

310 words, column #40
Java Talk
(for January 31 to February 6, 2008)

Every Age Is The Best Age

Seize the Day!

Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero, comes from Horace, Odes I.xi.8. In other words, “Seize the day while trusting little on what tomorrow might bring.”

During this past week, it has been everywhere! Just the suggestion of writer’s block can do me in. First, there was a cartoon making fun of a group attending a Perfectionists Anonymous meeting, probably an idea construed by the cartoonist’s own struggle and need to meet that day’s deadline. Then, a humour columnist wrote about how he had demonstrated the “excruciatingly tedious exercise” of writing in front of an audience of university students who watched and waited.

Sometimes the task at hand, whatever it is, needs to not matter so much, if it is to get done at all. I can imagine someone in that supposed group of perfectionists bravely standing up to remind and reassure the others to take it one day at a time, and stop worrying about their words not being good enough and lasting eons. In my mind, I can see the meeting progress as the rest of the anonymous members take turns sharing their strength and hope. “He who has begun is half done,” one might offer, not realizing that these long-tested words came from Horace, a poet born in 65 BC. “Yes, but,” says some fearful writer from the group, “the problem is that getting that last half done still feels like it is taking forever!”

Indeed, writers need to persevere and have the patience of Job. “Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!” he said, circa 350 BC.

Whatever helps, helps. The past week is now history. My mentor told me she never gets writer’s block. If she doesn’t, then my position is that I don’t need to either.

And at long last, I am finally done. Seize the day!

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