

## ***Something They Do Not Tell You*** **By Graeme Lavrence**

Something they do not tell you, is that you often find yourself drifting off down a side stream away from the central river. Paddle as you might, you will nonetheless be let down the mountain at your own pace; maybe you will rejoin the current of saliency, maybe you will not.

Something they do not tell you, is that you are just a tangent from the main argument. I.e., a footnote, of a footnote, of a footnote. No, there is no central protagonist, least of all let it be you. You are not nothing, you are just not the greatest something to exist in your time.

Something they do not tell you, is that our lives, like the universe, are not geocentric – and you are neither earth nor star. Still though, you do not revolve around a single sun; you are carried along with the gravity of the cosmic forces, being passed from star-to-star with abandon. Nobody you know is central to your life, there is no foremost figure you can rely on throughout your time. Your brother and sister and kin; friends and lovers and passersby; your mother and your father and the good beasts who greet you: All of them shall one day leave you, eventually, for a reason entirely unique as they themselves are. There is no way to predict how it might happen, with swiftness or slow unclenching terror; the manner in which they depart is left only in a premonition felt as a slight twinge in the wind. It is vain to be centred by yourself and naive to centre yourself around another, and I am left feeling small in this unflinching universe.

Something they do not tell you, is that periods of mourning and of joy do not restrain themselves like the Gregorian months of the year. They come, and they go, however they choose. No one else is on the same schedule as you; some have lost their calendar. You walk along this road and you may meet others but they, too, will continue forth on their journey.

Something they do not tell you, is that the one-year anniversary of your grandfather's death is the same day as someone else's six-year wedding anniversary. There is no great catharsis of the human experience. The world does not stop to listen to your wails. Gone is the great empathy of loss, lost as we accelerate beyond ourselves.

Something they do not tell you, is that you must embrace the changing of the leaves with the seasons. Be careful to rake them into their brown paper bags as needed. Embrace these changes which will mark your life in stark contrast to those around you. Embrace them or they will stack higher and higher until you cannot peer over them. Careful now, embrace these things that shape you – don't let them disfigure you – but don't let them consume you either. Look them directly in the eye before turning your head to gaze out to the setting sun across the hill. Rise to face the next morning. I know your hands hurt from tending to the plow. I know your eyes grow weary from gazing towards the bright heavens in hope of salvation. I know your voice is getting fainter as you try to call out into the dark woods you have found yourself trapped within. I know the bench on which you sit grows harder with each passing minute.

Still though, you must continue to search and to yell and to work and to rest and to eat and to love and to sit still and listen, even among all this loss you might encounter, and even if you are not the central motif of a greater tapestry; that, is what they do not tell you.