## **Cultural Daily**

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Sonia Greenfield: Three Poems

Sonia Greenfield · Wednesday, April 22nd, 2020

36.

You continue to try and understand words. I say, *eventually*, and you ask what it means. I say, *Something won't happen now*, *but it will happen soon*. I try to explain how some words have two or more meanings. For example, *letdown*.

When you were born, you latched on to fill the bowl of your hunger. You pulled and pulled, then I pumped three ounces of pure colostrum into a bottle the size of your father's thumb, and you drained that. Then my milk came in with a rush. We were synchronized. Once, when you were eight months old, I rode something like a centrifuge at the fall carnival, and when I stepped off the ride, two wet circles on my shirt marked me as your mother.

Also, per the dictionary: let·down [let-doun] *noun* 1. a decrease in volume, force, energy, etc.: *a letdown in egg production*. 2. disillusionment, discouragement, or disappointment: *Her husband's earlier refusal for more children was a letdown*. 3. depression; deflation: *She felt a terrible letdown at the end of her fertility*.

\*

37.

Someone says to me, This is really about shame, isn't it? Shame in that I can't be satisfied with what I have. Someone says to me, Well, we're all a little bit on the spectrum, right? And this comes from a place of kindness. Someone says to me, You chose to put your professional life before seeking motherhood. But that wasn't it. I waited until I was safe. Someone says to me, You never know what's going to happen. So be afraid, be elated. Someone says to me, We really appreciate what makes your son unique. (Subtext: But there's still something wrong with him.) Someone says to me, He seems normal to me. Someone says to me, We always thought he seemed a little off. Off what? Someone says to me, This is all just because you wanted another baby. I knew I was to blame. Someone says to me, Why can't you be happy with what you have? Someone says to me, It's all in God's hands. It's part of his plan. Tell your God to play nice. Someone says to me, Don't be so in love with your own suffering. I just wanted a little more. Why is that so wrong?

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64.

The windows of the photographer's loft looked out on a panoply of other windows above the shuffling of cars and women in smart heels. From the sound system I heard Bryan Ferry remind me that I am a slave to love. I told the photographer about you, how you seem more indelible, apt to be here for good, and I told the photographer about my failed attempts for more. She offered we get what we get and we all have our crosses to bear. Because I was reminded of it, I mentioned the preschool teacher who finished we get what we get with we don't get upset, and I pictured that green popsicle melting down your arm when you wanted red. The photographer spoke of teens as feral, so I asked: Do you have any children?

I had a son, she said, but he passed away.

A cross hung between two windows. My apology hung in the silence between us. Then the photographer's husband lit a pipe, and I watched its small curl of smoke hang over the coffee table before it ghosted into the air.

(Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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