

Reflection and Prayertime – July 12, 2021

The 7th Wave

From an article by Eli MacKinnon: Surf's up, bro but why? Maybe you heard it from a beach bum with a physics hobby, maybe you heard it from an ancient mariner having a moment of clarity on shore leave, or maybe you heard it from your dad on vacation. In all cases, the claim usually goes something like this: Ocean waves travel in groups of seven, and the seventh wave is the biggest of the bunch.

As would be expected with such a motley group of purveyors, this sea yarn turns out to be well-meaning but basically false. The short answer for why it's false is that you just can't predict the motion of the great wide ocean that easily. The short answer for why it's sort of true is that, well, sometimes you almost can.

To understand why waves don't neatly adhere to received wisdom, you have to follow them to their source. Contrary to another widespread fallacy, the formation of waves has nothing to do with the moon (unlike the rise and fall of the tide). The ocean surface waves that we see rolling onto the beach are caused by one thing: wind.

As wind drags over a stretch of ocean, it pulls up ripples and slants on the sea surface. These irregularities become exaggerated as they get steeper and even more receptive to wind drag, rising like sails that magically grow new fabric as they collect more wind. And because waves come from such a capricious progenitor as wind, their subsequent motions, interactions and properties are similarly hard to predict. Robert Guza, a professor at University of San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography who thinks deeply about waves, puts it this way: You wouldn't expect waves to have regular properties, given that they're generated by sort of turning on a wind eggbeater.

I've heard from a song by Sting that the 7th wave is love, so we'll just go with that!

Gordon Gosby asks "What is the Dream of God... of God's vision for creation/humanity? What is the "Good News," the message, God's intention? It is that all of Earth's people will live in harmony, being at home with one another, enjoying the diversity of gifts that each group and individual bring—all pulsing with God's energy of love flowing through each person, each group, each nation, all characterized by oneness, unity. All being in and for each other. Despite the awfulness of the opposite, everything is moving toward that completion. The dream can be deterred, it can be delayed, but the tidal wave of love cannot be stopped." I had a waking dream as I looked up from the stony field I was tilling, my nose so close to the grindstone, my focus on the seeds that I was turning loose. Squinting in the sunlight, I wondered aloud, "What exactly is it that I'm *doing*?" In the hustle and rush of this unpredictable rhythm and wild flow of time, I stopped, for just a heartbeat, to see the holiness and reverence in this *now*. What have I been growing, and why? I often feel overwhelmed by it all. And then came another question and a choice: What table am I setting?

Jim Marsh Jr says that in its' most distilled form, the gospel is a tale of two tables. King Herod imprisoned John the baptizer for telling the truth, which happened to include a painful truth about Herod. John had the king's ear, and a little bit of his heart, but it didn't knit. Herod set a table full of things that could not satisfy, with place settings only for those who help maintain the charade of his significance. Pride swells up in his small self, the place where isolation and war are born. Saving face, protecting his eggshell feelings, a grotesque wish is granted by the anxious king: John is murdered as a party favor. Killed for setting the table for a Light Bringer, Jesus, who had come to host the heart of God... to swing wide the door... to flutter invitations to every corner, welcoming all who hunger for belonging.

Shortly after my waking dream, I had the privilege of helping to set a new table. Two powerful young men of color, like younger brothers to me, met for the first time. It had long been my dream to introduce these kingly mentors... to see what magic they would create... what gold would be spun from the alchemy of their kinship... *our* kinship. Both men bear the inner scars of cycles of poverty and addiction, of systemic racism, of being pushed to the margins where so many lose their way, and their lives. I listened to them like I would the prophets. These brave chosen ones have not only survived, they sing now a new song with resonant voices, deep and rich, full of hope that can change the world... a burning desire that a firehose can't put out.

In the breaking of bread, we were made known to each other around this table, and then broke ourselves open. With our small selves laid low, divinity rises. We are the light bringers now. We are the hosts. We are the beloved of God, sharing tears, and all else that we have, dreaming waking dreams of new tables. Join us.

Join us in the 7th wave of love.