



THE ACTUAL EVOLUTION

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“The golden-rod is glad to meet the sun; but it is not this day’s light it enjoys most; it is what is not known, but wanted today — the flame of tomorrow’s breathing — ceaselessly always tomorrow; it is the anticipation that flows and riots as a gold life in its heart — never this day or moment, but what shall be, the later springing up as another, the change to greater.

“And so, pushed to the logical end, it is death it wants, the next, the withdrawing glory.

“The wild cherry-tree, waiting for the rain to quicken the twig, to squeeze from its tip the swift clean urge *out further*; and yet it is not that unfolding, not that fresh next inch of growing that excites the tree; it is what it cannot see or know beyond its yearly reach, the near familiar, its present life and chance. It is that last white instant of its coming spring, but better still, the age-slow recollection, the deadening branch, the borderland between self-aware decay and dissolution, when death is the fierce adventure — this — most truly this — is the scented kiss it seeks and dreams toward, — always the consequential, the following, the *shall-occur* — life outer, life yet-to-be-uttered.

“And so, it is the *later* that is true, and dying is the idea most absurd, yet the purest, the worldliest illusion, yet the wisest.



COMMENT

"The hawk strikes down along the brawny slopes of sky, across all cruel parabolas of time, at the racing, pulsing prey; and yet even its sinking, single clarity, the wonder of the palpable and instantaneous, its lancing immediacy are focused not alone on what its claws will seize, but on the gladness seasons hence this food will yet release in mating, nest-warm eggs, daughter or son — and beyond them to the further ones — and some wished for but never to be realized here, but only in the sun-gilded courts, the longed-for palaces of air; *there* lives later — out there.

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"The rabbit who, sleepy and content, bends his large gaze on grasses nibbled amorously, and with reflective praises, tentative and soft, to any God that made this food — attains not only grass and lassitude of now; he lives more strictly, beautifully, and replete, in the pressure of a lover's fur still vague, still denied, the far-away shining of an offspring eye, in the sleepy benevolence of summers yet to come, round-blossom-tumbling with alfalfa surf. He lives and nibbles best on what's withheld, on the sureness of the unfulfilled, the certainty of the elusive, the deep-blooming expectancies and loves for which he must gauge, control, and keep that poise for danger, which is life core's best, the balance and discipline that wins each day for us, that takes us through, to know and do tomorrow.

"And when that rabbit must alert the nerves, elude the dog, he runs with truth because his instinct is geared, cleanly meshed into the splendid character of God, the home burrow strained after, the withdrawing and remote, the ideal safety and perfection distantly sensed, for which the organism ticks in harmony because it *wants to gain*, and being of nature has a faith in what will be, the source that made this morning's sun appear, will bring the dark for sleep and silence, and

another dawn for wandering, love, and food, and ruminating.

"Man thinks he is the forefront of some great massive long unrolling called 'progress,' believes he is the chosen child God pampers with a candy-stick, on which His happy-colored image is man's own, a luscious stickiness that clogs the throat with sweetness. Man dreams behind his somnolent lids that something called Evolution has produced in him the cleverest, noblest, best — because the intellectual is ordained chief virtue, cognition the superlative from God, and science the desire of every cultured and aesthetic soul.

"But Paradox, a law dearest to God's being and intent, works relentlessly in all man does. Civil authority, created to protect, ends up in blatant cruelty, injustice, and oppression. Marriage, devised for harmony and love, corrupts more efficaciously than hate. The hushed, imposing innocence of cathedrals hides the deep old evils — cant, the wealth and power of systems, exploitation, and hypocrisy. All that is widely acclaimed, respected — art, literature, ideas, customs — tends to be vapid, least in value, rots with the obverse of its outer show. The acts of whores declare more kindness and Christ than the circumspect and morally exalted citizen.

"And so it is with man's conception of his role in the known world and the cosmic dark beyonds. He thinks himself the zenith of the thronging species — that, in importance, animals dwindle away below him, because inferior to 'brains,' the power to calculate, engineer, organize, create increasing means of huge annihilation; the opposite is fact: the animals have long since evolved past man, because they have sloughed off the incubus of artifice and falseness that is human, have rejected cleverness, cupidity, conspiring, the torturing and terror out of advanced imagination of the intellect that have been man's edifice. The human species thought it was emerging from a lower state; actually, it has been descending to the most abysmal of degradations and degeneracies; whereas, the natural creatures, finer without effort, will ascend to the angelic qualities men talked of, contemplated, but betrayed.

"The wild creatures, retaining spontaneous, unselfconscious love, play, courage, praise, their innocence and natural emotion — the song of bird, the loyalty of beaver, lynx, or dog — or larks gladly monogamous for life — *are* God, 'because they do the

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will of *life*, which is the will of God.'

"More reliable than man's their actions and responses — nobler because unmixed, less contrived, less calculating in securing of the ego; they seldom kill beyond nourishment's requirement; they do not plot aggrandizement, vicious privilege, the horrible trapping or poisoning of enemies, bribery, graft, the perversion of children to drugs, the long-drawn-out deaths that are the depravities of man.

"No, the wild and natural creatures live by impulse and emotion (emotion and instinct are the same); and Paradox again: man places them low in life's scheme because of these very traits and limitations — yet they are superior to mind, in which man excels; they are the qualities of children — to feel, react with gladness and affection, the sense of good because one is good — simple, gentle, unselfconsciously worthy, being more lately arrived than the adult from that life preceding this, God's purity — being more closely tied still to that bright divine instinctive unpremeditated joy and trusting wisdom — than adults, who compromise, repress, and sell their truth for safety.

"And this — man's arrogance — destroys him. He cries:

"Religion, reason demand humility!"

"— yet makes endless and pontifical pronouncement that he is God's elect, made in His image, picked to rule and restrain nature, exploit it to his ends — that the earth is his footstool and animals are here but to subserve his comfort and accomplishment. And yet, the 'lower' forms he slaughters, cages, tortures in trap or laboratory — these helpless, meek, and weaker ones are those of natural lowliness and humility — their claims are never false; honesty and the simplicity of the essentials are their primary laws. 'Unless ye be like little children ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven,' says religion; and 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' Yet man scoffs at, mutilates, and uses for monstrous ends the very things that *live* what he proclaims to be the way of virtue and true power; while he, pretending these chief merits, reveals their opposites — a scabrous arrogance, ambition's filth, the cruelties, perversions, and psychoses that will erupt in that last whirlwind retribution — his long-approaching, long-deserved extinction — by his own hand.

Animals, Ethics and Social Policy

CONFERENCE

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