

# Listening\_\_\_\_\_ to *Salsa* Music Under

\_\_\_\_\_ {{{ **Quar!antin!e** }}}!

*et al*

By Erren Kelly

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... Get ready for Erren Kelly...marks, set, GO! "Kicking up her heels, her matchsticks legs start / A fire within the groove, and its spreads, quickly, brazenly, / Throughout her body;" "pregnant with melodies" "a fragrance of / Trouble ... " See what I mean? What if she means what she says? We published all of her...who could resist taking an anthology that just keeps giving and giving. Let me preempt with a preview from Kelly's highlight reel, in no particular disarray. "feelings can be deeper than blood" as "snow falls lightly as jazz" 'Rowing Along The Charles' "this tall girl / linear and true," "her muscles ripple with / a song of morning / into the light" ... "her body, honest and feline as..." Pause, I can't see Mary Oliver writing these [abridged] lyrics or lines. Let's press play again: "a missile became / someone's crutch" "Leaders rested at the bottom / of the swamp" I could go on and on and I hope you do. If I haven't served her to your satisfaction...send me back to the kitchen. Just image a box of crackerjacks, the other way around, filled chock-a-block with prizes and one single caramel corn. "Eager to find life, she turns on the radio" As always, everything stays the same, editors have no business critiquing artists; they are the ones effecting change. "Sometime, the biggest heroes / Are reluctant to fight" "Her hard hat, like a tiara..." Erren's fallen "in [your] lap" ....(Spacing and font choice are poet's own. Please scroll down...)HS*

## Listening To Salsa Music Under Quarantine

Kicking up her heels, her matchsticks legs start  
A fire within the groove, and its spreads, quickly, brazenly,  
Throughout her body; she becomes a quarter note,

Insatiable with the beat, she is pregnant with melodies  
Easily, she moves like a banshee, in the Cuban night,

Making a statement out of her movement, her hips  
Undulate, as if music was the lover she always longed for.  
Like a saltshaker, she shakes herself into joyful spasms  
Like maracas, she feels the music inside her, waiting to  
Erupt; her dress, wet, clings to body, has a fragrance of  
Trouble, she is a melody, a tropical night you want  
To discover; the music of song and surf and breeze

Brothers And Sisters ( snowfall in the  
afternoon...)

i often thought she was her sister  
though she says they're sisters only  
through feelings

feelings can be deeper than blood  
she could be a ruth or an esther, too  
her beauty, goes deeper than a flower  
deeper than the heart of god  
deeper than god's eyes, which  
is the color of her hair

she, like the raven shares the color  
of winter, and snow falls lightly as  
jazz  
i watch her walk like a song inside the  
place where brothers and sisters  
meet

## Rowing Along The Charles

she rows along the charles  
this tall girl  
linear and true, as a mary oliver  
line

she rows along the charles  
jubilant as peter pan  
her body, honest and feline  
as a mary oliver  
lyric

her muscles ripple with  
a song of morning  
into the light , she is  
a line, clean and  
true

she reverberates across the charles  
a song of her , of one, wild  
and precious  
life

That was freaky

The way peace appeared

the way flowers grew

out of concrete

and bullet holes

turned into stars

A woman's fear

of me, turned into a

helping hand

and a missile became

someone's crutch

and children saw

possibilities in the

sun

Leaders rested at the bottom

of the swamp

sharing company with nuclear

Bombs

D Line, Longwood Stop

she sits across from  
Me, female hidden in  
In a construction hard hat  
Sweat swirt, bandanna  
Covering her face, like a hijab  
And america became the middle east

And she got off work, working to be equal

In some state, transgender women  
Are banned from women's sports  
Yet, women's athletics, get only a fraction  
Of the budget, mens college sports get

But i know she just goes to the worksite  
Just to make a living

What good is being equal  
If the rent dosent get paid?

Maybe she isnt trying to  
Be a warrior  
Sometime, the biggest heroes  
Are reluctant to fight  
Her ponytail rests against  
Her neck, her workbooks and  
Backpack tattered  
Her hard hat, like a tiara in  
Her lap

Toni Morrison, Writer

national suicide day was cancelled,  
miss morrison, people learned they had  
more to gain from grabbing the whip  
and fighting  
even if it meant dying, they know  
blackness is our ticket to a better life  
instead of a victim card, like the ace  
of spades  
i am black as the ace of spades and proud  
of my lineage  
it pours out of me like my dad poured  
cement  
or my mom poured out water  
after she wiped down a patient

i didn't discover black books  
until i got to college, but i learned  
black words  
can create stories, like jazz

black words can wash away shame

national suicide day was cancelled, miss  
morrison  
george floyd's family got a 27 million  
dollar  
judgement from the city of minneapolis  
spike lee polishes his oscar twice a week  
and kamala backs that azz up occasionally  
the most powerful woman in the world

blackness can be gender fluid  
a girl who looks like a boy who looks  
like a girl smiles at me, clutching her  
basketball  
monk took mental illness and wrote a soundtrack  
with it

and even white women could care less about  
being  
privileged. biden ordered 300 million  
vaccines by may  
in l.a., the rich steal vaccinations  
from the poor  
and low income people  
blue eyed feminists dissect your books  
and dream of full lips and thick thighs  
wishing for blackness  
the ghost of breonna taylor haunts  
jussie smollett's dreams  
nightly

and stormy daniels could teach zula a  
thing or two  
about marketing herself, and and using  
sex as  
power

national suicide day was cancelled, Ms.  
Morrison  
I walk by the ocean, hear the voices of  
my ancestors  
from beneath the water, i'm going to put  
nietzsche  
theory to practice



i'm going to continue to poet  
and put will to power....

