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My Melody

James Loch
Western Michigan University

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My Melody...

I'd picked up this melody in an off-beat section of skid row. An old drunk, he was. Sitting there with a half-filled glass of cheap booze in his hand, humming to himself.

I didn't think much of it at first because he was a real bum but afterwards it kept coming back. The more I ran it over in my mind the more I liked it.

It's funny how a melody or a few lines of verse gets hold of a person. You just can't seem to get it out of your head.

I had never been effected by anything like this before. I had some background in music but nothing too extensive. You know the usual thing in the well-rounded upper middle class family; high school band, a few piano lessons, and a couple of appreciation courses in college. But nothing that would make me a musician.

It got to be an unconscious thing with me. For instance, at work, people started complaining because I was getting on their nerves, always humming what to them was a weird thing. But to me it was beautiful. I could just hear the mystic, reedy, somewhat hoarse sound of a bassoon lifting my melody in surging rhythm, carrying me away from the crowds to heights I had never surpassed, showing me the aesthetic beauty of life and the turmoil and waste of its people.

I would sit in my apartment and dream up fantastic arrangements of crashing cymbals and rolling tympani and then the mystic, reedy, somewhat hoarse sound of the bassoon breathing my melody throughout the whole room, furniture, walls, ceiling, everywhere.

Whenever I was taking a midnight walk in the park, the soft cool summer breeze would sing my melody to me and the flowers and trees would sway to the rhythm.

I was in a world of my own.

It was a hot Monday afternoon and I was downtown during the rush hour. Everyone was rushing for home. All of a sudden I heard it, my melody. The horns of the cars were playing it, only it wasn't a pacifying pleasant melody. It was a flat, sharp terrifying sound that made the blood rush to my head and my lips pucker up as if they had just tasted a raw, ripe lemon. I crushed my ears with my hands and the sound died down, but when I took my hands away it started again. I couldn't stand there; so I rushed into a bar and pushed the door shut and held it closed to that terrifying sound in the street.

I stood there for I don't know how long, until I felt close to normal. Then I turned around feeling rather conspicuous since everyone seemed to be looking at me. I walked up to the bar, sat down, ordered a double shot of good booze. Gave the bartender a five and told him to keep the change in order to overcome the look of suspicion in his eyes.

After a couple of drinks I felt normal and my melody was back again.
When I walked out on the street, the traffic had cleared and I attributed my actions to my bad day at the office. My boss had had me on the carpet for falling behind in my work but, actually, I think he was just under pressure from the front office and was afraid of losing his job. The same old stuff. It isn't my fault. It's the men under me.

After a good steak in my apartment and a hot shower I didn't feel too much like going out. So I called my girl friend and broke my date. She wasn't too happy because it was the fifth time I had broken a date in two weeks. But she was getting like everyone else; always on my neck. I was getting bored with her anyway.

That night I had a hard time getting to sleep and finally had to take a couple of sleeping tablets. I took a couple of shots of bourbon for insurance and then went right to sleep.

The next morning I slept in and was suffering from a swollen head and an overly parched, dry mouth. I took a shot of whiskey to straighten myself out and started off to work.

I caught a cab and arrived at the office an hour late. My boss was waiting for me but I wasn't in any mood for his crap. So, I just walked up to him and quit. He smiled, thanked me, and said he didn't enjoy firing people.

I walked out of the office building feeling quite depressed and cynical. After all, it wasn't my fault. I just didn't feel well.

I was walking down the street with no particular goal in mind when a bright red fire truck came screaming around the corner. Almost at once the fire truck was obliterated from my vision and the siren changed to that flat, sharp, terrifying sound that made the blood rush to my head and my lips pucker up as if they had just tasted a raw ripe lemon.

I knew of one thing that would cure me of this. I rushed down the street with my hands clasped to my head in search of a bar. I turned down a side street and saw half a block away a bar with the sign above the door reading "Melody Inn." I rushed down the street, through the door, up to the bar, and ordered a double shot. I gulped it down quickly and ordered another. My head was clearing and my melody was returning.

Then I noticed it. Everyone here was sitting around with half filled glasses of booze, humming their own melodies.

My Solo...

Solo step one step one step
swirl through a lace of hope and promise
one step through a dance of love and hopefulness
one step one step, shoe by shoe,
one step one step one step
two!

... Anna Fable