

Connie's Wish

Born on the same day five years apart
We had to like each other
Though I was unprepared for your assault
When you want something you go out and get it
And I like that; you picked me up, too
In just the nick of time

We rode the Blue & Gold ferry into San Francisco
--Your first trip--
Crossed the Embarcadero
And hiked the sheer steps from Levi's Plaza
To Coit Tower
But didn't go in because of the steep fee
Then sat on the ramparts outside gazing out to the Golden Gate
Watching boys packing skateboards crawl up through the bushes
To run past us and cruise them on the asphalt parking lot

We spent the bright day gawking at sights in the sunshine
Bought sandwiches and stout at a Chinese deli
Drank Guinness out of the can in paper bags
'til we walked back to the pier for the last boat home

And riding it back to Marin
Played 'Titanic' at the bow
Then ambled back to the wide ship's stern
And there, while I held you, gazing at the lights of The City
Passing the black mound that is Angel Island
You wished on the twilight's first star:
"Star light, star bright, first star I see tonight . . ."
But your voice trailed off
Into your most private thoughts
And after a long pause when you wouldn't reveal yourself to me
I made a stupid comment
About craving more to eat
Or some such, although, in the sunny days since then
It's been really bugging me
And thinking about it now
I simply have to know--
What was it you wished for?

It must have involved you and me
After all, my arms were circling you and we were

Breathing in unison

So tell me--did you hope for a stellar night, a whirlwind affair?
Or even (my delight in you cries out to me)
Spending the rest of our lives together

And though I think the last must be true
The possibilities for me are
Fraught with trepidation

So don't tell me
Because a life with responsibilities
Scares the holy hell out of me
And I fall often
And sometimes get back back up so slow, yes so awfully slowly

You
Are beautiful
Though you call yourself "fat"
Say we're both old
And don't like me swearing
You can look like a little girl
Make pasta out of thin air
Loan me a sawbuck when I'm down and out
Forgive me my anxiety attacks
And seem to comprehend I'm not always fond
Of the world we live in

And I think you understand my truth--
That I feel a compulsion to fight the world without end
To feel more alive!
And I make things harder than they actually are
Just for the fun of it, I suppose
For accepting this, I do love you

So please, don't tell me
And maybe I can just slide through life next to you
And not realize you've got me
Until we really are old

And lately it seems
I can still
Make something out of myself
Since we met, when I scuffle with unavoidable death, and fall
I get up faster knowing you're near

When I find triumph I say it's your cooking:
Angel-hair pasta, home baked bread, buttered rye bagels and all

And it may be my martial training
Prepping for another skirmish
(Or maybe it's just you)
But I feel like I'm young and handsome again
After years with a pot belly that's a most welcome state
Now I find women staring at me from the dimly-lit corners of rooms
Really! Young, old, gorgeous or not, they gape at me even when they're with their men
And that's no fucking lie (I say only to myself)
Though it terrifies me knowing to keep you
I can only look back
Forever

And if my feelings about your wish are true
And a sunlit path does await us while you accompany me
Then I'm lost forever and I'm God Damned
I mean, "Danged if I do and danged if I don't" I say out loud
Hell, my father was a ship's captain!
And I was born to swear
And I know you can't change me now
And I start sweating in church, next to you
When I realize what lies ahead

So you see, this does affect me
And I have to know
I HAVE TO KNOW
But please, please, *please*

Don't ever tell me

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