

The Butterfly Ball

A Metamorphic Story

H.T.Manogue



Other Works By H.T Manogue

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About The Front Cover

“Path Through Life”

By

J. A. Yances

Award winning artist Jorge Yances was born in Cartagena de Indias, Columbia, and educated in the United States. He was labeled a creative prodigy by art aficionados at a very early age. During his teenage years he fine-tuned his creative expression using a variety of techniques and finishes. Yances studied under several well-known Nashville artists during the early years of his career. During that time he expanded his artistic repertoire to include wood carving and Plexiglas etchings. In 1974, Yances was given the medal of bronze by the Grumbacher Company, and around the same time he became the artist in residence at the Cruciana & Rosler Gallery in Orlando, Florida. Since then, Yances work has been on display and in demand throughout the United States and South America.

Yances has the unique ability to blend physical reality with what some people call fantasy, and the result is a vision of worlds that run parallel to this one. These worlds meet in different settings in his meticulous work. The marriage of mind over matter gives the viewer the opportunity to sense and feel more than one reality as they intermingle and come to life on the canvas. That ability has earned Yances a premier position in the Magical Realism Movement. Jorge has the uncanny ability to immerse objective thought into his unique subjective world. In that world the walls of one reality blend into the framework of other universes.

Jorge likes to describe his work this way:

“My paintings are like poems. Each work invites the viewer to make up his or her own story and allows them to see beyond the obvious into a world of endless possibilities.”

The front cover work, *Path through Life*, was completed in 2002. The original is 30 x 40; oil on canvas. The work is part of Yances private collection. To see more of his work visit: www.yances.com

About The Back Cover

“Pygmy Blue”

By

Bernadette Resha

Award winning artist Bernadette Resha is the epitome of extraordinary. She began her art career at a very early age thanks to her artistic maternal grandmother, and the diligence of her mother. Her painting career has been a metamorphosis of creativity. Bernadette started filling the house with childhood sketches at age six. As she matured, her work evolved into a potpourri of beauty. Her incredible pieces capture the soul of each of her subjects. Her paintings have been the talk of professional critics for over ten years. Even the Pepsi Company recognized her work by adding one to a Pepsi can.

Art galleries in New York and throughout the Southeast display her originals at various yearly exhibits. She continues to surprise the art world with her intuitive talents and movie star personality. She has appeared in a number of Television shows, fund raising events, and has acted in several movies. She loves playing the violin, and her physical fitness achievements, especially in the Special Olympics, show the world her multidimensional talents. Her positive outlook and love of life make her a role model in the world of disabilities; Nashville native, Bernadette, was born with Down syndrome.

Her personal life is filled with the same high level of achievement that her work expresses. Bernadette masterfully demonstrates the fact that DS doesn't have to be debilitating. A brief marriage, and her ability to live on her own with her beloved cats, shows the world that the word disability is not in her vocabulary.

Bernadette agreed to paint *Pygmy Blue* for the back cover of this book. The work puts a physical face on the non-physical aspects of this work.

Bernadette is currently working on her new collection with fellow Nashville artist and mentor, Pam Francis. This new collection reveals yet another side of her incredible talent. For more information about Bernadette, or to purchase one of her works, visit: www.bernadetteresha.com.

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The Butterfly Ball

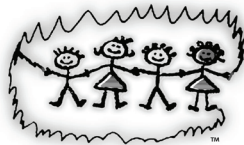
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For: The Butterflies



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Foreword

The Butterfly Ball is a story of transformation, and Hal Manogue masterfully weaves events that bring about resolution to painful situations in one way or another. He shows the importance of our perception and how by the way we look at things, we create our heaven or hell right here and now. This story does not sugar-coat life. It is filled with many of the dilemmas that are faced, and shows how the way we handle them can support us in building meaningful lives or condemn us to a life lived in fear.

Hal is a fabulous poet and has incorporated his poetic medium in descriptions that are memorable and instructive. His insights into life and the complexity each of us face are noteworthy. Most importantly, he shows in this work how in the end we are able to move beyond our own limitations and come into a dance with life as the butterflies do. The Butterfly Ball is a book that will change your view of events and give new understanding of the metaphorical meaning butterflies reflect, opening your eyes to seeing the clues that give your life meaning. By opening to appreciation for diversity in others as well as ourselves, we create an experience that makes life a wonderful and worthwhile journey.

