

POEM OF THE WEEK

PEOPLE THAT I'VE SEEN, I'VE BEEN

How can one person be more than themselves?
If you are referring to their essential being
Their DNA, no. A person, male or female (or other)
is the basic model, as they age, they will enhance

That model. A new fashion, a new job: a new personality
Whatever will facilitate their acceptance into one or more
Social circles. Is that not what we expect, accept and respect
You're shy, quiet, and withdrawn. You can choose a lifestyle

That encourages that, or face the need to change
To take on behaviours or mindsets that are new and alien
To become increasingly social and sociable. Others can't handle
People who prefer solitude can feel isolated

Get the picture? A human being, it might be me, begins life socially
As "one of them", the quiet type: shy, hard to talk to; hard to relate to
Whose responsibility was it to change? By common consent, mine
It's important, they said, to learn social skills; to get on with people

"To get on with people" turns out to be a pretence.
Smiling when you don't want to; laughing at others' jokes
Saying that you like their hair/dress and/or make-up
"Getting on with people" was the command, so I tried

Acquiring the new skills went against all that I had held dear
I acquired them regardless, determined to be part of the crowd
If sometimes I was too loud, think of it as trying too hard, lesson learned
Don't try so hard! Learn to feel what you're trying to achieve

Then the response could/should be proportionate

The "people-I've-been" label comes from attempts
To assume a set of behaviours or personality
I suspect that we all had that experience. We call it "growing up"
It's learn as you stumble, hide the scars. Don't let'em see who you are

Laugh and smile, go the extra mile: it's worth it, in the end (you tell yourself)
It's a personality, it's not me; it's what they want to see, isn't it? what they want to see
By the final decades of life, one would hope that all such fumbling and stumbling
Are finished and have gone. Not so, we carry on seeking approval all our lives

So, here's to people I've seen, a toast; and here's to people I've been
Don't forget the guy in the shadows. The original "me" that mattered
That matters still, as life carries on like a merry-go-round, tinny music included
After all, that's life, isn't it? A carnival busting with emptiness and noise

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