

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Dotty LeMieux: Two Poems

Dotty LeMieux · Friday, September 30th, 2022

The Big Sky Man

The Big Sky Man explains to me about marriage
at a dance where his wife is dancing with another man
The Big Sky Man stands beside the refreshment table
drinking Mexican beer that I have brought him

He tells me about marriage, about the kind of institution it is
that it works like the engine of an automobile by internal combustion
that explosions are necessary and the turning of gears
that living alone is like always peddling a bicycle uphill

He wears his hair short and has a perfect mouth
In plaid jacket and green shirt, he is as big as all outdoors
His eyes are blue like the Marlborough Man's
but he smokes Camels

Watching me between sips of beer, while his wife, his beautiful wife,
moves around the room in the arms of another man
It's Valentine's Day but the Big Sky Man is not the sort to wear
his love-hardened heart on his sleeve

He says—I look at it this way:
*The day-to-day routine of what to have for dinner
can drive you crazy, but the other stuff
the blowing up, the pushing away, the starting over
that's what keeps a marriage together*

When the music stops, his wife comes to stand on the other side of me,
draped in black velvet with a white lace collar,
thin and beautiful and smiling as I hand her the beer
the Big Sky Man and I have been sharing

I'm starving—she says, handing me back
the beer and taking his hand

I watch them walk away together
 a perfect unmatched pair
 as the band begins to play once more.

*

The Trouble with Small Precious Volumes of Poetry

is they get stuck between other small volumes on the bookshelf
 and you can spend hours searching because of course you have to pull out
 every slim book you come to and sometimes read a few lines or whole poems
 before you go back to the search

So I never do find *Lunch Poems*, but resort to looking on Poetry Foundation
 for “The Day Lady Died,” and there it is, with one of my favorite
 lines of poetry ever:

*I go on to the bank
 and Miss Stillwagon (first name Linda I once heard)
 doesn't even look up my balance for once in her life*

Even after I find the poem with the line I want, I keep searching for the actual book,
 because where is it??

I pull out Diane Di Prima *Dinners and Nightmares*, another dead poet,
 and Bill Berkson's *Start Over* inscribed to me in indecipherable hand, Bolinas, 1983,
 and of course Joanne Kyger for days

Yup all dead too

Then there are all those Rattles and Third Coast reviews I never once asked for
 full of obscure poets who must be very smug in their tiny MFA programs
(so special, they chose me!)

Just last week I took some comfort knowing that Jack Hirschman—that luminescent
 Marxist beatnik—was still kicking it in North Beach and now he too is gone
 and I wonder what scruffy hitchhiker from out of the east will roll into town, her poems
 stashed on ipad or phone, to drop by City Lights, have a drink at Vesuvio's and preach
 the revolutionary gospel of poetry?



Henceforth I Ask Not Good Fortune

DOTTY E. LEMIEUX

Henceforth I Ask Not Good Fortune by Dotty
LeMieux

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