

# The Lost Meaning

*by* Darryl Price

of any cautionary tale is  
somewhere found rolling around in your  
own sweet voice for me. Your sound's still  
listing there inside my wobbly  
head. My head is too often in  
my open hands, grinning behind  
its face-mask like a parade on float.  
There are things coming together  
that neither one of us will see  
until they are right on top of  
us, but we have lived through them all  
once before. If you paint a sad

enough picture for the truth, they  
will ask you why you didn't sing  
a happier song. If you make  
up a brave something to whistle  
as you crouch through a tunnel of  
swirling leaves, they'll want to know where  
your next funny picture of the  
burning moon is to come from. No  
one believes you are doing your  
best. They always think they could steer  
your fragile life away from the  
jagged, dripping rocks if you would

only let them. As Carol said,  
don't let them get away with that  
petty kind of sick juvenile  
manipulation. Direction

is another purely sticky  
organic thing in a dangerous world—we  
don't need to go as far as the next  
universe. If it was as fixed  
as they believe, you would be made only  
of the molten rocks. But as it is you  
get to be the presence that is truly  
your self. That's where all the magic

can begin to make some real contact  
with the rest of the earthly realms.  
And from there, my dears, you may at  
last sincerely find peace as goodness and some  
happiness as light, although they hate those  
two words almost as much as they  
hate this dream we are currently having together. That  
shouldn't stop us. Look. Here we are,  
making it all up as we go. Here we are, we  
are shaking all of the roots to heaven, we  
are dancing all of the rivers to hell,  
loosening all of the bad knots one by one by one.

Bonus poem:

The Lights Went Out

The door you used  
had quite a kick  
to it. The air  
was combustibile after that--

on Lonesome Avenue, harmful

or fatal if swallowed.  
The stairs you took  
swept sideways behind you,

daring anyone to love  
you without it being  
an improbable crime. Didn't  
mean to laugh, but

obviously I'd failed again  
to utter all the  
right things that make  
these things seem better. One

of us has changed.  
Oh I doubt there's  
a glorious moment to  
come on Lonesome Avenue.

