

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

April 24-30, 2020

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 28



*fragile I began and
in fragility I end---
between, the journey
of storms and winds and darkness
I survive with living wings*

Photo and tanka by Marsha J. Becco

DO YOU DARE TO BE A BUTTERFLY?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

SURVIVING the Covid-19 pandemic gave me lots of time for reflection while quarantined for the past few weeks after stroke-like symptoms. If OK with you, I'll share this inspiring memory that lifted my spirits and might have even saved my life:

*homeless butterfly
fluttering on injured wing
entered sick man's room*

*seeing broken wing
man made splint from wood toothpick
glued it into place*

*fashioned match-box bed
then served sugar-water meals
from an eye dropper*

*miracle took place
butterfly who flew like new
never left man's side*

*with love lifting us
covid-19 cannot win
be a butterfly*

--haiku sequence by Wanda Sue Parrott

The Butterfly

There once was a man who believed the glories of the universe were reflected in the human consciousness. But few believed this man, for, opening their eyes and ears to the world around them, they saw naught but poverty, misery, greed, and hopelessness.

“In sleep, if you will but listen and see your dreams, you will find that the stars, even the very galaxies themselves, are your domain,” said this man, who firmly believed the secret to attaining glimpses of the infinite life lay simply in loving.

“We do not believe you,” the people said, but for some reason they could not explain, many were drawn to this man who was not rich, but his kindness shone about his face so he truly wore a golden wreath that looked like holly berries in winter and the sun during warmer days.

One day during the summer season there came into this man’s humble Hollywood home a tiny visitor. It spoke not in words, but because he had learned to listen to the way of the heart, this man knew the creature was saying: *Help me. I am hurt!*

It happened that the creature was a little butterfly whose wing had been injured. Indeed, the wing had been mutilated so that only shreds remained of the delicate fibers that once helped it fly.

Lesser men might have swatted the insect, thus putting it out of its misery. But the man who loved all creatures large and small took the time to ask his inner self: *What can I do to help this little one which seeks my aid?*

Build A New Wing

He meditated a while, and then the answer flashed into his mind: *Build a new wing. Use the materials on hand and fashion a work of art in the image of that which the Creator has made.*

The man gathered some cellophane from a cigarette pack, some tiny toothpicks from his cupboard, and some miracle glue that manufacturers claimed would bond anything. And, indeed, the claims proved true. The prosthesis became permanently affixed to the remnants of the muscles of the butterfly’s former natural wing.

During its period of therapy, the butterfly lived in the man’s home, flying in hops and skips about the room. It took a great liking to the man and often would fly onto his hand or shoulder, or perch on his head.

“None is too small to be heard. None is too large to cry.” He believed this. “The soul is not restricted by size or shape. It is in all things and everywhere,” he said, talking to his small visitor.

And, yes, he believed butterflies and humans shared the same soul-in-common.

One day, after much time, his little friend was ready to be returned to its natural life. The man opened the window and let the butterfly return to the wind. But a surprise awaited: that night, the butterfly came home. It preferred to live in the house rather than outside among its own kind.

So, he prepared a small place for it, and the butterfly lived out its span with the man.

Do Angels Have Butterfly Wings?

One night, he was awakened in the midst of sleep by a mighty rushing of wings. So great was the sensation, it seemed an angel was hovering at the man’s bedside.

The man awakened to witness the butterfly, which had stopped to say good-bye.

He went to its roosting place and found its body prone, lying in its final sleep.

How great is the soul, thought this man, who would shortly afterward follow the butterfly to a new spiritual home.

Who was this man?

Ironically, the man with the great heart was best-known as “Scrooge-in-Person,” for each year he portrayed Charles Dickens’ miserly character during the Christmas season. A distant relative of Sarah, the famed actress who shared his last name, he was known in private life simply as Russ Bernhardt.

He was a human Butterfly. Do you dare to be one, too?

Russell Norman Bernhardt died of heart failure in 1978 at the age of 52. My story, “Dreams Take Wing in Meditation,” first appeared in November/December 1991 issue of *CreativeReading*.

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