

A Conversation with Audrey Hepburn



While typing at his desk [Brett hears a woman singing outside his window.](#)

Audrey Hepburn: Moon River, wider than a mile, I'm crossing you in style some day... Oh, dream maker, you heart breaker, wherever you're going I'm going your way. Two drifters off to see the world. There's such a lot of world to see. We're after the same rainbow's end-- waiting 'round the bend, my huckleberry friend, Moon River and me.

Audrey looks up at Brett who is now looking down at her on the fire escape from his window.

Audrey Hepburn: Hi.

Brett Weber: Hi.

Audrey Hepburn: What cha doin'?

Brett Weber: Writing.

Audrey Hepburn: Good.

Audrey smiles.

Audrey Hepburn: Sir Brett, many of the great writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were also great mystics.

Brett Weber: I am not even a good writer, Audrey.

Audrey strums her guitar.

Audrey Hepburn: Truthfully, Sir Brett, the sources of their mysticism lay not only in the intense devotional lives they led, but also in the inspiration they drew from the company they kept in mind... the example of other saintly lives that stirred their thoughts and imagination.

Brett Weber: Well, your life's example certainly does that for me, Audrey.

Audrey Hepburn: Well, as I said, many of the great writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were also great mystics, Sir Brett.

Brett Weber: Would you mind playing your guitar for me? It does help me think, and with your inspiration, I suppose anything is possible.

Audrey strums "Moon River."

Audrey Hepburn: Anything is possible, Sir Brett.

Brett Weber: Well, let's hope so.

Audrey Hepburn: Remember, when I asked you to put away your books...

Brett Weber: Yes, I do.

Audrey Hepburn: Thank you.

Brett look up questioning.

Audrey Hepburn: You're still curious about the Divine Comedy, aren't you?

Brett Weber: Well, yes. I feel as though that poem is important for some reason. Important in a personal kind of way...

Audrey Hepburn: Sir Brett, I am not Beatrice, but your imagination does give me wings.

Brett Weber: Well, that's okay, I am not a Dante, but your friendship does provide me with some much needed inspiration.

Audrey Hepburn: I am glad that it does.

Brett Weber: I'm gonna need more though!

Brett laughs and continues typing on his typewriter which happens to be next to him on the fire escape now.

Audrey Hepburn: Dante was already well known as a political figure in Florence and as a lyric poet before he began work on the Divine Comedy.

Brett Weber: Well, I am not well known in politics and I am not a good poet, Ms. Hepburn.

Audrey Hepburn: Your paintings are your poetry, and they do carry a political message.

Brett Weber: What message?

Audrey Hepburn: The sanctity of life, Sir Brett.

Brett Weber: I guess so... I am still hardly Dante, Ms. Hepburn.

Audrey Hepburn: I am still hardly Beatrice, Dr. Weber.

Audrey smiles and raises her gaze to Heaven as Brett continues typing.

Audrey Hepburn: Dante composed most of the Divine Comedy during his dreary exile, beginning in Verona and ending in Ravenna, Italy.

Brett Weber: Why was he in exile?

Audrey Hepburn: Politics. Brett, you are in a kind of exile now too. Like Dante, you may never return to your beloved home... the body you once knew..

Brett looks at his hands.

Brett Weber: How is it that I am typing so fast? My hands are so...

Audrey Hepburn: You are not really typing. You are dreaming, Sir Brett!

Brett Weber: Oh. I remember now... Can I stop working then?

Audrey rolls her eyes.

Audrey Hepburn: The Divine Comedy is divided into a hundred cantos; one is introductory, and thirty-three are then devoted to describing each of the three parts of the author's imaginary journey through hell, purgatory, and paradise.

Brett Weber: I am way too tired to write anything like that, Audrey. Even in my wildest dreams! That would be impossible if I had the energy...

Audrey Hepburn: All you need do is make the comparison. At the age of thirty-five, Dante enters the other world.

Brett Weber: Ah, you see... I am thirty-nine.

Audrey Hepburn: But, at thirty-five too, you entered the otherworld. It was the Easter Season of 2004 and everything you have experienced from that date has come with special purpose.

Brett Weber: I haven't seen or done anything?

Audrey Hepburn: Haven't you?

Brett Weber: No?

Audrey Hepburn: Then what are your paintings for?

Brett Weber: They were originally only for me, but they are about my journey, I suppose.

Audrey Hepburn: And, Hell has had nothing to do with that journey?

Brett Weber: Okay, life with multiple sclerosis can be a living hell.

Audrey Hepburn: So, your paintings are about your journey through Hell. Your first painting "Mirror" some might say is even a landscape of Hell.



Mirror

The spirit of the painter will be like a mirror, which always takes on the color of the thing reflected, and contains as many images as there are things placed before it. Know, O painter, that you will never succeed if you do not have the universal power to represent by your art all the varieties of form present in nature--and indeed, you will find this impossible unless you can first see them and hold them in your mind.

- [Leonardo da Vinci \(1452-1519\)](#)

Audrey Hepburn: You see Hell within yourself, Sir Brett. The disease is that Hell and you painted "Mirror" before you ever knew you had multiple sclerosis. You were feeling it's effects though...

Brett Weber: Well, that is true, but I painted that painting in 1996. Twelve years before 2004 ??? I married in 1994.

Audrey Hepburn: Half the three score and ten allotted to man.

Brett Weber: What?

Audrey Hepburn: God gave you ten years allotted to art. Then, at thirty-five, you found me in your dreams. Things have never truthfully been the same for you.



Audrey plucks her eyebrows now in the bathroom.

