

Reflections of the Fall



2020 has been a tumultuous year. We are dealing with a quarantine instigated by a global pandemic and the quietude such isolation can provide us, in addition to the clamor of civil uprisings incited by a myriad of injustices. Whether we have experienced great tragedy or merely bore witness to the absurdity of our condition, the year up to now has been far from ordinary. The excitement and joy we have previously experienced by engaging the external world has been replaced by the doldrums of solitude. Essentially, we have gone through a period of confinement akin to an extended winter.

When we face difficulties in life, seemingly outside our control, our minds cloud with uncertainty and malaise about what the future holds for us. We might feel a sense of hopelessness as we struggle to find meaning in our everyday lives. One might wonder, “Am I bound to repeat my daily, monotonous cycle until I discover my life’s purpose?”

The doubts and anxieties concerning the purpose of our lives was famously characterized by Albert Camus in his essay “The Myth of Sisyphus.” Within the essay Camus explores the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus, a king who was condemned to roll a boulder up a hill only to have it roll back down again once he reached the summit. Sisyphus, consigned to an eternity of this frustrating punishment, was imagined by Camus to ultimately be happy in his labor. By rejoicing in his punishment, Sisyphus rebels against his own fate and transcends his torment. Similarly, we also can find meaning by engaging in a rebellion against our perceived state of hopelessness.

Discovering what provides us meaning in our lives is easier said than done. There is no doubt that the search will lead us into a labyrinth of questions with no obvious answers. But what better time to meditate on these questions than the fall? This season grants us an opportunity to journey inwards in search of clarity. Similar to the sowing of seeds in spring, fall offers us a chance to plant seeds of personal growth brought about by the philosophical intrigue that lies dormant within our being. For those of us in search of wisdom, fall represents hope. Hope that the seeds we plant within ourselves will help us flourish and manifest our dreams of tomorrow. Bringing these dreams to reality inevitably requires trials, and each trial we decide to surmount will incite fear within us.



Taking the first daunting steps on our inner journey can feel like we are leaping off a precipice into the unknown. Alternatively, as illustrated in the myth of Icarus, the journey can send us soaring towards the blinding glory of the sun. We may be afraid that our wings, crafted with wax, will only carry us so far until they inevitably melt away and disappear. However, it is neither the melting of our wings nor the magnificence of the sun that terrifies us. What we truly fear is - the fall.

We have all been through countless trials and experienced the heartwarming buzz of victory, as well as the crushing blow of defeat. However, it is the fall after the defeat that terrorizes us. The lesson to be learned after trudging through the despondency brought about by the pandemic is to be grateful for those that harbor and cherish us dearly within their hearts. Because unlike Icarus, what is waiting to greet us at the bottom of our fall is not the frigid embrace of an abyssal sea, but rather the comfort and warmth of our loved ones.

So spread your wings, break free of doubt, and dare to soar towards the unfading passions illuminated by your soul. And remember – do not fear the fall.