Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Michael Montlack: Three Poems

Michael Montlack · Monday, November 20th, 2023

Goat Song

I thought I found a portal to another dimension,
looking into the eyes of an hour-old goat.
Peter had called us to his farm that morning
to help decide on a name: Bowie or Prince—
both recently lost. The kid soft as a dust cloth,
supple as a ribbon. His hooves smelled like bread.
I fought the urge to inhale or smother him.
This riddle in my arms, making me feel more
like a guest in the world than an inhabitant
of fifty years. I wanted to rewind his one hour,
to follow his trail back to that unknown
we must share in common. Could he reveal
secrets, maybe tell me how to go home—
this furry Ouija board. Surely his explanations
would diminish the wonder of Peter's frog pond.
I posed for another photograph with the newly
crowned Prince while Peter sighed like a critic.
Don't get too close, he said. And when I gasped,
he scolded, *This is a farm, not a petting zoo*.

*

"Scientists identify 29 planets where aliens could observe Earth" ~ *The Guardian*

and suffering from human-centrism,
I wonder what they'll make of our love.

Assuming romance is an Earthly concept,
a quirk or deficiency unique to our species.

Maybe we look cute and ridiculous

like a puppy humping a throw pillow.

Or as terrifying as a Praying Mantis
snapping off the head of her mate.

If aliens can muster pity, will they weep
while they watch us falter and repeat?

Who knows—their research might be
driven by a longing to imitate us,

technological advancements having
suppressed their primitive instincts,

and we'll help recall the carnal urge.
Imagine them staging reenactments:

Our clumsy liaisons as How-To seminars.
Who am I kidding—they likely seeded us

with the onus as a mere experiment.
I wonder if they'll share the findings,

teaching us to unlearn our signature snag.

"For Dorianne"

*

Unrequited Love Song

It's not that I have been alone—
it's that I have been without you.
This love, a disco flattened before
it ever flickered. A pomegranate
tossed after being bitten all wrong.
It's not that I have been alone—
it's that anybody else would've felt
like an almost, an echo of normal.
A belly blistered by the caress
of doubt. If you visit my grotto,
you won't find Mary but you will
find faith. A shrine that nods to what
could have been, an immense place
that never will be large enough
to hold what has been missed.

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