
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Rich Boucher: Two Poems

Rich Boucher · Wednesday, January 29th, 2020

The Agony That Must Have Been Listening to Emily Dickinson Repeat Back Your Driving Directions

What I would have said:

*Okay, so,
what you're going to do
is, you're gonna go about three miles
south here down Universe Boulevard,
which is the road you're about to come to now.
to which Emily would have replied:*

*so then —
in the moment to come —
about three miles hence
and south from this place —
along the pathway you are already on
which is -ah!- the universe,
you will travel there —*

and then I would have said:

*Yeah, fine, right – so, you're going to look for
an intersection where the streetlights are out,
and you're going to go straight through
that intersection; if you don't see that intersection
where the lights are out, you haven't gone far enough.*

to which Emily would have replied:

*look for where two roads
cross — there where the light has gone —
yet travel on and straight through
this dark convergence onward,
know, old soul, that if your eyes*

*have not yet lit upon this fearsome, stygian sight,
you have not yet come — to —
the place you must find yourself*

and then I would have said:

*Suuuure. Okay, so, once you go through
that lightless intersection, look for the barn
with the faded purple paint job with the white gate
that's sitting right up against the road; that's when
you'll know your left-hand turn is coming up fast,
that's Bright Autumn Road; just know that the sign
is hard to see, because no one ever trims that bush
right in front of that corner over there.*

to which Emily would have replied:

*when one has pursued
their destination through
the dark and lonely way,
one must observe —
with guarded eye —
the old barn — decrepit — fallen —
there by the white gate
there against the road
this is the way you shall know —
how all shall know —
to look for the autumn road
on the other — side —
—*

to which I would have said:

*Pretty much. You make that left on Bright Autumn,
and now you keep going about a half a mile;
you're gonna come to a small, narrow white bridge:
it's really narrow, like, there's only room for one car.
Once you go over that you'll see a big, big hill up ahead;
it's massive; you'll make that right just at the foot of that hill;
that road's called Violet's Way; you'll see the sign.
Make that right and go about five hundred feet;
the cemetery will be on the right. You'll know
you're at the right place by the black, wrought-iron entrance gate
with the little brick shack just after it on the left.
I'm pretty sure the place you want is down that way.*

to which Emily would have replied:

*where the Fall is found, turn —
go that shortest way one can go*

*'til one comes to the narrow pass —
 only room for one this way,
 there might I find it! —
 the highest ascent that could be known,
 but I shall not take it —
 nor shall I assay to climb
 what ought not be scaled —
 for there is another turn
 I must take, a place to my right!
 a violet direction, oh,
 and, turning there, I will see it —
 the headstones — the black gate — the doomed shack —*

*

I Have Always Wanted to Have A Neighbor

I remember that show we used to watch as kids on TV, the one about learning and sharing and growing up and how good life could be. But this show didn't have a soft-spoken, safe and gentle fellow in a red cardigan as host. No. We had a different guy. And instead of a song to sing together when the show began, the opening jingle was an eight-second blitzkrieg of thrash metal cut off abruptly by the sound of a record scratching and glass shattering, and then we'd see the door burst open with incomprehensible violence as the host, still half in the bag from the night before, would come hurtling full-tilt into the house and almost behead himself with the edge of the kitchen table. Oh, and then he would try to rise up to his feet, but he'd often piss himself, howling in pain, and then smash his face right into the front of the refrigerator and knock himself out. The show was only about two minutes long, but I loved it; I loved how it made me giggle my fool head off. I mean, I'm *pretty sure* it was a TV show. Why do you ask?

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