

Nothing

By **Robert Francis Basilico**

“When the clouds go by. When the trees say nothing.”

– Thomas Merton

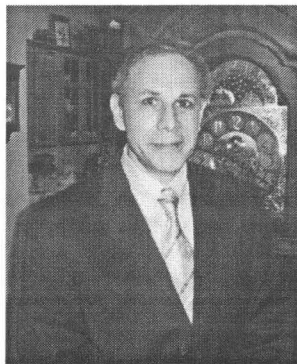
I have a bottle full of nothing,
it sits upon my desk, amid the clutter
of papers and books full of other people’s words.
An ordinary bottle, made of customary glass,
the metal top twisted tight, by my own hands.
To keep safe the nothing that is within.

Separate from the headlines of today’s newspapers,
that speak of the evils perpetrated by men.
Kept free of the politically correct editorials.
The sophomoric rantings of the columnists.
All the news that is fit to print,
it is merely filler, for the advertisements.

To keep it clean from the ideas of men
who were instructed how to teach,
the requisite meter of poetry preached,
by those who understand it least.
The literary styles of the day, the novels sold
in sets of three, the e-mails and the blogs.

Free of sermons and homilies.
To keep it free from those who impose
as doctrine, the precepts of men.
Those who worship Him with their lips.
Their hearts are far from Him.
Safe from the evangelicals on TV.

Robert F. Basilico, MD, a retired diagnostic and interventional radiologist from Port Saint Lucie, Florida, is past Chairman of Radiology, and member of the Medical Executive Committees of Lawnwood Regional Medical Center, and Port Saint Lucie Medical Center. A native of New York City, he graduated from Fordham University and New York Medical College, and served as Chief Radiology Resident at Westchester Medical Center. This poem was inspired by Sr. Kathleen Deignan’s book *When the Trees Say Nothing*, and by the quiet wisdom of Fr. Marty Devereaux, coordinator of the Boca Raton ITMS Chapter.



Robert F. Basilico, MD

Separate from the laws of men,
who champion freedom, imposed by them.
Bearing the white man's burden, solemn-faced.
Tell a lie three times, it becomes true.
And so we know, of the right to bear arms.
And the separation of church and state.

I have a bottle full of nothing.
An ordinary bottle, for an ordinary man.
Sitting amid the clutter that is my life.
All that I know and all that I am,
is contained within its customary glass.
It is what was, and what is to be.