

**Nothing New
Under the Sun**

or

**Ye Winds of Change
Doth Blow in Circles**

by John Marzetti, QED

INT COLONIAL LIVING ROOM- APRIL 1774

2 chairs, a table, a kettle hangs above an open oven
upstage, with a stool, a British Flag hangs in a corner

HENRY MEREDETH, middle-aged sits at the table,
reading a Bible,

AMY MEREDITH, his wife, tends to the stove and sits
by the fire, sewing.

ENTER BEN MEREDITH

Early 20's carrying a bundle of papers, excited.

HENRY

Well, look was that cat has dragged in...

(Amy stands to meet her son, Henry is unmoved.)

AMY

Is that anyway to greet your son, who has traveled a
day and a night to see us?

HENRY

If I believed, it was for us he has made the journey, I
might, But I know well he has come not for family, but
to continue to cause unrest, As if the rumblings of the
city aren't loud enough, he brings them to our quiet
corner of the Lord's goodly Earth.

BEN

But Father, the world is turning upside down even just
across the Bay in Annapolis they burned the a ship in
the harbor, and in Baltimore more unrest, the whole
of the nation is stirring, surely even here.....

HENRY

I don't give a damn about the whole colony of
Maryland, I am from the Eastern Shore.

BEN

Father, you do me disservice, I come to you and Mother before all else but to bring you the news. I am here on official business as a reporter for the press, there is talk of Chestertown setting Resolves to the Tea Act and anyone caught with Tea will be severely dealt with, I hope to be the first to report this news to the Maryland Gazette.

HENRY

News of treason and treachery is no more welcome in this home than the works of Satan that spawn them.

BEN

Freedom and Civil Rights are not treacherous, and it is no treason to stand with one's brothers and neighbors to defend those Rights, Father.

AMY

Here we go...
Benjamin, tell us about the young lady you wrote about last month.

BEN

She is well and well met, Mother. She has the craziest notions tho, she believes that a women should be able to vote on public policy and even be a judge or governor. She is very headstrong and sometimes goes out in public without a corset and bare armed.

AMY

Goodness.

HENRY

City girls.

BEN

Father, why do you deny that the winds of change are blowing?

HENRY

Blow how they may, they'll not assuage me, I am a rock.... it's the youth of this country that are all a Twitter. I saw a note nailed up to a post just yesterday announcing that some Robert W was 'going to see a man about a horse', and I said well that's an odd thing to write, but under it there were even more notes. who cares about Robert W & his horse I thought, well apparently 43 people liked it and 15 more had to comment on it. I have no idea where you young people's minds are. The whole fence post was covered with the stupidest minutiae and not a word of it on whether the horse was any good or not.

BEN

Father, don't you see, when in the course of human events, it becomes necessary...

HENRY

That's quite enough of that kind of speech, young man, you're getting a little ahead of yourself, I think, they won't have thought that one up for at least another year, maybe two.

BEN

Father, it was you that sent me to Philadelphia to learn a trade, Being in the City, there are so many different kinds of people, you cant help but learn to learn to be more patient with other points of view and walks of life. The ebb and flow of people makes...

HENRY

It makes for a lot of traffic, The last time I went to that City, there was an carriage that collided with an ox-cart and we were stuck on the thruway for two hours. I will keep to small roads and small people, thank you.

AMY

Of I remember that trip, you came back in a fitful mood, They had issued you a fine for parking your carriage in a, what was it, a handicapped area, and you told them that a body could hold their cap in their hand or on their head it made no difference to you and then they fined you three shilling.

HENRY

And I haven't paid it yet. They said, if I came back to the city, they'd give me the boot, and I said I would give it right back

BEN

Surely, Father, you must realize that being around so many new people would change how I see the world.

HENRY

Enhance yes, I expected you to learn Latin & Greek and be able to stand of the Bar or follow in the footsteps of your great uncle and find your way to the pulpit. Instead you have squandered your education and have become a delinquent, hanging out on the streets, with the rabble. Covered in ink and smelling of musty paper, working as a lowly printer for that man, Franklin.

BEN

I was never called to the ministry, but if I must call by example, Martin Luther himself, when confronted with such corruption and despite risk of personal strife, stood up to the old church.
How is our cause any different?

HENRY

In the first, you are not Martin Luther, in the second, your so called civil rights are not a question of your immortal soul, Luther spoke of finding solutions in a world of corruption, and greed, Our King does what he must to pay for a war that has extended the lands of His realm and by virtue made us a stronger presence in this world. Its not his fault that during the entire Seven Years War they never found the Weapons of Mass Destruction that the French were hiding in Quebec.

I for one have no qualms in tightening my own belt if it means helping the greater good of the Crown. I was not fortunate to be born on that splendid isle, but I am an Englishman, and have the good privilege to live I and will die loyal to my King and Country.

(stands and salutes, hums My Country tis of Thee)

AMY

Now, Ben, look what you've done, you've got him all up in his airs again. He'll not let me serve anything but fish & chips for a week now.

(she goes to him and tries to get him to sit back down, but he is roused)

HENRY

Moreover, I have heard of these 'men' you hold in such high regard, this Sam Adams is nothing but a blow hard and a drunkard. Is he not a brewer of ales?

BEN

Tis' true, Sam often brings a Keg to meeting, but is it not good for the men to carouse their spirits when times are so dark.

