

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Michael Hathaway: Three Poems

Michael Hathaway · Wednesday, August 7th, 2019

### Epitaph

For God's sake  
don't inscribe this on my tombstone,  
*Rest in Peace or Be with Jesus.*

Inscribe this: *He learned to love  
in spite of Christians, Republicans  
and rednecks.*

Inscribe: *He knew how it felt  
to trip over his stupid heart,  
to fall flat on his face,  
to lie in quiet contentment all night  
beside the man he loved.*

Inscribe: *He learned to feel joy without shame.*

\*

### Winter Snapshot 2011

In my tiny cozy living room,  
I'm surrounded by cats of many colors,  
shapes and sizes –  
they #OccupyTheLivingRoom in protest  
of snow and winter chill.  
They wash up and settle in for the night.

Roxanne, multicolored Maine Coon,  
decrees Herself infinitely more important  
than any MacBook,  
sprawls the Entire Regal Self  
across my forearms as I type.

Responsibility for all typos  
may be laid at The Royal Feet.

\*

## Full Circle

My second boyfriend turned out to be unfaithful,  
controlling, verbally abusive,  
threatened to burn my house down  
if I went out to a club with friends.

We were together only eight months,  
four of which I spent trying to convince him  
we had broken up, that he should just leave  
without drama or violence.

Three years after our traumatic breakup,  
his mom was in the hospital, gravely ill.  
He came to me in a panic, asked me to spend the night.

I agreed, but insisted we not sleep together,  
leery of letting him think we might reconcile.  
We talked awhile,  
then I shuffled off to bed in the guest room,  
dozing in and out.

In the middle of the night, the door creaked open –  
he slipped into the dark room.  
I pretended to be asleep, not wanting a scene.

He kissed my cheek softly,  
touched my forehead, brushed my hair back,  
whispered, *I love you so much*,  
tucked the blanket around me,  
then slipped back out.

Another year later, a new lover taught me  
the flip side of controlling jealousy and obsession.  
I was so upset, I couldn't stand being alone.  
I drove and drove just to drive,  
back and forth across the city.

I saw a light in my ex-'s window at midnight.  
I knocked on his door and asked if I could spend the night.

I insisted he sleep beside me.  
He held me all night long, no words or advances –  
just a calm vigil – my head on his chest,  
the boundaries of his arms.

*(Author photo by Barbara Lanning)*

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