
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Stephen Nathan: Two Poems

Stephen Nathan · Wednesday, November 20th, 2019

In The Garden

It's been so long, hasn't it?
You and me,
sitting in the familiar garden,
the annuals our clock,
counting down the bursts of color
that mark what remains of us.

The cruelty of age
this land of youth insists
the slowing pace
that feels like creeping autumn,
our future abbreviated,
made for others.

But still I want to kiss the new lines I spy on your face,
etched by smiles and tears,
that turn this usual day into the thrill of first love.

*

The Sweep of Time

It's the little things
we're told
that give reason to life,
those little things we ignore
in the whirl of enterprise and the crush of the clock.
The house is too cramped and the car too expensive
for us to note
what masquerades as nonsense.

But one day we'll again see
that tiny ring I gave you,
comically small,

the one you never take off
and we'll notice the trifling questions
about massaging your neck
making dinner
walking in the wind
the queries that knit us together into something more
than you and me.

This new sight
comes with a yearning
to train the past to heel,
a longing to rewind and gaze
at what we missed,
our daughter
years ago in her new shoes,
brimful with so much more
than the clodhoppers of adulthood
worn for effect and purpose.

Why didn't we pay attention in Physics
when the teacher was droning on
about quarks and leptons,
the tiniest of things
that hold all the universe has to offer?
Why pretend it's nothing
when we're cooking
and my hand brushes yours?

(Author photo by Jesse Welles Nathan)

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