

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Scott Silsbe: Two Poems

Scott Silsbe · Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021

It's Not the End of the World (How Do You Know?)

There's a national change shortage. And there's too much information on the second floor—they've had to post signs around the building that say, "Notice of Imminent Danger." They have different procedures in place for what they call the High-Risk Long-Term Unemployed. I believe that the syndrome has a new name now, but it used to be referred to as Great Depression Mentality. This was all linked to actions taken by Late-Stage Disaster Capitalists. My god in heaven.

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Where Do You Live Again?

I met Patty at the cemetery at 8 o'clock in the evening. I didn't know exactly where I was going. But I found Patty at the gates on Dallas, I parked, and we set out for a walk. Patty told me that the fireflies should be putting on a good show but that it wouldn't start for an hour or two yet, so we'd have time to catch up.

We were in the city, but near the big park, so nature was on display for us there in the cemetery—we saw deer and turkey and even a fox, who crossed our path in a loping fashion. We found a mausoleum tucked back in a corner of the cemetery and set up shop on the steps, breaking out beers and a little chocolate bar Patty brought to share. There was some news to discuss, but we started talking about our old friend, Tony, and the stories about him started taking over. I told some funny old stories about Tony and I was laughing and before I knew it, I was crying and I didn't know if they were tears of joy or grief but I guess it didn't matter.

The fireflies started up, just as Patty had promised

and so did the mosquitoes—I could feel them sucking my blood out of me. Because it was June in Pittsburgh, you could hear fireworks being shot off all around us.

And we talked about photographers for a while and I told Patty about how my dad, a man of many hobbies, had said that if he had pursued an artistic calling, it would have been portrait photography. And we talked about Teenie Harris and Patty said she once had a series of Teenie Harris dreams and I thought about how once I had a series of Richard Brautigan dreams for a while.

And I told Patty about my road trip to see the path of The Johnstown Flood, from the manmade lake down to the city of Johnstown and then up to the cemetery high on the hillside with its massive monument to the unknown dead. And then we talked about David McCullough and about his great books.

And Patty asked me, “Where do you live again?” and I laughed. It shouldn’t have been a difficult question to answer, but it was at that moment.

And when we left the cemetery, I got in my van and rolled the window down so Patty could hear the Ellington song on my stereo and I turned it up and Patty started dancing there on Aylesboro Street, dancing in the moonlight across from the cemetery.



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