

MORTUUS ANTIQUITATIS AD NEONATUM

by

Æmilius (Emile M. Hobo)

Strange it be, standing here. Distant Scots Pines, tops bent, mildly rocking with the wind. I still feel the solemn pebbles, scattered all around, many others of them taken by many a young child, few remaining, marking the pathways between the ancient headstones, some of them still glistening with this morning's rain. I felt them as I walked, searching between the stones, to find the one headstone no one would expect to encounter while still alive : the headstone of one's own grave.

I looked at the Shepherd besides me, its inquisitive eyes only looking up at me briefly, ever aware of its surroundings and possible prey or predators. It wasn't too distant in lineage from the Malinois Dog, but it carried some of all breeds of Shepherd in its genes, making it even more agile and more intelligent than any other Shepherd known to mankind. The only thing I had found to tame it, to keep it interested, was its own territory, if you will. I bought the largest estate I could find anywhere in all of Britain, surpassing even the largest the Queen herself privately owned.

But few seconds did I stand there, before I realized that for the first time in my life, I by my human self felt comfortable in a graveyard. Normally, not even the accompaniment of my dog could put me at ease. The reason was as plain and simple as ever it will be : I, Victor Wallis, wasn't dead. I had no place in a graveyard, quite frankly because I wasn't dead. I was and am as alive as can be. I can smell the saps of the broken leaves of the Crack Willow, crushed by a Golden Eagle that I only barely

saw fly away as I stepped over the few remaining stones of the graveyard wall.

Here I stand, alive and well, and here I lie, dead for many centuries. I be not a clone. I have not traveled through time. I only have come to realize, with as many options as there may be, that in the here and the now there probably is only one of me, but through the centuries, through cross breeding and chance, every number of centuries or so, I reappear. My body rebuilt from my parents and forefathers and foremothers loins, in exactly the same way as the one bestowed upon the Earth to be reclaimed. A new body, a new mind, yet in every way the same.

Here I lie, as I died of old age, fighting the Romans, building the Hadrian wall. Useless battles, even then, with the land supplying us with plenty to eat and the Earth thus big that we couldn't even think of suffering from a lack of room to live. Even today, the Earth has room for so many people, yet we feel that we are packed close together, because we pack close together. We choose to live in our cities, housing built as dense as it can be, and we complain, even though we ourselves are the ones that chose to live there and build the way we built. We need no Hadrian wall, but the fight for dominance has now turned to a fight for dominant thought.

Strange it may be, but I've taken quite the liking to our ancient oppressors' language, though I fathom they themselves didn't speak it very well. The oppressed typically reveled in speaking the language of the oppressors better than they themselves. Though they may have stolen the Sabine virgins, luring their entire families to Rome to feast, they'll nought steal their tongue. Those that seek to oppress favor saturation over refinement and fleshliness over self-control. In the end they always fall prey to their own neglect, their own whims and follies, much like the Romans did poison themselves with their heavy metal pots and pans while enjoying their bacchanals. Development of language skills by the Romans themselves was largely a downtrodden virtue.

As such it surprises no one that the Roman empire for sixty or seventy percent of its functioning, essentially all of its actual governance, relied on the fortitudes of those that were considered merely slaves. Treat your servvs well : a Roman custom rarely adhered to with many of them thrown for the lions and crocodiles. We weren't slaves, all but to our freedom. The Romans forged a common enemy greater than we would ever encounter in the French or any other people of this world for centuries. We stood together and our oppressors were left no room to oppress, because we would all die the sooner than that they would live fighting and us and the Romans. They needed us and I'll be the first to admit, we needed them.

The headstone, broken, I look at it and in Anglo-Saxon I can barely make out it reads : "Virtue, right, law. I'm ... ow- --ian." I know what it says, "I'm my own guardian." I too was left with no one to rely on. I stood alone. The lawless ruled my life for nigh on forty-one years, until I was not just done with it, but I found myself ready, restored to my old strength, eyes not only open, but alight. For years I had felt every muscle cramp and ache the morning I got out of bed. For years I had rather covered myself in my covers, the warmth offering me solace and what felt like safety, but wasn't more than a measly remembering of the comfort of the wench's womb. Spawn of her loins, heir to a father without a soul's legacy, I stood alone.

