

Leprechaun, 2018

Overture

Before I pen another word, another syllable, another letter, another comma, or heaven forbid, a future period, I must confess: With these words, I come out of the closet, a closet that is filled with all sorts of fancy frocks, silver scarves, kitten kerchiefs, silk stilettos, and soggy wingtips. The shoes, both high and low, are small, size four and a half, but the handkerchiefs are huge, because guys like me enjoy blowing their noses regardless of the size of their feet.

So without further ado, let all the world know, including New Zealand, Southern California, Jupiter and all its moons, including Europa, Ganymede, Io and Callisto, Boca Raton, Brooklyn, Albuquerque, Betws-y-Coed, Reykjavik, as well as San Antonio – that I am a leprechaun. I was born a leprechaun and I will die a leprechaun, except that leprechauns don't die. They live forever, which despite current assumptions, is limited. If we are lucky enough to know a 'later' in life, we Leprechauns transform into mushrooms. Of course, mushrooms come in all shapes and sizes. Out of all these shapes and sizes, we get to be one. Leprechauns aren't stupid; we can tell poisonous mushrooms from innocents. And we are capable of making teleological judgments, such as fire melts wax, as well as aesthetic judgments, such as how beauty and death are similar.

I should know. My second cousin once removed on my mother's side became a shiitaki. My nefarious uncle on my father's side became a morel. He smoked too much and bit his nails, which was easy when he was a leprechaun but difficult after he transed into a mushroom. As you must know, mushrooms don't have nails, or fingers either. But before I get into mushrooms-- perhaps I won't get into them at all-- I want to tell you about leprechauns.

We are the same size as little girls and boys, but we're not. We wear pointed green hats with fluffy red balls on top. That often causes the top of the hat to droop to the left or to the right. There is no logical explanation for this and no way to control it. The only requirements for being a leprechaun is that you are short, poor, and pudgy, although some leprechauns are quite thin and rich. So the above requirements aren't really requirements at all. They are not even guidelines. The difference between leprechauns and little boys and girls is simple. Leprechauns never grow up.

Leprechauns rarely get lost because they have antennae hidden under their hats. Once I was lost in a forest of sequoias. That morning I forgot to drink my apricot juice, so the acid in my brain battery was running low. My GPS was on strike. As I walked in the dense forest far behind the cottage where I and a few other leprechauns secretly lived, I saw a leprechaun who's countenance was unfamiliar. "Lo and behold," I thought. But I should have thought, "high and behold," because he was two or three inches taller than me. On the other hand he, and for now I am going to call him 'he'—though later I may call him 'she'-- was so much shorter than a sequoia, so I forgave her the extra height.

I thought, "What do you say to a tall leprechaun? Can we be friends?"

That seemed way too presumptuous, so instead I tried "Hi." Simple enough. It usually works. Simplicity is the key to beauty, particularly when you are lost in the woods. Did you know that a sequoia grows to be over three thousand years old? Old, I would say, but not as young as an indecent tortoise. They live to be a hundred and sixty, mere kids compared to sequoias. In comparison, mayflies live for twenty-four hours. If they are born at the usual time around midnight, by 2 am they will be teenagers, by 4 am they can drive (but they don't have to because by this time they can fly) and by 6 pm they will be grandmas and grandpas having already purchased their plots.

I apologize. I better stick to things I know. Kids aren't mere. Kids are more than mere. After all, I have been a leprechaun all my life. And I will be, until one day, I don't know when, I will trans. I have already waited for hours in Mushroom Hopeful Line Number 3 with my request, but I am not going to tell you which mushroom I applied for, because I want to keep you in suspense. After all, if there is no suspense why would you keep reading line after line until you get to some inevitable end. Ends are not inevitable for leprechauns, or children for that matter, but they are inevitable for stories. At some point there are simply too many pages. And pages are born from trees. And there are just so many trees in a forest. So stories must

come to an end. But not right now.

I think of my new friend as fandangled and new because, unlike most leprechauns, he sings. He's a tenor. All musicians, including John, Paul, George, and Ringo, as well as Janis, Mahalia, Lady, Jimi, David, and Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus, are fandangled in their own special way. He plays the guitar and accompanies his strings with falsetto. Actually this high voice is quite common among leprechauns, no matter how tall we are. But my friend stretches the limits height wise. Any taller and he wouldn't be considered a leprechaun. He would just be some guy with big ears wearing a droopy hat.

Most leprechauns don't sing, but not because we can't. It's because we are afraid of singing off key. But my new fandangled friend... Forgive me, I forgot to introduce him. His name is (U). In case you are simply listening and not reading, that's spelled with a capital U surrounded by parentheses. The parentheses are of course silent. But he isn't. He's a tenor with perfect pitch. He doesn't speak like a normal leprechaun, if we can think of a leprechaun as normal. Actually we leprechauns think of other leprechauns as normal. Why not? It's just that everyone else-- squirrels, elm trees, alligators, pebbles, ladybugs, frogs, grizzly bears, praying mantises, and last but not least, humans-- might have their suspicions as to what exactly normal is not.

(U) and I know. We never argue about pebbles or frogs or, for that matter, anything else. I couldn't imagine an argument with him, even though he is taller than me, which means I am a diminished he, because no matter how upset I would be, and, as a fact, leprechauns never get too upset- but hypothetically, if I were upset, his contribution to our arguments would be a melody.

