

A DEVILISH CONCESSION:

Some thoughts about human nature



Do you still dub us fallen saints,
bright angels bairn of feathered wings,
whose virtue wells up from our hearts,
from whence bright light springs?

Look closer, friend—beneath our polished skins,
we easily slip and sink in slimy, petty sins.

Notice how malice, lethargy, and reckless crimes
poison our hearts and grow like wild, wet weeds.

Observe how our fragile bonds and social ties
are fraught with mistrust, deceit, and adept lies.

Seeing this, ask yourself:

Is sanctity native to any human heart,
or are duplicity and cunning our innate art?

Aren't our daily dances—practiced, cold, precise—
built on half-truths dressed as professed vice?

Is sanctity a birthright buried in our breast,
or are we wofes rehearsing gentleness,
masking well-bidden wile and bile?

Let's drop the veils. The truth is stark:
We've fallen from the light by a long arc;
we've built our own damnation, slowly in the dark.

So raise glasses to the infernal flames,
renew Mephisto's age-old lease with glee:
laugh, chant "Hallelujah," while pretending
to be saved by God's great grace.

The neighborhood bookstore-bar was drowning in low light and hushed murmurs, with vintage lamps bleeding long, hungry shadows across the maze of wooden shelves. A bartender-clerk polished some plates and glasses while four customers read poetry in a corner of the establishment, which at this hour was more bar than bookstore.

Nadia leaned in, swirling her Irish coffee, a wry smile tugging at her lips. "Face it," she whispered, the edge in her voice slicing through the room's low hum. "We aren't misguided angels. We're devils in disguise—and we love every second of it."

Will didn't even flinch. He laced his fingers with deliberate, languid precision, resting his elbows on the scuffed table. He leaned back, tilting his head with the calm look of a prosecutor dismantling weak defenses. "Your angel-versus-devil binary is a kindergarten fairy tale," he said in a smooth, calculated, and level voice. "The idea is overly simplistic and not particularly helpful. The world doesn't split that cleanly, and you know that."

"...and it is also bloody depressing," Wan-Sze cut in. He threw his hands up in mock surrender before crashing back into his chair with a heavy, theatrical groan. Wan-Sze stared hollowly at the stack of empty glasses littering the table between his friends. "Talk like this makes me want to jump off a bridge—or order another round."

"Definitely another round," Kasim muttered.

Before the tension could loosen its grip, Kasim snapped his fingers, his voice cutting through the room's quiet hum. He caught the server's eye with an unyielding glare and raised two fingers. "Bartender," Kasim commanded, his voice deadpan and absolute. "Two heavy, pitch-black stouts. And make them fast—we're negotiating with the dark side over here."

The barkeep hesitated, glass in hand, caught for half a second in the lamplight between the four of them — and in that pause, something in the air shifted. Nobody laughed. Outside, the rain kept falling, patient and unbothered, exactly the way the dark always has been. A quiet settled between them, not empty but exacting.

Note: This piece was partially generated with AI tools; human editing was then applied.

– T Newfields

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