

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-down] *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*.

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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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