Last Year at Betty and Bob's: An Adventure

Sher Doruff

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“That’s an old joke right? What’s black and white and red all over?” IRB queried Bob. “Uh, yeah, I guess so. I wasn’t being jokey though, more philosophical regarding homophones. That’s phones as in phonetic not phobes as in fraidy cats by the way.” IRB laughed but needed to ask, “Is homo a genus in this case?” Bob admitted he was never sure when homo meant human and when it meant the same.

Sometimes it was difficult for IRB to parse the imaging of their near-infrared spectrum to anything vaguely normative. Even though Bob worked hard to stay woke to their differencing, his alertness caused other problems. They were never sure – like with the prefix homo – if and when he was pre-translating his perceptions to meet theirs. When was red really (his) red? When was it his green? This not-knowing kept them perpetually off-balance.

“Here’s a cool non-item,” Bob said swiping through the ebook.

Geryon took portraits of people through their footwear. The assistant head librarian’s sister, for instance, wore red converse sneakers.
It caught his attention because first of all, he loved his focus diverted to the sister of the assistant head librarian and secondly, he cherished a pair of reds he kept in the attic. Now he thought about cloven hoofs and IRB’s articulated toe shoes and suddenly craved a fetish pair of scarlet tabi socks.

For his part, Bob hoped to connect Carson’s Geryon in some uncreepy way with Red Betty’s resolve. Her will to red, her well-read, her unwavering readiness. Hoped to keep the motor of her passion revved and running. He also hoped, according to his own burgeoning passion, to swipe right from red to infrared on the spectrum. Unfold a link between what he’d lost in a friend and what was becoming intimate in another. “Sure,” he admitted to himself, “I want to ride that wavelength.” Sexy aside, there was an undeniable lineage between his reddish Bettys. He’d follow it gladly.

Sharing the space of a summer morning, IRB fiddled with a design for a five-toe last for a women’s size 11 while Bob copied an excerpt of a phone conversation between Herakles and Geryon. Herakles’ excited report to G of a Freedom dream went like this:

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But that’s not why I called Geryon
the reason I called is to tell you
about my dream I had a dream of you last night. Did you. Yes you
were this
old Indian guy standing on the back porch
and there was a pail of water there on the step with a drowned bird
in it —
big yellow bird really huge you know
floating with its wings out and you leaned over and said, Come on
now get out of there — and you took it
by one wing and just flung it right up into the air whoosh it came
alive and then it was gone.
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Yellow? said Geryon and he was thinking Yellow! Yellow! Even in dreams he doesn't know me at all! Yellow! (74, emphasis Bob)

Herakles reported an omen of death and rebirth, of pity and power. Ultimately – of freedom. But it meant nothing much at all to the young fop. The Heraklean compliment, his mythic vision of Geryon's potential rang hollow, a flaccid intrusion on the kid's earbud beats. But oh, how hot the comment burned. To get his color wrong! To see him Yellow! “Shame on you my friend!” thought Geryon as he nodded to a dubstep remix.

As Bob discovered in Red Doc>, Herakles became Sad.