

Perhaps You're Right

by Jim Gold

“Perhaps,” said Martha with a definitiveness well beyond maybe, “you’re being visited by travel demons.”

Sam threw back his head and laughed. “You must be kidding. Why should those creatures affect me? Am I not Sam the Fruit Man?”

“Indeed, you are. But even the best fruit can rot, especially if it’s attacked by *touriosis nemicosis*.”

“Market madness, Martha. I won’t give in to it! Stay strong and intellectual. That’s what my mother always said.”

“But she was always wrong.”

At that moment, Sam heard a knock on his door. Before him stood his testy neighbor, Emily Emoticon. She smiled with neighborly assurance and handed him a pink slip. “Sam, your

anxiety test scores were too low. You’re fired.” Softening her voice, she went on. “It’s true, we need frightened people in our company but you are simply not one of them. You don’t fit in, don’t belong.” Singing an ancient Roman martial anxiety song in original Latin, she turned and disappeared down the street.

Sam didn’t know what to do. Should he return to the old neighborhood of Less Terre where he had dwelt in anxious peace and unhappy comfort? Or should he remain in his new purchased residence, the stately quasi-mansion he had acquired through years of heart-breaking labor in the anxiety field? Since he moved into Plus Heights, the brave northern quarter of the city, his fear faculties, along with his ancient anxieties, had disappeared.

Backing his mind into a corner, he sat down on his Bloomingdale’s hardwood conference chair to discuss the pros and cons with himself. “Can I dwell in security and be happy? Or is living with anxiety more comfortable?” He considered the conflict. Hours passed. “Maybe there’s a compromise solution where I can do

both—security and anxiety as One. I like that!”

Sam pondered further. “I don’t want to reject Emily, but I want to move beyond her as well. Is there a new neighborhood where Angela Anxiety, Fanny Fear, Karen Comfort, and Henrietta Happiness all live together in peace and harmony? Or do I have too many female friends? And what about daring, diving, confidence, and masculinity? What about my male friends?”

Martha listened. Stroking her chin, she declared, “These questions can only be answered in Spanish. Perhaps you’ll find them in Cuba.”

“There you go with ‘perhaps’ again.”

“Perhaps you’re right. Nevertheless, why not ask Fidel Castro, after you arrive?”

“Is he still alive?”

“I’m not sure. But does that really matter?”

from Carlos the Cloud

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