

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Julie Demoff-Larson: Two Poems

Julie Demoff-Larson · Wednesday, July 27th, 2016

Julie Demoff-Larson is one of the founding editors and current Managing Editor at *Blotterature Literary Magazine*. She is the chief organizer and curator of “Small Prestivus,” a two-day annual literary festival aimed at promoting the diversity of small presses and the writers they represent. Julie has a B.A. in English Literature from Purdue University. Her dedication to the writing community is second only to family and friends. Her short stories have been published in *Mangrove*, *Ricochet*, *Epiphany Magazine* and in *Good Morning, Justice* an anthology from Brine Books Publishing, and *This is Poetry Volume II: The Midwest Poets*.

Hospitality, pre-2005

Moving East on Highway 10
across lake waters
en route to New Orleans,
a white double-cab pick-up truck
offers us a ride
on an oppressive September afternoon.
At first look, the man is without flaw,
an American success story,
white father, Vietnamese mother
figuring we fit into his mold
as he speaks with growing misogyny
and nigger talk
that we feel compelled to dismiss
for fear of retaliation
or abandonment
on the road that connects
land-locked Mardi Gras wishes
to the rise of the surrounding muddy waters
in the whole of the city.
We are passengers—
side-road highway travelers—
rooted in the South Chicago corridor,
blinded by the catacombs of white suburban squalor,
believing this deep Southern doctrine to be archaic,

when all along the trepidation between
 the voice and the voiceless;
 the affluent and the penniless;
 the black and the white;
 is but a poor veil
 to what has always been
 a part of us.
 On the outskirts—
 away from Hurricane
 drinkers and
 bead throwers—
 we ride with the men and women
 on the bus line
 to dance on the street in Vieux Carré
 outside Jolly Roger's,
 while they make their way home from
 late-night work shifts,
 casinos and jazz clubs,
 catering to tourists that look
 like me—
 last stop
 everyone off,
 a mile march along the banquette,
 where rats and roaches
 follow like protective pets.
 Walking where no government cars pass;
 no celebrities roam with carnival cameras.
 It is here,
 in the hole of the Crescent,
 where we first learn about humanity.

Necessary Durability

I suppose the high wasted briefs—
 Granny panties
 and the boxed Playtex bras—
 white thick strapped brassieres
 shaping breasts like summit peaks,
 tips of torpedoes—
 kept hands from meandering
 beneath turtlenecks and sweaters,
 unlike the girls who wore tank tops and sundresses—
 their thin satin straps showing,
 nuzzling under lace and polyester blend,
 those girls smelling of patchouli oil and sweat
 just like my sister
 stretched out on family living room floors

with boys they loved
with boys they devoured way too soon.
Top heavy and weighted down,
bras that were purchased for me
lifted and secured,
corrected posture to retain femininity
like the ladies who worked
the assembly line at the soap factory
coming home smelling of lard and lye
making seventy cents to his dollar—
maybe less,
god damn, they were
tough and durable
and able to get the job done.

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