Shakespeare's dead, and so is Homer

by Jerry Ratch

I remember one time I was downtown when this little old lady came up to me at a café, looked in my face, and said, *"You know what?"*

I was surprised she was even speaking to me, a young blonde girl sitting alone at a restaurant, with the shadows playing between my fingers around a glass with coffee in it. *"What?"* I said.

"Shakespeare's dead, and so is Homer, Proust, Hemingway. And I don't feel very well myself!" And with that she let out a loud, long laughter that completely caught me off guard. It was like was she somebody's grandmother I was supposed to know or something. And who did she think I was?

Well, it just took me by surprise, that's all. She didn't look like she would have had it in her, laughter like that. And I just spent the rest of the day thinking about you and me, and our first time together, in your bed, and the surprise that took hold when I left my body during sex that day and I was floating near your ceiling and witnessed us making love on the flattened plane of the earth below. And I wished I could have a glass of red wine in my hand again — and you too. I wished I had you to hold one more time in my arms. Just once!

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