
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Alex Lee: Two Poems

Alex Lee · Tuesday, June 25th, 2024

It's Nothing Special

“It’s nothing special,”
they would claim,
as we stood under the blanket of branches and leaves,
where the droning sounds of insect wings cascade
from canopies. And these people would walk on obsessed
with their self-important lives that are just like any other. Except
each would have their own unique quirk,
a color you might call it that makes them slightly,
though just a teeny-tiny bit, more interesting.

Some quirks tentatively rustle the back of our minds
like the swaying branches of a pine tree. While others
slam into our faces. And we’d each have a worry
that comes with that quirk. This worry bounds
after us, cavorting like a frenzied dog that
fears being forgotten. It’s not something that can be
shaken off or reprimanded. But it’s something that
needs a pat, a hug, a kiss – anything reassuring.

And when the whispering breeze tickles
our face and holds our hand. When the noon-sun
hugs our bodies but warms our hearts. That’s when our lives
— *if you’ll forgive the pun* — comes to life.

The pungent street smells explode
into the heavenly aroma of my favorite BBQ place. As if,
by chance, we find ourselves “unintentionally” eavesdropping
on others’ dinner conversations and stumble
upon Drew Barrymore personalities.

That’s when we realize
It’s nothing special

*

A Fractured Reflection

As the youngest-born, I remember chasing wide-eyed
After my brother and dad. I remember
Lying down on the bum-freezing swing. I remember
Him twisting the stubborn rope of the swing. I remember
Naively giggling as I spun, pretending to be an unstoppable hurricane.
I remember.

Lying on the ground, soft winter kisses
Dropping onto my red cheeks from the sky.
Angrily turning my back as you tentatively walked out.
I rubbed my eyes with an angry snuffle. And you said
“Sometimes, when we’re angry we say things, do things
We don’t mean.”

But, looking back, the signs were already there.
I remember locking myself into my room,
Futilely trying to block out you and mom’s angry shouts.
Hearing the door bang shut and the muted sobbing that followed.
When my mom came to ask me how I was doing,
Trying to ignore the angry welts on mom’s neck
And her saddened but mostly tired eyes.

Maybe this was a mistake.
And then the tensions boiled over like untamed fire.

I remember arguing over the money
Storming out the living room with a huff
Fuming inside my room as I listened to the persisting argument
Rushing out the door upon hearing fists collide
Pulling you away and tackling you to the ground

And you said, “I’m done with all of you,”
As if you were in the right
As if you hadn’t landed the first punch
As if you weren’t why my mom sometimes cried at night

Now, three months in,
You’re all but gone from my memories
There’s this peaceful silence
For the first time in my life
But, when you dispatch a formal writ
Demanding to freeze our accounts.

I can’t help but scoff.

So, we're family, and blood's thicker than water,
But, for you, it's certainly not thicker than wine.

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