
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Rich Ferguson: Two Poems

Rich Ferguson · Wednesday, May 21st, 2014

Rich Ferguson is a Pushcart Prize nominated poet who has been published in the *LA TIMES*, *Opium Magazine*, has been widely anthologized, spotlighted on PBS (*Egg: The Art Show*), was a winner in *Opium Magazine's* Literary Death Match L.A., and his spoken word/music videos have been featured internationally. Ferguson is host of the weekly Blog Talk Radio podcast *Poetiscape*, and is a regular contributor and poetry editor to the online literary journal, *The Nervous Breakdown*. His poetry collection *8th & Agony* has been published by L.A.'s Punk Hostage Press.

To-Do List

Live more
Laugh more.
Have more sex.
Explode orgasmic mind juice
into active imagination.

Make necklaces
of fiery L.A. sunsets,
ones you can
give away
at freeway exit ramps,
Skid Row,
or battered women's shelters.

Write more.
Sing more.
Play more guitar.
Leave all
mental & metaphysical doors
wide open.
Allow poetic muses
to pay unannounced visits
at all hours;
even if

they show up drunk
or with muddy feet.

Exercise more.
Walk the dog more.
Adopt dog logic—
where everything
is pure instinct,
pure expression.

Clean out your closet.
Give away
what you don't need.
Give away
what you think you need.

Especially
what you think you need.

Breathe more.
Meditate more.
Cultivate a flower mind.
Paint your darkest thoughts
baby blue.
The rest:
a blazing
Van Gogh yellow.

Drink more water.
Eat more fruits
and vegetables.

Don't lie.
Don't cheat.
Don't be deceitful.

Basically,
don't be an asshole.

And remember:
All the sins
your father
passed along to you,
don't accept them
as your own.
Instead,
donate them
to Buffalo Exchange
to be resold
as edgy

fashion accessories.

Spend more time
in nature.

Speak
to birds, trees.

Be the tree.

Imagine that kind
of stillness,
and patience.

Be
stillness and patience.

Brush your teeth
at least
twice a day.

Don't
chew your food
with your mouth open.

Don't condemn.

Don't kill.

Don't approach this life
as war.

And if you need
to carry a bomb,
let it be filled
with grace & generosity.

Explode color.

Explode beauty.

Explode joy.

Be a bliss terrorist.

Get more sleep.

Get more informed.

Learn to be
your own best friend.

Learn to be happy
with what you have,
and don't have.

Especially with
what you don't have.

Trade in
all your sad goodbyes
for newly reconditioned
hellos.

Develop a binding theory
of compatibility.
Know that love
doesn't trap you,
it sets you free.

Don't waste your time.
Don't waste
other people's time.

Don't tailgate.
Don't procrastinate.

Never mistake
silence
for annihilation
or submission.

Make
your inner light,
living light.
Don't
build mausoleums
behind your eyes.

Phone your parents more.
Send more letters
to friends
through U.S. Mail,
not email.

Clean out
the junk mail
from your
email inbox.

Greet each day
with a smile.

Make your
eyebrows kazoos;
teeth, keyboards;
chin, a bass drum;
so that when you laugh
you're a one-man band.

Finally,
build yourself
a Louis Armstrong gun.
Its ammo:

soulful vocals,
and trumpet wails.
Every shot:
the sounds
of a wonderful world.

When Called in for Questioning

When asked about the scars around your lips, tell them you were speaking peace in a shattered-glass world. When asked about employment, say you are a wound collector on the broken frontier. As for where you reside, tell them your heart is equidistant from joy and suffering, the now and never, the sweet flower and the Hiroshima cloud. Regarding why you say the things you say, tell them the full moon is in your mouth. When asked about the ghosts behind your eyes, say you occasionally spend too much time thinking about who you are to become, rather than who you are supposed to be. As for why some leave the world too soon, tell them death's reflexes are sometimes quicker than prayer.

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