

COMMENTARY

Imagination: fuel and fertilizer of our future

The gentle magic of the last beams of a spring evening were straining their way through our window, splashing a colorful spectrum across our white bedroom walls. I was splayed across the bed with my beloved Madame P at the ebbing moments of a day when the reign of a new season's sun had teased and threatened my breaking a sweat.

Life is good on such sleepy early evenings as troubles of the day melt with the retreating rays.

Then, as only she can, Madame P tickled my funny bone and tapped the mother lode of my love. Fixing an intent gaze at the sun-stenciled new foliage of the tall liquid amber trees outside, she pronounced matter-of-factly, "OK, there he is, plain as day. Yes, that's Walter all right, no doubt about it."

We all have melodies to our minds. I liken them to "idiotsymphonies." The orchestrations of Madame P's imagination are as inscrutable and lovely as any.

I loved the idea of tumbling down another unexplored shaft of the mine of my love for this lady, so I asked, "Walter who?" Encouraged, she elbowed me like those sharing the inside scoop always do, pointed to god knows where in the tree and said most assuredly, "Why it's Walter, you know, Walter Van Buren, the 28th president of the United States. It's



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plain as day and he's in the tree. Just look right below that J-shaped branch, see?"

As if sealing the deal while smacking down the gavel, she continued, "Yep- good old tall, bald Walter; but he's got that beautiful white hair all around the sides."

Martin, not Walter, Van Buren, was our 8th president- not 28th. He was not tall but rather notoriously diminutive. There are few photographs, and as a one-term president in disastrous economic times, he was not particularly famous or successful in office. In short, I was convinced she wouldn't know a Van Buren from a Volkswagen Vanagon even if either one ran her over.

Nonetheless, that sultry spring evening she unabashedly continued in phenomenal detail to outline every aspect of Walter's (I mean Martin's) waistcoat, his Bozo like thick shocks of white hair-encircling a bald head, mutton chop whiskers, a square jaw, the infamous stalwart posture; everything. Yes indeed, "good ole Walter" Van Buren was hanging out in the limbs and leaves of her imagination and our liquid amber trees.

When you have been immersed in the wondrous waters of another's imagination and the machinations of their mind, you learn to give pause before laughing your spleen out your nose at their visions. You also learn

to curb your criticisms of their creativity, and if you are lucky, you might learn the difference between incredible and incredulous.

One of the greatest gifts we have been given is to travel leagues without transportation, soar breathlessly without wings, leap the highest obstacle without leaving the ground and see into the depths of possibility without opening our eyes. Imagination is the tapestry of creativity and the fuel and fertilizer of our futures.

It is no less a gift to have the privilege of encouraging the dream and dreamer as it is to take a spin on the magic carpet ride yourself. Everyone can and must do it as well as be vigilant against those sad souls who would ground us all.

So beware of those who have bartered critique and criticisms for creativity and whose self-absorption has stifled the flight plans of theirs or another's dreams. The only thing required to commandeer the magic carpet of our minds imagination is a willingness to soar. There is no age limit for a license to drive creative dreams, and interestingly; the most adept are often the young in heart.

So good night Mr. Van Buren, I can see you now, thanks to Madame P.

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