



see

See + 4

By

John Ganshaw

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...*

I must say, John Ganshaw's bio rivals his works. "Nothing is as it seems, and experiences are meant to shape us not define us." Let me offer you a collage of Ganshaw quotes: "Lie and only speak untruths, believe in all / you say and do." "Those who have will just get more / those without are whom we are fighting for." "The fascists must be put in their place, the polls are our last battle place." "Save us from the peril of our own making, remind us / of whom we once were." "We never know when our years will turn to days, to hours, to / minutes, to seconds, and

then no more." John's last two poems take a different direction 'I Can't' and 'See' are touching pieces. (Spacing is poet's own.)

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Tech Hun Sen
(Lord Prime Minister and Supreme Military Commander Hun Sen)

Twice impeached disgraced ex-President Trump dreams
each night of such a name. To rule in fear with the ability to
extinguish his opponents and control the courts with
impunity. To kill at will with no worry. For all to bow before
your grace, who say "fuck you" behind your face. Sleeping
with women is such great ease though they may be maimed
or killed as your wife's revenge may appease. Such joy you get
when loyal subjects are on their knees, fear of death is what they see.
You charge a ransom for them to pay, to remain alive and in their place.
Own the courts and businesses too, the rivers of wealth
flow through you. Lie and only speak untruths, believe in all
you say and do. Devout in hate and ambiguity, and make others
feel in your spirituality. One from the East, the other
the West, both wizards of their demonic fallacy. To
say you are a narcissist doesn't do you justice, truth be told
you are the supreme PooBah of all the fascists. The
citizens in the land you rule deserve so much better than a walking
talking piss of a fool. Perhaps in time, we will see a rising of men
who long to be free, and seek justice and fairness for all, not just a few.
Treason is the word for everything you do. With all your actions plainly
in view, the time will soon come when you inhabit a prison cell built for two.

Our Call To Freedom

My dad attended those local raucous meetings of elephants.
as I remember, they were always packed with the faithful.
The devoted GOP family gathered to hear the candidates speak,
fifty years before the party began to reek. He like others,
took this as their duty, to ensure their voice was heard.
What's happened to those long-lost times? The party of Lincoln
and Reagan is no longer alive. Now that eagle is just a bird.
Freedom, liberty, justice, and truth together are lonely footnotes
relished to the past. A patriot is what they believe they are,
in reality, they aren't even close, and their views and beliefs are so far.
Guided by Facebook, Twitter, Truth Social, and those psychic stars.
Any written word to back up their conspiratory tendencies. Social
Media spreads rumors, lies, and all the other abuse that they speak
Why give credence to the truth when providing hate an outlet
will pay the bills? Not long ago those with differing views and beliefs
could agree to disagree and work toward a solution of compromise.
Today, its threats and vindictiveness, are all they seek
Instead of reason, outliers turn to guns and violence to
get their way. Lies are believed, plated, and fed for their followers to eat.
Speaking out is such in need. All that our forefathers fought for is at stake.
The recipe for the end of democracy is written for us to make.
They lay in wait and prey for those who are now unsafe,
The FBI, the Police, and all the rest who protect us from harm.
We must fight for them when they sound the alarm.
Women lose their right to choose and when this happens, society
and everyone will lose. Can I marry who I want? Who knows
what tomorrow will bring, perhaps it will be I who they target
next. I once believed in justice and truth but now I see it all from
a different view. Will justice prevail in the end, or is this just
my dream that won't come true? Those who have will just get more
those without are whom we are fighting for. Do we want to keep
helping the rich by sacrificing the poor? This is the Christianity that
they believe in, and this is what they continue to preach. Their world of
They say that pretending is what they wish all to perceive, "follow us," because
they don't want you to think. A nation of followers is whom they want us to
to think critically will no doubt become a crime, and then we will be left
to be condemned and fined. Educators were once respected but that is gone.
Now the viciousness of attacks continues to spread.
Books are banned, and librarians now work in fear
of mobs that arrive with guns do appear. Authors, writers, and artists are damned,
you are in the sights with your works to be burned. Truth is genuinely
feared when all else is embraced, education of the youth will soon disappear.
I once hid from who I truly was, and that changed and I am now so proud and out.
I see those like me, just walking the street, being attacked for being queer.

