

## Prescription for Insomnia

Last night a sinus attack had me sitting up at 2am in my rocking chair trying to ward off all those sniveling symptoms with my usual never-fail remedy for “Can’t Sleep!” I’d taken antihistamines before I went to bed, but for some” reason, those cursed symptoms wouldn’t allow the usual Russian antidote to work: and-drop-off.

So, I got out my Bible and asked my Pal the Holy Spirit for a verse that might usher in the Peace Jesus bought for me on the cross. Sitting still with my ‘ears on,’ what I got was ‘see Walt Whitman’s poem ‘The Sleepers.’

I didn’t have to dig out my “*Leaves of Grass*” Lines from “The Sleepers” began to infiltrate my mind. “The sleepers are very beautiful as they lie unclothed./ They flow hand in hand over the whole earth as they lie unclothed.” ... Whitman then cataloged many sleepers – all enjoying perfect peace, touching one another, lovingly, in this dream poem about Love’s perfect peace: “The master salutes the slave and the slave salutes the master.”/ friend is in-armed by friend.”

“Stiflings and passages open, the paralyzed become supple” ... the joints of the rheumatic move as freely as ever/ and freer than ever” ... Learned and unlearned are hand/ Male and female are hand in hand.”

Then the Spirit changed the subject to a celebration of Night as the great mother, whose offspring, Sleep, unifies an otherwise divided, even, antagonistic humanity: “I love the rich, running day/ but I do not desert her in whom I lay so long.// I know not how I came of you/ I know not where I will go with you/ But I know that I came well/ And will go well/... I will duly pass the day, Oh my Mother/ And duly return to you.”

These mixed lines came to my mind randomly, as stream of consciousness.” Then some Shakespeare drifted in: “Sleep, O gentle sleep/ Nature’s soft nurse,

/Chief nourisher in life's feast/Great Nature's second course/ ... Sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care.. How have I frightened thee,/ That thou no more will weigh my eyelids down/ And steep my senses in forgetfulness? Why lie you with the vile, In loathsome beds,/ And leave to kingly couch/ A watch case or a common 'larum' bell?"

“Still it cried, “Sleep no more/ Macbeth has murdered sleep/ Therefor Scotland shall sleep no more/Macbeth shall sleep no more.” (Act 2: sc2)

Finally, from Psl 127: “He gives to His beloved sleep.”

My usual ‘go to sleep,’ prayer at bed time goes something like this: “Thank you Abba, Father for loving me, calling me, ‘beloved.’ Weigh **my** eyelids down, and steep **my** senses in forgetfulness. Knit up the ‘raveled sleeves’ of all my cares, and let my soul drift upon your still waters.”

Usually, by the time I run through a few of these random lines, I’m asleep; but if I’m sick I add, “be my ‘soft nurse’ tonight, and let me wake up healed.”

Hard laborers, who sleep the second they hit the pillow, need not bother with my cure for insomnia. But for you fellow insomniacs, try my prescription with perhaps a little wine “for you stomach’s sake,” and you’ll soon droop “and drop off.”

Gene Pinkney/ 24-01-30- for The Daily News