As I run my fingers over it, Mooi sniffs it with his damp nose. The Gold Eagle returns and Mooi spots it with mild excitement. Predator or prey? Mooi was well fed, I had brought plenty of food for him. He assumed a position of caution, readiness, and rest, slightly closer to my side. He had been trained not to provoke conflict, but to first and foremost watch. There was no need to meet those capable of fighting with aggression. We were never and will never be mortal enemies, most of us. If you want peace, you may have to prepare for war, but that's not the same as going to war. Aggression isn't a virtue, it's a vice, and Mooi felt it in every living cell of his being.

I feel the cracks in the stone with my fingers. The rain has worn them down, leaving no granule of sand nor stone in the opening they now provide. I lay down the white rose I brought for myself and as Mooi spots the Gold Eagle spot a rabbit moving further away in the tall grass, I drop to my knees and rest my head on my headstone, gently holding onto it with my fingers, praying to my former self. Many centuries had passed and ancestors had left each other behind, gone astray, and found each other again.

I had always been told I was different, which led me on my search. I searched for my ancestry first by tracing our family tree, but it only led to an ancestor born out of nothing, out of wedlock, after his mother's Noble husband had died. I had nothing to go by, with only a John Doo, not even a John Doe, registered as his witness at his baptism shortly after being born. No family named Doo or Doe was to be found in any registry of pedigree. Imagine the surprise when I had my genomes tested and I was told that here I lay, 93.8 percent of my genomes matched with those found in the bones in this grave, its headstone placed centuries after my death, the other 6.2 percent not accounted for due to absence and decay in general, but all accounted for for at least 90.5 percent of their constituents. According to the genealogist I was essentially an exact copy of the unknown King that here lay.

Wasn't it interesting, that here lay a man in a largely unmarked grave, only known for how he lived and how he thought, his personal motto marking his headstone, passed down from generation to generation, and nothing else? Many a man and many a woman contribute but their names, yet strive to be remembered for eternity. Here I lie and all I strive for is to be heard and better still to be felt. Every day I get up and I ask myself, "What change can I bring for the better? What does this life cycle improve, making life better than those that were before, other than the technology we encounter in our daily lives? And how do I improve it, making use of the observations of others and contributing my own?"

Every age is the dawn of a new age, but what do we make of it? I feel Mooi lick my neck and behind my ear and I look up at him. He's growing restless. I rest my hand briefly on my grave and pray once more, briefly closing my eyes, "As Mooi expects me to exercise him, the people expected you to exercise yourself and offer them a voice that you always looked for, only to find it in yourself. It was you that stood up and as will I. We strive to live and love and work. We accept the abundance of the land, the animals, and the people. What cause people may have yearned for we have found. What game people may have played, we have won. There is no cause. There is no game. There is just being and as you were, I am. As I were, you are."

I get up, moving my attention to Mooi, scratching him behind his ear for a second. "What say you, Mooi? Do we run or do we jump? Or both?" I look at Mooi and his eyes light up, his cheeks relax, the muscles around his nose clench ever so slightly. The shoes I wear, made for walking, running, and fighting; allow me to feel every pebble left on the paths of this graveyard, every rock not removed from the Earth. It cushions my heel, but gives me proper contact with the ground with my forefoot, so it's I that moves me at my will, not the Earth, not my opponent. It's my choice to move and with three quick steps I speed up to running speed and Mooi runs with me to town, three miles up ahead. There we will eat and drink and rest only momentarily. After that we will continue on to the Capital and the Queen. As always, to support and sacrifice, we will make our presence known, our being already recognized, and as expected, we will serve the throne.

The End