
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Anthony L Rose: “Hemingway’s Room”

Anthony L. Rose · Wednesday, October 14th, 2020

I was surprised I chose “Hemingway’s Room” because I tend not to like poems about writing. Again, it was the language, clean and sharp throughout, but the section where the narrator heads out and reports what he sees, the images, is what won me over.

— Tony Gloeggler

Hemingway’s Room

I think about Hemingway in his room upstairs
a table, two chairs, a small sofa, settee with glasses
and a typewriter on the desk placed so he can see
both doors and the palm and banyan canopy rising
between him and the moon.

Something about that Spartan surrounding —
no phone, no files, no computer, fax, printer
no ergonomic swivel chairs poised at three work stations
one for writing and reading, one for projects, one for finance.

Something about the air, half boiling, half balmy
drifting aquamarine dragonfly light beams
etching prison bars in the hardwood floor.

Something about the man
square jaw, cropped beard, red burned jowls
and those massive arms big enough
to hold the kick of an elephant gun
and those thick hands, fingers tapping on teak.

I look at my slender arms, my tapered fingers
the lacy darkness that swims behind my eyes.

And I think about a night in Semarang
when I walked along the black water canal —
low cement wall, makeshift houses of tin, scrap wood,
dim lit by night candles, faces with deep Java eyes
averted to study some rice bowl, some deck of cards,
a chess board, or any kind of news print message
for a young woman with slight shoulders bent toward the baby
in a woven nippa-palm basket on a cracked Formica table top
pressed against chipped plaster, a few yards from the bend in the wall
where a family sleeps in a six foot square wooden box, woman and man,
each with a child across the chest, side by side, four bodies in a dark box.

The box family slept while I struck a cinder from my smoking kretek
and kicked mud from the heel of my hundred dollar shoes.

Something about the air
Something about the man
Something about the fingers
tapping tapping.

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