Kathleen Jacoby
Editor

Preface

Magical is a word that we all have used at one time or another to describe an event or a person that crosses the boundaries of our physical and scientific understanding. We believe the word means mysteriously enchanting in a non-ordinary sense. Magical can describe the world of the unknown as well as the art of being unreal in some way. There is an element of beauty attached to any magical world. We all love the stimulation we feel when a magical event takes place before our eyes. We stretch the corners of our mind to find an answer for not knowing why or how something exists. In most cases we throw these unanswered questions into a vacant lot in our conscious mind, and mark them ‘magic’ or ‘not-normal.’

Most of us are too busy to watch the magic that unfolds around us every day. The rigors of work and family responsibilities take up most waking hours so there is little time to enjoy the natural magical beauty that surrounds us. As the great Sufi poet, Rumi said: *“Beauty surrounds us, but we usually have to be walking in a garden to appreciate it.”* The quest to stay afloat in our economic pool of ‘what’s next’ takes a toll on what we see and experience in our individual reality and the other natural realities that are constantly occurring around us.

We are conditioned to overlook our own spiritual magic. It sits in specialized compartments in our psyche while we idolize and worship other compartments that tend to fill the void we have within us. We have been conditioned to believe magical beauty belongs to an exclusive club and most of us don’t have a membership card. The quest to

be more than we think we are is hindered by our thoughts about our own beauty and our creative imagination.

This book is about the magical mystery of change. Who better than a butterfly to tell a story about change? Just like butterflies, the people in the story awaken from their metamorphic state in their own way.

Butterflies are living metaphors, but we are not educated to see them in that way. To most of us they are strange insects that become beautiful flies. We don't usually focus on them as they flirt with bushes and flowers and spend their physical time drinking, eating and having sex. Their world is unknown to us, but when all the frills of life are extracted from our lives, we discover that we live just like butterflies. Our physical lives are exaggerated versions of the beautiful mystical magic that flows through butterflies, and all forms of life. The free will of butterflies represents the nature of our true beauty. Like all other aspects of consciousness they are here to imitate the multiplicity that exists within our conscious mind. When we bring that beauty into our awareness, life becomes less of a mystery and more fully a journey of discovery.

HTM

September, 2012

The mark of your ignorance is the depth of your belief in injustice and tragedy. What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the Master calls the butterfly.”

Richard Bach

If you don't like something change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it.

Mary Engelbreit

When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.

Victor Frankl

Part One

Whether the events in our life are good or bad greatly depends on the way we perceive them.

Michel Montaigne

Introduction

In certain circles they call me a Pygmy Blue Butterfly. Some folks even call me by my scientific name, *Brephidium exilis*, but that one is a bit boring as well as a little annoying. I just call myself Blue. It's a fitting name for me. I dress in shades of brown and blue and travel the coastlines and wastelands of the Southern and Western regions of your United States. I like to travel in a crowd, and I appreciate the deserts, wastelands, vacant lots and alkali flats that provide the nourishment I need to exist in this form.

Most of you don't know that I exist, but I do. In spite of your ignorance, I fill my life with the same basic needs you have –freedom, food and sexual activity. Your scientists say that my species is the smallest butterfly group in the world, but they miss one very important fact when they describe us as a group. Our life cycle and consciousness mirrors yours. We interact with you, but most of you never know it.

I have been part of the Butterfly Ball for many of your centuries. I use those words to explain time in your terms, but those time sequences don't mean anything to me. I have my own time reality. I use different physical butterfly bodies to express the beauty of being one with all forms of life without your time restrictions. Butterfly wisdom is the art of knowing one's self in any form. I move to the music of the air and rest in the grace of knowing. I've been telling stories about your species in the pigweed, pickleweed and saltbushes for eons. My stories are filled with the essence of life, which is change. You fear it while you do it. We do it

to feel our beauty. Change is the only constant; it is the desire to be in harmony with your inner beauty. My species is here to teach you about change and help you remember. We teach without words; our lessons are rooted in our life cycle and the beauty we offer you.

