

“Catch a Falling Star”

This morning from one to three I lay in bed looking at the stars and thinking about Perry Como singing the song in 1957, “Catch a Falling Star.” It was a catchy little nursery rhyme, a poem about doing something that is impossible to do.

“Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket

Never let it fade away

Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket

Save it for a rainy day.”

The original words for this song were written by John Donne (1572-1931) an English poet, scholar, and religious verse. He was noted for the saying, “no man is an island” and “we are all a piece of the continent.” Donne was raised Roman Catholic and attended, but never graduated from the University of Oxford and Cambridge. It seems graduation was not extended to him because he refused to swear an oath to the Protestant Queen.

Donne’s original writing of “Catch a falling star” was filled with a series of impossible teaching from catching a falling star, to placing it in your pocket, and it was all a fool’s errand. Donne’s poem was in part about a tongue in cheek pitfall in chasing fame.

There is an old superstition about “wishing upon a falling star.” The trouble I see with following a falling star is that they meander around in all directions, being made of dust and rocks, are short lived and eventually burn up in the earth’s atmosphere.

It appears to me that we are no longer following the North Star, the Big Dipper rather we are scurrying after meteor showers, and we are scrambling for the meaning of life in some pretty empty

places. These meteor showers occur daily and we Americans, Democrats and Republicans, Black and White are scrambling about like “cats on a hot tin roof.”

There are many falling stars that tell us of our plight, consumerism, militarism build up, materialism, racism, sexism, hatred. NRA, worship of sporting events, and our rise in Nazi groups.

Instead of chasing after “fallen stars,” we need to get back to the basics of why we were placed here in the first place; caring for the land, being a good neighbor to all and obeying the natural laws of life.

We each need to discover our own North star, something that is reliable, true, constant and life giving. When we discover this source of hope we will all be better off.

Dennis Siebert