In these times we live, the pain, the hurt, is much more severe.
In a few weeks, we have a choice. Move forward, accept, and embrace
the freedom we have taken for granted for hundreds of years.
We can't sit by and watch hate rule the day
We must speak up for there is no time left to display.
The fascists must be put in their place, the polls are our last battle place.
We must turn back the extremists at these gates.
We have to rise and turn back time to a future safe place.
We can work with others with different views, and join hands with those
of other beliefs.
The future is ours we must believe.
I worry the noose of time will soon be called,
our last chance to escape is here and now.
After the election when I wake up, I plan to see a brand-new state,
a place that is void, of a voice, for those who spread hate.

Through Death, We Should Learn

Such a tranquil late summer evening, not a cloud to be seen,
all have been blown away so only the bright blue sky lurks above.
The Sun is hiding behind the skyline, not wishing to be seen. A
warm night to enjoy the trees still in the green, grasping and holding to
those last moments they have. Joggers and walkers all rushed about,
absorbing these last few days of warmth. I gaze at the sunset as a plane
rises overhead and lose my thoughts of the trying day. The Queen has passed
away. A reminder that our democracy is knocking on death's door. She
reigned for over seventy years, the world is now left in tears. Perhaps in the
death of majesty, a reminder of her greatness and humility can breathe into
this land that once was hers. Save us from the peril of our own making, remind us
of whom we once were. Life is such a great mystery, in times of looking at the
brilliant light such darkness is hovering at our door. Through the window, the
brightness hides the death that is lurking just beyond our view. I try to understand
but am left so bewildered by the happenings of life and when it passes. So many
questions are left unanswered, but we must move on. The multitude of good wishes and
thanks for your servitude was so righteously sent. Yet, some spoke such
utter nonsensical words of ill contempt. What have we become when compassion
is so hard to find? We never know when our years will turn to days, to hours, to
minutes, to seconds, and then no more. Why are some, like Her Majesty, so strong
till the clock strikes twelve while others pass by so silently? Why do some so endlessly
give while others can only take? I hope that when my time has come, I will have lived my life
till the very end and have given to others like Her Majesty.

I Can't

I met you and you were so different
The way you looked at me
The way you touched me
The way you made me feel
I knew I would love you

We would touch
We would embrace
We would hug
We would kiss
You said, I love you but I can't

You gave me hope
You gave me breath
You gave me your heart
You gave me a life
You said, I love you but I can't

And you gave me happiness
And you gave me a home
And you were so kind
And you returned my soul
You said, I love you but I can't

You took my heart
You took my love
You took my compassion
You took my life
They say I should hate you but I can't

See

You look at me
And say I'm beautiful
You look at me
And say I'm handsome
You look at me
And say I'm striking
Are you looking at me?

You don't see me
But you do
You see the skin
But don't see me
I'm there before you
You don't see me
Yet you do

Peel away what you see
Strip the skin away
What do you see?
Do you still see me?
Can you answer me?
Do you see the scars?
Do you see the pain?

Can you see all the cuts?
Can you see the open wounds?
Can you see all the scars?
Some there for over 50 years
You aren't looking at me
You see what you want to see
Who do you want me to be

You don't see
You don't see the beatings
You don't see the bullying
You don't see the hate that was left
You don't see the rape
You don't see the belittling
You don't see the fear in me

You see what you want to see
You say what you need to say
You don't see me
You see the shell containing me

I see who I am
I see what was given to me
I see who I am left to be

THE POET SPEAKS: *The poems I write are based on so many different emotions depending on whatever transpires during the day, but I started writing poetry two years ago as medication for a traumatic experience. This experience allowed me to see the world through a different lens; I'm forever grateful for this. The poems, "I Can't," and "See," are based entirely on coming to terms with the fact that people you care for the most can hurt you the most and are a reflection of those feelings. The other poems in this series are more political in nature and draw a comparison to how a democracy can easily slide into an autocratic state, and how we can learn from the actions of those in power, both negative and positive. Most important in all of my writings is to see with your entire being, not just your eyes, but with every particle that makes you human. My style is totally from the heart and am most comfortable expressing it through variations of prose. It is important for me to convey my passion for the topic I write about and when I read poetry, I seek this same passion as it provides me with the essence from which I can draw life.*

AUTHOR BIO: After 31 years in banking, it was time for John to retire and follow his dream of owning a hotel in Southeast Asia. This led to many new experiences enabling John to see the world through a different lens, leading him to write his story through essays, poetry, and a yet unpublished memoir. John's work has appeared in Native Skin, Runamok Books/Growerly, Post Roe Alternatives, Empyrean Literary Magazine, OMQ, Open Door Magazine, SCARS poems and short stories, among others. Nothing is as it seems, and experiences are meant to shape us not define us. Life has hope, truth, and adventure, all leading to stories that need to be written and told.