



SADIE'S AMERICAN DINER et al

By

John Grey

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...*

SADIE'S AMERICAN DINER,' "the coffee / that grips onto its spoon / like it's a mammoth / in a tar pit." "TO THE ONE WHO RECOMMENDED I READ FIFTY SHADES OF GREY,' "Even a bad book / takes me somewhere. / You should know. / I saw you there." 'ON COUGAR TIME,' "greasy or smooth, / sodden or dry...Lips bare, body likewise..." But especially, every line in 'HER MAN,' "his greatest charm / was her necessity." He must have written this before profiles were sought online. John Grey can tell a story. (Spacing is poet's own).

Five Stars

SADIE'S AMERICAN DINER

We sit together
stool by stool,
the old man and me,
at Sadie's American Diner

Not for the food,
nor the sugar jar,
nor the silverware
that he touches up
with a fingernail.

And he didn't just bring me here
to spin my stool
and make me laugh
or introduce me to
the famous Sadie.
Besides, she's dead.

And it's not for
the company -
bikers, truckers, farmers.
Nor the coffee
that grips onto its spoon
like it's a mammoth
in a tar pit.

No, we come to Sadie's
because his father
took him to Sadie's
forty years before.

The waitress hands us both
an egg-stained menu.
He grins at me
as I struggle with the choices,
Whatever he's having,
he's had already.

TO THE ONE WHO RECOMMENDED I READ FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

No journey like a book.

No lands like pages.

Or cities like words.

Or topography

like the feel

of hard cover,

soft paper.

By the end,

I've been places

beyond the reach

of trains and boats

and cars and planes.

Even a bad book

takes me somewhere.

You should know.

I saw you there.

ON COUGAR TIME

Your desire,
freckled one minute,
bronzed the next,
greasy or smooth,
sodden or dry,
how can it not taunt;
tidbits of heart appear...
you don't mind nibbling
until the real meat comes along.

So where do you park your soul
when this is going on?
Where do you cage your need for kindness?
Someone's available,
brutish and black-eyed,
tattooed and twenty one.

And no other instrument available,
you pound your love on a drum.
Lips bare, body likewise,
the noise is irreversible.

HER MAN

He was a man
who wanted to be left alone,
spend his nights in,
with the television for company,
who could not grieve
who expressed no interest
in small talk or photo albums,
who was too unmoved by anything
to be moody
who did a passable impersonation
of houseplant,
who was so settled,
he barely twitched.
who didn't want children,
or his own home,
who was consistent
to the point of monotony,
who didn't do anything
he didn't want to,
and didn't do much
of what he did want to,
who didn't joke,
who had no friends,
who never admitted
to loving anyone or anything
but he lived in the same town as her,
and there wasn't much choice in men,
so he would have to do –
his greatest charm
was her necessity.

THE STATE YOU'RE IN

hard times,
no job,
can't even afford bus-fare

you live alone
though sometimes
liquor qualifies
as a significant other,
provides an effective drowning
for one more intolerable life passage

under the bridge,
traffic hammers and nails
you to sleep

until the wind off the river
scours out the obscure places,
penetrates your thin walls

and
at some early hour of the morning
your frozen blood
insists you move

then a cop tells you
that it's against the law
to be you

no trial necessary,
you're already
serving the sentence

THE POET SPEAKS: *For me, writing poetry is part obsession, regimen, inspiration, obligation, chore, thrill, and various other conflicting emotions. I rake up the past. I project the future. I fantasize. I observe. I invent. I'm honest. I lie. So the poems I create come from many different places.*

And I do have my fascinations. One of those is the kind of eating place that is "Sadie's American Diner." This is a fictionalized version of the many diners I have frequented in my time. Just as "The State You're In" is a response to the plight of the homeless who are all too visible in the city where I live. And "On Cougar Time", is a reflection of people I've known, both men and women, who've had a difficult time letting go of their youth. As for "Her Man", it's more a product of wondering what it's like to live some place where the romantic choices are few. My "Fifty Shades Of Grey" poem, on the other hand, is just my little dig at what passes for popular fiction in this day and age.

AUTHOR BIO: John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in Stand, Washington Square Review and Floyd County Moonshine. Latest books, "Covert" "Memory Outside The Head" and "Guest Of Myself" are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in the McNeese Review, Santa Fe Literary Review and Open Ceilings.