The Bright Pink Feather

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The Bright Pink Feather

J. VAN LOO

He represents every businessman in America. Wearing two of the three pieces of his black suit, a white button-down shirt, and a yellow tie, a look of forced happiness mixed with boredom is apparent. Behind him, four clocks hang on the wall. 11:15 in Tokyo, 9:15 in Paris, 2:15 in L.A... these are important details in the life of this businessman. He swims in a sea of computer chips and paperwork. This is his life. His name is Joe, and he is not fulfilled. His world is tedious and precise. It is technical, like a form letter, the only elements that vary being the date and the contents of his lunch. Joe needs something—he needs a catalyst, and he needs it now.

Joe will take a trip. The trip will not be like his life—it will be spontaneous, entertaining, and fresh. It will include a six-hour flight from his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia. He will fly on Northwest Airlines, and will arrive to his destination an hour late; he is aware that Northwest Airlines is known for this type of delay, the informed consumer that he is.

His destination is Las Vegas, Nevada. Since he has never been on trips other than those for business, this is a new experience. Joe loosens his tie at the airport as a gust of relaxation sweeps over him. He briefly considers removing the tie. He does not remove the tie.

Joe has reserved a room at the Radisson Hotel. The computer chip industry has paid him well, so he can afford this room. He checks in and takes the elevator to the seventeenth floor. Taking stock of the room, he notes a pen, stationery, and the Gideon Bible. His suitcase is then unpacked, its contents placed in drawers and on hangers in the closet.

Riding the elevator back down to the ground level, Joe leaves the Radisson Hotel and walks out onto the street. Strange people surround him. He is handed pamphlets containing pictures of naked men and women. These pamphlets also have phone numbers in them. He finds the nearest trash receptacle and deposits them there. Joe is on vacation, but he is not that kind of man.

He proceeds down the street, passing by street performers. One street performer is a man standing on a box. This man moves only when music plays from his small stereo, shifting around like a robot. Joe gives him one dollar, and then proceeds into the hotel. Lights flash everywhere he approaches the cash window. He receives an equal amount of money. Joe heads for the machine, and pulls until all the chips are gone.

Wandering around air, Joe finds that women are all dressed in vests, bell-bottoms, and lengthy brown hair, which is bright pink. Joe is confused. He is and bell-bottoms. She urges him to sit down. As he does so, she reads “Janis Joplin Impersonator” and asks him his name. He says Joe.

The woman is joined by another little piece of my life. These women are friendly. They decide that it is time to have a drink. They enter his room, Joe informs them that there is no bar, but they were not aware of this. The bell-bottoms. They figured him to be just another little piece of my life. Joe retains his composure and asks him to take a piece of the bright pink feather boa and all, and into the machine, and pull until all the chips are gone.

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He represents every businessman in America. Wearing two of the three pieces—a black suit, a white button-down shirt, and a yellow tie—a forced happiness mixed with boredom is apparent. Behind the four clocks hang on the wall. Tokyo, 9:15 in Paris, 2:15 in New York, these are important details of his life. This is his life. His name is Joe, and he is not fulfilled. His world is tedious and precise. It is clinical, like a form letter, the elements that vary being the contents of his lunch. He needs something—he needs a rest, and he needs it now. He will take a trip. The trip will not be like his life—it will be a six-hour flight from his Northwest Airlines, and will make him realize that Northwest Airlines is better than he is.

He has never been on trips before. Joe loosens his tie at the level, Joe leaves the Radisson Hotel, and is surrounded by women. These women are all dressed in a similar manner, wearing bright colors, crocheted vests, bell-bottoms, and huge round or aviator-style sunglasses. They all have lengthy brown hair, which is wavy. Tied into their brown hair are feather boas. Some are bright pink and some are red.

Joe is confused. He is approached by one of the women with brown hair and bell-bottoms. She urges him to enter further into the room and invites him to sit down. As he does so, he looks up and notices a large banner, which reads “Janis Joplin Impersonation Night.” The woman sits down next to Joe and asks him his name. He quickly outlines his statistics. The woman is joined by two of her friends. Her friends are also Janis Joplin impersonators. These women are friendly—very friendly. They say things like “come on, take another little piece of my heart now baby.” Joe is, again, confused. He does not know what, exactly, the women want. His computer chips have never asked him to take a piece of their heart.

Joe remains seated as the Janis Joplins smoke their Marlboro Reds. They give him drinks. He normally does not drink, but he is on vacation. He drinks a blue drink, a green drink, a red drink, and a pink drink. He repeats this process. Joe feels fuzzy. He feels happy and euphoric.

The Janis Joplins ask Joe where his room is. He cannot remember. They find his room key and see that it is on the seventeenth floor of the Radisson Hotel. They decide that it is time to go to bed. The Janis Joplins walk him back to the hotel, over to the elevator, and push the button for the seventeenth floor. They enter his room, and find that there is a massive king-sized bed. Joe informs them that there is good money in computer chips. The Janis Joplins were not aware of this. They prepare him for bed, leaving him in only his white briefs. They figure him to be a brief man. The Janis Joplins also get into bed, feather boas and all, and they all fall asleep.

Joe awakens the next morning. He is wearing only his white brief underwear. He does not remember much about the previous evening. He doesn't remember how many drinks he had. Looking over next to his head, Joe sees a bright pink feather lying on the pillow. He then remembers the Janis Joplins. He also remembers that it is time for him to go.

Joe gets up, showers, re-packs his suitcase, makes his bed, and places the bright pink feather in his wallet. He takes a taxi to the airport, and boards a
plane for the six-hour flight home. On the flight back, he reflects upon his time in Las Vegas. He thinks of the Janis Joplins, and how wild he was for that one night. He returns to his job and to his computer chips. His face returns to a look of happiness mixed with boredom. But somehow, with that bright pink feather resting in his wallet, the look of happiness on his face is no longer quite as forced.

Maestro's Abecedary
(A Day in the life of a...)

MYRON HARDY, JR

Alabaster musicians that sleep.
Before my bed they place
Consoling during moments
Doubt blocks thought
Emboldened by the remnants
From an era in times past
developing and
hip-hop lay in the word
God's gifts to each his
History repeats itself in
I listen subconsciously
Juggling effort and aim
Knowledgeable one does
I'm
Learning how to rhyme
Many artists have come
Now gone, who left but
attention
\Or have come and new
opportunity. On a
Pulse I sit, glaring much
Question about my life
Rather convinced—I'm
Sitting in my room in
Take out a pen, a piece
Unrehearsed verse is not
Vowels are linked for
Words are rearranged
(Xed) crossed out. With
thanks to
(Yahweh) God for the
Zealous.