Letter to Garrison Keillor

by Ann Bogle

Maybe you'll friend me still. That would be just. You friended that gal who teaches at Normandale, a friend of a deep friend of mine in Chicago, a serious secular religious poet in Joliet, Bill Yarrow. Feminine wiles? Jane Bowles. I'll go back on my Scottish oath re: Olga Kaymashnikova, the escort from Moscow, who inspired my best friend in writing his novel but who later demystified their union by asking $3.5 K an hour for her son or two, Nikolai. I do not agree with feminine wiles in the long run. I like men to be big time, deep set men who love deep set women. I wrote today at my Facebook page, thinking of you a bit because Stephen Dunn's poetry about divorce was in your bookshop in St. Paul:

(Based on another photo at Laura Hinton's profile page): “Evie Shockley is so mild. I met her in an elevator in Atlanta. She did not grow shockingly in five years. She is protected, a garden herb, and herb is better than hosta. I met Stephen Dunn in the same elevator. I was shocked, can you believe that? by Hilda Raz's son's speech on the panel where Dunn had described his date with Liza Minnelli. Hilda Raz lost a daughter. Her son gained a persona, backed by biological components. I was impressed at the book fair by his male-pattern baldness. A biological genius. And yet, I was reduced and in the elevator mentioned crying about it, about ordinary women, to Dunn, who had already known about Raz's son.”

Leo Kottke is my friend. He is my friend because he is decent, not for any other reason. I had lunch with him one day in Excelsior. I ate like a man, soup, as I always do. I tend to be thin at times yet eat without apology. He looked a little rueful when I told him that I have bipolar disorder, as if saying so would not work. Then I said a publisher released Janet Frame. And “fat chance that would happen.” He knew Kay Redfield Jamison and said he was in a correspondence with her. I thought, she is a publicity researcher but in no way a primary creative genius, hers a middle path, research, fluent in English, talent at predicting pathological

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resistance to melancholy in artists after her revelations as a pseudo scientist, no Sylvia Plath, whose nature poems alone outstrip her. My doctor, Faruk S. Abuzzahab, is polite about Jamison who renamed the illness bipolar disorder though she did not go to medical school. I wonder what she and Leo corresponded about? I guess I thought he'd had (past) major depression, not bipolar. My old dad had died of cancer in ‘92, just after my d'x with bipolar. I loved him so much. Seven years later, I sat in an A.A. meeting at St. Luke's Presbyterian in Minnetonka, where I was baptized, why I despised cult leaders in the room. I told them he had died. It was obvious I was flipping out but not why. Daughter of a WWII reservist whose Wisconsin Synod Lutheran and Episcopalian lovers had suggested incest. Fucking Episcopalians! I didn't think anything like that even prior to my d'x in Houston, but silence dictated. I had told Christa. Christa was a Mexican-Irish gal from San Juan Capistrano. She had said, “Were you molested as a child?” And I had said, “Yes, I think so,” but my “think” was not related to Freudian hysteria (I was not hysterical) but to the age of the molesters, who were fourteen.

If you don't friend me, I'll have no way to forgive you. Christa would say, “Offer it up!” I drove once, not expected, to my boyfriend's house in Sugar Land from Houston. Twenty-five miles. He acted amused when he opened the front door. I said, “I'm not stalking you. I love you,” and he said, “Come in. What are you doing standing outside?”