The story of the Butterfly Ball is a life changing story. Some of you will rejoice in its truth, and others will balk at the thought of me, a butterfly, telling you about you. But, my story shows the butterfly side of being human, and the human side of being a butterfly, and the fact that you will continue to change in spite of yourself.

Chapter 1

Just living is not enough,” said the butterfly. “One must have sunshine, freedom and a little flower.

Hans Christian Andersen

Just before dawn, the tantalizing aroma gradually filled her dark and quiet country-style bedroom. The scent of fresh coffee permeated the air around her. She quickly opened one eye to confirm what her nose was telling her. It was that coffee smell again. It was the same aroma she smelled when her grandmother died. No one else in the house smelled it, but Nessa knew that her favorite person was somewhere around the house brewing coffee. The last time she told Mamma about it, Mamma said she was still dreaming.

“I’m twenty-five now. I know when I’m awake or dreaming.” Grandma taught me about dreaming and I know the difference. She liked to talk to herself when no one else was around.

Nessa knew about dreaming. She saw her grandmother in some of her dreams, and she remembered each and every one of them. Her grandmother taught her a lot of things in the short time she lived on the farm with her. Her grandma always told her that the two things she loved the most in life outside of her family were coffee and the butterflies. Grandma would sit out in the garden with a cup of coffee and say:

“Nessa, honey, the only difference between being awake and dreaming is you have a body to be aware of when you are awake in this world. All you use to dream is your mind.”

“That’s right.” She whispered as she let the aroma fill her thoughts.

“Vanessa Lazerbee, you know the difference.” She always called herself by her given name, when she talked to herself even though everyone else called her Nessa. She repeated that thought three times aloud and pinched herself just to be sure. Two or three Saturday mornings a month for the last three years, the scent of the ghostly java immediately made her jump out of bed like a woman with fire ants in her pajamas. Three years had passed since her maternal grandmother made her transition. It was a traumatic event for her in one way and in another way it opened another world for her to experience.

Nessa followed the same procedure every time her nose went haywire on those special Saturdays. She immediately took a few steps down the hallway, and walked into the kitchen. Vanessa knew where the source of her mental mystery was, but she always started in the kitchen. She had to start there even though there was never any coffee percolating in that room or any of the other rooms in the family’s early nineteenth century farmhouse. The Lazerbee’s coffee pot sat on the granite countertop like a stoic waiting to smile.

Vanessa did what she always did when her nose was in control. She quickly looked around the small room. She looked over at the four burner electric glass-top stove. This particular morning, two of the burners were surrounded by tiny grease splashes from the thick turkey

burgers that were consumed for dinner the night before. She glanced at the heavy farm-style ceramic double sink filled with the dirty dishes. Her eyes dropped down to the round oak claw-foot pedestal table, which still had the salt and pepper shakers on it. They were in the used position, and the napkin holder had one white sheet hanging over the edge like a limp parachute. The ketchup from Friday night's turkey burger dinner was sitting straight-up with the flip-top opened. Caked ketchup lined its white lips. The left-over brigade of condiments looked like soldiers spent from duty. The four hard oak armchairs were still pushed away from the heavy lip of the century old table.

“Grandma I’m on my way to see you.” She spoke to herself and tapped on the oak table at the same time as she turned and walked toward the old kitchen door.

Vanessa opened the old black wooden door as the sun began to highlight the cirrus filled spring sky. The air molecules immediately rushed through her 5’ 2” frame, and the wind blew her long strawberry blonde hair around like a kite in a tailspin as she took her first step out the screened-in back porch door. It was quiet out there except for the sound that trees make when they feel the wind tickling them with the dawn of a new day. The birds were beginning their daily routine, and the crickets were silent; spent from a night of love making. Nessa saw the branches sway in the breeze as she looked over the semi- cleared fifty acres. She loved to look at the bare branches especially when new buds were beginning to form a soon-to-be green wonderland. She stopped and began to imagine what a tree feels. Her grandma told her about trees. She looked up and pointed towards the mighty oak that gave the backyard a healthy dose of dignity and beauty. As she stood there she began to daydream. Grandma’s words were fresh in her mind once again:

“Each branch is part of a tree, but each branch is its own tree too. The buds on the branches are trees, but they are leaves too. The leaves are part of branches, but they have their own life. All trees are more than they seem to be in this world. Remember they have roots, which are trees that live in another world. Maybe we are just like them. Our roots may be in another world too. Maybe you don’t have Down syndrome in that other world, honey.”

