

Quarantine *MCVI*

By

Meghan Crosby

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...I find Meghan Crosby's 'Quarantine XVII' both grounding and consolingly animating. If we have been somewhere long enough there is that one view, one window we look out inviting our mind to wander, reflect, resolve, contemplate. Those incidental fixtures that have grown so familiar beyond the glass, remaining constant, comforting us. Meghan takes it further--uber-anthropomorphic: Befriending a lamppost who calls itself "Petunia." "But my friends call me Tuni / So I call her Tuni too." (...what i wouldn't give to be as life-like.) Besides, what's more romantic than a streetlamp? The Cinema has had a love affair with them since the invention of celluloid.*

“Quarantine XVII” by MC

I have made friends
With the lamppost
Out my window
She winks at me
From afar
As she safeguards the park
She warbles top of the mornin!
And other catchphrases
In a jolly lolly tone
When I requested her name
Petunia!
She proclaimed
But my friends call me Tuni
So I call her Tuni too
It felt like the right thing to do
Now Tuni and I
Spend most of our days together
(At a distance of course)

We smile at runners in the park

And bark slow down!
To the crisscross crosswalk cyclists
When I wave
Tuni bows her head to greet me
And I shine my face back at her
We start each chat with the weather
Or I read her a poem
And she sings to me about flowers
While we pass away the hours
We are quite the pair
She stationary
And I, striving to stand still too
Both donning our best black
Because we know that fashion
Never fades

Tuni declares
A good friend
Is like a good dress
Classy yet sassy
With unique curves and spins
One embraces
But never brags about
As they light up the dance floor
A true friend
Always waits for you
Even when
You don't have the strength
To turn the light on
Just like you Tuni, I remark
And she spangles her spark
In agreement
Just like us
She gleams

THE POET SPEAKS: *Teaching drama online during the height of the pandemic in New York City was soul-squelching to say the least. I spent hours and hours on the computer teaching up to fifty small faces at a time, spread across three different screens so I could see as many of them as possible while still screen-sharing tunes for our latest musical. Each afternoon my eyes had recessed to the center of my skull, pressing so hard against my brain that a migraine doesn't begin to cover the sensation. One of the few things that brought me peace during that time was morning walks in Prospect Park, where I would pass one particular lamppost that I could see from my living room window. I developed a sort of friendship with this majestic lamppost,*

smiling at her while walking past. Each morning I would raise my cup of coffee in greeting as I sat down to journal or write poetry. During this time of extreme loneliness and isolation, this lamppost took on the role of confidant and friend. She was sitting so still too; she understood what it was like to be in a city with so many people, yet never able to get close to them. So we chose each other. I named her Petunia, and we've been friends ever since.

The women who inspire me to write are Lynn Nottage, Paula Vogel, Sarah Ruhl, and Rupri Kaur. Each of them has at least a spark of the lyrical in their writing, whether that be imagery, alliteration, other worlds, or pinings for peace. I need to write poetry because my heart is too full as an empath. I spend each day with a chest spilling over with both love and fear, and if I don't empty some of these into a poem, then I end up crying out water instead, expelling feelings just to get by. Poetry is my solace, my memory-maker, my take on the universe. I feel fortunate to think in words that dance. I hope those that read my writing feel a quiver in their feet as they are inspired to walk through the world with just an ounce more caring, an ounce more peace.

AUTHOR BIO: Meghan Crosby, also known as MC (she/they), is a playwright, performer, and choreographer. She received her MFA in playwriting from the University of Glasgow in 2013. That same year, their dance-infused play *Sleeping Soldiers* received four stars at the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival and was a semi-finalist for Amnesty International's Freedom of Expression Award. Her dystopian play *S-T-I-T-C-H* was a finalist for the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting in 2014. A global writer and teacher, MC's work has been produced alongside their theatre courses in New York City, Scotland, China, Singapore, and Madagascar. Other NYC playwriting highlights include *Imprint* (2015), *Little Feet Big Dreams* (2017), *Hear Them Roar* (2018), *A Woman in Your Life* (2018), *Clique* (2019), *Um...Om* (2019), *Patty* (2020), *Prom Dress* (2020), and *Arcade Gym* (2021). Meghan was a finalist for the Playwrights' Center 2020-21 McKnight National Residency and Commission. In 2020, they won the Kaufman Playwriting Award for their play *Um...Om*. Her writing has been published online and in print by organizations such as Smith and Kraus. MC uses their own unique style of "movement theatre" to create socially conscious art. With a fusion of dance-like scenes and poetic dialogue, her plays challenge social norms and destigmatize subjects like mental health, gender identity, surviving sexual assault, body image, and so much more.