THREE POEMS

ryki zuckerman

The Poetry Collection is proud to celebrate National Poetry Month with the publication of ryki zuckerman's *Three Poems*, the eleventh in a series featuring the work of poets living in Buffalo.

2009	Bernhard Frank
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2014	Robert Giannetti
2015	Sally Cook
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THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER WORLDS

> *The telescope has a special instrument which splits light to find wobbles in different wavelengths. Those wobbles can reveal the existence of other worlds.*
>
> *– April 21, 2009, Associated Press*

we are on different wavelengths,
you and i,
and i rest, weary
after every wobbly search,
across the starry expanse
of night and time,
inside the vast litany
of could-bes,
everywhere i look
another black hole,
another mini-planet
waiting for your gaze.

send back a wobbly length of light
and we will blog later
oh, my little starchild,
cradle of water,
lifeline to the future,
oh dear "gliese 581 d"—
you wondrous sphere.

JANUARY 2ND, EARLY

(for my father)

he asks if i left it on,
maybe the light outside,
maybe something else that plugs in
there, in what might be the kitchen or
outside the window on the back porch
where the view is gaunt tree tops swaying.

when i assure him i didn't,
he considers what else might have
caused some change—
perhaps a loss of power
or a threat of flames.

i seem to have lived at home for decades
above the dock by the creek.
i survey the idea of what is owed,
what should be offered,
perhaps a generous monthly rent.

(for days an uneasy angst has gripped me
and the late light and early dark
help incubate a dull but crushing knot.)

when i wake up
the empty quiet
is a quite different location,

but the desire
to discuss rent
or anything else with him—
the song of the planets, the greek ideal,
the frequency signatures of musical notes,
the habits of fish in hook creek—
cuts sharply into the moment,
the ache to hear him again
tell me, tell me, speak
that
is the same.

TRIO

(for jimmie margaret gilliam, priscilla devantier bowen, and gabrielle burton)

here is what it is:
first the one leaves
and then another,
same day, on the other edge
of the same country,
from the same malady.
when you see the third,
bidding adieu to the second one,
she exudes the wraith
of her end as well.
faint shimmer in the air,
the dark thought that it is the last time.

here is what is clear:
the essence remains long after.
in each of them was this:
the whorl of her attention
centering on you,
in her presence, a calm center,
her graciousness, her smile,
the many gifts of her self she
shyly bestowed on you.

a breeze brushes your ear,
as if she is whispering her secrets

so you will keep them also,
more for counsel than consoling.
the clouds are wisps now,
lingering, wrapping you
with the determination
to remember her by your
next kindness to another.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ryki zuckerman is the author of *Looking for Bora Bora* (Saddle Road Press, 2013) and three chapbooks: *body of the work* (Textile Bridge Press, 1984), *the nothing that is* (Benevolent Bird Press, 2015), and *a bright nowhere* (Foothills, 2015).

zuckerman is a long-time co-editor of *Earth's Daughters*, the longest continuously published feminist literary arts periodical in the US. She taught art both in public schools and at Erie Community College City Campus, as well as a poetry class to adults at Gilda's Club.

She created, curated, and hosted the Gray Hair Reading Series for ten years, and at present has been organizing the Wordflight at Red Doors series for nine years.

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