



THANKS FOR THE SOCKS + 1

BY

ERIC D. GOODMAN

WHY I LIKE THEM: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...Eric D. Goodman writes with such a light hand. He sees endearing details in everyday happenstances--playful, erudite, perceptive. Norman Rockwell in words. Here's a taste--a cut-and-paste--"Water rolls in the kettle. / The spout's bird whistles / a call to action." Ahhh, "The spout's bird whistles..." Like a dandelion seed puff swirling in an updraft. I think 'Thanks for the Socks' is as charming and a fine story:*

discovering an old picture portraying a distant past Christmas. "Half a life later," recalling a gift exchange: A pair of socks for a book of original poetry. "...the harvest of heartache: / a book of cathartic poetry dedicated to you. / You, in turn, presented me / with a pair of socks." 'When you are old and grey and full of sleep / And nodding by the fire, take down this book...' (Spacing is poet's own.)

Five Stars

Two Poems by Eric D. Goodman

Taste

Water rolls in the kettle.

The spout's bird whistles
a call to action.

Across the counter,
you fill the cast-iron teapot
with a generous helping
of loose oolong tea.

Steeping fills the air
with earthy aroma.

Pour into ceramic cup,
add a touch of honey.

You in chair,
cup in hand,
tea in cup,
all in place.

Across the room,
snow falls in a gentle, rhythmic hush
beyond the picture window.

Just the right moment
to taste.

Thanks for the Socks

Rummaging through the attic,
I came across an old picture
and remembered a thank you card
that I forgot to write.

Thank you for the socks
that you got me for Christmas,
immortalized in a photograph
collecting dust in an attic box.

I bore my soul
took the jagged shards of broken notions
from the darkest crevices of my mind,
examined them, conducted psychanalysis on myself,
and exposed my innermost despair to you.

You drove to the mall, in your sable,
parked in the garage so you
wouldn't need to bear the snow
walking through the open doors of Lazarus.

That cozy evening beside the colorful, lit tree,
I presented you the harvest of heartache:
a book of cathartic poetry dedicated to you.

You, in turn, presented me
with a pair of socks,
a pock-marked design
with a thin red line across the toes.

I declared devotion in verse,
painted your beauty in rhyme and tempo,
alliteration and angst.

You accented the men's hosiery
with a framed picture of you wearing them

to personalize the gift.

You commented on how much you
cherished the poetry—
a book devoted to who you were to me.

I said thanks for the socks
and the picture of you wearing them.

Half a life later,
I revisit that poetry—
cringingly sincere, earnest, naïve—

and I wonder whether you still have a copy
that you take from the shelf from time to time,
reminding you that such worship as this
once put you at its center,

or whether your copy has been discarded
like the picture of an old acquaintance
or a worn-out pair of socks.

THE POET SPEAKS: *Sometimes poetry feels best when capturing a simple moment. This was the case for “Taste,” which depicts a winter afternoon sitting in the living room enjoying a cup of tea with my wife as we looked out the window at a light snowfall. “Thanks for the Socks,” on the other hand, remembers a moment with a more bitter flavor from decades ago. A marvel that even unpleasant memories from long past can evoke a warm laugh in the present. Although I write more fiction than poetry, I admire poetry and its ability to capture a feeling, a moment—a story—in a brief and concise word package with such emotion.*

AUTHOR BIO: Eric D. Goodman lives and writes in Maryland, where he’s remained sheltered in place during the pandemic and beyond, spending a portion of his hermitism writing poetry. His first book of poetry, *Faraway Tables*, is coming in spring 2024 from Yorkshire Press. He’s author of *Wrecks and Ruins* (Loyola University’s Apprentice House Press, 2022) *The Color of Jadeite* (Apprentice House, 2020), *Setting the Family Free* (Apprentice House, 2019), *Womb: a novel in utero* (Merge Publishing, 2017) *Tracks: A Novel in Stories* (Atticus Books, 2011), and *Flightless Goose*, (Writers Lair Books, 2008). More than a hundred short stories, articles, travel stories, and poems have been published in literary journals, magazines, and periodicals. Learn more about Eric and his writing at www.EricDGoodman.com