Every time she passed her “natural friends,” the trees, she would feel something strange. It was like they knew she was there. They made her feel her innate beauty.

The old farm, which was the only place she ever called home, was once the home of some of the finest hogs and cows in the county. The house sat empty for six years after her paternal grandparents died in 1972. But during those empty years, the chimney swifts from South America still nested in the brick chimney each summer, the butterflies still flirted with the overgrown weeds, and mice and other critters made the deteriorating farmhouse their vacation home while Vanessa’s daddy, Wallace, and his two brothers tried to sell the old place.

The old barns broke down years before, but the smokehouse was rebuilt when the family renovated and moved into her dad’s childhood home. The smokehouse was a workshop and craft studio now, and she walked toward it. It was three times as big as the old smokehouse. Her dad used it on the weekends, and she and her mom, May Hartley Lazerbee, used it every day to paint or work on some fun project. On her way to the converted smokehouse, Nessa usually tripped over a piece of exposed stone foundation that was once part of the main barn, but she always caught herself before she hit the clover-filled yard.

Those old flat limestone bricks were reminders of the glory days of farming. They reminded her to pay attention as she followed the scent of java that surrounded the smokehouse. She had a hard time paying attention when the coffee smell lingered in her memory that long. She still called the building by its formal name even though there were no sides of pork hanging on those heavy hooks that her paternal grandpa used before farming became a losing profession. She immediately went to the source of the scent. The smell was strongest around the buttercup patch. It was the same buttercup patch that her grandmother loved so much. She stood there for a minute and looked around. She heard the faint sound that butterfly wings make and she smiled. Her grandma taught her how to listen for that sound. She sat on the bench next to the door and put her hands face-up on her tightly closed legs. Before she could blink her eyes, a big black butterfly with iridescence blue wings and red and white dots landed in the palm of her hand. She never knew which hand the butterfly would pick, and that was part of the fun.

“Hi Grandma. How are you today? I’m happy you’re here. I missed you this week.”

Nessa spoke to the butterfly in her normal tone. She was in full conversation mode as the sun came up that morning just like those other mornings when grandma was around.

“Grandma, tell me about your butterfly life again. Do you still feel human in that beautiful body?”

Nessa wanted to bond with the butterflies just like Grandma Doris Hartley did when she was a young girl. That was long before her mother, May, and her twin sister Mindy came along. Grandma Doris liked to talk about the butterflies, but she never talked about the secret that made her turn

to them for help. She took that secret with her when she passed to this world of wonder, but somehow Nessa knew about it before her mother found out while reading Doris's diary after Grandma died.

Nessa sat there for fifteen minutes in silence, but she constantly smiled and shook her head as the butterfly sat in her hand. Somehow Nessa was listening to the voice of the butterfly, but there were no words to hear. Nessa would move her head a certain way when she was tired of sitting in one position. It was a subtle move, but it was enough to alert the black beauty; it was time to move to the other hand.

“Grandma, tell me again about the day you saw me in the hospital and what mamma said to the doctors when daddy and her found out I was a Down syndrome baby.”

Nessa knew that story, but she wanted the butterfly to stay and talk to her just like grandma Doris did when she was living in her human body.

The butterfly sat in Nessa's left hand for another fifteen minutes, and then in the blink of an eyelash she flapped her wings and flew away, but she never seemed to go very far. She would go to a dandelion or she would fly around the butterfly hedge that her daughter May planted years ago. The butterfly hedge was made up of several nectar producing bushes that provided food and shelter for the caterpillars. May called caterpillars 'natural born angels.'

Nessa got up and moved toward the bushes:

“It's a great day to be awake with you in this garden, grandma.”

That thought made Nessa's skin change to chicken skin.
That's what grandma always called goose bumps. Grandma
didn't answer this time. She didn't have to. She told Nessa
years ago that every day was a great day if you want it to be.

