



The Sun is in the West



a play
by

Damon Falke

The Sun is in the West

Damon Falke

Copyright © 2010 by Damon Falke

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that 'The Sun is in the West' is subject to a royalty. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound taping, and the right of translation into foreign languages, are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is laid upon the question of partial or complete public readings and performances, permission for which must be secured in writing from the author or author's agent. For more information, please contact Square Top Repertory Theatre.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010930722

ISBN (10) 0-9800841-2-1

ISBN (13) 978-0-9800841-2-2

First Edition – June 2010

Shechem Press PO Box 131694 Tyler, TX 75713



Cover design by Rebekah Wilkins-Pepiton

<http://www.bekawp.com>

Foreword

By Charles M Pepiton

I'm not sure why, but lately, it seems like everywhere I turn I'm confronted with questions of memory. Maybe, I'm feeling time move a bit more quickly. I'm constantly mindful of the need to save those things that are important. I want to save the sound of my grandmother's voice and the way Macon, Georgia, finds its way into every syllable; the crisp smell of May in Southwest Colorado; and all the stories—whether actual or contrived—that surround me.

Call it research or character study, but I eavesdrop relentlessly. This is the stuff that we are made of, and significantly, this is also the stuff that great theatre causes us to reconsider. A good play poses a question and we, the audience, struggle to reconcile that question with what we have constructed, with those things that we choose to keep.

However, I'm struck by how irony and sarcasm pervade our world—and as such, much of the contemporary theatre. Even as I consider this foreword, I fight the learned tendency to undermine my own comments and thoughts regarding myth,

ritual, and memory—those things that make us definitively human. “Stop! You’re taking it all too seriously. Time to throw in a joke,” the voice whispers. It’s a defense mechanism. Perhaps, it’s just a stalling tactic. If one waits long enough, questions of memory cease to matter. Yet if not these things, just what *are* we supposed to take seriously?

The Sun is in the West sidesteps the whole pattern. This is a play that explores vital questions of memory, particularity, and heritage, and it does so without self-indulgence. Damon’s characters lean into language. Their stories are lush with poetry, yet they remain recognizable as people we may know, struggling to reclaim the sacredness of what’s around them. We would do well to listen to them.

The Sun is in the West was first produced in 2010 by Square Top Repertory Theatre under the direction of Charles M Pepiton with the following cast:

The Groundskeeper: Sean Downing

The Photographer: Felicia Meyer

The Historian: Geoff Johnson

The Musician: Dave Seaton

The production was designed by Rebekah Wilkins-Pepiton.

All music ©2010 Dave Seaton

For more information and to hear music samples from the production, visit <http://www.squaretoptheatre.com>.



The Sun is in the West

Music – “Dust”

Groundskeeper

All my life, I think. All my life. Over the grounds here whole worlds are buried. Gone like they are. Coming down from the country, towards the coast, you can see the grounds and the sky feeding into it the way it does. Then the grounds sometimes take on flood and then these steps of mine, right here through the dead. All these years.

Photographer

I remember it was the year after our parents had died that my brother asked me how often I visited their graves. At first I said I didn't know. But then I told him I thought I went too often. He asked if I ever looked at any of the other gravesites. I told him that I did. He then asked if I ever found anything interesting. I started to say like what, but I didn't. Instead I told him sometimes. Sometimes, I said. He looked at me a minute but then just nodded.

Historian

Somos un instante

Y el instante ceniza, no diamante,

Y solo lo pasado es verdadero.

Borges. From a poem called ‘A una Espada en York Minster’ or ‘To a Sword at York Minster.’ It is a piece I have tried to learn by heart.

*We are a single instant—the poet says,
And the instant ashes, not diamond,
And only what is past is what is real.*

I thought of this a long time ago, and I am confident that it is nothing original, but almost no matter where we are, we are standing at an intersection of something historical. I suppose this calls for a broad understanding of what historical is, and this is something I try to explain to students. Think of history as something large, and then recall the historian who claimed that all of us are historical figures. That is, we all exist in history, and our existence, plain though it may be, counts for something more than our short lives.

Music – “Carnival Blues”

Photographer

There’s a fair going on up the road. A festival. I took a few pictures there and then came here. The way I usually do. I think it’s becoming part of my habits that I should go to cemeteries after I’ve taken pictures some place. When I was little Papa always wanted to go to fairs. I don’t know why. It wasn’t clear to me that he actually liked fairs. He tried to like them. Mother I