

Thursday, November 16, 2006

Finding inspiration for great work.

Often when finding the story, persuasion, and arguments for a client's case, I step back to clear my head. Sometimes I will do t'ai chi outdoors, spend some time with my family, listen to some great music, or experience other great art. I recently learned from the liner notes of John Coltrane's masterpiece *A Love Supreme* that while seeking inspiration for creating, Picasso swept the studio, Beethoven paid the bills, and John Coltrane went to a little-used area of his new house to end up with *A Love Supreme*. When he emerged with his new composition, as his widow Alice Coltrane tells it: "It was like Moses coming down from the mountain, it was so beautiful. He walked down and there was that joy, that peace in his face, tranquility. So I said, 'Tell me everything, we didn't see you really for four or five days.' ... He said, 'This is the first time that I have received all of the music for what I want to record, in a suite. This is the first time I have everything, everything ready.'" Trane poured his heart and soul into *A Love Supreme*, which can be heard in part here. The year was 1964, and this was his tribute to the deity. *A Love Supreme* hit a wildly popular chord far beyond jazz fans at a time when so many sought spiritual solace in a time of so much turmoil. Sadly, John Coltrane died just three years later, in 1967 at age forty, from liver cancer. When asked by a veteran lawyer at the Maryland Public Defender's Office why I had left private corporate law practice in 1991 to defend indigent criminal defendants, I told him it was where my heart was. He warned me about what can happen when a person wears his heart on his sleeve. It's often painful. However, I do not know where else to wear it nor how else to perform as well. I pour my heart and soul into defending my clients. They deserve nothing less. Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Persuasion at 01:00