

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Sue William Silverman: Two Poems

Sue William Silverman · Wednesday, April 17th, 2019

If the Girl Goes to the Next Whiskey Bar

after Jim Morrison

She grooves to the back
beat of the Lizard King's cravings,
choking on scotch-soaked
cubes, suspending lust from
bar to blue narcotic lounges,
electrical surges, sex
with a disembodied
heart on a floor of smashed
cups and gypsy tea leaves
mute and unforseeing.

The next bar, the next
reptilian tongue, kiss tasting
of flayed leather—
desire rolling holy
with never enough to
drink/breathe/swallow/fuck,
his signature Mojo
moan risin',
from a bathtub combustible
with desperation—
legions of French
foreignness piquing
his last dull interest
in Parisian cathedral bells
tha *tclank, conk, gong, bong, peal,*
and *ring ring ring* signaling
time to move on to the next
happiest hour
after you are
gone, the girl

spilling Walker on
the floor of the bar as if
over your grave, drinking
whatever's left in her glass.

*

If the Girl is a Slut

The girl's fever rises like exploding
thermometers, mercury sizzling
her palm, dancing in lavender
chiffon, a slight gust
to the hem, swirling
in the man's arms.

Show me a good time, baby. And
she does. Ravenous zippers, stripping.
Clouds wafting on floors
lavish with weather, fucking
in season, railroad tracks splintering
bedroom floors, her teeth rattling
in the aftermath.

Never mind the gang
rape as an excuse, the pawned
heart happened in another decade,
Route 17, Jersey, where chemicals
grow grass unnaturally green,
clouds light the sky
like overripe neon
relentless as brightly
used needles.

What would her Russian ancestors say?
They who risked pogroms, starvation,
inhuman soldiers clashing red
and white, just so their waiting-
to-be born daughter could slit
her crotch all the way up
to her mouth.

The girl torches all the photos.
No one's looking, or left to know,
except the mutant, half-formed
baby slithering down
the drain one night
when only *you & you*
were watching—as if it, too,

were simply lost
to the diaspora, the girl
not even bothering to cry,

especially when Houston's flooding—
cars wash to sea in hurricanes bright
as tangerines. The girl opens
doors and windows inviting
all the men in as if it's the Fourth of July,
her lips ripe and independent,
plummy for kissing
him to death, and the girl
only wishes he'd come back
to life so she could kill him
again.

("If the Girl Goes to the Next Whiskey Bar" and "If the Girl is a Slut" are both from Sue William Silverman's new collection, *If The Girl Never Learns*.)

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