

Tom Sheehan

Reading Spring, Looking Forward to the Day the Ice Starts Out

I find the days about us now, which keep me indoors and at this machine, to be very special; they allow me wake-up composition and comfortable reading. So it was that I paused at your remarks on winter, and went right on past them, with the *Great Book* at hand, open for me. It demands attention.

I can bear all this silent reading of the *Great Book*, Mother Earth's tome, sitting here waiting for that day of signals, the day the ice starts out from secret places where it's been harbored, in whatever crevice or cranny, from lake, or pond, or river. It'll begin itself by spitting. There's a law against that in some places, you know. It'll spit anyway, mostly off real mountains and mountains of my creation, hunchbacked over all, and up the valley from the main routes barreling all that way from capital cities. Spring, crushed downhill, is buried in dark spots, but has been stretching forth this way for days on days now. It's like a host of dark prisoners coming past capture on the sly, past hard cement and bars, in quick moments of illusion and evasion. Things move everywhere; Earth shudders, a root douses under onus of added obligation, and near-frigid water trickles anew in a cave. See how (and why, oh ever why) on garage floors in many towns, long-sleeping baseball bats slowly roll half an inch, mere radius, without any real inclination, or so it seems.

Sonic booms without aircraft thunder across the frozen lakes, echo in awakening caves still dark in the Appalachian spine work. Old gold mines behave as if they have company. In the whole Shenandoah Valley and the Ashuelot Valley nearer here, the trout and bass thrust upward in one free magnificence, waiting the mastery of hooks. That's all coming along the way, even though stiff platelets have been worn water's way. The Earth, we know, slung itself here, calved itself from plates and formations huge underlings once hid, responded to the soft reach of sun's life, moon's open-door policy, made dirt shine. Can you imagine one platelet or calved cliff-face cut up in the aftermath of heat along the incessant chiseling of glaciers? Spring, near atop us, does the same deed in quicker time. Those among us who measure time, wrestle edges, knock ice illustrations to the back row of thought and creativity, must shiver at such intelligence.

I say, Whoa, horse, whoa, Earth, this never changing Earth, yet changing, the maneuvering underneath, the slides and vast sleds of rocky knobs and blobs. Whoa, future hills of white coming calved, cheating us of old tunes, old ways, by being brittle yet, but hear us. Hear me, outland, overland, inland, less than what I seemed I was. Ho, Earth, ho, this hardness in the firmament, this space taken up in its place, this burg with all parts of measurement, glacial interchange and maximum, oh, endless Earth not yet melted, not steamed out of self, holding in place grand Capricorn and big Cancer Mother Earth has long known in dashed sluggish aftermath. Her tough fuselage's being primed out in the mainstream, aloof, water in different forms, yet making up everything. Lastly, thus, appropriately wet, we drown in the plenty of coming, stiff platelets' stuff of ocean's *derring* and oh *do*, like Zanzibar and Rio too, the Equator slicing through half the waters of Earth and blessed bonnie rebirth be, salty, testy oh full of mirth and flowered hills.