

Day into Night & More

by [John Grey](#) (July 2025)



Landscape at Falmouth (David C. Driskell, 1963)

Day into Night

The crows are on the flying march,
from treetop to treetop,
before dropping to the ground.

While these dark birds
nibble on roadkill,
warblers stay deep
in the elms and oaks,
twittering and chirping
the life song.

Sun is setting,
night encroaching.

The music is going out of the world.
Just caws remain,
the feasting on the dead.

All Life, all the Time

For all my treks through the forest,
I so seldom come across a dead animal.
Yet, deep in the woods, I'm surrounded
by all these lives, and just as many deaths.

Existence trills, snaps twigs,
wallops the air with its wings.
But its end goes quietly, invisible.
Nature would prefer I not know.

Yes, I'm aware that, for every corpse,
there is a carrion eater,
a vulture, a crow, even a wolverine
that sees the carcass of a deer

as its personal meat locker.
But I prefer to think that the wild
is mindful of my sensibilities.
I'm here to experience the living,

the growth, the cycles of life,
not be hung up on the tragedy
of a cancerous fox or a brain-dead
possum stroke victim.

So my hikes continue to invigorate,
not distress and depress.
In the bubble of my perspective,
I don't see beyond its sides.

In the Oregon Pines

I looked about me and inhaled.
Air seethed with scents of soil and bark and foliage.
The tufted pines stretched skyward,
eager to be light-suckled,
murmured a soft recitative
to the scattered shreds of cloud.

From where I stood,
the ground ran away downhill,
becoming rocky on one side,
a narrow winding stream on the other.
The piping wind
moved effortlessly between the shadows.

I passed easily
into that state
where the most outward

of creature and greenery
turned their inwardness toward me
so that I was in no doubt
of a squirrel's gist,
a wildflower's meaning,
when the familiar,
narrow existence of
the denizens of this world
reached out and revealed
their infinity.

Something in this quiet pine forest
was mighty, utterly magnificent,
linked me with a stroke
to the great spirit of nature.

Its beauty gripped me by the heart
and made me beautiful.

Living Alone

Solitude isn't lonely.
Lonely is lonely.

I don't miss the touch
of fingers on skin.
Not while I have fingers.
And skin also.

Or even the whisper
of soft words in my ear.
I write words.
I invent ears.

Some say

that even the sound
of another's footsteps
somewhere in a house
is comforting.
But I can walk through
every room.
I can hear myself anywhere.

A being is a powerful thing,
I find.
What it doesn't have,
it can imagine.

I sit here
in the parlor,
in my favorite chair,
reading a book.

So many characters,
this place
almost feels cluttered.

When I Kiss Your Hand

I saw it in a movie once.
Guy doesn't just shake lady's hand,
he takes it to his mouth,
lays wet lips upon it.
She then withdraws it graciously.
He's had the digits.
He figures the rest will soon follow.

Friend says he'd never do that.
As many germs on a strange hand he says
as a bus station toilet seat.

I wish he wouldn't put it in those terms
but I know the risks,
and their glorious offset,
that initial brush with soft flesh,
the smile it pollinates
to an all-consuming warmth,
the way my "romantic" box
is checked from the outset.

I saw it in a movie once.
Set in France it was,
sixteen hundreds, seventeen hundreds,
I forget which.
Dashing musketeer
with one sudden gesture
of unexpected intimate touch
sips sweetly on
milady's powdered pink fingers.
It's from a time before bus stations,
toilet seats and cynical friends.
There were consequences sure,
just not the unintended.

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John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in *New World Writing*, *River And South* and *The Alembic*. His latest books, *Subject Matters*, *Between Two Fires*, and *Covert* are available through Amazon, and he has work upcoming in *Paterson Literary Review*, *White Wall Review* and *Cantos*.

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