

Terminal illness

It is Saturday, and I am sitting in one of the bars at the international airport here in town. I am waiting for a relative and nursing a pint of the finest hops while reading the newspaper. These are all key words in my vocabulary. I have not yet reached the age of 50 but to stay ahead I read the health section for people of the age 50 plus. There is a lot of advertising in there for pills that are molded from the fountain of youth, scooters that do under a minute on the quarter mile and health insurance for non-smokers. I guess that is because they can pay the monthly fees longer. Next section has what I need. The crosswords, which will keep me occupied because my uncle's flight has just been delayed. What else is new? Well, it also gives me my money's worth. Boy, am I cheap to entertain or what; 50 cents of amusement is all it takes. I feel the need to spend more dead presidents because of the savings I just made and order another beer. Since I have a monitor above me I do not need to pay attention to the announcers over the terminal's intercom. So I was whisked away into the ocean of trickery. I got stuck early and was chewing frantically on my pen. That is when I heard a familiar voice behind me saying:

"Hey Stan, 8 letters for ludicrous is farcical."

It was my friend John Conner. I meet him on the most unexpected times and places. He is my philosophical mentor and path companion. The first time I met him was an evening at the city library. It was poetry night and most people there were dressed in Amish fashion. Some in turtle necks with goatees and then there was me, the asparagus in the field of Carnations. The first four readers made some sense but the fifth one was a funny one. He only used a few words shuffled around on three pages.

"I have what we had. Did we have what you had? Did you have me? Had I what you had? " and so forth. He did not go out so often I guessed. The next speaker was intervened by a strange man dressed in black. He took the stage and started to talk without a manuscript or hesitation for that matter. He claimed being dead for almost a day and left the morgue with a trail of fainted nurses. With eyes like a bug and intimidating finger pointing he made most people leave after ten minutes. His opinions were frightening to most of the listeners and uncomfortable to say the least. I stayed to hear him out whether he was a homeless seeker or just plain nuts.

"Hey yo', the curious one in the back with a skull on da T-shirt." He was pointing at me.

"Let's walk over to the Flyin' Pig. It's still happy hour there." He said and came towards me with an expression of determination on his face.

"These poets can't get to the point. Everything is a depression on beds of roses." he said.

I cannot say no to a beer even if it means drinking it with a lunatic. It is still good to me and this one seems to know where I can find a pitcher that I so desperately needed. All the talk about footsteps in the deserts sand and dried out relationships had made me thirsty. We left an almost empty auditorium. That evening at the tavern my life left the roundabout way it always had. Ever since then I am flying steady like a whale in space believe it or not. It is a very taoistic point of view according to John Conner. It has taken many evenings to let that sink into my head. With his strait shooting arguments, my Swiss cheese for a brain is finally healing. Here he is now and takes the seat opposite mine and orders a pitcher with his arm continentally wiggling.

"So, what are you doing here at the airport?" I asked him.

"I talked on da phone with Emperor Hailie Selassie last week, an' he wants to do a limbo dance with me on Jamaica's beaches."

.... I never know when he is joking or not because of his straight face. To keep a steady mind like Buddha's is fundamental he says. Much better than the hysterical roller coaster of modern man. Buddha had told him so himself! So now John Conner practices Buddha-building under the local taverns' draft beer faucets. I know, you can shake your head for less. Grabbing the health section he starts to read the articles on the front page while downing his first glass. His mouth wrinkles and I can see a commentary coming. I was right.

"Cancer is ova' 40% self-suggestion so why can't it be at least 1/3 self-healing huh? The brain works two ways yo' know. Why aren't there no guidelines for meditation an' harmony triggerin'? Releasin' the right chemicals in yo' body is a trained thing, you know. How big of a mistake can yo' actually make huh? I guess it all depends on the pill makers head banging prophets."

He never stops analyzing today's life style and he always gets the last word too. To ease him up before boarding his plane I said:

"You know what John, 9 letters for farcical is ludicrous."

He looks at me through the bottom of his empty glass and his eyeballs start to grow. It means he is going to laugh out loud. Before I could react he had sprayed my newspaper and crossword. I made his flight though. In my next column I will tell you more about the opinions of my friend John Conner.

Your man in the zone
Stanley Mintras