

i.had.a.dream.its.now.a.nightmare.to.ss.txt

Here I sit, (and all good art starts with here I sit ;-}, early in the morning following an evening that ended with an Independent Lens special called Today's Man

Yesterday I went to the farmers market, low on funds worried about spending too much, but running late again so limited time, as up in the middle of the night again following a day where I skipped the heads of everything in Northern Virginia human services meeting of [rich? overpaid] executives laughing about spending our money, when we get none, was wondering how to die, but found money I can't be spending, food to binge on and artwork on the walls to learn from, only in the end to be looked at by two police officers when transportation didn't get me out of there quick enough, my baggy appearance at the Taj Mahal drawing attention, or that sick beat up appearance from the rich people abusing me with money I advocated for, laughing about it, only to hear of someone who didn't take it but wanted to give it back at 1 pm at the US Capital building, a common occurrence of people at the end of their ropes going to government who is supposed to help them, failing them.

Skipping the support group I need to deal with stuff,
but too tired

5 vehicles, one van and 4 cabs show up
the last with non disabled customer getting in with a snicker
the cabbie saying yours was cancelled, call again?

Coming back to a neighbor who says I smell?
We all smell, and what do you smell like?
The dogs that bark incessantly? Or the one
that drops shit and urine onto my patio?
Health complaints are likely...

In Street Sense writing group, we have common exercise to write about our last day, and last week I wrote two little items for publication, one publishing the grant funding announcement \$345K for consumer run mental health programs in Northern Virginia, and a humorous piece experienced on a long commute. You see, while the editors originally said they will publish almost anything, I usually write too long and the editors will not accept 2-6 pages of stuff for print media, and never gave feedback on my first submission, so why send another? (I usually blog ad nauseum where the number of bits and bytes don't matter as much, but how to make money online? send your donation for an edition by paypal?) but to fully cover the experience requires lots of background otherwise it is taken out of context, like the chopped 2 page into 350 words done by the instructor for last publication.

You might know me from my previous writing Ode To A Farmers Market where I described a little local community market that closed for the

season and looking for a substitute in a big city market. My main issue with that market was that it was too early in the AM and too far away, maybe 40 minutes by bike. I'm frequently up in the middle of the night so being at the market for a 5.30 am start when up at 1 am and back down, lucky to get there before closing at 11 am.

Well, I've gone back to that City market, in Virginia, a likely place where slaves were sold 240 years ago, on a big brick plaza that is now largely empty, and discussed with the market master several times who says that they are rented, though empty and not more space, (an annex by the river isn't going to happen) basically that a street paper is not produce, there is about a 5 year waiting list so get a notarized application (for tax purposes, but Street Sense is a donation, independent contractor type of thing and the \$5 to \$15 / week booth fee. I'm not even clearing at this point my expenses of buying papers and my time much less a profit. My hope being a startup position instead of staying out side vending.)

So I ask for another application form, to fill out at that time.

Under the current scenario, like the dogs I'm to stay on the side walk, can only bring my money on the plaza?

Having spent over \$200 on groceries and getting lots of odd looks and many raised eyebrows? Ran into the police chief and asked what I'd done lately, having been evicted from the same jurisdiction and no known other offenses that I'm aware, unless you count last years advocating with a senator trying to keep people from being foreably medicated for something that doesn't work and only makes pharma money, forced treatment is not treatment, but force only, because health is about love, not force.

Visiting the local bank, while there was a notary, but you must be a customer to be notarized there, try down the street, which was closed, visiting the Visitor's Center, friendly enough despite my baggy appearance, wondering about my belongings, looked up and called places for me leaving a copy of what I'd written previously for the kindness/help.

That is what I've been doing, not really selling Street Sense and making money, but spending a day per week commuting into writer's group hoping to learn how the paper works for similar work in Northern Virginia, next month my transportation is likely to run out and will not be able to do the commute regularly, with winter, other commitments like the funding cycle announcement and my seasonal energy level and all the baggage slights and possible gang violence at the other end as well.

So last week I went into DC, heading for writer's group surprised to find a letter on the message board commenting it wasn't pink (so not a pink slip), nor another romantic disappointment, from a volunteer Street Sense photographer about my 20+ farmer's market photos, that I can best describe as photography for idiots (and it is publishable quality), and dropped a few paragraphs into email

messages in the one hour computer time frame,
limited to computer time like a library, two paid
staff asking how to put up a coat hanger that someone likely broke off
the wall, but no tools to drill into plaster nor parts
and better not to have coats, the best solution into the wood
chair molding, but too low, so keep them with you so no one
goes through the pockets...

listening to WPGC hearing people mispronounce fifty cent
after slurring the words dropping the f and saying, black people say
it the same, not different. FIFTY.

'It's a disabled thing, you wouldn't understand'

Sometimes the Short Bus, sometimes Metro Limo

I'm reminded of my experiences, many of the vendors
have had and continue to have worse

but people don't come back to being homeless?
if you show up in an area where people are homeless and you were, what
to make of you? are you pretending? can you give me a place to sleep
tonight? But it's against the rules

most people lose associations with their previous friends when they get
a place. Some arguments in the shelter is solved by getting someone
out of there, and if there long enough, maybe it's time for someone to
graduate?

My experience, I'm not really proud to say involved commuting 2 hours
by bus, having one bike break going down a big hill, my first mountain
bike stolen around the corner from the 'Remember the Titan's school',
running in quickly and not locking it from a bus stop

And the older gentleman waiting on government funded eye surgery
like the walton's I'm saying night Uncle Tom, not really realizing the
racial implications as the largely African American bunk mates want to
talk into the night at 11 pm while I need to be up at 5 or 6 am to
make a two hour commute to treatment and with depression either have
to take pills that might destroy my 'manhood', a possible side effect
of one of the common drugs that knock you out, an erection that requires
going to a hospital ER before damage... Marketing will tell you it's
rare but if you are in that 1 percent it's probably pretty bad...

