FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Circus Days & Nights
Robert Lax
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Throughout literary history some authors write a single book, and they write that book over and over for the remainder of their lives. Walt Whitman, for example, wrote continuously upon his great book of America and democracy, Leaves of Grass, until the day he died. Dante, likewise, wrote such a book when he journeyed from damnation to salvation. The same might be said about Lax's Circus Days & Nights.

Lax is eighty-five years old and lives the life of a hermit on the Greek island of Patmos. He, apparently, began this book in 1943 after traveling with a family of circus performers throughout North America. After fifty-seven years, he is still writing his epic and most assuredly will continue to do so should fate provide him the time. His book possesses all the same cosmic perspective that readers have come to love in Whitman and Dante.

In Lax's poetic scheme of things, the microcosm reflects the macrocosm. He asks the reader in his poem, "The Morning Stars," "Have you watched the light of a star through a world of dew?" Indeed, is this not precisely what Whitman does with the grass, and what Dante sees in God's face what was written on every leaf in the universe? Lax might just as well title his great epic the Book of Creation or the Book of Redemption.

Lax begins his epic of the soul: "Sometimes we go on a search / and do not know what we are looking for, / until we come again to our beginning." Later, he explains to the readers: "in telling the story of the Christians / we tell of creation and glory / of rising, / and fall: / and again of the rising / where we are all risen / for each man redeemed / is risen again." The voice that asks the questions in "The Morning Stars" could very well be that same voice that speaks from the whirlwind in the Book of Job.

Finally, Lax is able to create a special magic with words and the spaces between them. He is able to conjure the silences between he and his companions in the circus caravans, of those times when words will not convey the moment and the listeners sip quietly their coffees and do not have to speak. Lax shows his love for the circus and its subjects.

Maurice Ferguson