Cultural Daily

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Robin Williams – Missing You Already

Sophia Stein · Thursday, August 14th, 2014

Robin Williams always brought me to the space of awe. His imagination was so facile, so quick; I often felt four steps behind. Frankly, that's the way I like my art – jaw to the ground, gaping in amazement, while my heartstrings are gently being plucked.

I fell in love with a capital "L" for the first time to *The Fisher King*. I shivered at *One Hour Photo*, and awaited with anticipation each and every successive project graced by his presence.

I am moved to learn that Robin Williams was such a generous friend to Christopher Reeve. At the time of Christopher Reeve's critical accident, Reeve was uninsured, and Williams purportedly stepped in to pay his friend's medical bills. I am struck by the irony of the *Louie* episode (episode 3, season 6) in which Williams directly imagines the future occasion of his death and pained to hear his riff on suicide in the illuminating 2010 podcast on WTF podcast with Marc Maron.

To continue on in the wake of the loss of Robin Williams feels labored. Unfair. I did not know Robin Williams personally, and yet somehow — I was counting on him to accompany me through the passing of my days.

These days — that have become so unforgiving for artists. These days — where once again, nobles lord above plebeian masses. *(Where's our Federal Arts Project? Our New Deal?)* I do not know if it was the economics of art that pushed Robin Williams towards the precipice of despair, but in the bleak days devoid of his bright light, his singular insight, and his gentle humanity, I will always wonder …

Please, please come back. Tell me this news was just a waking nightmare.

In my waking dreams, Robin Williams is greeted on the other side of the great divide by compatriots and co-conspirators, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Spaulding Grey. Robin Williams is among the departed, whose company I will miss …

Robin Williams — WTF with Marc Maron (April 26, 2010) (Excerpt transcribed from podcast, 1:54:40)

Marc Maron: [B]efore the heart surgery, were you somebody that was hung up on … the mortality element?

Robin Williams: No, I literally went: "They found it!" I didn't go into [the surgery] going …

what are the odds? I knew with the doctor I had picked that the odds were really great. He'd done four thousand surgeries, and all of them had gone well … Everybody around me was like, 'Oh, God.'

I made the choice. Once you make the choice you've gone, "I'm in. This is gonna be better because right now, I'm flappin' in the wind," you know? And the idea [that] if you didn't have the surgery, then you really are playing dice, you know.

Marc Maron: [Y]ou don't seem to me somebody who is … morbidly fascinated or hung up on death.

Robin Williams: No. I mean it's weird, when I was drinking, there was only one time even for a moment where I thought, "Oh, fuck life." And even then my conscious brain went:

Did you really just say, 'Fuck life'? You know, you have a pretty good life as it is right now. Have you noticed the two houses?
Yes.

Have you noticed the girlfriend?
Yes.

Have you noticed that things are pretty good even though you may not be working right now?
Yes.

"Okay, let's put the suicide over here on 'discussable," … we'll talk about that. First of all, you don't have the balls to do it –
I'm not going to say it out loud.

I mean, Have you thought about buying a gun?
No.

What were you going to do – like cut your wrists with a water pic?
Maybe.

So that's erosion. What are you thinking about that? … So, can I put this over here in the 'What The Fuck' category?
Yes.

Let's put that over in the 'What the Fuck.' Can I ask you what you're doing right now? You're sitting naked in a hotel room with a bottle of Jack Daniels?
Yes.

Is this maybe influencing your decision?
Possibly.

O.k., we're going to put that over here, and tomorrow morning … And who's that in the bed there?
I don't know.

O.k., well, don't discuss this with her because she may tweet it, o.k.? … Let's put that over here in the "What the Fuck" category. We're going to put that over here possibly for therapy, if you want to talk about that in therapy. Or maybe a podcast, two years from now. Do you want to talk about

it in the podcast?
No, I feel safe.

You're talking about it in the podcast!
I know. [confrontational] Who is this?

It's your conscience, asshole.
Oh, o.k.

So, have you ever thought about it since then?
No.

During the surgery, were you thinking about death?
No.

Why?
Because you're just thinking everything's going to be fine.

Was that your mother talking?
Maybe. She was a Christian Scientist who had plastic surgery.

(whispers) Wow.
Is that a mixed message?

Yeah, that is.
O.k. Well, we're going to go back to the podcast now because Marc is sitting here and we're talking now.

I know.
I feel like golf commentary. Look, Tiger's back. Tiger's playing. Tiger's doing well.

I was hoping that some of the tweets would have golf metaphors like "choke up," or like "I'm going to hold you down and putt from the rough." But, no, it didn't say that, you know, it's all good. We're back …

To listen to the complete podcast: WTF with Marc Maron – "Remembering Robin Williams"

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