

Mary Shanley

Parisian Photo Booth

In the metro station,
she was playing a saw
like it was a cello.
It sounded like a theremin.
The photo booth was
just feet away. Lisa and I
crammed into the single
space and popped Euros
into the machine and began
mugging for the camera, all the
while accompanied by the
other-worldly, weird and wonderful
sounds being produced by the
spacy musician wearing a black
leather jumpsuit. She owned
the local airwaves and captivated
the crowd surrounding her.
A slice of Parisian magic,
everyone tossed money into
her black fedora.

Everything Shakes

I.

My heart opens.

There is no sound, yet I hear the wild,
undefined rhythm underlying all.

Every move that I make, everything
shakes.

My heart shakes
a rhythm that sets
my life's course
for the day.

Sometimes my entire
body shakes from the
effects of atomic spinning
and excess caffeine.

What spinning holds
a hummingbird in mid-air,
quietly shaking.

When I leave this body, I will
still be shaking. And held
in mid-air for all eternity.

2.

I'm on the couch, writing;
attempting to capture
free-floating moments
of joy. I want to save
them for when my spirit
falls, fast and deep.
The abundant universe
may impart vibrant energy
to set all life a spinning;

but I'm not always able to
access this grace and to
feel welcome in the world.

3.

Ancient French cave paintings
in Lascaux, provide the mystery
and Paul Klee's Moroccan
paintings provide the back drop
for my visions.

They are projected onto a screen
I can't stop watching.
The cave paintings tell a story
I can't crack. I'm too modern.

Rimbaud turned his back on
the encroaching world and instructed,
'Go Back' No modern world
for him. He refused to be civilized.
He refused all of societies attempts
to control him.

All around, he witnessed:
The spectacle
The substitution
The pretense
The facades
The inauthentic.

Like a painting you pass every day.
Beautiful, but not so much, after
awhile. Predictable colors. Predictable
patterns. People living symbolic lives.

Rimbaud aspired to live archaically.
To live by his spirit map. To listen
to illuminated voices. The only rules,
his own. He contained journeys that
were his alone to take.

His young soul dwelt elsewhere;
deeper than the messages he received
at home, in church, in school.

He plunged into an exploration of ancient belief systems. He traveled back to the time, 'Before civilization made criminals of us all.' (Francis Picabia).

The ragged punk was launched into an illuminated state where he recorded a wild explosion of winged words. The value of his young defiance was misunderstood at the time. Rimbaud spoke about resistance in a language I understood, 'Don't let yourself be one of the captured.'

St. Mark's Place

Lisa lent me Reshad Field's book, *The Last Barrier*. I read it long into the night. The story follows an English healer whose spiritual journey led him to Turkey. He wanted to meet the dervishes.

As I read, I continued to return to one particular passage, 'It is important to remain spiritually awake, so, you don't miss the moment.' My memory echoed back through the history of my soul, and I recalled the many times I received messages about awakening. I re-read the passage, reflecting on how much loving instruction and wisdom, I had forgotten.

When I awoke the following morning, I sat quietly and reflected on my desire to remain awake to the lessons I had been taught: compassion and kindness, the true aims of my life.

It was early, and I was going to work. As I walked across St. Mark's Place, I noticed a woman with long black hair walking parallel to me on the other side of the street. I was in front of the Dojo Restaurant, when the woman with the long black hair crossed the street and stood in front of me. I stopped and she asked me, 'Well, are you awake yet?' and she crossed back over to the other side of the street and resumed her journey west, walking in tandem with my gait.

At first, I was a bit shaken, but, ultimately, I did not find the message from the woman all that surprising. I inherently knew this was not an uncommon occurrence in the spirit world, where we are all connected. I did continue to ponder the woman's question, as I descended the subway stairs, boarded the train and went to work