

Some Musings at 83 –

The Noun Nemesis

by Jim Freund

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For octogenarian chaps,
one of the major traps
is the dreaded memory lapse.

You all know Barbara, my wife,
the love of my life –

Now let's say one day I want to please her –
or, if I've previously screwed up,
to appease her
(in which case, I'd be on my
knees to her) –
and, utilizing my literary expertise,
have devised a quite affectionate tease,
but one that depends on certain
verbal keys –

And then, half-way through tantalizing
my main squeeze –
I encounter a helluva brain freeze.

Last year I wrote a piece on the general subject –

like when a slow gent has a “Moment”
that’s so noticeably leaner
it can be dubbed as “Senior” –

Ah, the Senior Moment syndrome –
It’s worth a whole tome,
or at least a long poem.

Pity the wife whose husband harasses
with agonized queries like,
“Where are my glasses?”

I could write a passionate homily on,
“Who’s got the car key?”

Now, if you’re like me, you don’t encumber
your brain with numbers.

By way of example (though this I don’t
condone, but doubt I suffer all alone),
for me, two numbers still unknown
are those of either offspring’s phone –
and, sad to say, sometimes my own.

Furthermore (though this defect I deplore),
when playing tennis, it's a chore
to keep in mind the freaking score.

Today, however, you get a reprieve –
that other stuff you won't receive.
I'm sticking to a single peeve –
the way you feel so damn absurd,
when you forget a chosen word.

You're vexed at the lack of text,
irate at your empty plate,
dismayed by the dumb blockade.
And later on, looking back,
it really stank to draw a blank.

Well, here's my most recent analysis
of this distressing paralysis,

When a verbal abyss casts you amiss
(so you feel like a clown,
face wreathed in a frown)
the word that's escaped you is usually
a NOUN!

Just reflect on this:

“promiscuity,” “fortitude,”
“undertow,” “sanatorium” –
all the missing words of renown are
a noun.

And part of what a noun embraces –
which your tired brain misplaces –
are names of people and of places.
Henderson, Anderson, Donaldson,
Schwartz – Yokohama, LeHavre,
Moresby, and more ports.
It's a terrible shame
that in recalling such names
I am now forced to claim
that I'm really quite lame.

But hey, just in case you forgot,
there exists a correlative bright spot.
To wit:

Each other form of speech conceivable
is much more readily retrievable.

So, e.g., with an adverb I'm superb.

I can wax astutely on, say, "absolutely,"
and need not be cautionary
using a "very."

(Some folks claim recall of every
adverb, even when they've smoked
some herb. . . .)

Let's face it, an adverb never perturbs.

With "and," "or," or another conjunction,
you won't run into any injunction.

We can all function with a conjunction.

Also, with “the” or a similar article,
you’re unlikely to drop a particle.

But as for remembering a troublesome
noun, on a scale of white to black,
I barely register a brown.

On the other hand, my narratives
can be chock full of adjectives.
“Beautiful,” “pretty,” “ravishing,” “cute” –
it’s easy to take an alternative route,
to arrive at a viable substitute –

Whereas with nouns,
we have precious few hand-me-downs.

With a participle, I'm no cripple.

I can run errands with gerunds,
and encounter no curbs with verbs.

As for using a preposition,
I'm a veritable magician –
my renditions oft gain recognition –

But I'm not aces

with nouns, names and places.

Well, though you may consider me myopic,
that's all I've to say on today's
main topic.

Did you think I was going to
tell you why this anomaly is so?
My answer is “no”.

Did you expect me to offer you a cure?
Forget it – read the literature.

And so, in closing, I’ll just say that, for me,
“This experience has been... uh
ah . . . uh . . . ah”

Well, since my selected word opts to make
itself unheard,
it will suffice for me to be concise –
“This experience has been very nice . . .”

Hey wait! that was no noun,
but rather an adverb/adjective pairing
that created the missing link. . . .
I think I need another drink

It looks like I have some rethinking to do,
to distinguish between what's false
or true,

So if you'd like to learn what's valid,
Please come again for next year's ballad!

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