

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Gary Grossman: Two Poems

Gary Grossman · Sunday, February 16th, 2025

### Benediction

I'm sitting in the dark,  
as first rays coerce light  
through the small gap between  
blind and window—it is  
the gloaming's unnamed  
identical twin. But why  
nameless, surely it's  
deserving? Don't all Castors  
need a Pollux, Romulus  
a Remus, Mary-Kate  
an Ashley? Neither night  
nor morning, perhaps  
the *unwrapping* or  
*reopening*, although  
both lack élan. My back  
braced against two bed pillows,  
dark roast lapping the rim  
of the Spanish azul-glazed  
mug in my right hand.  
Coffee, slow and bitter  
as that night eight years ago  
when you said *We need a break*,  
but here you are, still, asleep  
alongside me, inhaling  
and exhaling like a mockingbird  
calling at 2AM, a complete  
night's sleep a rare treat  
in your seventh decade,  
and this harmonic traces a smile  
over my top and bottom lips,  
while time mimes the decades  
we've lain alongside each other,

the way banks hug a stream,  
 twisting and turning, yet forever  
 entwined, and how lovely it is  
 just to sit—my left leg grazing  
 your right, sheets still slightly  
 piney from the wash, drinking  
 French Roast, in the everyday  
 air of an unwrapping morning.

\*

## MRI

Modern medicine says hello, not with a smile or twinkling eyes, but with a bang loud enough to wrench my head ninety degrees to the left, as if Rowdy Roddy Piper had me in a headlock, while the referee slaps the mat, the count now at eight. But no, my head is hugged by two expensive plastic braces—penny-level expensive compared to this bedroom-sized multi-million dollar machine, that is making every kind of bang, clang, and soft-tissue image possible. Then there's the high pitched shriek that I myself would issue, if any utterance was permitted, however, my imperative is to remain motionless as a bullfrog within reach of a hungry great blue heron, and so I just repeat my mantra and loosely clutch the blue squeezy that activates the escape protocol. Wedding ring and Maori jade amulet removed and I'd better ask about the titanium staples that have merged the sections of my lower colon for the last 35 years, because metal is metal, regardless of where it sleeps, and this machine hugs tight to metal as if it were the only lover in the Imaging Center. Loose, comfortable clothing they say, so it's tee and running shorts—medicine is always cold in both affect and effect, so it's a long-sleeved tee rather than a shorty. Surprisingly, the tech says *after a while your back may grow hot* because my back is what I'm here for, well, spine specifically. And I won't bore you with terms like L4 subluxation and collapsing spinal canal, because I can still walk, even while my nerves fire hot shots through weakened legs to my toes, and it may be that pins and needle soles will be my new story for decade eight, even though a scalpel waits to write the opening paragraph.

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(Featured image from *Pexels*)

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