

Parable

By Charles Sanchez

Words. Forgotten words. Discarded, lost. I find them. I find them in dusty boxes on shelves, pressed in books packed in moldy trunks, in attics, closets, basements, on passed over shelves, like literary wallflowers waiting to be picked up, wanted again, made useful. I find them and I shine a light on them, making them come alive again, letting their beauty emanate, recycled, renewed.

There was this one word, a beautiful word: Widdendream. Name sounded like the wind. I found her in some love letters, dated back to the Civil War, tied up with a worn yellow ribbon. There was a rat dragging this little bundle cross the floor of a Baptist church, down near Weatherford, Texas. This rat thought he'd found himself a feast, but I rescued that packet of long-ago promises, and found in it's brittle pockets this word, this frightened, shy little noun.

When I saw her, I smiled, so as to gain her confidence. I told her, I said, "little girl, I ain't gonna hurt you. I'm here to help you." She looked up at me, and whispered that she wasn't scared, but confused. She didn't know how she got that way, but she'd been that way long as she could remember. And now, the fact that she'd been tied up in an age-old envelope and left for rat food, why, it made her more disturbed and confused than ever.

Well, I told that pretty girl, I told her, "little girl, you don't have to feel that way if you don't want to." She looked up like she didn't believe me, so I went on. "Little girl, pretty thing, that's what I'm here to tell you. You don't have to be confused or disturbed any more. You can be whatever you want to be. What is it that you most wish?"

The little word thought, and she closed her eyes and took a deep breath. Then she opened them and said, "Sir, if I could be whatever I wanted to be, I'd like to be the kind of word that really helped people, you know? The kind of word that could show people that wishes, if infused with love and passion and joy and work, that they could expand into more than they ever imagined. Those fancies could grow into aspirations and goals, and help people to spring up and change the whole world!"

As she spoke, right before my eyes, that confused little caterpillar of a noun transformed into a strong, confident, beautiful butterfly of a verb, I swear she did! That Widdendream. And she's out there in the world right now, expanding dreams.

And that's why I do it. That's why I search for forgotten words. For those special moments when a miracle like Widdendream happens. I wouldn't trade that for the world. No, sir. Not for the world.

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