

Fantasia Lights, Too

For Kristianne, Ted and Mark

It's the smell of a wolf or a Hello Kitty with a strap-on, one can't help but think how cute, how responsibility and desire are conflicting elements, how that dildo is going to put someone's eye out; sometimes art hurts. You smell astroglide and look at three cats and a man telling you how he ran from Bigfoot when he was fourteen, then on to discussing how a spice weasel is a fact not an interpretation, you don't need a rocket surgeon to tell you that. A philosophical problem is not an empirical problem. You drive past the restaurant you should be having dinner at with someone you have wanted to shake by the hand for years now. He drives fast and talks in scarce thoughts of exaggerated passions, subjects from the army to anger and how no one gets caught growing, he knew a guy. The endless social questions of what a poem is and how the fuck can anyone write a poem and that be grounds for an art form. Steel is heavy, steel is art. He hit the dashboard and then asked if I liked Neil Diamond. I said I heard he can split a room, he asked who I heard that from, I told him, Boswell and he nodded like he knew him, recognized the distain some hold against him for saying that thing; but no I know he doesn't know him or anything more on this, but that was how this truck ride tapped along, blindly regaining its footing. It's been ten days without marijuana and one gets jangly, uncomfortably so, so discomfoted you call friends, all your friends whom you have ever put bowl to mouth with, just in case they do not actually know of anyone who they can call for a quick favor. You call your dealer to let him know that there is a poetry book fair going on just in case he may not know, and I know he would have called if he had heard from his regular supplier, but this is to let him know the cultural aspects of the city. We will suppose that this is not about that but this, and say off hand how this affects the other, it's a zinger coming down from the sunny haze where a patron can potentially knock knees with someone who you had a twitter fight with yesterday, and you cannot gather up the courage to apologize just yet; the stomach flips on emptiness'. Then a call comes in from the ex-wife of an ex-life and that strained excitement begins to surge through your memories, everything works out and in minutes you'll be dining on rogan josh, high as a kite and pretend that all is fine and a smooth transition back to normal is a dinner jacket rented to you by the maître d'hôtel. You dream of impressing the person who has impressed you for so many years, you hope he doesn't smell the pot smell, or if he does will want to smoke some with you. But now, we are parked across the street of that restaurant and that dinner in a patch of lawn that is not a parking space an hour past the time agreed to meet. The dealer is not at home and he comes back to the truck to call on his cell phone. We drive up Elmwood to her house in hopes she might be there. He tells me of his time in the Army and how he blackmailed his sergeant major with the names and locations of his hookers, I really liked him at this point. But I would like him better if he had the pot and we were talking crazy shit while high. So it was me waiting in the truck again, crinkling a smiling towards a church going grandmother walking towards her car from the nearby liquor store. I could tell she thought I was a cop. I wanted to get away from all of this but if it all worked out; well, then fine. But if I had come this close to only smell the declining disappointment of a faded world; well we never had to figure that out because out he came and in your face, he had two ounces of commercial and a small bit of some really tasty kind bud. We smoked a bit if the kind and I let him keep the rest as a thank you for the troubles. He yammered on and on as he drove around the place I had to get out, a poetry reading in Allentown. But the more I smoked the easier the stories were to digest. He told me of guns and tattoos and of a giant rat that I am certain the world is not yet ready to hear. But I will tell you of the worst smell I have encountered outside of a war zone and preteen narco-fascist artists; a poet who made another artist gasp and demand an explanation; a brief encounter of Akron love, The only authentic man in the room is not sure if he is a fraud, of the man who led the way out of blue death with two gay cats Marcel and Balthazar under his arms, of the kindness and thoughtful friends who you can fight with and come to hug over art, of the UPS truck that sent books from South Carolina to Kenmore in nine hours, and how four pearls made me fall down stairs and dislocate my elbow. But that last one is not as interesting a story as once I put the pearls back in their container, instantly I regain my fortune, my land and title are restored, and like a guillotine everything falls into place. I get that phone call that began this garish affair. To sum up, there is very good evidence that we generally don't truly want good poetry; but rather poetry that confirms our assumptions. We may believe in the clash of opinions; instead we embed ourselves in the reassuring tomb of an echo. Dangerous fun at a youthful twenty-five makes for a queasy freefall at a gray haired forty.

Rockets, Geoffrey

Geoffrey Gatzka

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