

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Column #173

The New Bedou - Part 8



REMINDERS OF THE GYPSY IN EVERYONE'S SOUL

By Wanda Sue Parrott

*new bedou search here
for oases without palms
where their body rests*

COMPARING the late Darby Moss Worth to a Gypsy in last week's column was metaphorical, not literal. If I appeared derogatory it's because, as a poet, I used the simile "Gypsy" like "gypsy" to mean anyone "free from the shackles of social constraint."

There are so-called bad gypsies and good gypsies, depending on which side of the poetic-pen one uses in allusion to practices and principles.

Darby, who died on January 20, will be recycled as compost that nourishes future plants. She was a bold, beloved, and outspoken social activist, a lover of justice, and a great haikuist who wrote as her 2015 holiday greeting:

*merry christmas joy
new year challenges us all
please do not despair*

Philosophically, her wisdom matches the vision of each high-minded man who ratified the Declaration of Independence at the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. The Founding Fathers of America must have recognized that there's some gypsy in everyone when they finalized the document, original draft of which was penned by Thomas Jefferson, which reads like pure poetry when translated into free verse.

Declaration Of Independence

(Paragraph 2)

*We hold these truths
to be self-evident,
that all men are created equal,
that they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable Rights,
that among these
are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*

Why do these words remind me of the gypsy in everyone's soul? Because my muse reads their implicate meaning to be "yearning for freedom."

But that was then. This is now.

Examining Gypsy America

The president delivered his first State of the Union address on Tuesday, criticized by multitudes who feel he trampled down the vintage where the grapes of social justice are stored.

Like each of us, the president has an inner gypsy that's striving to be free.

A major portion of American life that was missing from the speech involved homelessness, and the "road gypsies" now migrating as part of the New Bedou, the Bedouin-like sub-culture of nomads who move in groups without settling anywhere.

A National Public Radio report last week stated there are 68 million "forcibly displaced" people (refugees) in the world and 11 million homeless or potentially homeless in America.

Be alert. Road gypsies might come to Monterey, and some will be, like those in Missouri, disdained by authorities while others have no other place to live but in their vehicles.

Road Gypsies Are Coming

Despite TV warnings about Gypsy Travelers in Springfield, Mo., I lost \$1000 by hiring two swarthy men to pave my driveway. They'd apparently arrived via Interstate 44 in a procession of vehicles like those that park along county roads north of Marina, then disbursed to motels on the outskirts of town, registering under aliases like Smith, Thomas, and Jones.

When rain washed away my new driveway, I discovered they'd laid cold tar mixed with sand. And they'd stolen Dad's antique weed whacker.

I filed a report with the police and volunteered to help in a sting operation.

Acting inebriated, I stumbled through motel lots at dusk. Voila! I spotted Dad's tool in a truck bed and was photographing it when a man started cursing and chasing me. I photographed his furious face, sprinted to my car, and peeled away with my evidence on film.

That night, KY3's ten o'clock news featured a parade of vehicles fleeing town. The red taillights glowed like a strand of ruby beads flashing around a campfire as they headed toward Saint Louis.

I got the tool back. The Gypsy Travelers got my cash. The hand-scrawled receipt they'd given me was from a stolen receipt book.

Beware Of Con Artists

If strangers knock on your door, selling goods or services too cheap to be true, beware.

And never pay in cash you can't afford to lose, because unmarked bills can't be used as evidence.

When panhandlers proliferate and unfamiliar live-in vehicles appear on the streets at night, a new gypsy spring will have begun. You can judge whether it's good or bad.

County of Monterey's Safe Parking Program has been operating since December 22, but vehicles parked illegally on county roads far exceed applications for the program that allows legal overnight sleeping in the county offices parking lot in Marina. Why?

A homeless man told me, "Once I got used to being houseless, I liked living like a Gypsy."

Darby Moss Worth lived in a house but traveled freely in her mind.

If compost containing Darby's remains becomes available, I'll publish details. Please do not despair. Darby said, "I'd like to return as a golden poppy."

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