

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/1

Jack Swenson

What It Takes

Every morning we walk. We do it to stay fit and for the company. We talk about politics and the world situation.

Neither of us is a positive thinker. We agree that the American people are stupid. They often vote against their best interests, I claim. He says the solution to our problems abroad is to nuke 'em. I don't agree, but my solution--diplomacy--sounds pretty feeble, even to me.

We disagree on immigration, too. He doesn't like the Chinese, East Indians, Afghans, all of which we have aplenty in our community. He and his wife are going to move, he says. Where are you going to go, I ask him?

We agree about one thing: we're lucky to be alive and kicking. Our pasts would haunt both of us if we let them. He is a Vietnam vet. We both fought a round or two with King Alcohol, lost the fight but lived to tell the tale.

Why were we chosen, I ask him? He says he has no idea.

One day we are walking along the trail with a stream on the right and an open field on the left. We see a jackrabbit take off across the field, going to beat hell. There's a hawk after it. The bunny zigs and zags and then disappears from view just as the hawk catches up with it. The hawk hits the ground, bounces, then flies slowly off. We don't see the rabbit. My friend concludes it went down a hole. I had never seen anything like that before. My friend said he used to see it all the time when he was a kid.