Brett Weber: I...?

Audrey Hepburn: ...found you Audrey, and Famous too.

Brett Weber: But, you and that dog are not even real. I just make you up because I am so bored and lonely!

Audrey Hepburn: Lets not start arguing about that again... real enough for most people, Sir Brett. More real than your imagination! The world will remember...

Audrey Bites her lip now in her living room.



Audrey Hepburn: Never mind... You are doing exactly what God wants you to do, Sir Brett. Dante's journey only lasted...

Audrey suddenly appears regally dressed.



Audrey Hepburn: ...one week's time in the mortal word. Our journey together will end on your birthday April 24, 2011... Easter Day.

Brett Weber: It is not the end.

Audrey Hepburn: No, it is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

Brett Weber: What does that mean?

Audrey Hepburn: Our time, although much longer than one week, will pass quickly. Remember to be true to yourself Good Knight. While you are true, you cannot fail!

Brett Weber: When have I ever not been true, Audrey? Hrmph...

Brett casts a disheartened gaze at Audrey.

Audrey Hepburn: I have another poem for you, Sir Brett.

Brett Weber: Not another poem! You've got to give me more time to memorize the ones you've already given me.

Audrey Hepburn: Actually, I have two poems for you.

* Audrey takes a look of satisfaction.*

Brett Weber: Good grief.

Audrey Hepburn: A man should hear a little music, read a little poetry, and see a fine picture every day of his life, in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful implanted in the human soul. Johann Wolfgang Goethe said that, Sir Brett.

Brett Weber: Well, I am certainly in no danger of obliteration, Audrey.

Audrey smiles.

Audrey Hepburn: Pay attention, Sir Brett! Naomi Shihab Nye was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1952 to a Palestinian father and an American mother. A good deal of her poetry focuses on her life as an Arab American. She currently lives in San Antonio, Texas.

Audrey Hepburn: You got that, Sir Brett?

Brett knods looking at the floor.

Audrey Hepburn: Naomi Shihab Nye's Valentine is a clever and moving explication of poetry. She takes a strong stance in the age old debate on whether poems are like tacos. She writes as you paint!

Brett Weber: Oh really, Ms. Golightly.

Audrey now appears again as her character Holly Golightly.

Brett Weber: Can I go back to sleep now?

Audrey Hepburn: No!



Audrey Hepburn: Valentine for Ernest Mann

You can't order a poem like you order a taco.
Walk up to the counter, say, "I'll take two"
and expect it to be handed back to you
on a shiny plate.

Still, I like your spirit.
Anyone who says, "Here's my address,
write me a poem," deserves something in reply.
So I'll tell you a secret instead:
poems hide. In the bottoms of our shoes,
they are sleeping. They are the shadows
drifting across our ceilings the moment
before we wake up. What we have to do
is live in a way that lets us find them.

Once I knew a man who gave his wife
two skunks for a valentine.
He couldn't understand why she was crying.
"I thought they had such beautiful eyes."
And he was serious. He was a serious man
who lived in a serious way. Nothing was ugly
just because the world said so. He really
liked those skunks. So, he re-invented them
as valentines and they became beautiful.
At least, to him. And the poems that had been hiding
in the eyes of skunks for centuries
crawled out and curled up at his feet.

Maybe if we re-invent whatever our lives give us
we find poems. Check your garage, the odd sock
in your drawer, the person you almost like, but not quite.
And let me know.

Audrey Hepburn: Do let me know, Sir Brett!

Brett Weber: But, I have no energy for poetry and writing, Holly.

Audrey Hepburn: Do as your friend Mark has advised you to do. "What you could do yesterday, or may do tomorrow, shouldn't set the expectation for today. Rather, let each day be its own benchmark: I do not know how far I am going to get today, but I am going to strive my best, where the only scorecard that I am following is that I strive to move my life forward each day in some way, in any given circumstance. A tiny step was all I could do today, but I will approach tomorrow with the same resilience -- maybe I will only be able to accomplish a small step again, or make a quantum leap, but I am simply going to strive my best, within my capacity, at the start of every day."

Brett Weber: Wow, that was well said, Holly. Did Mark actually say that to me? "Let each day be its own benchmark!" But, Holly you especially out of all Audrey's characters are relentless... How do I deal with people like YOU ??? Holly Golightly is always trying to get me to do more. "Be more! Inspire more! Accept more! Expect more! But of course, complain less, Sir Brett!!! Or if you must complain, complain to me. You already know that I won't pity you!"

Audrey Hepburn: And, I DO NOT PITY YOU, SIR BRETT. What you have been given, you do not completely... if at all, understand. Yet, there will come a day when you do understand the life God has entrusted with you. Remember, to be true to yourself, Good Knight. Beckon not to the call "of pale kings and princes," who cry out, "La Belle Dame sans Merci hath thee in thrall!" Sir BRETT.

Audrey Hepburn: You will look that poem up for yourself. In your books! "La Belle Dame sans Merci" is [French](#) for "The Beautiful Lady without Pity." It is a [ballad](#) written by the [English](#) poet [John Keats](#), Anna's favorite poet. You will memorize it for the Queen, but remember me. She may, but I will never pity you!

Brett Weber: But, you are the same person... sort of ???

Audrey Hepburn: Then, neither of us will pity you. The poem begins...

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

A ballad

I.

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VI.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

VII.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
“I love thee true.”

VIII.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd fill sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

IX.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

X.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—“La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!”

XI.

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

XII.

And this is why I sojourn here,

Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.



LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Belle_Dame_sans_Merci