

The Morning After

By Lawrence Tan JJR 69

Last night I stopped by the Table Tennis Club after work looking for some action. But to my dismay, the place was packed, I had never seen more new faces.

All tables were playing doubles and they all had paddles queued up. I just stayed for half an hour watching and chatting with some of my acquaintances and then left.

Feeling depressed, I decided to stop by a Karaoke place, thinking about getting some songs in to lift up my Friday evening. Last night, I had never seen so many bad Karaoke singers all in one place in the same evening. I admit that the music system there was not the best that I



have seen. There were two or three parties going on at the same time, celebrating something or the birthday of someone. But a lot of people went up on the stage and brutally murdered the songs. The music went on one direction, but they decided to sing the other directions, either off key or off beat. But I have to give it to those people, they definitely had a great time. They even gave me a piece of their cake. I sat in the back by myself with my CDs the whole time, enjoying my beer and trying to make up for my ears since they were hurting. I did not even finish my second beer, I left the place and went home feeling more depressed.

I woke up about 5:30 this morning, a Saturday, realizing that I had left my lights on all night long. I must have been very tired after what occurred last night. I turned over to my laptop which is always next to me in my bed, my sole source of comfort at night, and started my favorite list of songs, turned off the lights, closed my eyes and started my process of waking up.

Loneliness is no longer a foreign feeling to me, in fact I often feel comfort in it. It is a strange thing, but it must be a familiar feeling to a lot of people out there, because I don't believe I am the only one who feels this way, at this stage of one's life.

My mood is completely soaked in that of "Fly Me to The Moon" in Tony Bennett's voice and then my heart raced in Josh Groban's "To Where You Are". I am convinced that the authors of these songs must be truly gifted, bestowed with such levels of perceptions and feelings and then able to verbalize into these pieces of musical jewels that can pierce your heart. As the morning light started to slowly invade my space through the blinds of my windows, I finally got off my bed. I should have felt happy since this was a Saturday and I did not have to rush to work, but I went through my routine still feeling depressed. It is definitely a familiar feeling that had occurred from time to time.

I sorted all the mail that I picked up the night before, went to the kitchen and rummaged through the fridge and decided to pack a few food items and then I headed out to Leesburg while everybody in the house were still sleeping soundly.

The traffic was light since it was early Saturday morning. The drive was relaxing with my favorite CD on, I often put a few of my favorite songs on repeat. But my heart still sank and I could not shake off the feeling of loneliness. I have driven my kids for so many years, to schools and to lessons. I always chat with them if they were not sleeping in the car. And even if we did not have conversations, I always felt the presence of their beings, a source of my joy, a reason for my being. I just realized that I had been driving alone a lot lately, and indeed I had a chance to get more intimate with my songs and my private thoughts.

Sometimes I wonder the purposes of our beings; are we here just to run through the course of our lives. Or are we supposed to make a difference for others'?

In a narrow sense, we all have responsibilities, to ourselves and to our families. But that is really it. The more we think we know, the more foolish we sound. This kind of reminds me of the story of the Monkey King who thought that he had outrun the grasp of the Goddess, just a few jumps and he was thousands of miles away and thought he had escaped. He etched a poem on the side of the hill at the end of his run, trying to prove that he had been there, way out of the Goddess' reach. When he returned, feeling triumphant, it turned out that he was just etching the poem at the base of the Goddess' fingers of her palm!

What did people do when they got to our age? How are they supposed to feel?

I supposed that we should be able to tell since we are here now. But honestly, I feel lost, I had never been here before. However I am not willing to give up, at least not just yet. As my level of energy goes dwindling down every year, I will try my best to hang on to it as best as I could, as long as I could. I have seen older folks, either due to their physical or mental exhaustion, they had surrendered, had totally given up and resort to the dreadful and seemingly meaningless existence of the last years of their lives.

I am scared but I will not go down without a fight. Whatever is left in my last breath, it will be all for my songs, and let them be my witnesses. Nobody would be able to take that away from me.

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