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Heaven or Hell

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Heaven or Hell

Juan A. Miranda

Is this heaven or hell?

Beauty surrounds me: magnificent trees and a stunning sky
illuminate behind me;

tranquility is in the air and harmony fills my breath.

Yet, a burning stench and appalling screams pierce the ambience.

Slowly, my world spins out of control; my grasp on reality weakens,
it slips through my fingers as warm blood drops from the sky.

My sight begins to blur; the surreal and actuality fuse as one,
occulting the truth.

I feel a mystical presence caressing my spirit as it slowly penetrates
my thoughts.

I struggle for freedom, but immobility is all that I reap;
vain are my efforts as I succumb without hope.

I feel chaos and the malicious aching to be let loose;
the shackles that hold them prove too weak.

I feel a slither crossing my path,
hissing at my sight, provoking fear in my heart.

I shudder at my spectacle,
trying to escape my torments.

A fiery sensation consumes me as I feel my flesh boil.

Hallucinations blurred my truth,
while my eyes deceived me.

Slowly, I regain my senses
and all that I see vanishes;
my imagination loses control.

The illusions fade,
much like hope after long-suspected disenchantment.

I see clearly
for the first time in my life,
knowing that what I saw was no heaven or hell,
only life itself;

how gruesome, no?

How wretched must we be,
committing such acts of inhumanity
against our very flesh and blood.
Searching indefinitely for stability,
but waging violence, destruction, war
constantly amongst ourselves,
under the false flag of serenity;
not considering how we annihilate the bonds that tie us mutually,
not caring about the suffering we convey upon each other.

How could such “civilized” beasts commit such atrocities?
How could such sophisticated beings demean themselves to such
animalistic acts?

Aren't we the superior inhabitants of this world?
Must we assume that what we do is right?
I am appalled at our nature: violence and death.
If only we had enough common sense to realize
how we slaughter ourselves from within,
in such an abhorrent manner.

Why not live a harmonious life,
one filled with splendor and tranquility?
A life where embraces and caresses are our weapons of choice,
where the battlefield is our heart and mind,
where the only devastation is zeal;
how pleasant, no?

But alas! we are but human,
and as they say,
our nature is barbaric:
kill or be killed.