And then his words would not be considered arguments; they would be known in all parts of the world-- including Peking, Beijing, Poughkeepsie, North Dakota, and Virginsville, a town in Pennsylvania on Maiden Creek (check it out) – as lyrics. As long as I can remember-- and leprechauns do have memories, oh, what was I going to say? Oh yes, I know, because of their connection to C's and B's and E minors, and D's, lyrics can never be arguments, because they always and simply become songs.

I don't like to repeat things I can't remember. With Jo {who is Jo? I often try to mutter something without a predicate, like, "Oysters in the Morning." Then to compensate for my predicated omission, (U) will sing a whole string of verbs to the tune of "Hey Jude." Of course, because of the ending of that particular song, he would have to repeat over and over again the "Na na, na na na, na na na, nana na" ~~and so forth~~ for all eternity. One might think, "Lucky for the fade out, otherwise we'd be here forever." Of course you know as time goes by that the na nas get softer and softer till you can't hear them anymore. So that song never really has an ending, certainly not an argument. How could it? But I'll tell you a leprechaunian secret: As the na nas get softer and softer to the point where humans cannot hear them, they are experienced ad infinitum by the keen green ears of leprechauns. There can only be one explanation for this ~~phenomena~~: that at least one of the Beatles was descended from leprechauns. Question is, which one?

So (U) and I felt we had to solve this problem along with all the world's troubles, which are many. Some are blue. Now blue can mean a number of things like, "I got the blues," Or chilliness, like, "my lips are blue." But the blues can be very enjoyable, especially when sung by Blind Lemon Jefferson, Bessie Smith or Lead Belly. So ironically blues, normally sad, can actually make you feel very good.

But the big problem with English is the spelling of "leprechaun." It can easily be misspelled, especially by bees. Ironically, bees are quite good at spelling. They can spell "disenchanted," quite easily. Unfortunately, one common bee misspelling is, "L-E-P-R-E-C-O-N." The bees never seem to get the last syllable right-- They spell it "con" rather than "chaun." Consequentially leprechauns can be easily misunderstood, because conmen cheat and steal and lie in order to gain trust. Then people start believing things that are not true.

On the other hand conmen do some things like normal people do: They set their alarm clocks to 7 AM. They snooze for a while, then get up and make breakfast, usually an omelet. Some conmen do have bad manners, but some politely hold their fork in the left hand and cut their carrots with their right. Neither leprechauns nor conmen lower their heads ~~down~~ to their vegetables. They bring their carrots right up to their ears, which coincidentally are level with their mouth. Conmen smile as if to enjoy the carroty taste. Of course smiles can be deceptive. But that goes for all of us.

Another problem (U) and I discussed was arbors in space, how will we get them there, and why should we? Should we build large rockets to lift trees up and out of earth's atmosphere? Of course that would be taking trees away from earth, and giving them to someone else or, most likely, to no one else. If the planet ~~that~~ we donate them to is uninhabited, our generosity will go unnoticed. Maybe we should downsize and simply send up seeds? (U) and I agonized over this for what seemed like weeks but is really only a couple of moments in a leprechauns life.

I don't exactly know what, "What can you say?" means. "What can you say?" is exactly the kind of thing one overhears on the subway: it's a combination of two common phrases: "what can you do?" and "what can I say?" This is fine if that's what you intend. Otherwise, choose one I overheard it once in the subway, walking through tunnels on my way from one arbor to another. We leprechauns would never think of riding on trains with people because they would make fun of our ears. And then our feelings would be permanently hurt. Feelings are different than ears because you cannot wiggle feelings. Ears are integral parts of our bodies. Feelings exist inside and outside our bodies just like our thoughts. If you don't believe me, just look at those starlings.

Oh, I mean *think* of those starlings because as far as I can see, and that's quite a distance, there are no starlings in sight. But if they were, they would be flitting this way and that, all together. Oh, sorry, I meant to say a murmuration. A murmuration of starlings, what a beautiful thought. And never once in my observance of starlings have I ever seen one starling bump into another. A murmuration is just a big spotty brain in the sky with each starling being a thingamajig, which is a fancy word for synapse, inside a murmuration. Why else would we go to the movies? You may never have seen a leprechaun in the movies except, of course, on the screen. And there are a hell of lot movies about Leprechauns, so many you could fill a teacup with their titles. And talk about stereotypes. Leprechauns aren't really like that, whatever really like is like. There's even a movie called *Leprechauns in Space*, but I am not sure which space it is.

Leprechauns have good taste. We don't watch B movies. We bring our own popcorn and Coca Cola, and sneak in the back row with all the lovers as we peek at the screen through the vacant space between the seats. Since everyone is watching the movie, kissing, or both, no one seems to notice. We come and go in the dark. This means that we may not see the end of the movie, but that's OK because as you know, we don't believe in endings. We only believe in mushrooms.

Leprechauns go to the movies and laugh and cry together just like starlings fly, as if our minds are way larger than their heads. Is this a coincidence? Symphonies are always symphonies, but very few coincidences are coincidences. Does that make sense? I don't have proof of much of anything, not even that life goes on. You simply are, or you aren't. I know you heard that one before. But if you are going to be a conman or a leprechaun, why not steal from the best?