So what is my life like now?

wearing the help the homeless long sleeve shirts and gifts from family
writing about stuff that people will likely not understand, or misinterpret

most of my energy goes to getting places or worrying about whether the

ride will show up, when not scorned by the others walking to their cars or having police stop by

and the few times I am brief about something, it's in anger at the end of my rope and that is what people seem to enjoy and publish.

Well, I found

going to the local mcdonalds, trying to order, the counter not understanding, finding grilled chicken in many varieties instead of just one sandwich, i usually pack my meals, as the slathering of mayo is not what I'm supposed to be doing, but when in Rome... Cause a scene and get it 'my way'?

chatting for a bit
giving gloves to another vendor

seeing another person I'm angry with

and run off to my first park feeding frenzy, kind of lost, not sure how many bucks i've got to haul my stuff, getting looks by drivers, and pedestrians, passing liquor stores and guys hanging outside, finally going near a police station, and not seeing it, but later when calming down, finding a van around the corner from a police station, guys milling around a van

stop and take a picture, from the back hoping it would not be too revealing

while waiting in line, an expensive car pulling up near the construction only to find one way, and trying to get out of there quickly, as all the people might want the nice shiney Beemer instead of egg salad and peanut butter?

One guy spills the soup and almost instantaneously in chorus chants of 'whip him' or similar spilling what the others want, he probably thought it was a drink instead of soup?

The guys (all guys that I recall seeing but from the back of the line not seeing faces) lining up politely, though somewhat a ruckus because they are happy getting to eat, offering me a place in line a little better dressed and feeling self conscious trying to see what it is like for others, where in NoVA there were not vans with food coming to you, you had to go somewhere, like the soup kitchen and I'd just been to Mc Donalds, so wasn't that hungry and was giving greatest need (like the Metro elevators, disabled, seniors, etc before kids in strollers?, before bikes but if the kid, biker or disabled has to use a bathroom? I will flash a disabled ID and insist instead of leaving a puddle), possibly sampling the local foods available to homeless, making a donation and writing a review like the 'Our Turn at the Table' article, calling it my park bench meal, in a restaurant where

people wait on you, someone is still serving you, this time a young person likely doing school service hours or a family member of the other probably volunteer christian staff and somehow the \$70 check gets paid, a possibly staged event because if you went in all baggy and homeless, you might not even get a table, or have the police called, even at the DC restaurants my neighbors commute in to work at...

So the comparison between what is experienced and what is published is getting too great. The teacher says we want to give people hope, but false hope is dangerous, imho. The street people and vendors aren't here to publish an artistic fiction about the life of being homeless for the enjoyment nor education of the local community. But an entirely angry publication would not be purchased?

It is probably easier to buy a paper from someone than actually talk to a homeless person, I've tried, and I have been sheltered homeless bounced around shelters for about a year while trying to stay alive and go into 'treatment'... What gets edited out is the anger and ego hits one takes so frequently, and now it seems like by staff as well...

Street Sense readership, according to the sales survey literature, is a middle aged woman, possibly a government worker nice enough to stop in at their local vendor and buy a paper while a majority of people I see in NoVA don't know Street Sense exists, so I give them a paper, mostly in return for some kindness in contrast to the usual harsh life of snubs for my baggy sleep deprived appearance.

Like just the basic necessities of getting a pair of jeans to replace those worn out or destroyed, or getting groceries with bags (hence going to farmers markets) the snooty sales guy at a local mall says my card is denied and while I don't have much remaining, I need to call my bank? and hence get out of line? Well after paying in cash for one pair, I verify there is money in there, so I go back and thinking I'm going to create real scene, after waiting and being ignored again, ask to see the manager, while a line develops, and taken aside with other people, the manager disappearing in the isles with my card, possibly not coming back or destroying it, another coming over possibly wanting to look in my bags, as everyone knows or thinks they know, all people with bags must be stealing. WRONG! Many are just trying to keep their stuff, too tired hauling things around in a too long day, when kicked out of someplace or on a long commute and want to have food they eat (without fear of what counter help do to it based on your appearance), extra clothes for the temperature change (+/- 20 degrees am to mid day to late evening), and water, and can't afford the emotional nor financial ego hits that are given daily, hourly or by the minute to people whom you don't like their appearance. And I'm the same way, I'm not sure in getting on an elevator with someone with a shopping cart full of stuff what I might be dealing with in closed space. But they are likely asking for something and I'm not sure I want to get involved.

Pan handling annoys vendors who are working. What are you are giving in return? It is a gift/donation to buy Street Sense, but it doesn't contain information about what it is really like, imnsho... Talking to the vendor you might learn more about what it is like to be homeless and/or poor.

So my strategy of giving Street Sense to people who are kind? Is that working? The people will already deal with me and the nasty people aren't being written about, because we tend to not publish the angry stuff, when many come into the office and leave in a huff for one reason or another, perhaps because it's a one room office and staff gets tired of over hearing the vendors tirades, complaints or whatever for more than an hour? You are just supposed to buy your paper and get out? So how is that supporting the homeless?

But even when writing something for publication, the white and off white paid female staff don't even acknowledge the last hour of writing, giving over opportunities and some off color humor, wanting to edit something and say it in their own words, when really not hearing what we have to say and using us for their benefit instead?