

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Alessandra Bava: Three Love Letters to Anne Sexton

Alessandra Bava · Wednesday, April 28th, 2021

Love Letter to Anne Sexton # 2

I say: "It'll be romance gone wrong."
"I can take it," you answer. I say "I'm
older than you now, but not as wise."
You shake your head, reject the
wisdom of the pill, elude the cure.

"I bleed all the time," you add.
I know that it's not what you imply,
but it hurts me that I've stopped, now
that menopause has kicked in, yet
desire is still strong, and I hold on to it.

"I'll be your gauze and your peroxide,"
I say. "My wound is suppurating," you
answer. "I'll flush it, dab it and suture it,"
I add. You lay your wiry fingers on my
head, smile and whisper: "You're marrying

a cadaver!" I watch your waning face,
and say: "A beloved bride. My sick lily."
You take me by the hand, hum a few notes
from Mendelsohn's march and sprint towards
an altar of books, two rings in the hand.

*

Love Letter to Anne Sexton #7

You teach me all about
the stubbornness of being,
the permanence of grief.

I know life tore you
apart. "I've died many
a life," you say.

Your years were a long
poem of resurrections.
Your husky voice rings

as fierce as an incantation,
as tender as shattered glass.
Your tongue moves swift,

a red carp in the pond of
heartbreak, saying: "Save
me, but love yourself!"

*

Love Letter to Anne Sexton #8

I am rowing upstream like
a salmon seeking new words.
I know you understand what
drives me. I have rowed with

you, page after page, oar in
hand, toward God. You were
an adamant seeker. Have you
ever seen spawning salmons

brave the rapids? They turn
dark and red, grow humps,
develop canine-like teeth to
lay their eggs. I have never

known a greater dedication,
an effort that tastes like
sour romance. Beauty is not
familiar to me and I would

gladly turn ugly to hatch new
poems. "Would you Anne?"
I ask. The fiery gleam in your
eyes is the only answer I crave.

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