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**A window is neither door nor mirror**

**By Curtis Seltzer**

**BLUE GRASS, Va.**—I've been thinking about windows, because we just junked all of our funky, old-timey, double-hung single-paners in favor of super-duper Pellas that cost more than my late college education, RIP.

No more iron sash weights dropping into the irretrievable unknown. No more frames falling on my fingers at the speed of light. No more cold air leaking in. No more wavy glass, leading to vertigo. No more metal screens that resist insertion and defeat removal. No more rattling at night like ghosts escaping a birdcage.

Gee whiz. I miss the old idiosyncrasies...a little.

A window is transparent. You're supposed to see through it, to whatever's on the other side.

Television is not a window, incidentally, though it resembles one. With television, you get to choose to see what someone else wants you to see. The Internet, especially social media, is also like this.

Windows are not doors, which you walk through...after opening them. Those of us who have a habit of walking through closed doors are not quick learners.

Windows are not mirrors, though they do offer occasional reflections—fleeting selfies in the current manner of speaking.

The history of windows is that we want more and bigger.

More and bigger is also wanted in social media where kids often fail to install either shutters or blinds on their windows.

The older we get, the more we use both shutters and blinds.

The morning deejay on our community radio station dutifully reads the official forecasts four times every hour and then says, “It’s another window-weather event.”

Which means: if you want to know what’s happening outside your house at any given moment, look out your window, fool; whatever you see is what you have.

A weather eye, she believes, should be cast in the present, not into the future.

I’m hopeful that she bags obligatory forecasts altogether, because she doesn’t believe in them.

When it comes to weather, what will be will be. And what is, is. As meteorological philosophers, she and I can’t go much deeper than this.

Eyes, many have said, are windows into the soul.

This is a bunch of hooey.

The best liars I’ve met look you right in the eye, don’t blink, don’t squirm and don’t fidget. Spend enough time buying real estate, and you’ll run into this crowd.

You get no clue about their soul from the eyes of liars, which are windows either with the blinds drawn or tricked out with decorations to look honest.

Would you buy anything from a salesman wearing sunglasses, indoors? Me neither.

The human eye is not transparent, even though it has a hole in it called the pupil.

Raise your hand if you can see through a pupil. (I should add that I’ve taught a number of opaque pupils at the college level.)

Eyes, on the other hand, may lead you into someone’s thinking. Thought is far more accessible than rummaging around in the cranial darkness for someone’s soul.

Looked at from the other side of the pupil, every human being has the ability to turn a blind eye toward some portion of what’s indefensible in the world. Otherwise, I fear, our asylums would outnumber our smart phones.

You often hear phrases like “It seems to me,” “In my view,” or “The way I see it is....” These window sills are intended to support the speaker’s effort to have you believe that you’re being given a straight line into his or her thoughts of the moment.

Maybe truth is a window-weather event—it’s whatever you experience and say it is at any moment. All of us have heard words that were true when they were spoken...and not so much later.

We often hear certain phrases that should be interpreted as blinking yellow lights. They suggest that what is about to be said may be less than true or not true at all.

When we preface a statement with “Quite honestly” or “To tell you the truth” or “I’m being straight with you, it suggests that we’re trying to bolster a wobbly opinion that can’t stand on its own two feet.

“The dog is brown,” I say. No one should have a problem with that.

Were I to say, “Frankly speaking, the dog is brown,” you would probably wonder why the poor mutt needed me to fluff up its coat.

Might the dog be more tan than brown? Might its name be...Spot?

I was friends with a lawyer many years ago who instead of saying “I’m being as honest with you as I can,” said in every conversation with me that he was “spilling his guts.”

It always created a picture in my mind where I, against my will, had been forced to form my hands into a basket as he filled them with his chitterlings. I generally discounted any statement he made by half, intestinal exchange notwithstanding.

So what’s the point?

Often, we voluntarily put things in front of or behind windows that we use.

Blinds and curtains block windows from the inside; screens and functional shutters from the outside.

With eyes, we have lids that lower, brows that raise and lashes that bat and flutter. These accessories limit what can be seen in from the outside. They can also be employed as lures and distractions.

When we block transparency, we are protecting ourselves from either an external threat or something inside ourselves that we don't want to admit. Often, it's both.

That's why politicians and governments fear transparency, despite their words praising it.

I grew up in a house whose windows were hung with drapes and Austrian shades.

I'm sure that explains a lot about something, but quite honestly and I'm telling the truth so help me, I'm not sure what.