

# I Walk Alone Toward The Crimson Horizon

It was only a month ago that I buried Jessie,  
She was only seventeen and wanted to go all the way.

I was told I was born in a hill country in Tulsa, New Whitman many years ago,  
My parents were Baptists but had not required that their children follow a faith.  
We grew up free spirits but tethered to our home and town,  
Relatives and friends, hills and streams.

Life thus lived evolved into an open-ended possibility but without a vision.  
I dropped out of college as I felt it was a waste of time to get educated in a  
structured way,  
For me all there was to learn was easily available outside it.  
Life to me was to discover one's soul and then living with it -  
Rest was all hokum.

In 1997 I met a young man called Jerry Robinson in the Tulsa bowling alley.  
He was smooth but with a big guard over him.  
After several meetings he gradually loosened to an extent,  
What I could see was that he felt he was on a special mission in his life.

Our friendship evolved to a level of comfortable affection -  
But structured with some hidden barriers.  
We were like an asymptote and a curve - getting closer as we progressed but  
never touching.

I joined the job market in my teens and the slavery has continued on without an  
end,  
Except for a time in my third decade I hit the rocks of poverty as I lost the job.  
Meeting two ends meet became a struggle.  
To my shock it started affecting my spirit -which I had thought to be  
imperturbable.

A woman's place in society is still a spineless principle;  
She is regularly trampled on,

A continuous prey of sexual infringement - never secure anyplace;  
In social, political, and economic fields she continues to languish in 2nd class.  
Equal rights are a good slogan but still away from the ground.

The cruel pace of the modern life was insane as well as spiritually suffocating;  
Then there was the ever-present shadow of loneliness,  
The tyranny of which remained an inscrutable malady.  
Stressful days merged into lonely evenings which melted into blank nights,  
The stream of life thus engendered was without a theme - a song without  
harmony.

What to believe in was the single most challenging thing in the modern times,  
As the shell of the old faith had been cracked by the newfound "freedom."  
Mechanical living - without a thematic emotion - was the curse of the age of  
technology.

I lost Jerry to his mission and cultivated another friendship,  
But raising a family was a huge risk that scared me,  
But with pained trepidation I decided to take a plunge.  
Frank and I joined in matrimony with open eyes,  
Without the star-crossed romance and wonder of the earlier times.  
We started as good friends with the intent of serious commitment.

Jessie was born four months later.  
She was an exuberant and fun-loving child,  
Mischievous and demanding but with a presence and grace.  
I dreamed of my failures to adjust her vision of her life when she grew up.  
From generation to generation human beings readjust their dreams,  
Often faltering but never ceasing to have them.

In the tenth year of our marriage Frank started drifting to another woman.  
A woman's immorality is generally overlooked  
While man is singly blamed for matrimonial infidelities.  
The marriage finally broke down -  
Jessie and I survived the shipwreck as a new family.

Jessie seemed to grow up well even after the separation from her father.  
She was learning to live in the world as a woman.  
We maintained a cool but stable relationship.

Years rolled by and she ripened from girlhood to young womanhood,  
With apparent ease and grace,  
Though I cannot tell how much of it was natural and how much of it was a put on  
To make me feel good.

One day she returned from school complaining of body aches,  
But as times passed they pointed to a malignancy in her liver.  
Endless testing and consulting confirmed it to be a cancer.  
A new darkness descended on my life, even as I was still absorbing the old one.

After two years of struggle with her destiny, in her seventeenth year,  
Jessie gracefully walked to death,  
Leaving a large gyrating black hole in my life.  
It is a strange paradox of nature that to find liberation  
One has to first go through the vortex of a deep sorrow.

But once you have seen a beautiful sunrise,  
Missing other eternities of nature is less painful,  
If a person has soulfully greeted you,  
Sour expressions of others are not upsetting,  
If you have had a dream of liberation,  
Shackles of this world are not hard to bear.

Now I have only one dream -  
To touch the point where the earth meets the beyond.  
The world is just a background to my journey,  
My flesh a wax to the flame carrying me on.  
I walk alone toward the crimson horizon.