

AN ANGEL OF ENGLISH: PUSAN, SOUTH KOREA

An Angel of English flooded my room this morning
with sweetness & light & a disturbing request:
She wanted to know what we Earth Huggers
down here make of the state of our Native Tongue
at this late date in the decline of just about everything.

Angel, I said, do you mean you want to find out
if people are happy with their vernacular
if they feel it's still providing them with sufficient
creative opportunities to express themselves
if there are any peculiar words they would rather
not have around any longer
if the spelling is still too tough
if they fear vulgarity is on the overall gross increase
if there are enough euphemisms & other circumlocutions
available for them to negotiate their way through
the many tricky thickets of potentially embarrassing
social encounters
if lies are on the rise & what they might be able to do about it
if people worry they are telling the ugly truth without
realizing it too often these days
if they still believe, for instance, in crap like Freudian Slips
if the vocabulary of daily commerce is holding steady
or diminishing or becoming just too damn unwieldy
if the Language of Love is still as hyperbolic & insipid
as it has always been – that kind of thing?

Yep, She said, you get my drift. Now tell me—

O Angel, I besought, don't task me to come up with any more
such hard questions about our devilish & beloved English.

I'm just an expat scribbler with too much beer on his morning
breath & too many years away from his native shores.

These days I just go on & on & nobody here or
anywhere else gives a pig's whistle about the words

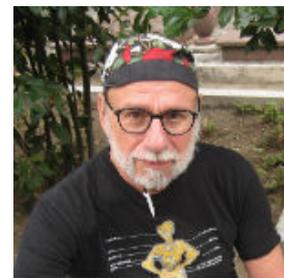
I use to map the dominion of heartache, Angel,
across the domain of our mundane chance enchantments
with mere flesh. I'm nothing but a crumb bum poet
& you know it & I know it & we all know it.

Crumb Bum, She ejaculated in my ear (yes, Angels do that too).
I haven't heard that one since 1955. Old Man, you made my day.
Now let me make yours. And with that – POOF – she vanished
& this poem was finished & my day was made.

– ROBERT PERCHAN

ABOUT THE POET

Author: Robert Perchan
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Nationality: American
Mother tongue: English



Robert Perchan was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and grew up there. After finishing grad school he taught college English courses aboard, deployed on U.S. Navy ships for a couple of years, and later joined the faculty of a university in Pusan, South Korea, where he remained until his retirement. He has published two poetry chapbooks and a full-length poetry collection, as well as a flash novel. He still calls Pusan home. Find him at www.robertperchan.com.