Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Scott Silsbe: Three Poems

Scott Silsbe · Wednesday, February 26th, 2020

Bill Fox's Guitar

I helped the guys from Cleveland load their gear up the stairs.
And up by the stage, one of them handed me Bill Fox's guitar.
I cannot remember now how it became clear to me that it was
Bill's guitar, but I want to say that it was passed to me almost
like a rather holy object and pretty much identified as such—
"This is *Bill*'s guitar." I put it carefully in a corner of the stage.
And I looked at it. And I thought, "Most people would look at
that and think that it's just a guitar case. Just an ordinary case
for a guitar." But I had a deeper knowledge, an understanding
of what was in that guitar case and who the guitar belonged to.
And the songs that had been played on that guitar. Songs that
I knew, songs that I could sing. So I stood there and stared at
Bill Fox's guitar in the upstairs room of a bar in Pittsburgh—
imagining the rooms that guitar had been in, all of the nights
and stories and melodies that were the history of that guitar.
And I knew it wasn't an original thought. But because it was
Bill's guitar, it felt like something—like something special
or interesting or unique. Even though I knew that it wasn't.
But it felt like. And that feeling—that feeling *was* something.

*

Driving Around Pittsburgh Through an Early March Snow Listening to the Jimmy Woods Sextet's *Conflict*

The singular imagination aims at producing
that which is both ephemeral and eternal.
At least I think that's what Bachelard meant.

Today I drove while white fluff piled up
on my windshield and on the sidewalks
and streets and the roofs of the buildings
around me and while somehow, recordings
of songs from some fifty-five years ago

made their way through the stereo system
of my beat-up, silver bullet of a minivan.

And it didn’t matter how much time was left.

*

In Moments

We were out in Jeannette on a Friday night
and Don was talking about the night before.
He said, “There were these moments…”
and I can’t remember whether or not
he used the word “transcendent,”
but he very well might have.

But anyway, I knew what he meant.
I might’ve tried to articulate the same
kind of thing to Bob as he left my place
one night after we had a good practice.
I can almost hear us there on the porch,
Bob saying, “It sounded good tonight,”
and me replying, “There were moments.”

(Author photo by Chandra Alderman)

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