

A House, A Cup Of Tea, A Boat, A Puzzle & more

by [NoLo Segundo](#) (October 2024)



Interior at Night (Isabel Quintanilla, 2003)

A House, A Cup of Tea, A Boat, A Puzzle

This house is another house
when I alone inhabit it.
These rooms speak different tongues
when I alone listen closely.
These chairs appending rounded table
await freshened visits from friends,
friends I welcome to my house
when I alone inhabit it..

My soul swirls in a cup of tea,
I drink, I am warmed,
and repeated nights of coldness
forget themselves in the inner spaces.

I walk these childhood rooms
sensing, probing a magnitude
standing like an invisible colossus
outside my reason,
outside my sight,
outside my consciousness...

I stir my solitude with a straw,
inebriate myself on the otherness
of this house flipped over to a kingdom:
my soul the subject, my soul the earth,
and my soul the condor soaring
towards the Divine...

I grasp its presence so easily,
with less strain than fingertips
embracing a lukewarm teacup.

Like a personless boat

I am being drifted by some tide
whose source eludes me,
whose destination confounds me
but I'll bob the ripples
as like thousands of breasts
they caress me unto arousal,
enduring to embrace the ocean.

All of our time given makes a puzzle
of the jigsaw pattern whose pieces
are thrown down in random order
or in order beyond our fathom
and we haphazardly assemble...
who gets to finish his puzzle?

The Old Man in the Mirror

You think it a lie, seeing that
Old man in the mirror—some
Imposter taking your name,
Living in your house, calling
Out to your wife as though
He had married her 40 years
Ago and not you ... what can
The old fellow want of you,
You wonder, and would ask,
But your fear his laughter.

So you never speak with him,
And he runs the place just
As he sees fit: sleeping late,
Eating early, taking a nap
And going for brief walks
When you'd prefer a jog.

He also doesn't care much
For taking those long drives
You love so much—too, too
Far away from comfy home.
A thousand carefree miles
Is but a dream to you,
While he shudders like
It's climbing Mount Everest.

Worst of all, he is less
Patient with the myriad
Fools of the world—so
He'll rant and rave
When clerks misbehave!
And his politics! Right
And right he feels,
Caring naught for the
Downtrodden masses.
Yet he is kinder than
You ever were, more
Thoughtful of others,
More giving, less taking.
He loves his friends and
Doesn't screw women only
To leave them empty.

Best of all, the old man
Loves God—he won't
See belief as a folly,
For he has learned
The real illusion is
Mortality, so knows
Death is a door,
And not a wall.

You could learn
From the old man

You share a life
With, but you won't.
You are young—
What are God and
Death and endless
Soul to you?

My Neighbors

My neighbors are charming,
An old couple in love through
Sixty some years and six kids.
Phil had been an engineer,
Doubtless with formidable mind
But he was usually reticent,
While Nancy loved conversation.

Her wit I strove to match when
We met by chance at the café
Where the Pie Lady made her
Treats of muffins and pie and
Quiche with cups of rich coffee.
Nancy could turn a pun with a
Flick of her tongue, and always
I was so amazed—they're nearly
Ninety and so engaged with life,
One would think getting old,
Really old was not so bad—and
Their love has lasted so long,
Undiminished, unblemished..

But now Phil sleeps most of the day
While Nancy wears his coat by mistake
And thinks she is going to the doctor
When her friend is driving her just

For a haircut—THIS is not what we
Think, a second childhood—a child
Has its own world but it is freedom
Itself Phil and Nancy are now losing.

They are losing their minds,
he slowly, she a bit sooner.
But when they sleep at night,
she still pulls the blanket o'er
his thin old body, an act of
love and a proof Nancy is
yet there...

She passed before him—
(my secret prayer filled)
their love still whole,
but oh I miss her wit
every time I bite into
a slice of cherry pie.

Some Are Not Meant For This World

They cannot fit, they cannot go along,
And the reasons vary—pride, fear, or
Even love never tempered by time,
Illness of the heart or mind, or simply
Bad, bad luck: life throws them away
Until they throw life away...

She was one of the gentle ones,
The unlucky ones—a flower child
Who missed her time, an era she
Might have thrived in, free, alive,
Unencumbered by family ties...

If she had come of age in the 60's,
She might have lived into her 90's.
But lost and afraid in a cold world
Not of her making, with her bird-
Like heart breaking, she ate her
Last hoarded apple, then lay down
In the house abandoned of hope
To sleep and sleep and sleep until
She awakened safe in heaven's lap.

Ocean City

I saw it then as my own little Shangri-la,
for I was very small and knew nothing
of the big world, the grown-ups' world.

And for the child-me it was nirvana,
that little town on a barrier island
between the gray, cold, untamed and
endless Atlantic Ocean and the quiet,
near somnolent bay where the boats
of the less brave could sail safely...

I could ride my bike from Nana and
Pop-pop's little house on that bay,
feeling as free as the myriad seagulls
swirling forever above my head—
I 'd ride 'cross town to the boardwalk
and if I had a dollar, see a movie by
myself, feeling like a proud little lord—
I remember as though yesterday, and
not 60 some years, my favorite theater,
with its long darkish hall that looked
like the entrance to a pirate's den,
lined with displays of model sailing

ships, mostly men-o-war chasing, yes, pirates, but never catching them...

But most afternoons I was happy to just sit quietly on the porch of my grandparents' house, smelling the dinner Nana was making while I read of countless dreams in books, books that captured like a pirate his prey, and took me round the world in the finest and fastest sailing ship of all—imagination!

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Nolo Segundo is the pen name of a retired teacher (America, Japan, Taiwan, the war zone of Cambodia, 1973-74) who became a published poet in his 70s in over 200 literary journals in 15 countries. Cyberwit.net has published 3 collections in paperback, the latest titled *Soul Songs*.

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