

POEM OF THE WEEK

ON THE SUBJECT OF CHOICE?

Choices? We have many. Red or blue. Manual or automatic.
Digital or analogue? We make them, no problem. We can make choices.

The 20th Century taught us a lot; much we rather not have known,
About ourselves, our society, and our dependence on our past.
The rate of change has been accelerated; humans fear they are being left behind
They are worried, apprehensive, and fearful of change. Change must be restricted

They say as they huddle together in tightly defined communities,
Rejecting that which is different. An ideal time to ask the question of questions,
The one we fear to confront, the one we must, what is the nature of evil?
Teetering on the edge of a global environmental challenge, it is surely time to ask

"What is evil, and how can it be identified?
Define it as you will, as you desire.
It's laissez-faire, a free-for-all. Is it not?
Religions can define it. It's the opposite
of what they teach, simple!
Totalitarian regimes define it. You guessed
"the opposite of what they teach,

Control brutally without pity. Long live the state,
and other such nonsense. (Oops, did I say that?)

The problem is, we sense it: evil, as an intent,
act, or result of an action. Do we? Don't we?
I am not a mind reader, as an observation we do.
Is it in the definition: we stumble and fall?
Is it the same for me as it is for you?

Death. The murder of an individual, or the murder of many;
senseless one says; So sad, disgusting, tragic and a zillion synonyms,
All inadequate to express our feeling.

Oh so simple if it were just you and me. Sharing conversation.
Defining terms, building a basis of understanding. Then, there were three?
The greater the number, the increased importance of recording the rules.
Rules are open to interpretation, interpretations can harden into beliefs

And belief systems: the beginnings of Politics and Religion.
Aye, there's the rub: the difficulty, obstruction of objection.
From left and right, yes both terms are used, without understanding.
Opposing camps, constantly grandstanding. Oblivious to each other.

It is axiomatic to each of them that their beliefs are right, correct and proper,

Matching the intensity of their belief, the other must by definition be wrong.
Is it within this conflict that the seeds of evil lie? A fire awaiting a flame?
Is this our future, one we cannot escape? We are all the same!

The banality of evil. Can one who is not evil commit an evil act?

Is "Evil" an answer seeking a question, or a question seeking an answer?
It defies definition. Want a definition? Be my quest. Yours will be as valid as mine.
A disappointing situation for so serious a consideration. Would you not agree?
Let's see if we can share light on the subject: you and me.

Is an action evil in the nature of the action, in the intent, or a result of the action?

History and mythology have defined the 20th Century's consciousness and awareness:
Between Auschwitz and Hiroshima, the boundaries of our future are tagged.
Systematic mechanised murder against the horror of a force we barely understand.
Mass murder or mass destruction? A choice? No choice! No (proverbial) choice at all

There's something out there. Huge, dark, pensive, lurking, with murderous intent
And a complete lack of empathy. The nations' armies? Yes. Nuclear weapons? Yes.
Pacts between nations? Yes. Something? We're occupants of a world teetering
On self-destruction. Our greatest fear, our greatest enemy? Ourselves. Welcome

To the wonderful, amazing, gifted world of humanity, waiting to live, waiting to die.

What should we fear? Fear. Uninformed, ill-informed, mass-manipulated fear
a.k.a. Politics & religion, the mass marketing of ideas. The guardians of the faith
Use it all the time. Truth/falsehood? It's all about the packaging and presentation.
Who's right? Who's wrong? Who's insecure? At-risk? Who's strong?

To rephrase Paul Simon: There must be 50 ways to leave a planet.
Broken? Beyond repair? Depleted. Destroyed? Rejected? Used up?

Slight problem: there's no Plan B.

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POEM ENDS