



Welcom to the Year of 20/20 Vision! As has been said so Artfully by Lady Jane Howard, "Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one." Another Way of saying this is that you've got to love a humane-scale community like Helena, for which Art is Epicentral{!} A recent example from my own borderline minimalist life: Having devoted an earlier contribution to this state-of-the-Art Newsletter to Photography, I was thrilled Yesterday (01/22/20/20) to find at a local thrift store a hitherto-unsighted-by-me pristine copy of "Bernard Shaw On Photography" (which features a Foreword by Shaw scholar extraordinaire Michael Holroyd, & is ed. with an Intro. by Bill Jay & Margaret Moore; Gibbs-Smith, Salt Lake, UT, 1989), my price having been all of \$1.99. This on top of having scored minutes previously a like-new pair of winter-proof Sorrells, to boot, so to Punish. In this case, said winter-gear purchase set me back a mere 3 dollars{!}. Oh, and did I neglect to mention that among GBS's photographs in the above-mentioned compendium is a remarkable platinum print taken by Shaw of the Prague-born R. Maria Rilke -- a contender for being my favorite 20th-century poet -- at Auguste Rodin's villa at Meudon in 1906, RMR having been Rodin's personal secretary at the time.

At the risk of aesthetic overkill, among the other volumes that 'bonked' me for what even Rilke &/or Rodin would regard as an affordable price was Mark Kurlan's Sky {think Big}'s aptly titled "Havana: A Subtropical Paradise" (Bloomsbury, NYC, London, Oxford, etc., 2018), for which I shelled out the same not-terribly exorbitant price of \$1.99, it having been a Green 'Tag{You're It!}' special. Not a shabby day in The Queen City life, I dare say! But I'm thinking that one could do worse in this context than to quote a few lines from the English poet Philip Larkin's 'Aubade,' whose "Collected Poems" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, NYC, 2004) also turned up for a song at our local Goodwill Yestereve :: "Religion used to try, / the vast moth-eaten musical brocade / Created to pretend we never die . . . / No touch or taste or smell, nothing to think with, / Nothing to love or link with, / The anesthetic from which none come around. / And so it stays just on the edge of vision{see above}, / A small unfocused blur, a standing chill / That slows each impulse down to indecision . . . / The {Big} Sky is white as clay{!}, with no sun. / Work has to be done." ☀