

The *Love* of my... Previous Life

... Elena Naskova

WHY I LIKE IT: *Drama Editor JANET EHRLICH COLSON writes...Elena Naskova's The Love of My Previous Life gives us elements of performance poetry in a reflective jam that goes beyond spoken word into the hidden voice of the subconscious. Emma is a raw and honest character weighing a life-changing decision in a monologue that pits her beliefs about love against a stark reality that has become unbearable. We witness Emma as she pieces together a personal narrative in which the emotional weight of a relationship wrought with addiction has collapsed chronology, and yet her rational mind thrums throughout as a steadying force. She asks, "Who's this man sleeping next to me?" wondering where she exists in the past and present tense - and then answering her own question in the aha moment that propels her forward.*

"Oh yeah", I thought, "this man is ... was ...

is ... the love of my ... previous life".

Spacing is playwright's own. Please scroll down.

The Love of my Previous Life

a monologue
by
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EMPTY STAGE. EMMA ENTERS. PAUSE.

EMMA

I couldn't sleep last night. Maybe it was the bottle of wine that I opened, after you went to bed. I was going for a little buzz to help me fall asleep ... but ... I didn't stop drinking soon enough. The bottle was empty before I remembered to pay attention. My mind went somewhere far away, and it returned to me, too late. So when I finally went to bed, my head was banging, instead of buzzing. You were sound asleep. I could hear you breathe next to me, and like almost always, completely oblivious of what I was going through. I tried to lay still and ignore the banging in my head, but I couldn't. So I sat up and turned on the nightstand lamp. You didn't budge. You were where you were, and you weren't going to join my drunken party. But you were the only one there, and right next to me, so I ... watched you sleep. And as I watched you sleep, I started wondering, "Who's this man sleeping next to me?" The more I stared at you, the more I felt like I had no idea who

you are. When I was just about to start panicking, a weak voice in my drunken head spoke to me: "He's the love of your life", the voice said. "Oh yeah", I thought, "this man is ... was ... is ... the love of my ... previous life".

The life that is no more. The man is still here, the bed is still here, and the room and the house ... everything is still here, but ... it does not belong to ... this life of mine. ... anymore.

(pause)

I jumped out of bed alarmed and started searching for anything that belongs to my current life. I checked my closet. My closet too was full with things from my previous life. Dresses, skirts, high heels, tops, bras, business suits. Things that I haven't put on for a long, long time. I felt as if I was going through a dead woman's closet. I quickly left the bedroom and walked around the house, disoriented. As I walked in the kitchen, I approached the recycling bin and I opened it. There it was, the empty wine bottle. I picked it up and held it, asking myself: 'Is this empty bottle the only thing in this house that belongs to my current life?'

(pause)

I put the wine bottle back in the recycling bin. "Tonight there will be more empty bottle in the bin", I thought, and that

thought terrified me.

(pause)

A sudden urge to flee overwhelmed me. An unbearable urge to run away, and leave behind the sleeping man in the bedroom, the empty bottle in the recycling bin, and all wine bottles that are yet to be finished alone, made my skin crawl and my stomach cramp. Run away, but where to? What is there but the present and the past? I asked myself.

(pause)

"Just run away, no matter where?" That question was the answer, and that was that. I went back to the bedroom, I scooped my clothes from the floor and put them back on. As I was grabbing my purse, I wondered, "is this all that I need?" My passport came to my mind. "My passport? Do I need a passport for where I'm going?". I dug out my passport, and my reading glasses too ... and ... I walked out of my life into the vast nothingness.

THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS...

Long time ago, a friend from work, who was an immigrant like me, gave me tour of his newly bought house.

'Is this your dream house,' I asked him.

'It's from a previous dream,' he said.

His response was something that I never forgot, because it was so honest and real. Very often our dreams change, our lives change, our choices change, but remain we're stuck in the past, because our lives have remained the same.

When a Facebook friend who always posted about the 'love of her life' divorced, I remembered my friend from work and his house from his 'previous dream'. And that is how two completely unrelated stories come together.

I haven't found my writing style yet, and I'm not sure that I'll ever find it. I try to learn from all the writers that I've read and admire.

AUTHOR BIO: Elena Naskova was born and raised in Macedonia. She immigrated to USA when she was twenty-five. Elena is interested in the human condition, the ways we relate to ourselves and to others. The subtle, the hidden, the unseen, the untold and the misunderstood is what she strives to capture in her plays. Her plays have been produced and read in Portland, San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, North Hollywood, Chicago, Nantucket, Mesa/Scottsdale, Sheffield - UK, New York, Toronto, Bloomington, Oakland, San Francisco, Madrid – Spain, Dubai, Spokane and Seattle. She's also a proud participant of the 14/48 theater project in Seattle and a second-place winner in the La Vegas Little Theater's *New Works Competition*. Elena is a member of the Dramatist Guild and the Seattle Playwrights Circle.

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