

It Seems Only Yesterday

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When twenty-five years ago today, at bout 11:00 A.M.,

I was ushered into Chief Engr. Joe Zangara's office for a job interview.

He told me that though I had been in project engineering

The job was in plant engineering.

But he thought that I would be willing to change,

And I was.

Little did I realize that moment

That I would spend the next quarter century

In Lederle's human splendor and its alluring thrall.

It has been more than a job -

It has been a tormenting love relationship -

A magnificent prison sentence without a parole.

But much has changed in Lederle -

Not only just its name.

It has most of the same buildings,

It has some of the same people,

But its spirit has a new fire

And its vision has a new light.

"Although life must be lived forwards,

But it can be only understood backwards."

Here in 43D/201 was a group of professionals,

Riding the crest of the plant projects and dreams.

From Pharmaceuticals to Research,

From Biologicals to Boiler House.

It was an army with the same uniform,

Bonded with common purpose,

Vibrating on the same wavelength.

It had some of the ablest commanders,

Some of the sharpest soldiers.

An engineer's life here is intertwined with a building's.

(If only buildings could talk,
I would not have had a need to stand here today.)
I have worked in almost every building,
Except for the new crop of Research centers.
Some buildings are new and abuzz with smart gizmos,
Though still unreleased from the seize of validation.
Some are old and creaking mad,
Crying for relief of demolition
And deliverance from the ignominy of the new S.O.P's.

My story is slowly coming to an end.
When one day I cross the turnstiles the last time,
I would like to turn around and look at Lederle one more time,
And feel the echo of the dreams once I dreamt here,
And sense the serene silence of the buildings holding my work,
And tell myself that I put in the best efforts
Of the best years of my life for this institution,
Then I would know that it was because of your help, your smile, and your love.

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