

SPOON SHAPE

By James Latham

*Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes... Here is a pair of poignant poems varying distinctly in style by James Latham. **Spoon Shape** is an alluring read appealing to the vicissitudes of coupledness. "Curled around you in bed, your back to my belly. You call it spoon shape. This morning it felt like two question marks." **nothing but static** "you let the cards blow away, / and the lantern burn out." "you dance the forgotten dance of spoons, / a waltz atop the ruined walls of broken rooms." Latham should be read aloud. A melancholy pair always trumps contented solitude. HS (Spacing is poet's own.)*

Spoon Shape

I've said good-bye to you twice in the last six months. Once when I drove away across country and again this morning driving you to the airport.

I said so many things to you in the last week, curled around you in bed. I wanted to promise you everything and had nothing to spare.

Curled around you in bed, your back to my belly. You call it spoon shape. This morning it felt like two question marks.

Tom Waits sings that when you get far enough away you're on your way home. That sounds true, but I'm not anything as much as I am tired.

I'm on the other side of the world and I haven't gone far enough yet, no matter how much I want to turn around and come home to you.

Tonight I want you to slit me open with a curved knife and slide my guts onto the cold tile floor of this six-dollar room, my blood gleaming in candlelight.

I want you to stand barefoot, the room awash in blood and slime, your bare hands deep inside of me, and drape my intestines on a rickety chair to predict a future where hope is stronger than fear.

Sew me together with jagged blue stitches and hold me spoon shape, my back to your belly. Sew me back together and tell me a future where hope is stronger than fear.

nothing but static

what do you do
when there are no more cards to play,
when there's nothing left to say
and no one to listen to?

when you can't stare at the moon
because it's the rainy season?

you get up, put the cards away,
blow out the lantern,
and turn off the radio
playing nothing but static.

what do you do
when you talk to fill the quiet,
when you've run out of words to try,
and there's no one to talk to?

when you can't ask the moon
because it's the rainy season?

you get up and put the cards away,
blow out the lantern,
and turn off the radio--
it plays nothing but static.

what do you do
when you know nothing but static,
when you burn your brightest dreams

on the highest mountains of the moon?

you let the cards blow away,
and the lantern burn out.
you forget about the radio--
it played nothing but static.

you dance the forgotten dance of spoons,
a waltz atop the ruined walls of broken rooms.

THE POET SPEAKS: *My poems, like most of my writing, are snapshots of emotion with the shutter speed set from minutes to weeks. The goal is to capture the moment. That's why I write poetry and that's what I look for when I read poetry.*

Spoon Shape is three snapshots taken on three lonely nights missing an ex-lover. I wanted to know the future would be better than the present and I wanted to be held.

Nothing But Static was written in a wildlife reserve in western Uganda. Camp was set up in and around the ruins of a colonial-era hotel. At night we played cards in the yellow light of kerosene lanterns and listened to music on cassette tape until the solar batteries gave out. Some nights I stayed up late and walked the broken hotel walls.

Influences include Richard Hugo, Michael Ondaatje, Charles Bukowski. James Luckett, Raymond Carver, Elmore Leonard, and Amanda Hartman.

AUTHOR'S BIO: *Jim Latham's work has appeared in Rue Scribe, The Pagosa Daily Post, Dezmin's Archives and Opium Magazine. Originally from northern California, he now works in the oilfield and lives in Anchorage, Alaska.*

