

*My Noontime Happiness* by Rich Norman

No one is luckier than we are. Living here in southern Oregon is living in heaven. Sure we have helicopters spraying, and crime, but we have it here, in paradise. I contend that there is no more beautiful place on earth. In paradise, one's entire outlook can change with a simple look around. Here, let me work some magic, a bit of illusion and psychology... come with me and I will show you my heaven. Here, come with me—

Oh my friend how I have missed you! Your summer so distant from my noontime happiness, drenched in Sun and heat, splashed bright and wet with light and purring red Sun. I will wrap the world for you, fold it into my happiness and the warmth of this forgotten noon, stolen back from Time so I may give it to you... Here, come with me. Let me show you my crumbled world, now snatched away from Time, again liquid and living, hot and sultry with scent and sweetness, twice stolen and double thick with my noontime happiness.

Here is the pathway, draped in cool shadow and scent, currents of tangled lavender breeze at once sweet and vanishing into clear forgetfulness; the sheltering greedy canopy of folded green, arching its back over the shade, shafted fingers of yellow light and pools of rose, splashes of amber and peach, drifting currents of heat and thick warmth, ripe Sun and welcome bashful tongues of cool shade, sudden laughing puddles of mirrored heat and silver light splashing under our careless footfall.

Oh the greedy shelter of this noontime canopy! Its folded green heat and burnt brown fingertips hungrily suckling upon the noontime Sun, licking up its heat and pain into itself, greedily sheltering us from the burnt heat of noon. Safe, cool and protected here under its sheltering greed and folded green heat.

Now the Sun pierces our brooding kindly host, tickling her fingers of yellow feathered light and golden shadow, her branches of red and orange daylight, stolen through under the green wing above us—So kindly and lidded, this arching shelter of leaf and life, green and growing, ripe and hot, unfolding itself before the furnace of Day... As if it could drink her whole heart into itself. And so the Sun teases these trees, this hungry arching palm of folded heat and shifting branches, piercing and shadowing, the gauze of Day dripping her golden red feathered fingers of light and teasing heat upon my cheek—Here in my noontime happiness.

Now the Sun has had her fill. As we climb higher and higher, the sheltering lid of green growing thinner and more feeble, until at last her wing is bare. Her hungry green tent torn away. Now slapped blind in a white sheet of Sun, I have been kissed, blessed, blinded and sanctified, washed clean and boiled through to know her, to know the wet kiss of her white molten heat, the blinding spattered sheets of Sun now drenching, pouring their relentless vibration, pure and white, boiling up through me, cleansing me with pure fingers of white platinum light.

Oh how I have missed you, my friend! Who but you is strong enough, to know even this

much happiness?

Now standing before my noontime Sun atop my mountain, the world spreads itself before my horizon— Bright and unrefusing is my noon! Here are my distant mountains, cold and alluring, granite, gracious and forbidding are their cragged peaks, gently ringed in the supple milk white shawl of seasonless snow, delicate and eternal. Here is the endless pale sweep of my painted azure heaven, arching and encompassing, endless and containing, bright, clean and cold, boiling with the wet white heat of my platinum noon. Here is my valley unfurled before you. You know its careful, hunched, hidden places, and slender threads of platinum and rose, jade and azure, green and guarded, shaded, greedy and sheltering, sunken, lush and sweet...swollen with hidden treasures and tangled scents, tongues of cool shade, fragrant memories—and silver sweet forgetting.

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