
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Gregory Goodrich: Two Poems

Gregory Goodrich · Tuesday, July 11th, 2023

Moonlight Sonata in C Minor

i don't know anything about music or musicality
only about the way your hands move across my back
like pin needles from an acupuncturist
or Botticelli painting *La Primavera*
and when i hear your fingers string across those keys
all i can think of is an entire piano landing upside my head
like in one of those Saturday morning cartoons
and as you keep that motherfucker suspended
a quarter inch above my toenail
i begin to think about that night
with Cassandra—seven years ago
where cobalt crushed into the asphalt
and you called me a fucking asshole
and how i still keep a stick of her eyeliner in my car
just as a reminder of when you asked me:
who the fuck do you think you are?
how i'm still here
trying to figure that out
and how we survived doing figure eights of cocaine
living in a glass house
that Ocean Drive hotel
and how we played those keys all damn day
until i damn near passed out
and i think about if i would've died then
i would've been happy about how i went out
because the last thing i would've ever remembered
would've been your damn mouth
but instead i remember right before i went into shock still
and how it feels like nothing—now that you killed your damn self

[and i think about that night
inside that brothel on Bourbon Street
rolling blunts in the back room
with some bitch named Cassidy

and how if we didn't get thrown out by security
i probably would've let her take me
for every fucking penny
thinking you would've let me
get away with anything]

or how a couple years later we'd end up in Phoenix
making out in the backseat—of a cop car
and how even after two hours inside that bitch
and hearing all the dogs bark
they couldn't pin us for shit
and i think about how much that pissed them off
that they had to let us drive off
into the motherfucking sunset
and how we had Maxwell's *Embrya* playing on a cassette
thinking that if i could be reborn
that this would always be my station
and i would fucking get off
on all the times i thought i hated
that time in that Toronto high-rise
after i had spent the night with the other girl of my dreams
and you just had to go on asking:
do you think Cynthia is more beautiful than me?
and i was fucking stupid—enough to think
that honesty was the best thing
cuz you already knew the answer
and you were just fucking testing
and i already knew then
i would've been better jumping off that fucking balcony
forty-four stories down til i was face-flat on the concrete
but i just fucking sat there
just like i would for the next four years
listening to all that dumb shit
and all those you don't really love me's
well shit—i'm still here
writing you love letters
and you've been dead for two years
and i can't think of a night since
that you haven't pulled at my heartstrings
like an angelic harp—or an arrow shot
that you expect me to catch in between my damn teeth
and i think about that first time in Fort Lauderdale
Valentine's Day 2013
how you gave me a gift—and like a kid on Christmas
i spent that whole morning playing with Cecily
and i think about how many hours we all sat on that tennis court
coming down off ecstasy
and how later you'd lose your best friend

and i don't know what the fuck even happened
but that shit was probably cuz of me

so all this is to say
i'm a fucking asshole
you were right all along the way
but never for a moment did i not love you
the only song i sing
is at the moon
howling your name

*

Plums

lips like plums
you tore me up

death rests
on the edge
of my tongue

and you stand there
in opposition
as a monument
to everything alive

and living
as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes
and i stop
and think

your frame
is like sunshine
and i'm
subject to photosynthesis

and you
are a message in a bottle
that i've been dying to read
even though i know i'm antithesis

palm dates fall to the ground
and eventually sprout
spelling out
the catharsis in your curves

reasoning creativity
into such a singular space

my great-grandfather used to spend all his free hours
trying to fit his creations into glass bottles

ships that never sailed
emotions that stayed bottled
now i'm going off the rails
now tell me, do you follow?

because we are against two different oceans
but every day i search for you in sea-foam

because you're a message in a bottle
one that i've been dying to read

my great-grandfather didn't have the privilege
of being able to fall in love on a whim
with someone across the country
and so he spent his nights emptying bottles of scotch
that were the same age as his wife
when he last loved her

folding himself away into delicate squares
like the sails he folded so close to his ships
just to make them fit
into these glass bottles
that to even to a younger me
felt like the eyes of fish

he was writing poetry in the wood he carved
i'm the only one who took the time to translate thus far

and you're a message in a bottle
one that i've been dying to read

because about you i've already written novels
and you didn't have to tell me anything

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lips like plums
you tore me up

my body breaks down like a chorus
you are all my wishes

lips like plums
you tore me up



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