Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

DTLAB: Family

Chiwan Choi · Wednesday, August 13th, 2014

The week in which we reached the halfway point of our DTLAB #90for90 project has been an emotional one. Each of us knew it would be a great, but heavy week of events. I guess we all tried to pretend it wouldn't be overwhelming. Or maybe we just didn't know what to expect because, well, we've never gone through this before.

I usually try not to make this column personal, about me, wanting to keep speaking of things in terms of us, the four of us at Writ Large Press. But it's hard this time to *not* speak of what I'm feeling right now.

So…

It was silly, my whole *unretirement* thing, when I thought about it. Just a person who used to do something not-so-important, who then made a big announcement about no longer doing this not-so-important thing, which led to another big deal about *unretiring* to continue the not-so-important work.

It was all so silly. So I thought.

Then came Douglas Kearney. Then came Monday night with one of the biggest crowds I've seen at a poetry reading.

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The unexpected subject (for me) of his latest book, *Patter*, drew me back into my own writing of the past few years, the writing that I'd run away and hidden from.

I don't know if I'm happy that I read on Monday night or if the discussion afterward made me feel lighter or freer. But it made me feel at home in a weird way.

And I'm trying to process it all still, but struggling because the emotions are still raw from thinking and talking and reading about our miscarriage and how that event has altered so much for Judeth and myself.

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And as intense as the week began, I don't know how I will deal with Saturday.

There is a party at DTLAB. We want you all to be there. It's my birthday party. My 44th. But more importantly, Judeth moves across the country the next day. To Pittsburgh. And it's exciting as all hell because she will be developing crazy visionary things at Carnegie Mellon with scientists and programmers. She will literally have a chance to change the world.

I have to tell you though. It's sad as fuck. I'm heartbroken and I cry all the time, even standing outside Traxx Bar, right there in the middle of Union Fucking Station.

It affects Peter and Jessica too because we have been such a team, the four of us, and we love being around each other so much. She is not leaving the team, of course, but we will miss her physically not being here.

I never considered that my wife and I would be living across the country from each other, but here we are. This is the decision we made. And it goes straight back to our lives being altered by that single event.

One day a couple of years back, while lying under our desk crying because we'd learned after a series of tests that spanned over a year that we couldn't have kids, we promised something to each other:

Let's do whatever the fuck we want.

And what we wanted to do was throw ourselves into the world around us and to use every ounce of talent and energy and creativity and rage and love and our bodies to bend it into *the* place we wanted to exist in with the people we love for the rest of our lives. We wanted to find our tribe.

The past 47 days/events (as I write this) have been life-changing for us and it's been intense and brutal too. I am having a tough time. Judeth has so much to do. Peter is struggling. Jessica too. Individually and collectively trying to find our way through another day, another event, no matter what's going on in our personal lives.

As are you. And you. You.

I don't know what happens on Sunday when Judeth leaves. For me. For us. And no matter how hard we tried, this week the personal crossed over into our work at DTLAB.

But this is the choice we made together because we couldn't see any other way: for her to continue planning and shaping our events while also working on our books while studying in Pittsburgh, and for me to stay here in LA with Peter and Jessica and continue to give it all to the community we have been building. This is Writ Large Press. For us, *community* will never be a marketing term.

I keep going back to Monday night. Never in my life have I felt so—I don't know. So held, so cared for, by a group of people, many of them strangers.

It felt like home.
It was family.

Full DTLAB #90for90 Schedule

photo by James Ducat

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