54th Massachusetts Regiment ( the subject  
of the movie " Glory, starring Denzel Washington and Morgan Freeman )

**When I die, i'll die a man**

**I'll watch the sun, rising from the hill**

**I'll die a man and i'll die free**

**Down south, i'm not a man**

**The west only counts  $\frac{3}{5}$  of me**

**When i die, i'll die a man**

**A brother from harvard reads poetry**

**Another cleans his gun, ready to kill**

**We'll die like men, but we'll die free**

**A woman plays beethoven on a violin**

**Her hair is fire in the dawn, singing jubilee**

**When i die, i'll die a man**

**Lincoln broke our chains, hallelujah !**

**I don't care if he doesn't like me**

**We'll die like men, but we'll die free**

**One more night, i pray for strength**

**The bible says turn the other cheek, but also an eye for an eye**

**I'll think of the woman of fire, playing beethoven**

**When i die, i'll die a**

**man, i'll think of her and die free**

A Dream Of Fall In Italy....

A woman orders coffee

And waits

Long black hair

Brushes against

A white blouse like

A raven at

Rest

Like fall, she is pleasant

And ethereal

But she never lasts long

I look at her in black

Jeans

And I want to drift off

In her magic

Like a leaf, she is a

Dream of fall

Like a night in Rome

She is a light , a song

Lingering on the water

## Listening To The Supremes Under Quarantine...

Kicking it in her mini skirt and go-go boots  
As she thinks of the waves in California  
To her, soul music is her Bible, Rhythm and Blues, her  
Irresistible church, she goes to daily  
Eager to find life, she turns on the radio

Music becomes her sanctuary and  
Unlike pot or acid, the melody baptises her into blackness  
Leaving her euphoric, she dances as she  
Listens to Diana Ross, showing her the way to heaven  
Even as Aretha and 60's girl groups, delivers the good news,  
Truth surges through her little legs, they are like the blues  
Two matchsticks moving feverishly, as she dances, making a fire

## The Barista

Reaching out  
to you  
even though your  
fears turn me into  
a gorilla  
we look at each other  
as if a war  
could start  
but i don' t want a  
war  
just words

I sit at a table  
near you and you  
clutch your purse

you have nothing i  
want

i only want  
words  
books  
and dreams

you move around the coffeehouse  
like its a dance  
you're a snowflake  
a perfect evidence of  
the god  
you don't  
believe

**THE POET SPEAKS:** *Why do I write ? Wow ! I don't know...that's like counting sand on the beach...kinda pointless, dontcha think ? ...I just do it...When I'm riding the bus and I got something on my mind, that I can't stop thinking about, I just write and get it out of me...Sometimes, I see a nice girl and I'm compelled to write her a poem, give it to her and not bother waiting for her reaction...It's always about a moment, nothing else...I've been doing this since I was 23 years old...Mama took me to the library when I was a kid, but I think the only things she ever read were magazines and the Bible...My Dad gave me a typewriter when I was 23, and he found out the writing bug had bit me...Sometimes, I dared to show him my poems, but he never "got," them...It didn't matter, at least he thought about me...I changed my Major in my Junior year in Colege, from Law to English, I never regretted it...Mama helped sometimes, sometimes, financially, mostly spiritually and morally...when I graduated from L.S.U., I gave My Mama a copy of My Diploma..My Dad got a Xerox copy...at least they were there...I like Cathy Park Hong, I like Daurianne Laux, I like Amiri Baraka ( now raising hell in the spirit world...) Shara McCallum...She is a great poetess...Mona Lisa Saloy..She's A Nat King Cole Baby, and The New Poet Laureate of Louisiana...Ava Leavell Haymon...I like her work a lot...Adrian Matejka...I always like his work...Ishmael Reed...very funny poet and writer...I love Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot ( I have heard The Wasteland a lot, since The Pandemic began ! ) Allen Ginsberg ( I have heard " Howl," a lot too)...Slam, spoken word, Old guy poets...they show up a lot in my DNA too...Billy Collins is okay...He respects his readers, and I love that...Mary Oliver, really helped me to appreciate beauty in nature and in life. I love Blues, Classical Music, Old Rap ( Not the Mumble Rap of today, that is incoherent and useless) I like Country Music, Western Swing and Cajun Music ( I'm originally from Louisiana) World Music and Always, Jazz...I never let a day go by without Jazz...When I write poems, I put down the content first...I make sure I write what it is I want to say, and get it down...Then, when I rewrite, I give it its shape and meaning...I write on Buses, Trains, In Cofeehouses, Anywhere !...In the past, being perfect stifled me as a writer...Now, my Mantra is " Don't get it write, get it written." You can go back and clean it up later...It makes sense, it works for me and I'm sticking to it...*

*Erren Geraud Kelly 10'20'21*

**AUTHOR BIO:** I am a Two-Time Pushcart nominated poet from Lynn, Massachusetts . I have been writing for 31 years and

have over 300 publications in print and online in such publications as Hiram Poetry Review, Mudfish, Poetry Magazine(online), Ceremony, Cacti Fur, Bitterzoet, Cactus Heart, Similar Peaks, Gloom Cupboard, Poetry Salzburg and other publications. My most recent publication was in Black Heart Literary journal; I have also been published in anthologies such as "Fertile Ground," and Beyond The Frontier." My work can also be seen on Youtube under the " Gallery Cabaret," links.

I am also the author of the book, " Disturbing The Peace," on Night Ballet Press

I recieved my B.A. in English-Creative Writing from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. I also love to read and I love to travel, having visited 45 states and Canada and Europe. The themes in my writings vary, but i have always had a soft spot for subjects and people who are not in the mainstream. But i never limit myself to anything, i always try to keep an open mind.