

Odyssey Oracle

Number 19
Wednesday,
March 16, 2005

Kindred spirits?

Why did Martin Luther King, Jr. admire Thoreau?

I think M.L.King, Jr. called Thoreau “eloquent and passionate” because Thoreau spoke so strongly against slavery, witnessed the struggle and spoke about it. Thoreau comments about a sixth of the population of a nation being slaves and a whole country being unjustly overrun. I think he believed when people get together and stick together that the government would have no choice but to satisfy the people’s thoughts, beliefs, and wishes regarding war and any other unjust laws. Overall Thoreau believed if a person has God on their side, anything is possible. (Corina Brown)

I believe that Thoreau is eloquent and passionate because of the sacrifices he is willing to make to get what he wants. He talks very passionately about his desires. . . . A lot of his thoughts are honest and powerful. One specific quote reminded me of when we boycotted the bus system: “Why do they not dissolve it themselves,--the union between themselves and the State,--and refuse to pay their quota into its treasury?” (Enjoyli Henley)

I think that Martin Luther King, Jr. was so moved by Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” because Thoreau talks about a real man and a just government or society. Those were issues that Martin Luther King Jr. struggled with himself. I also think the underlying belief in God that Thoreau displayed drew Dr. King deeper into Thoreau’s writings. I would go as far as saying that Martin Luther King, Jr. may have thought that he found a kindred spirit. (Sherreallum Allen)



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We were simply saying to the white community, ‘We can no longer lend our cooperation to an evil system.’

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Martin Luther King, Jr.

“During my student days I read Thoreau’s ‘Essay on Civil Disobedience’ for the first time. Fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system, I was so deeply moved that I reread the work several times. This was my first intellectual contact with the theory of nonviolent resistance. What we were preparing to do in Montgomery was related to what Thoreau had expressed. We were simply saying to the white community, ‘We can no longer lend our cooperation to an evil system.’ No other person has been more eloquent and passionate in getting this idea across than Henry David Thoreau.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr., from *Strive toward Freedom*

35/10

By Sharon Olds

Brushing out my daughter's dark
silken hair before the mirror
I see the grey gleaming on my head,
The silver-haired servant behind her. Why is it
just as we begin to go
they begin to arrive, the fold in my neck
clarifying as the fine bones of her
hips sharpen? As my skin shows
its dry pitting, she opens like a small
pale flower on the tip of a cactus;
as my last chances to bear a child
are falling through my body,
 the duds among them,
her full purse of eggs, round and
firm as hard-boiled yolks, is about
to snap its clasp. I brush her tangled
fragrant hair at bedtime. It's an old
story—the oldest we have on our planet—
the story of replacement.

The circle of life

Commentary by Camille Soward

I can appreciate the poem "35/10" by Sharon Olds because she reminds me of the circle of life and how it rolls. I can imagine my grandmother and her age of 77 years, then down the line to my daughter and her age of 1 ½ years. The circle of life is a beautiful experience as well as sad. The beautiful part about it is that a new life is brought into the world by the creation of God, yearning for tender love and care; the sad part is that an older family member leaves this world, and the family left behind has to learn to let go and realize the strength of memories.

"35/10" is a realistic poem that every woman who has a daughter will be able to see themselves in even though you may not have the grey hair yet.

What is white and what is black

By Aaron Blacks

What is white or what is black, to get an accurate
Measure, we must turn the clocks back.
I'm oh so curious what we will find, will blacks be
considered equal or viewed as far behind.
History will state the truth, they say, but many will argue
that equality was the only way. So I dropped all the research
I no longer dig deep and rely on today to disclose
the answers I'll keep. What is white or what is black,
it seems the two colors that for a long time have stood
back to back. Let's take a chance, a risk or two, and learn
to measure these colors by just what they say and do.

It takes the same amount of letters to spell white as it does
black,
But the difference in the letters makes both words more
unique and significant.

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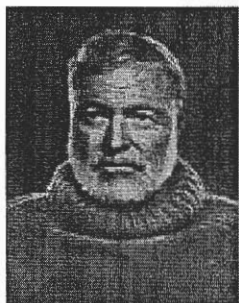
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You'd better be ready, because

Papa is coming!

As you know, Ernest Hemingway, one of our most famous authors, will be visiting us on April 13. Although he has mellowed somewhat since his death by suicide four decades ago, he can still be a bit prickly, so a few words to the wise as you prepare for his question and answer session.

- 1) Be sure you've read his work! Most writers are flattered if you've read them; Hemingway is insulted if you don't. Come prepared.
- 2) Come with questions and opinions. Papa don't like wusses. He loves to expound on the so-called "Hemingway Code" of grace under pressure, his criteria for judging the value of a life.
- 3) That said, here are a few topics that he's rather sensitive about:
 - His literary reputation. Although lionized early in his career, Hemingway fell out of favor with critics toward the end of his life. Although *The Old Man and the Sea*, his last work published during his lifetime, earned him great critical acclaim, he has since been written off as irrelevant.
 - His attitude toward women. Critics have reviled him as a woman-hater. Not surprisingly, Hemingway doesn't agree with this assessment.
 - Comparisons to F. Scott Fitzgerald and William Faulkner. He had some very nasty things to say about his contemporaries.
 - The manner of his dying. Some have called him a coward for taking his own life.
 - The "Hemingway" line of furniture being marketed by his grandson and other attempts to cash in on his name and fame.
- 4) His favorite topics include:
 - Deep-sea fishing
 - Bullfighting
 - War reporting
 - Writing in general
 - What jerks Fitzgerald and Faulkner were
 - And above all-- himself

Reading Comprehension Test

Read each question and then *immediately* write down your answer. If you don't know an answer, it's okay to guess. (We may award points for the most creative wrong answer.)

1) Before Mount Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain on earth?

2) Which is correct: "The yolk of all eggs *are* white" or "The yolk of all eggs *is* white"?

3) How many animals of each gender did Moses take on the ark? _____

4) The clerk in the butcher shop stands 5'10". He is from Omaha, Nebraska and of Norwegian descent. He is a Lutheran. He has been married to his wife, Edith, for 24 years, and they have three children, a boy and two girls. What does he weigh? _____

5) In baseball, how many outs in an inning? _____

6) Do they have a fourth of July in England? _____

7) Suppose you're an elevator operator, and you want to figure out how far you actually travel in your elevator in an average working day. You work from 6:45 a.m. until 4:45 p.m., with two 15 minute breaks in the morning, half an hour for lunch, and two 15 minute breaks in the afternoon. You figure you average 37 trips an hour while working, and that the average trip is three floors. To negotiate each floor, the elevator travels 10 feet. What is the elevator operator's name?

Tonight's special guest word:

RENDEZVOUS

RON-day-voo

Meet **Part of Speech:** *verb* 4 **Definition:** convene **Synonyms:** appear, assemble, be introduced, be present, be presented, collect, come together, congregate, convene, converge, enter in, flock, gather, get together, join, make acquaintance, muster, open, rally, **rendezvous**, show, sit
Roget's New Millennium™ Thesaurus, First Edition (v 1.1.1)

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And tonight's burning question:

How do you get "RON-day-voo" out of THAT mess!?