

3 Dollar Bills

by Tim G. Young

Once when I looked in the back seat of my car
I found an empty jar.
Well, actually there were three
one dollar bills in the jar.
I wasn't sure how the hell they
arrived in there but I wasn't
uncomfortable seeing them.
They reminded me of a trip to the grocery store
when I needed to pick up some frozen pizza.
In the freezer section I saw the pizzas were all on sale.
They had the usual pepperoni, sausage, cheese and
a garlic flavor I hadn't seen before.
At the register I plunked down my money for
a pepperoni and a spinach and mushroom
I found at the last minute.
My belly was doing flip flops but before I finished the transaction
I had to run to aisle three to pick up a two liter bottle
of Coke.
Man, that shit was made to consume with pizza,
even better than beer in some situations, you know.
Back at the car I removed the three bucks from the now
truly empty glass jar, and stuffed them in my pocket.
I looked at those as a tip for buying the
pizza that was on sale.

At home I cranked the oven and stuffed both pizzas in there
and when they were ready I ate every crumb of both pies.
Well, there was some burnt crust that I let slide.
The bottle of Coke was almost empty too. It's not that I
really care about soda but like I said with pizza it's very
important for me.

I walked around the house after I had finished and talked to myself I spoke about the texture of the crust, the freshness of the tomato sauce and the flavors I was craving it turned into a quite long monolog. I discovered pepperoni may hold the secrets to life.

The cheese and extra cheese I forgot to mention I dumped on the pies before they took their place in the oven. Cheese please. Extra cheese please. And then like heat escaping from the oven I thought about my mother. She had died almost eight years ago but I never noticed the time when it came to thinking about her. She really loved me and I really loved her. We never had any huge or small issues. She would have helped me eat those pies too, except I would have had to make her some bourbon old fashions. That was her drink of choice, with the fruit muddled. She always ordered them that way and I always laughed to myself. it struck me as a funny thing coming out of my mother's mouth.

So then I turned on the TV and put up this noir detective show with the character Harry Bosch, named after the painter. He had piercing eyes and a face that did not define symmetry. I felt good looking at this face and the city of Los Angeles where the stories took place. Jazzy saxophones played in the background and the colors of the neon lights reflected over everything including intense emotions. Not sure how my mother would have felt about all the gun play and murder but it was simple for me to accept as part of life in the big city especially experienced by police detectives. They knew things mere mortals would never begin to understand.

When I lived in the big city time was like the express
number two subway train cruising down to fourteenth street from
thirty-fourth.

No stopping it. Windows and bodies rattling like empty Coke bottles
in the back of a delivery truck. In the small town now time
is ripped from the soul because the stars at night are
so bright but are so indifferent to every human who
chooses to stare and have a good look.

It makes me think the crazy notion that
the big dipper one night when I wasn't looking
may have done a quick sneak into my car and dumped those
three single one dollar bills in my jar
as a kind of a tip that maybe I was doing all right.

I felt all right about thinking that and I know
my mother would have had a good laugh about it,
especially after one or two muddled fruit old fashions.