HENRY

If they wish to rouse their spirits, they might find the way to the church.

BEN

Surely, Father, even you have had a yard of beer on occasion, And as such, I have been told that you are by that measure, occasionally more the genial for it.

AMY

I don't know where you would have heard such a thing! Ben, please tell us, what of your job at the print works? Surely that cannot bring any controversy.

HENRY

That is probably where he is getting all these ideas, That man, that bears your name, is a braggart and scoundrel.....invented electricity, ha! the Good Lord invented it. Franklin, just nearly killed his own son by playing outside in a storm. I for one, cant see any use whatsoever for his novelty tricks.

BEN

Work at the press is remarkable Mother. I learn new things daily. We hear stories from all over the colonies and abroad. Men gather outside the window to hear our stories read to them and thenfor instance, did you know that Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, not only is a great writer, but that he designed his magnificent home himself. I have met him once, just briefly, as he came to drop a message to Mr. Franklin.

HENRY

Jefferson, Jefferson is a deist, doesn't believe in the Holy Trinity, and shouldn't even call himself a Christian. From what I hear of his relations with his slaves, he will end up trying to integrate the whole nation all by himself.

BEN

Father, where do you get these stories?

AMY

He has been subscribing to the Ole Sly Fox Almanac ever since his favorite writer, Glendenning Beckworth started to send in guest commentaries.

(She goes over and removes a copy of the Almanac, that Henry has been hiding between the pages of the Bible.)

HENRY

Did you know, for instance, that George Washington killed baby seals to get those teeth he grins at us with?

AMY

Here we go....

BEN

Mr Washington, is a great man, and one of the one of the coloniies' leading men. Dare I say a founder.

HENRY

I don't think he was even born in the Colonies, the almanac says he was born Egypt, might be part Arab.

BEN

He was born south of Alexandria, Virginia, not Alexandria Egypt and he is American as you or I am, they have the documents to prove it.

HENRY

Documents, smockuments, if I wasn't there, you cant prove it happened.

BEN

Then next I suppose you deny the events of last December in Boston Harbor ever happened, as you were not on the deck at the time?

HENRY

Now you'll start defending what they did up in up in New England, I suppose? It says here that a bunch of your "sons of liberty" got drunk, dressed up like Mohawks and willfully destroyed another man's property. When I was a boy, if you dressed up like a native, you were either shot on site, because we hated them natives, or better yet, we gave you to them, so they could roast you on a spit and eat you.

BEN

Father, the Natives aren't cannibals, many eat less meat than we do.

AMY

Is anyone hungry? Benjamin? I have some ox-cart stew left over from supper.

HENRY

That's not what Beckworth says, he says anyone that doesn't look like us cant be trusted, they are all trying to bring about terror. It doesn't matter if it was their country first, they are suspicious, have you seen how they dress, covered in feathers and praying to some other god. It must be true if its in the almanac
Not to mention, I happen to like tea., and it is a terrible waste to throw it into a river.

BEN

I like tea as much as the next man as well, but I'll tell you one thing Father, if I had the same chance as those fellows in Boston, I would have done the same thing, I would have thrown the cargo overboard, save that I would want to do it in broad daylight and sans disguise.

HENRY

Well, that's terrific, my son the jihadist.

AMY

What's a jihadist, dear?

HENRY

The Ole Fox says its anyone who doesn't think that King George is the greatest king we ever had and tries to make him look foolish.

BEN

Reports are to us now that last month your Beloved Good King George III was seen at the palace brandishing a machete on the parapet and telling everyone he was descended from Atlas and drinking Tiger Blood, when asked about the situation in the colonies, he said that he was a warlock and we were all trolls. And finally when Pitt the Younger spoke out in Parliament asking the King hoped to accomplish from this aggression to the colonials, all he replied was ... "winning duh..."
Who in their right mind speaks in such a manner?

HENRY

It means that the King is a winner and those that hold to him are as well,

AMY

What's a 'machete'?

HENRY

It's a jihadist weapon, I think.

Listen, in a few years, this whole thing will be forgotten and blow over and the colonies will still be colonies and the Monarchy will last forever, and everything will be back to normal.

BEN

Father, Change is coming and Hope is in the air
It is a palpable thing, I have seen that men united together can make a difference in the lives of others.
We hold these truths to be self evident...something something....liberty and justice for all...

AMY

Too soon for that one too I think, son.

BEN

I know that it seems like a simple thing, but the boys and I have a new slogan, and whenever there are nay-sayers that tell us that we can't make a difference, we shout back at them "Yes we can!"

HENRY

Oh, that will never catch on.

AMY

(she picks up the Bible and thumbs to a place marked with a ribbon, reading, center stage, the men are transfixed just for a moment by a woman who is wiser than they knew)

You know, it was wise King Solomon, who once said more than two thousand years ago,

“Generations come and generations go,
but the earth remains forever.

The wind blows to the right and turns to the left;
round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.

All things are wearisome, more than one can say.

The eye never has enough of seeing,
nor the ear its fill of hearing.

What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.”

(closes the Good Book and looks behind her)

Goodness, look at that, the kettle is hot,
I know what will calm everyone down...
Henry are you ready for a cup of tea?

HENRY

Yes, hot and strong like Good King George.

AMY

Benjamin, how about you? Two sugars?

BEN

You're kidding right?

CURTAIN