

## **An Ode to Our Inner Voice, the Unter Genie**

**by  
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There is within each of us something special. A quality unique, rare, exceptional. Let's just call it our inner genius self. Strictly translating from German, Unter Genie is under genius. It may have nothing to do with intelligence. It might be exceptional compassion or bravery. Maybe it is the ability to do something meaningless to society, but still really cool. Like, lick your elbow. Whatever that something is, here's to you and that something. I am singling you out for recognition. Mark your calendar and put a big star on this day. You are no longer unrecognized. Still underappreciated, but just between us, recognized.

How does such genius go unnoticed? It exists within the self. It does not emerge from the self. Yet, the self doesn't ignore the presence of this genius. We will walk through an example. Your genius is that you are a fantastic poet. You can compose on the fly and the result is wonderful. This happens as you drift off to sleep at night or when you are in that twilight between wake and sleep in the morning. A wonder verse comes to mind. You enjoy the cadence, the rhyme, the wordplay. It is like magic. As you come to full alertness, you consider writing down those words, but wait. Where did those words go? They were on the tip of your tongue moments ago. Oh, so rare. And oh, so ephemeral. The world will never know your genius. It is a genie in a bottle. The magic is self-contained.

There have been songs that hint at this very phenomenon. Jim Croce's song "Workin' at the Car Wash Blues" hits on this theme. Here are some of the lyrics:

They wouldn't listen to the fact that I was genius.

The man say they got all that they can use.

Now I got them steadily depressin', low down mind messin',

Working at the car wash blues.

Perhaps you think this is just a case of being a legend in your own mind. It is more, but I will digress to relate a true story. I introduced my wife to an esteemed colleague, and I gave him a big build-up as he was very highly regarded. He was known for his quick wit, his easy turn of phrase, sophisticated, and erudite. I said, "He is a legend in his own time." My wife turned to him and asked, "When was your time?" He was speechless. His inner genius decided to duck and cover. I know the man and I know that genius is in there, just hiding. Perhaps that genius had ducked into the car wash with Jim Croce.

Friedrich Nietzsche gave us the Übermensch. Superman. I won't go into the philosophy associated with this. I mention it to give context to my Unter Genie. The Under Wunderkind or Genius. We can even consider your inner genius as a delusion of grandeur much like Walter Mitty in his daydreams. However, I am talking about that inner genius that we all have that the world will never notice. The world will go on searching for signs of intelligent life all the while waltzing past one genius after another. The Unter Genie will remain under wraps. Self-contained. The great things we are all capable of doing will remain potential energy. Waiting to be released, like the power of an atom. So much more power than outwardly detectable. The artist who puts great works in the attic for self-reflection, only to be discovered decades or centuries later. The writer who pens a masterpiece no one will ever read. The philosopher who figures out why we are here and what it's all about but doesn't write it down. It was there on the tip of the tongue just before the alarm went off. Time for

work. No time to write. The world will never know. Ah, well, the mystery has been internally solved and remains internal. This is your new calling card:

Insert Name here.

Unter Genie

The Genius is In.

This is your Ode. A bit of recognition for the unrecognized. A title for that which goes unnoticed day after day. Don't worry, the world will never know. It will remain our little secret. If someone should challenge you as to just where your genius is, much like my wife asking, "When was your time?", you just say "On sabbatical." If that doesn't satisfy the inquisitor and they wish to know exactly where the sabbatical is being taken, then respond, "It's a place known only to geniuses."

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