

Chez

In a small southwestern town, not at all prestigious,
folks were mostly middle class and sometimes religious.
There lived an interesting man, a bit of a loner,
staying in a small room above the diner, downtown on a major corner.

Across from the Court House were numerous stores,
A five-and-dime, a theater, a barber shop, a newspaper office, and several more.
Churches were plentiful, all Christian, Anglo, and Hispanic residents.
Everyone knew their place depending on their sentiments.

Some say the man was a veteran drawing his support from a military pension.
The work he did was sweeping sidewalks, barely worth a mention.
He walked straight, with a normal gait, unbowed, taller than most, and slim.
He spoke quietly, and respectfully, but not to make friends.

He was called Chez, only Chez. No one seemed to know much about him.
He had been there for years, most ignored him. He did not show much vigor or vim.
The police greeted him with respect, as one who belongs.
Vendors welcomed him with kindness, one who does no wrong.

There was a small public park on the Court House grounds.
Concrete brown-bagging picnic tables, and sitting benches, are better than most towns.
Several concrete checker/chess tables were lined with opposing seats.
This park was the town's pride, a refuge to find peace.

Usually, Chez was in the park playing chess and keeping the park clean.
Sometimes, a small group would gather to watch him play, skills so keen.
Rapid castling, gambits, lightning checks, and en passants, moving on the fly.
Sometimes he would lose. One wondered. To preserve the esteem of the other guy?

Children loved to observe his quiet, almost wordless chess insights.
He helped set the kids' tournaments on Saturday mornings, all reaching for new heights.
The parents were delighted and praised him for being there. "Super-Chess Chez"
They could shop without worry and take advantage of his chess daycare.

Part 3 - Poetry and Thoughts

One summer day, sitting, watching the shoppers across from the park.
Rick and Saul, two young boys, entered the five and dime, an easy mark.
Eventually, they exited and met at the theater nearby.
Chez observed them empty their pockets, and share items. Say goodbye.

After observing this behavior on three different days, Chez acted.
He met the boys at the theater and took ahold of their collars during the transaction.
The boys were surprised. Chez told them not to run
Rick and Saul felt the need to flee, but escape chances, there were none.

Chez walked the boys, grasping their collars, and moving back the way they came.
He quietly told the boys you are going to return the items and feel some shame.
Entering the store quietly, Chez found the manager. He ran his plan.
The boys returned the items. Chez asked the manager that for each young man

not to call the police, call the boys' parents, and
ban the boys from entering the store until they are men.
The manager agreed. The deal was done. Forgiveness had been earned.
The pain and embarrassment of being a thief had been learned.

Chez went back to his park. Rick and Saul found their way back to chess.
Accepted, they played again and stayed close to Chez.
It does take a village. Who will have the greatest effect?
With kind intervention, with calm firmness, no lives must be wrecked.