

Poem for Ivor

by Deborah Oster Pannell

How to capture in word, in song, the fleeting moments of our love
You were here
And now you're gone
Even as I used to lie next to you,
bathed in the care and concern that emanated
from your warm black brown eyes,
I knew there would be that day, that you were no more
Destined for separation
Our love gave little room for the illusion
that we would have forever
Perhaps it was this knowledge
that haunted me
prevented me
from scaling the wall of fear
that grew with each passing year
one, two, five, ten,
and then, ironically, I became that person
who made long term commitments
merely for staying in one place
for long enough
to let the years unfold around me
it's not a skill, really
just inertia
you build muscles in strange places
to withstand unexpected pressures
challenges you have no way of understanding
before you find yourself in the ring
If I could wash away the regrets
and sweep aside the anger, resentment, frustration
all that would remain is memories
of magic times,
like that early night when I sat, rocking back and forth in my chair,

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gazing in the mirror as we spoke on the phone for hours and hours,
unwrapping the gift of our life stories for one another,
and I knew it was right, because I didn't see a single red light
or the time we smiled at one another across the platforms
you headed uptown, me down
after a night traversing the city, hand in hand
certain of our uncertain future together
already bound in inexplicable ways
preparing for the first of many nights
traveling in opposite directions

