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Open letter to Fred Lehmborg... An Ode To An Ode

From: **Jim Mortellaro** <Jsmortell@aol.com>
Date: Tue, 13 Jul 1999 14:35:39 EDT
Fwd Date: Wed, 14 Jul 1999 09:10:33 -0400
Subject: Open letter to Fred Lehmborg... An Ode To An Ode

Hey Fred...

I see him in me, my dad, I mean. The way he writes with passion. The way he looks and acts, the way he just can't be mean. The way he has of saying so much with not a word, just a look. And that look. I do that too. I share his passion and I share his love. It cannot be genes alone, can it?

Nah. Maybe there's a thing with life, where the spirit bears close resemblance to from whence it came. Maybe we're a little like the Big Guy? Maybe a little like the old guy? Maybe the spirit has it's own genes, too. Maybe.

Whatever the answer, it does not belong to me. And so I can, with impunity, say anything I wish. Because aint nobody else got a clue to spew. Who can nay say me? My theories are just as good as anyone else's theories. Let them rank and rant. Let them decant. Let them spite and fight and yell and scream. Let them dream. I don't much care.

I know better. I know they know nothing. But neither do I. Sue me.

Fred, I know you are somewhere else. And I also know my dad will be joining you soon. He's got that look. And he's pretty old now. I saw him just the other day. He had a spark in his eye that I haven't seen in a long time. He took out one of his old pipes and some of that 40 year old tobacco he's kept since he quit smoking that long ago, and sat outside in the shade and had a pipe full. It was almost like having dad back again, the young one I miss. The one with the sharp look in his eyes, the piercing stare which bored though my heart. A short smile on his face. A lost reverie found. The old man was my dad again. But how can that be? Nothing changed. Musta been me.

On thinking about it, it was me. And it was him. His spirit, his soul, his life force, call it what you will, burst upon the scene like an unexpected clap of thunder from a flash seen almost at the same time. It shocked me. But then I thought long and hard and realized that we are not the lump of meat which begins to die after only a few years on this planet. It's the thing within which gives the thing without the means to be. And that thing, whatever it is, revealed itself once more. Maybe for the last time.

So I wept a little as I drove off. But the feeling went away. After I read Al's 307, when he said he was no one special

because your spirit left this mortal plane. Everyone loses his dad. I had to laugh at that I did. See, Fred ... you are special. Which makes him so. I know and so does he that you just had to go. The ol' bod' couldn't work no more. But just you wait, Fred. He'll be along any time soon. Just like the rest of us maroons. To take the place we all deserve, along side our dads drinking Grand Reserve. Reminiscing about all those times you gave to me and I accepted. I just hope I can say that I did the same for someone(s) else. Shit, Fred, you just can't take without giving. It's not expected. We don't lose our dads. We merely see the thing to which his spirit gave life, wither and pass. Wasn't you, wasn't me. It was a gas, when he said that. But then I understand, it's modesty which rears it's head.

Some son's shame precludes admitting that you are they and they are you. "In my father's house there are many mansions, and each one a' them got a fireproof floor. Got to have your own harem when you come through he door. Got to play your harp until your lips bleed." It's the law. Poor bastards they are. Ashamed of their dads. I'm glad I had mine. And I know Al's glad he had you.

Been really neat knowing you Fred. I'll pass along my best and, if you don't mind, do me a favor please. Tell my granddad, the one I barely remember, that while mine rarely speaks of him, his love shows through the sparsity of words. With my dad it's a little different. It's not that he's ashamed, just that it's hard for him to talk about him. But shoot, he already knows that.

Never mind. Glad we had this talk.

Al? He's gonna be fine. Just a little ruffled until he comes through that door, the one on the other side. Best be sure you meet him there when he does. Oh, and I suspect that he's like my own dad. Aint gonna talk much about his old man. Not that he is ashamed or anything. It's just that he can't. It's a thing with some guys...

I'll send along a mass card. It's more for him than you, you know. It's for both your spirits. One needs the other. Always will. It's a little tough down here alone. But you know that too. You lost yours one day long past. Didn't you? Al lost his. I will lose mine too. Shame. Somehow, I think we brought all this on ourselves. Just a feeling. Just my own opine.

Pray for us, Fred. It's lonely down here. Must be one of the tests they give to us. If you pass and weep, then you lose what you keep. Funny, it aint got nuttin to do with IQ. Now there's one for the books. Something new. Be seein' ya'.

Love,
Jim

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