were no matter how much the internet tried to impose itself on them and no amount of self-foolery was going to change that.

To be continued...

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Goodbye for now.

This will be the last episode in the Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, for a while. I started this during the first COVID lockdown. You can read the story here.

I'm planning to turn this series into a podcast (starting from Episode 1, of course) and I've even signed up for a course on creating podcasts. I'm going to leave the episodes here on WordPress and I might even run the podcast here. But so far, nothing's written in stone.

In the meantime, for those of you who've just started reading the series, you'll have lots of time to catch up; although I think it might be best to do this on my website where you won't have to scroll through blog posts over a two year period. [You might want to open the pdfs here for much easier access.](#)

So...how did the Adventures begin?

It Started with a Lockdown

Yep, went into work late March and they told us to pack up and go home because the world was on fire with plague.

There followed a layoff with winter still freezing everyone's asses off and travel restrictions so that we all had to stay put and take it up the frozen butt. Plus, the first day of lockdown, I injured my back and spent the next three weeks on the living room floor reading Dan Simmon's Hyperion series. By the time I was able to sit down in front of my computer without screaming, I was starting to go a little stir crazy.

There I was...in front of my computer...sitting. Humming. Not screaming. It was all new to me. I laid my hands upon the keyboard, let my mind go blank so that I could fall into my wellspring of imagination and drown in inspiration. My fingers moved in fitful patterns across the keyboard and there was no stopping them. I lost track of time and place and was aware only of my fingers making the keys go clack, clack, clack. When the clacking stopped, I stared at the words they'd left in their wake:

“One day Crazy Man stepped outside to see what it was all about.”

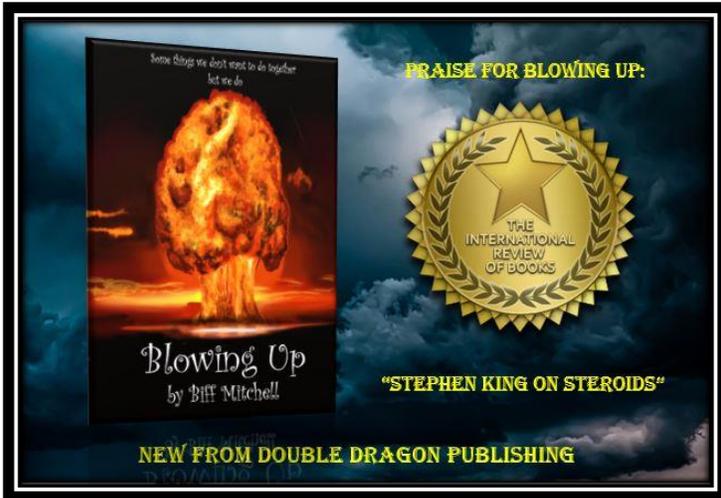
I read these words, re-read them and read them one last time before thinking: “What the hell is this?” I wasn't impressed. All that time cooped up and letting the inspired thoughts build and then getting this craziness? I was just about to delete this nonsense when my fingers began roving across the keyboard on their own, ignoring all sense of who was in charge of them...and those damn fingers wrote another line:

“He'd been under his bed crying and drinking wine for so long that he couldn't remember what he was crying about and he'd run out of wine.”

This...I could relate to. It was the story of my life.

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