

Sundown

(7 min)

by James Lynn Smith

Performers: 1. Sally, 2. Mike, 3. Jerry

- 1 Mike, he's just been standing there, looking at the sun go down. Think he's troubled with something?
- 2 Probably. His last relative died last week. The end of his family blood line must be depressing.
- 1 He left the party inside and came out on the deck half an hour ago. Think we ought to say something to him?
- 2 Like what? Maybe he doesn't want to be disturbed. Seems a bit coarse to say, "Sorry about the death of your genetic line, pal."
- 1 Oh yes. He might break down if we intruded. It could be embarrassing.
- 2 Yeah, we should just respect his space for now.
- 1 ...Ooh I can't stand it. I hate to see him so forlorn. Maybe if I just meandered over close by and commented on the view, it might help him

snap out of it.

2 Okay, but be prepared for...whatever. I've heard he's something of an enigma.

1 ...Lah de dah. Hmm hmm hmm. Nice sunset.

3 (No response)

1 ...Ahem, nice sunset, right?

3 Oh excuse me, I didn't know you were speaking to me. Yes it's very nice.

1 (Aside) He seems to be holding up.

1 Makes you want to forget your troubles and tune in to nature, huh?

3 We should not forget troubles, just transform them. Nature can do that when you see it properly.

1 How's that?

3 I feed my troubled thoughts to the sunset and let them burn away. Out comes the light that was always hidden in them. I see pink clouds with golden edges against an orange sky. All surrounded by gentle tones ranging

from purple to aqua blue.

- 1 You notice *all* that? I don't get that far after three martinis.
- 3 The best elixir for healing disappointment and stress comes from your own mind chemistry.
 - 1 You a chemist or doctor?
 - 3 No, I was a CPA but I retired last year. So when I say "chemistry," I mean *soul* chemistry. To *me* it means a combination of spirit and brain biology. Probably not the right words, but I'm no philosopher or theologian.
- 1 Couldn't prove it by me. Invent all the words you want. You seem to be on a roll, and so far I get it.
- 3 Taking the elixir is a matter of practice. In time the brain begins to obey spirit.
- 1 Wait now. Your brain is not its own master?
- 3 The brain is a magnificent tool that adapts us to living in this world. But, left to its own devices, it's vulnerable to learning limited or even wrong lessons. It can learn how to do your job, how to conduct a meeting but also to fear, to hate and struggle at things not really important.

- 1 Well, isn't the brain supposed to learn how to conquer all that? Some say that we are in this life to learn.
 - 3 I'm not sure the soul part of us even knows what the brain learns. Maybe it engages the brain as a means to gain *spiritual* knowledge. Once that occurs, details and memories the brain had to go through are not an issue anymore.
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- 1 How does your soul engage the brain to learn?
 - 3 I really don't know. I can guess the brain gets us through this physical world. But conflicts occur naturally and decisions have to be made. Questions occur the brain doesn't have answers for. For example, what you will have faith in, what to trust, how to love. These decisions are what the soul learns from. But I think the soul has a spirit with an innate sense of rightness too. If we let that come forward, both soul knowledge and earthly mind improve.
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- 1 That's kind of deep. Do you meditate?
 - 3 Yes, that was what I was doing while the sun sets.
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- 1 Oh, I interrupted you. I'm sorry. As a burglar, I'd wake the guard dog to see if he's asleep.

- 3 (Chuckle.) Quite all right. I knew this was not a monastery. It's good to talk with you.
- 1 I mistook your meditation for sadness. I hear a close relative passed recently.
- 3 Correct, but I am not sad. My cousin lived a long life. She and I were close. We had quite a few laughs together. I remember those things, without a pang insisting that I mourn the fact they will never happen again. Her smiles and good humor have now become a part of me.
- 1 Wasn't she the last of your blood kin? Is that a problem for you?
- 3 Yes, but no problem. My blood line or specific genetic makeup is not what is important. There are many who have similar enough traits. The soul doesn't trap itself in blood or DNA. Who knows, I may live again as an entirely different species.
- 1 Like a holy cow in India?... Oh, that was crass, I'm sorry.
- 3 (Laugh) That's okay. Who knows?
- 1 Mike come on over. He's not down in the dumps at all.

- 2 Hi guys. Listen Jerry, I'm sorry about your kin passing.
- 3 I was just telling Sally here, I'm glad I had time with my cousin while she was well.
- 2 It's good you can take that attitude, man. I know it's not easy to come by.
- 3 Actually, I come by it naturally. Her presence was a loving gift. Now I'm on to something else, but her effect is still with me. It doesn't die.
- 2 Oh my, that brings back something that happened with me a long time ago. I'd forgotten how to think that way.
- 1 What happened, Mike?
- 2 When I was a boy scout I had this friend. He was kind of dorky and it embarrassed me to be with him when other kids were around. But when it was just us, he was good to be with. Actually I never understood it, because he wrote poetry and I was into western movies and adventure comics. But we managed to do homework, practice knot tying, that sort of thing together. One summer at a scout camp he must have wanted to prove himself and gain acceptance. He took a boat out from the lake dock without permission and never came back. When I heard the report from the scoutmaster, the sky grew dark and drops of rain began to fall.

1 That must have been traumatic. Mike, I'm sorry.

2 The look on the scoutmaster's face is burned in my memory. His face was ashen and long, his breaths came in short, nervous pants... For a long time, I couldn't forget it. I thought if only I had spent more time around my friend at camp, he wouldn't have drowned. I became depressed.

1 You were not to blame.

2 Just the same, whenever I thought about it, it was like hot sand in my chest pouring into my gut. Finally, I admitted my problem. My mom said she knew I loved him like a brother. She told me to take something of his and carry it until I felt that it was a part of me. I chose to take his poetry and actually read it. For the first time I paid attention and it was like a spirit pulled the cloud of gloom away. Everything seemed to radiate new light. Most of his poetry was amateurish but I can still remember one part:

I paddle away, arms grow tired. My canoe slips silently through.

Ahead I see the waters are dark. I discover my vision was true.

Above, the clouds shade depths below. And a voice comes from the deep.

Abide with me and immortal be, young lad with a mission to keep.

1 My Lord. I think his poetry was prophetic. The lake was his last adventure in this world.

- 3 And afterwards, I believe *you* found that love is mysterious, diverse, and healing.
- 2 I'll say this: We all need to reflect on what's really important. There's no promotion or earthly honor that matches that contact with spirit.
- 1 And sharing it in such a caring way...Thanks to both you guys, I'm going to watch the remaining sunset and see it *again* for the very first time.

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