

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Tony Gloeggler: Two Poems

Tony Gloeggler · Wednesday, July 8th, 2020

### A GOOD MAN

At the end of our last phone call  
my mom told me cousin Tom's  
cancer came back. He's keeping  
quiet about it, which everyone  
appreciates since he tends  
to tell the same stories over  
and over. Besides, somebody  
will just say what can you do.  
Someone else, it is what it is  
and everybody will nod, think  
he's seventy-five, how long  
does he want to live anyway.  
I like his Brooklyn Dodger  
stories: the Duke of Flatbush,  
Carl Furillo's canon arm, Campy  
Jackie, Pee Wee, Hodges and the way  
his face would turn red, words  
would spit out faster every time  
my brother called them the biggest  
chokers in baseball history, losing  
all those world series to the Yankees.  
Like smooth jazz, he'd flow into talking  
about the Mets, his Polo Grounds  
try out, throwing to Choo Choo  
Coleman in the bullpen, the call  
back that never came, or that Sunday  
when I was twelve and he pulled me  
out of Mass because his softball team  
needed a ninth body to avoid  
a forfeit. He'd always make fun  
of the three pathetic, weak-ass  
dribblers I hit before bringing up  
my over the shoulder catch in shallow

right that turned into the game-ender  
when I spun around and doubled  
the game-tying runner off second.

My mother coughs, wonders about  
his forty year old, never diagnosed,  
slow son and who will take care  
of him now, while I remember  
the month after my transplant,  
how he sat in his car outside  
my building, motor running,  
waiting for the sun to show  
its face, waiting to take me  
for my twice a week, follow up  
appointments, smiling like him  
and his son were heading out  
for a day of fishing on his boat.  
When my mom says he's a good  
man, my mind moves to Christmas  
dinners, stuffing my face, trying  
not to pick up the Italian bread  
and smack him across the mouth  
as he ranted about his tours  
at the Two Six Precinct in Harlem,  
the niggers, the spics, the way  
they lived like animals, how  
he'd leave the country, years  
later, if monkey-man Obama  
got elected. When my mom  
notices my silence, she says  
*Tom would do anything for you.*  
I say, *I know*, promise to call him  
over the weekend, see if there's  
something I can help him with.

\*

## AU REVOIR LES ENFANTS

After the movie  
I said I would do  
all I could

Hide you  
under my bed  
bring you  
bread and wine

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guide you  
past guarded borders

I would do that  
for you, for  
anyone

But if black boots  
kicked in the door, pressed  
a gun to my temple,  
said, *where's the Jew*  
my mouth would open  
point a finger

And I would breathe  
deep, glad to be alive  
for one more moment

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