

This World Is My Home, and I'm Not Planning to Leave it

Growing up, I learned to sing the catchy “gospel” song, “This World Is Not My Home.” The verse continues, “I’m just a passing through; my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from heaven’s open door, and I can’t feel at home in this world any more.”

In my youth I already sensed that this song’s theology might be seriously amiss, however. After all, the God of the Bible commands the first humans to care for the earth, not abandon it.

Fact is, this world is my home – has been, is now, and will be so long as I live. I’m not planning on leaving. Even after I’m dead, my unadulterated body is to be returned to the earth. You’ll be able to find what’s left of me – that is, my corporeal self – in the green burial section of Bloomington’s White Oak Cemetery.

Meanwhile, I’m in love with life and in no hurry to give it up. I’m in love with this world that is my home. Whenever I stop to think about it, I am amazed at what an extraordinary gift life is – not just my life, but every life. How extraordinary that there is any life at all! How amazing that there is a universe, a world that I can see, experience, apprehend with my senses and my mind. How in the world did any of this come to be?

I take it on authority from the astrophysicists that over 13 billions years ago some sort of “big bang” brought this particular world into being. But that hardly begins to explain the awesome realities of existence. Why is there something and not nothing? Or what was there before the big bang? I don’t think answers exist to such questions. It’s like asking, Why does God exist? I consider that a meaningful question, because I happen to believe in God. But that doesn’t begin to explain how or why there is a God and a world. Ultimately it all remains an unfathomable mystery.

As is my existence! And I don’t want to see it end, if only because it is so precious and fantastic.

I admit, however, that there are times these days when I hope I go before this world goes. I’d like to live long enough to see this world positively transformed and redeemed, but I don’t expect that to happen. The way things are going, there are more and more ways in which this world feels less like home. Not that the world feels strange so much as that it feels angry, mean, inhospitable, and cruel. There are significant elements in this world that do not love me or much that I hold dear. There are powers, forces, and factions that are nothing short of demonic. The planet is under siege, as are science and reason, as are religions of love and justice and humility and compassion. Our society, government, and Constitution are under siege.

I don’t know how or where things are going. I just know that when you feel like you are losing something you love, or someone you love, it’s more than painful.

I won’t stop loving this world, but I can’t love everything about it. I’m seem incorrigibly bound to hate lies, duplicity, hypocrisy, cruelty, greed, arrogance, stupidity, and indifference. It’s not

fun.

In a world of awesome beauty and mystery, utterly amazing accomplishments and gloriously rich diversity, we must do more than lament the current degradations and destruction. We must try to repair and redeem, transcend and transform. It's not easy – but it's what love does.

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