

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Tongue of Grief

Abigail George · Wednesday, May 13th, 2020

Petya Dubarova lived in Burgas, Bulgaria. She was a young poet with a fascinating career ahead of her. She took her own life when she was sixteen years of age. I think that she had a very promising career as poet ahead of her. The questions I have are the following. Was she depressed, was it chronic in nature, was there no medication that she could have taken to appease the onslaught of the depression and the suicidal thoughts. She leaves behind a handful of poems. Below I have written a letter to her.

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Sleep. I don't sleep anymore at night. I don't sleep very well, or, not at all. You only see what you want to see. You only see the sum-aura of me. You have no proof of who I have loved. No one knows who I really am. And I want to be yours, but I can't. And I want to have a child, before I am too old to have a child. But life for me. It seems as if I have already travelled halfway. And I have suffered. I think that I have suffered too much already. I have buried the renal unit far underground where you find the dead of the fairground. Where sea meets the floor of the ocean. Where river meets dust. And enemies meet up with ash heap. The waking inside the iceberg doesn't come naturally. There are deadlines even here amongst the elements amongst poor family life, dysfunctional life stick figures. There is project management here by children. I know, because I used to be one of those children. I ask myself now, am I being value-based by this, my tiny prejudices, my dreams, the visions that I have of the moth environment that I live in, the buzzing world around me, the holistic visions that I have of my future self. I'm an actor who doesn't care what you think of me. I live on stimulus and impulse alone. Those are the laws that I live by. I should have had those children. Shouldn't have listened to my father. Should have paid more attention to my mother when I had the chance. Maybe my life wouldn't be such a fine line of a mess now. Staying at home with elderly parents. Struggling to carry on with my life which is a grownup life now. My life is just an illusion now. Nobody listens to this ghost capturing the castle.

Memories they come and they go. Angels walk by me. Overwhelmed as you are by grief, there is gravity, there is, in remembering the personality-type of the people that you loved, the person you thought that you were going to spend a lifetime with, their untimely and tragic loss. When you are young you think that there is only one person cut out there for you. For a while, grief grew in everything. I could see its progress everywhere. In slices of melon at the breakfast or lunch table, flowers, in Updike's Rabbit, in ingredients and priorities it was a mooring, a kind of lifeline, a cold-hearted and aloof buoy, it was, grief was for the longest time. Grief came in waves, in waves, in waves. The rain would make me cry, the smell of winter, my childhood, my sister who was now

living and making a life for herself in Europe, and then one day I woke up and discovered that grief was a stem now. It was growing, growing inside of me. A heart filled with grief can and will burst. This is how my heart behaved in those months after a distant friend of the family, Bunny Flowers, passed away suddenly. His death had come as a shock to everyone. Poetry found me. Prose found me then in those hours. In his bare defeating and breaking silence out on the sea. Grief will break even the calmest hearts. It will make you think that you are missing out on something. It will. Everything will remind you in the early days in retrospect and in days to come about the one who left you behind. I am slowly starting to figure that out. You will shout at the walls, I certainly did.

You will through no fault of your own, but you will come to blame God, blame the hospital staff who came to the people you loved and lost who came too late to the assistance of your loved one, at the unfairness of it all. Your teeth will have grief, sink its talons into it like watching the steam from a coffee mug. Seasons will change from the present to the past and my consciousness wanders. I act and pretend Bunny is on holiday. It was my defence mechanism as a child. It is still as an adult. He'll be coming back now any day. Clouds will part. Still I tell myself because the grief is too much for me to handle, it overtakes me on certain days to the extent that I can only fill the hours and the silences with writing. Writing about life, the celebration of life and writing about death. You go on. You must. You must remember them as they were, I was told this once, I think my mother told me this. I make lions out of them. They turn into guardian angels and I make lions out of them. I find they are as much present as they ever were. I take comfort in that afterthought that populates. Grief can make you bitter. It can make you regret what you said, what you didn't say in the moment, what you wanted to say, desired to say to the object of your affection. It can make you angry at the world and for no apparent reason you snap at a stranger, or a child, or a loved one still very much in the world. Money, I realised will never bring them back. It is important, and somehow some people make it the root of all good, all evil, all material possessions as if they could take with them if they left this world. I am in a boat and my heart is breaking. My calm heart is breaking. I realised early on in life after I lost my paternal grandfather, I was of course much too young, much too young, well I realised that grief has an outspoken tongue and point of view when it comes to the living. Those left behind in the now less than crowded house.

What to do when grief overtakes you, when you're immersed in that space it is beyond overwhelming. If I could turn back the clock, I would have kept you safe every minute. I remember your voice, Bunny, I didn't think that I would, but I do.

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