

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Rich Ferguson: Two Poems

Rich Ferguson · Thursday, August 12th, 2021

He Says, She Says

He says, what does this mean?

She says, it means what it feels like it means.

He says, but I don't feel anything.

She says, that could mean everything.

He says, but what if we play the record backwards?

What if we hold our memories up to a mirror?

What will they see that we don't?

She says, the flowers I once picked for you are now wild dogs snarling at the door.

He says, I'll build a new house whose location is known only to us.

She says, our bed is a graveyard.

He says, those snarling dogs at the door, I've turned them back into flowers and have placed them by your pillow.

She says, your spider logic has eight legs too many on which to offer any truth.

He says, I'll write us a new life if only I can find a pen that uses my blood for ink.

She says, you're like the hangover I haven't suffered in years.

He says, you're the empty bottle from which I find it difficult to consume a moment's peace.

She says, your hands are wounded birds I once thought I could heal.

He says, these aren't birds, these hands are restless musical notes still searching out their song.

She says, the moon is the moon is the moon.

He says, the moon is the bittersweet symphony I used to sing to you on summer nights.

She says, last night I dreamed you got lost in a desert of your bleached-bone sorrow.

He says, did I make it out alive before your alarm clock went off?

She says nothing.

He says, funny how a silence can say everything.

She says, distance is the best medicine for us.

He says, I'll leave my shadow by the door in case you change your mind.

She says, roll over and go to sleep.

He says, I've been rolling in my grave for lifetimes.

She says, why did we even get together in the first place?

He says, life's answers are interesting when one only has lightning to read by.

She says, it's cold outside.

He says, the wind now

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the shape of who we are.

She says, these days with you are gifts I no longer wish to receive.

He says, I never know what shirt fits me best when I wear

my heart on my sleeve.

She says, don't worry. The heart maintains its beat even

when its love moves on.

*

Everything is Radiant Between the Hates

Days boobytrapped with animosity,
reeking of gunpowder's acrid bite-

when
the bass-heavy beat
of police brutality
makes it so you can't breathe,

and kids begin the new school year
with face masks and bulletproof backpacks;

when
homegrown terrorists
keep getting younger,
and bullet speech
grows louder;

when
those who perish
from shootings,
beatings, lynchings,
overdose, and disease
are reduced to

body-bag hashtags
on social media.

So heavy these days
when chaos holds sway,
and pallbearers bear the weight
of still another coffin
across the worn, cobbled streets of our eyes.

In between it all-

moments of grace:

a kind word,
a shared kiss,
offering a child
tinderstick phrases
such as *please* and *thank-you*
to illuminate
their journey forward.

Here,
contentment is revealed,
everything is radiant
between the hates.

Photo credit: Alexis Rhone Fancher

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