

# STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND?

Nathalie Taylor



## STRANGER

n. person in a place or company that he/she does not belong to.

Stranger ... To be a stranger or to feel a stranger ... two different things. Anyone can feel like a stranger in his/her own country. Feeling like a stranger and feeling estranged can leave you with a queer feeling of being misplaced or a misfit ... Being a stranger or foreigner to a region or a nation can be a refreshing and positive experience for both stranger and the strange land ... for a while ...

“You are not a stranger in a strange land” God says. Sometimes the strange land can increase the feeling in the stranger of not really belonging.

## FOREIGNER

n. person born in a foreign country or speaking a foreign language; foreignship, imported animal...

Sometimes being approached as a “zoo animal” increases the foreigner’s feeling of not belonging

to this place, of obviously not belonging if his/her colour of skin or different way of speaking is made obvious by the staring or the constant reminder: “You’re not from here!?!” Then the stranger finds him/herself thrown back on an island on his/her own, and it makes it more and more difficult for him/her to regain footing. “You are not a stranger in a strange land” God says. The attitude of the God who came to earth from heaven, of the One who died on the cross because men rejected him and told him, “You don’t belong!” ...is undivided ...

His eyes want to see people free, embracing one another and not observing one another through bars of prejudice, mockery, condescension or stary eyes of fantasy. His heart is all-loving - there is no shadow of mistrust and rejection – all-accepting and does not differentiate people through race, colour of skin, ways of speaking, languages or cultures.

No.  
He came as your peer.  
An outsider looking in  
Can bring an unbiased opinion to a  
problem,  
A fresh view into a situation  
Because of his different cultural  
experience and some acquired-in-  
another-  
land knowledge.  
An outsider can speak his/her mind -  
He or she can speak of the  
“elephant in the room” ... the obvious  
that nobody dares say and  
shuns away or ignores...

He or she can reflect the distant eye  
of the one who sees without  
belonging, the horizon and distant  
shores that is not yours, the red  
kite over the ocean of fear

The albatross wounded  
Washed ashore with a story  
That is not yours.

Listen,  
As into the shell combed on the  
strand.  
Listen to the sound  
Of the seas,  
The orchards, the nectar of  
The pomegranates,  
The untold story,  
With the gritting taste of sand in the  
mouth,  
The story yet-to-be,  
Do not rush it, do not stop it, do not  
laugh at it,  
Neither judge it nor throw it on the

deserted island of common  
understanding,

But let it reach the point when the  
story unfolds,  
The truth about them,  
The truth God gave to them,  
The treasure of a different approach.

Listen...  
Forget looks and accents,  
The obvious difference,  
And see the beautiful gift of God in  
their eyes, their heart and soul,  
The murmur of the seas, faraway  
horizons, half-hidden or yet-to-be  
revealed...  
Look and see

What God has,  
In His wonderful craftsmanship,  
His mercy,  
To us from all nations and creeds,  
Us from different idioms and voices,  
Hear us O creator and saviour,  
You friend of the weak,  
You befriender of the friendless,  
The God of the universe and each  
man and woman of every shore  
and nation,  
Keep us from harm,  
and harming each other,  
Keep us in  
Peace  
understanding  
and harmony - **Amen**  
**(Inter-Cultural Insights – All-  
Irelands’ Consultative Meeting on  
Racism)**