

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Ava Zaffarano: Two Poems

Ava Zaffarano · Tuesday, August 23rd, 2022

Two poems by Ava Zaffarano

It's the little things

Don't look through my books,
My copy of *Devotions*,
My paperback of *Emotional Advantage*,
My used hardcover of *Just Kids*,
What you will find there
Is my vulnerability.
At times, I fear her.
That cunning girl has her hold on me.
That little thing.
I look her straight in the eyes
Every day,
Pursing my lips, till my jaw stings.
Swallowing to coat
My dry passage.
Pressing the pad of my thumb
Down on the rest of its neighbors,
Just to release at least some of the tension,
To gain some of the control.
A shaky breath finds its way out
Of the maze of my body.
She still holds my gaze.
Eventually, I release mine,
Bowing my head, smiling,
Knowing that she has won, once again.
I suppose I will not be showing
My vulnerability today.
Yet, she stays still, boring her eyes into mine
Till I feel her gaze go farther,
Almost through me

To the rear of my cranium,
 Disappointed, she wants me to win.
 It's no fun for her anymore.
 However, when I feel the familiar ridge
 Of a book on my palm
 I wrap my arms around my
 Vulnerability and say,
 "You're okay. Come and join me."
 In my books, the only eyes on me
 Are the letters.
 Those pages are alive. Heartbeat or not.
 They feel my ink pressing down,
 Knowing exactly what I'm underlining.
 They say, "That line got me too."
 They quietly soak up my tears.
 It's their way of whispering,
 "Keep going. Read another."
 With this,
 I become one step closer to feeling
 Comfortable in my vulnerability,
 That little girl.
 That little thing.

*

Parental Guidance

They said:
 Yes, the nights are long
 And the sky won't give you answers.
 The water will shock your warm skin
 And one day the ground you stand on will
 Move out from under you
 Without any warning.

But eventually, what I focused on more
 Was that sometimes, before it gets dark,
 I slow down
 And turn to watch the glow
 Of the sun pour over
 What's in front of me.
 And that those nights will consist of
 Farewell embraces and painting
 Until the glow returns.

They are right.
 The sky will not give me answers.
 But in the moments that I have talked to the moon,
 She has opened her ears to me.

And if I talk to her long enough,
I would tell myself exactly what I needed to hear.

They are right.
There will be points where
I'll walk miles in the rain
And feel ice on my heels.
But I hope I forever notice
How the pearls of water
Glide down my skin
And the needle sized sparkles that
Dance on the snow.

They are right.
The ground left
And I was falling.
So I looked around me and saw
Many things I could hold on to.
But I took my arms and
Wrapped them
Around myself.

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