

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Vanessa Napolitano: Three Poems

Vanessa Napolitano · Tuesday, November 29th, 2022

The Patron Saint of Lost Things, His Sorting Room

Look, not everything comes here. Not every earring post and stray sock,
not the wishbones from chickens or hair clippings. Not debris you shake off.
Not either the stray dogs, or missing children, though sometimes a unification can be made
(heat maps, good timing – I do what I can when I'm asked).
In this room you see the ghost of objects I'm asked for,
materialising and dissolving,
catalogued by my contemporaries. Maria in Rome has lost her engagement ring down the drain,
cliche, but so frequent. Poppy in Birmingham has lost her license at The Victoria, though she
doesn't remember so. She barely remembers getting home.
Men ask me less often but they ask. Michael has forgotten his keys in Winter Park. They're
actually still in his pockets. Michael talks to me often.
I try to answer as quickly as possible, but it requires time, concentration. What? I'm not Santa
Claus. Not handing out gifts. Not big with the funny. Not doing a trick.

This table here
is for items I was unsuccessful with, they have hardened into facts over time –
a real gold watch. The plastic charm from a cocktail glass. There's a melted quality to them,
they're still a little warped by desire, by the process of being asked after and missed. It carries a
physical toll, as you would expect. The weight of want, I called it in my better days. Maybe
I had just had too much wine.
Anyway, I better get back to it. As you can see, the queries are stacking up, literally! There shortly
won't be room to see. Don't get lost on your way out!

Just my little joke.

*

The Parade of Lost Fathers

Mine is the one around the middle with the beard, and glasses-
my whole life I never saw his clearly defined chin.
I hope they provide a float,
as he was latterly not much one for walking.
though I suppose the ankle doesn't bother so much now.

Likes:

Good whiskey; black coffee; a long meal out;
photography;
a lengthy televised political debacle.

My husband's father is behind, in front,
the fathers of at least two good friends.
They walk/drift in lockstep, out of their concrete being
into their concrete memory, just as immutable. In my brother's view of the parade,
perhaps my father wears a different shirt-
laughs at a different joke? Later, at a barbecue, we can argue over what year it was
our father learnt to drive.

I give my parade balloons and a bar
I imagine the weather is exceptional – dry, sunny but not too hot.
All the fathers at this parade are kind,
but not caricatures – there is rancour, regret,
candy floss. Popcorn.
Small foods that get stuck in the craw.
The confetti of things left unsaid.

*

A Slim Fury

Just enough rage to prop under a door,
to pick a lock. To wedge open a window.
Just angry enough to be a slim letter
that you can fold into a plane, send away.

A slice. Delicate like wire,
like wire sharp,
like guitar wires, vibrating.
Never knowing its why,

erratic like a dangerous pulse.
Glass under the sofa, fragments ready to spike.

You look radiant
you radiate.

*



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