

My Friend the Cork  
By Mañanita Ochoa

One of my best friends was never a stand out at school, at college, or in the business world, but he always faired well in life. He never worked too much and he enjoyed long lunches, supposedly work related, that ended in calm naps in hidden places with uncertain company. Always charismatic, the Cork was not bothered by waves or tides. The Cork floated comfortably. From time to time he would get stuck in the sand until a wave would come and rescue him from his abandonment and return him to sea. The Cork was not a Broken Tooth either. Broken Tooth did not speak, he would just observe while he filed his sharp and irregular tooth with his tongue. The Cork always spoke eloquently and well. He was always well informed. He could have been a successful television presenter. His great talent was to be in favor with God, the devil and the current government. The Cork floated wherever you put him, no matter how big the waves were or how powerful the undercurrent was.

He was the President of several companies, cabinet secretary, and almost a candidate to the country's presidency, but he left the campaign trail since being a presidential candidate is harder work than being a miner in South Africa. The Cork was neither bad nor good, and he was invited everywhere. Women wanted him chastely and passionately. From time to time young damsels, as well as society women, modest but adventurous, would accompany him during his naps. The Cork floated elegantly without doing anything and every now and then someone would rescue him to plug a hole. They would use him to fill in an important position where he would never cause anyone any problems.

My friend The Cork, now bald, potbellied, and in his sixties, is till floating and flirting around, and he can still pick up loose and virtuous women who are attracted by his aloofness and bon-vivant style. But he also picks up executive men and women, and even presidents of countries such as Argentina and Germany that need someone to cover institutional vacancies assuring them and all he will not make any waves but will ride them instead. Always elegant. One of these days there will be a quick political change in some anarchic country and he will end up as President in the transitional government. There, calmly, with out much of an effort, and he will then relinquish power without any trouble and will continue floating until he turns into an angel and people pray to him for heavens graces.. My friend The Cork is a man to be admired for his irrelevance and harmlessness, as well as for the fact that he is nothing like a tyrant.

Many of us would choose The Cork's career if we were reborn. To be a Cork is so admirable as it would have appeared unconceivable in each juncture of the hard-working yet hectic life we have chosen. The Cork's career would have given us plenty of satisfactions and eliminated all kind of angst. The Cork is well off and happy, despite the problems that affect those around him. I am sure that everyone that is reading these lines is a friend of The Cork and even has some love for him. Even in violent times life is compassionate with Corks, no matter if that compassion is too large for the smallness of their achievements.