

INTHEMARGINS

POETRY edited by Florine Melnyk

the last time i cried

we were in a bar on elmwood avenue
& i was drunk.
it was the middle of the afternoon,
on a sunday, in the summer;
august, i think.
you were talking about bukowski
or kerouac, & how their women
could never be in the great writers' club,
& i just couldn't help myself.
i don't know what started it,
hank's vanishing self, or jack's
blood-drunk death
but the tears hit me solid &
i couldn't stop
not for the frat boys watching baseball at the bar
or for the bartender in tight jeans with a grooved cameltoe
not for the diners and their pleasant meals
or the people hand in hand on the street
not even for you.
i was no good to anyone &
dear i really think something changed
for me that day, some kind of loss set in,
the kind we always just mused about,
& has left me hollow ever since.
because lately i've been so lonely,
i just dont know how to say it, except
to write this poem & tell you this:
i'm really sorry i got drunk & cried
on such a nice day.

—john a. grochalski

Something Like

Here, where
only careful
rhythms of
our words filter
through muffled
sounds at the table,
here, where
my breathing turns
shy, almost a wheeze
while yours grows
more daring, stretching,
no one—everyone—
in the restaurant must notice
these subtle changes.
I allow myself a glance
across your eyes, settled on
mine, then we drift
together to this page.
Doesn't it feel so right,
composing something
like poetry in the night?

—perry nicholas

She Sings Standards in the Corner

clatter of ice
in glasses
whisper of top shelf cocktails
kitchen's dinner specials
glide within this room
and across the bar
finds the singer in the corner
She sings standards
songs we all know
but seldom hear
She sits on a stool
dressed in a form-fitting sleeveless
sparkling-black dress
My Funny Valentine echoes from
her buffed-over lips
Her Carole Lombard locks
droop over her brow
and settle across her shoulders
She crosses her black-stockings legs
bounces and smiles out
Sunny Side of the Street
The singer
sits in her corner
slips on her glasses
and hums out
Cry Me a River
patrons drink
some want to smoke but can't
The patrons clap
after each of Her songs
Are they really listening?
They glance from their conversations
Is her voice the days-end elation
they don't know they need...

—mark lloyd

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