

She (**SHE!** ... *she* ... **She** ...

she...*she*...**SHE** (she)!!)

By Thomas J. Misuraca

WHY WE LIKE IT: *The pronoun as anima. Misuraca crafts an enigmatic femme-fatale in this slightly turgid narrative in which, by turns, the contentious and amorous relationship between 'he' and 'She' is deftly presented as a series of exclamatory collisions. 'She' is oracle, siren, Sybil and Salome wrapped into one and the author's keen prose and focused story telling keeps our attention where it should be. Together they might even be a shade not of he and She but the nonbinary. An innovative playful take on the darker side of gender politics. The style is somewhere between dramatic monologue and Greek choral theatre as played by Ionesco.*

QUALITY QUOTABLE:

I peeled back my eyelids so I could take in more of the new worlds she exposed me to.
My eyeballs burned.

"You've got to dilate your mind," she snarled.

SHE

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She blew into my life like a whirlwind. Tearing the world around me to shreds. What went up wouldn't come down in the same place.

"Batten down the hatches," she warned.

She overtook my life suddenly. As if she'd always been there.

She pried open my heart with the crowbar of her tongue. She knew just what questions to ask to expose my most intimate parts.

She stripped me naked with a glance. The air so cold, it turned my skin to gooseflesh.
(Duck, duck, goosebumps.)

The goose pimples of my love popped like whiteheads. Surged like the whitecaps.
Rushed in like white blood cells.

She's an infection. I'm infected.

"We're from two different worlds," I suspected.

"The same world," she laughed, "but different realities."

She rocked my world so hard, we had a 5.8 earthquake. Soon after, it snowed.

"We live inside a snow globe," she realized.

Fog obscured the city.

"I'm being to doubt if it were ever really there," I confided in her.

"It wasn't," she confirmed. "At least not the city as you knew it."

I peeled back my eyelids so I could take in more of the new worlds she exposed me to.
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She's always been the author of her own story. Now she's writing mine. But how much of this is fiction?

"There is some truth in there," she revealed, "but it's buried deep."

We lived together in her domain. Soon I forgot the address of every other place I'd lived.

"Because you can never go back," she explained. Or threatened.

We'd grown so close, we could be the same person.

“I could never be you,” she scoffed. “You’re too far gone.”

I was lost within her.

I was lost without her.

She relished this power.

I laid awake at night and stared at the unfamiliar ceiling. My fears kept me awake until dawn. I wanted to share them with her. But I knew she’d make them worse.

“I don’t know everything,” she told me. “I just fake it better than you.”

I prayed one day she’d vanish. Instead, pieces of me eroded into her ocean.

“You’ll be free when you’re dead,” she assured. “But you’ll never be whole again.”

The story is no longer mine. Her words form a path before me. Her tongue pushes me forward.

When was the last time I had an original thought?

“I’ve changed the narrative,” she brags.

What was once a whirlwind is now a gentle breeze.

My empty shell wafts away.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: *The story was inspired by an image I had of people living inside a snow globe. How after an earthquake, it would snow. Somehow, my mind connect that to somebody who would shake up your life, but then focus on the pretty snow that was falling. Somebody who scares the Hell out of you and excites you at the same time.*

We’ve all been in that relationship, whether if it’s with a he, she, they or them (or even an I). How we lose ourselves so much in another person, we’re no longer writing our own story. And it happens in a flash.

Influences. Always Kafka. A sprinkle of little Burroughs (William, not Edgar Rice, though I did live in Tarzana for over 20 years) and a dash of Mark Leyner (have you read My Cousin, My

Gastroenterologist?) And there's always some crumbs of Joyce Carol Oates at the bottom of my box.

AUTHOR BIO: I studied Writing, Publishing and Literature at Emerson College in Boston before moving to Los Angeles. Over 95 of my short stories and two novels have been published. This year work has appeared in Capsule Stories, Page & Spine and Alchemy Literary Magazine. My story, Giving Up The Ghosts, was published in Constellations Journal, and nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

I am also a multi-award winning playwright with over 135 short plays and 11 full-lengths produced globally. My musical, Geeks!, was produced Off-Broadway in May 2019.