I'll find you - A Dedication to Mathew Paust

by Amantine B

I joined Fictionaut nearly a decade ago at a time when I was very reticent about every making my writing public again. I'd experienced severe and traumatising online bullying and public humiliation of my writing, including violent threats regarding my daughters that I withdraw for close on a decade. Resolute that I was no longer willing to be intimidated I made a very tentative steps back out into the 'literary world'. I did so with a collaborative project spontaneously begun online with an American artist. It was an experiment in improvisation which resulted in an invitation to present the project in 2011 during a series of appearances during the London summer season of literary and poetry readings. The response was lukewarm and it didn't spur my confidence in publishing my work. Fictionaut changed that, and very much at the heart of the overwhelming warmth and support I have been privileged to enjoy here ever since, is/was Mathew Paust.
Momentarily I stand in the midst of close family loss as my father in law died yesterday afternoon after a decade long and courageous fight against various cancers. I know Matt in recent months has on a similar challenging journey and from our last private exchanges a few days ago, he's been commandingly defiant as ever. Over the years here on Fictionaut, I've had the glorious fortune not only to find myself among a community of writing peers, but to have among the most meaningful and important relationships of my life; ones which I value and treasure and will hold dear for what ever time is graced to me.
I found Matt to be funny, generous and unflinchingly direct; also for me he is among those rarest creatures, an ideal kind of reader; not

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because of praise or unqualified admiration, of the kind that undermines quality, but because he was genuine and honest. A writer can ask no more of any reader and he generously and consistently supported my work and glad to say, I was able to reciprocate by hosting his work in Literati Magazine in recent months too.
Matt's warmth, friendship, tenacity, wit, generosity and resilience will remain a guiding light high above my literary landscape whatever shape it assume and it is with profound gratitude that I re-share this poem as a fare well to a writer who loved this space and the writing he discovered here every day.

Here's to you Matt, to stirring it up among the stars and their angels and universes colliding down here ... x

- Ever, Amatine

_____-

I'll find you among the mustard seeds, drawing breaths of dough
as the slow bake rises in the back room of longing we let go.

I'll find you summoning the larks back from their twilight, where
the oceans ebb their flow to the pull of a forgotten springtide.

I'll find the sum of you in the particles of stars fallen to capacious black
in that cold shimmer of our Unbecoming

I'll find me in the ghost of your wreckage adrift islands sunk to the feet
of Hebredian gods, where I'll wash ashore in the ash of seashells.

I'll find your voice, unbidden in the softened bruise of sunken afterthought,
and recall *Manafon* amid the *sylvian canticles* I yet should write.

I'll find you where the shore turns its heel there, where the woods breathe
their lovely dark to the larksong of ancient adorations.

I'll find you somewhere browsing those laughter lines anchored to our waterfront of years taken hostage to the harrow;

and I'll borrow lines from Everywhere's sorrow to soften the blow - of that pinioned yearning, looking back into the hollow of this finitude.

MY GRATITUDE

Usually I write individually to thank each person who has left a note and taken the time to read, fav(the bane of Matt's day:-) ...) however, this time I am expressing my gratitude to each one of you here, for your moving and humbling commentaries. Along with Matt, those of you who have become something of a 'regular', though never, blithe, blasé or indifferent, audience / readership, of my literary 'alchemy', here and elsewhere, continue to inspire, challenge and drive me to ever improved craftsmanship and to better my apprenticeship of literary and poetic language. Fictionaut has been a place from which I re-commenced my professional foray back into the publishing landscape and will always be of central importance in how I have emerged back into life itself too. So, as much as this poem is a dedication to Matt, in gratitude, I wish you all to know, he is counted among several of you now, proudly, as a rare peer group of literary

friends, to whom I will forever owe, my deepest gratitude. Thank you for joining me in this send off to Matt - I figure he'd be muttering and grinning back, at the lot of us.