

Every Time

By

Jill Michelle

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... I must confess a bias, the what's-wrong-with-my-boyfriend poems never seem to engage me so much as the what's-eating-my-wife ones. Just look across the room, from your armchair, if there is someone, anyone else there, they're sure to be a clinically undiagnosed narcissist or worse, hiss-tsk-tsk, narcissist. Got issues? Just have a former-friend send in two box-tops and you will receive a genuine 'Certification of Narcissism.' Hang it on your wall, keep it in a drawer, but be assured we've got a file on you here back at the store. Whatever. Ya gotta love this line, in Jill Michelle's 'Every Time,' "but this time no / Reflection will appear when you look into the lake, no / Echo will return as you shout my name merely in / Search of yourself."*

Every Time

Narcissist that you are, you'll get hold of this book, skim
Its pages, hunting this very line for him, the
Ghost of a boy I loved, the man he might have become
Had he stayed true
Taken our happily ever after
More seriously. You'll trample through these already uneven feet
Attempting to pillage some poems, but this time no
Reflection will appear when you look into the lake, no
Echo will return as you shout my name merely in
Search of yourself.

THE POET SPEAKS: *In 2017, I began writing song-inspired poems for a collection entitled Certain Songs, exploring the relationship between music and memories to create pieces, much like ekphrastic works derive inspiration from visual art. The collection itself is inspired by the song of that name by The Hold Steady, specifically Craig Finn's lyric, "Certain songs—they get so scratched into our souls." As an organizing thread, all of the poems in this series are acrostics that spell out the song titles that sparked the pieces, and the titles are fragments of the song lyrics. "Every Time" is inspired by the song "Nightmares" by Violent Femmes, my absolute favorite band.*

As far as motivations for writing and reading poetry, I simply can't imagine a life not doing both and feel grateful to teach the subject as well. In terms of influences, I love a lot of poets, but find that I return to the works of Sylvia Plath and Wisława Szymborska in my reading life, often having one of their collections going along with a contemporary collection and literary magazine.

AUTHOR BIO: Jill Michelle's latest poems appear/are forthcoming in *DMQ Review*, *Eclectica Magazine*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Bacopa Literary Review* and *Drunk Monkeys*. Recent anthology credits include *The Book of Bad Betties* (Bad Betty Press, UK) and *Words from the Brink* (Arachne Press Limited, UK). She teaches at Valencia College in Orlando, Florida. Find more of her work at byjillmichelle.com.