

DREAM...PEACE ELEPHANT April 1985

An arts fair in the Bay Area. By the time I come there, many events have already taken place. Performances etc. To finish the day there is an omelet contest. A long table is set out with about 30 contestants displaying their pet omelets. Samples are free. For a succession of reasons, I keep my seat and defer to others who are lining up all around the table. I seem to be acting true to form because some poet friends are coming by to bug me about it. Saying..”you know there won’t be any left by the time you go up there.” “You won’t believe how good the dark-haired woman’s omelet is, man, there’s only a few pieces left, get up there”

So finally I go up to the table and it’s true that many of the omelets are finished. But on the other hand, how many big wedges of omelet can a person eat? I’m mulling this over as I eat and reflecting on the deliciousness of the ones that are left. How much better could the others have been..? and what does that matter anyhow.? I’m experiencing great pleasure as it is...

I come back to sit down with my last slice, and a Rexroth-type of guy lets me have it:

“You damned fool, see what happened?”

I say: “So what, I had eight pieces of omelet and even some bacon”

He says: “Well it’s just true about you, you’re a Peace Elephant.”
I know what he means and am secretly honored.

After a while I get up to look at the exhibits. There is a whole area dedicated to illuminated works. I’d heard that they had some pieces made by none other than Andrew Marvell. He apparently had made a kind of frieze or bas-relief with poems worked in to the design and they had just been rediscovered. There it is, no doubt about it. A fascinating frieze about a foot square. It meant a great deal to me to see it... to know that he too was drawn to the attempt to fuse words and images.

The design is that the words go around the outer edge of a bas-relief Tudor building. The outer words are, “SINCE THE HARVESTS OF ART ARE DRY BY NATURE”

Next there is an inner circle of words that spiral inward and surround a portrait of an elephant’s head full on. They are:

“WE MUST TO THE WORTHY CAUSES ENLIST”

Then inside the portrait accompanying the elephant:

“BE A PEACE ELEPHANT”

Amazement that it seems aimed right at me.