

Loving a Ghost
by
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AT RISE:

Empty stage. Lights on
Suzanne.

SUZANNE

Twenty five years ago, he promised that he'll love me until the rest of my life. 'Watch what you're promising,' I said. 'If I live for a few year, you may manage to keep your promise. But what if I live for another fifty years, or more? What than?'

(pause)

'My love for you is timeless and endless,' he responded.

(pause)

'Nothing lasts forever,' I insisted.

(pause)

'Just stick with me and you'll see,' he said.

(pause)

I laughed. 'You're laughing,' he said. 'Yes,' I said and I stopped laughing. He kissed me, and I ended up believing everything he said.

Pause.

SUZANNE

He died the next day. A car accident.

(pause)

He was only 35.

(pause)

I don't remember much of that day, I only remember being led to a lifeless, barely recognizable body. I recognized the shirt. His shirt. I had bought that shirt for him, just a few weeks ago, for his thirty-fifth birthday.

(pause)

And that was that. He was gone, and all that was left of him was a box of ashes and the promise he broke. A broken promise is as good as a lie. And he claimed that he wasn't good at lying. So what was I supposed to do with a lie that I couldn't forget?

(pause)

Twenty years later and I still love him, even though I never promised him that I will. What do I love exactly? The blur image of him in my mind? His voice that has long gone mute? A ghost? A memory? The something that should've happened but it didn't? His promise that he couldn't keep? Or all the above? Twenty years later and I still hold on everything that's left of him: his clothes still hanging on his side of the closed, his tennis racquet behind his dresser, his cowboy boots, his notes, his pictures, his music collection. I just could not let go of any of it!

(pause)

And I did work hard on moving forward, but I couldn't. There was this big roadblock in front of me, that I couldn't pass. Was the roadblock his promise that I never managed to let go of?

(MORE)

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Maybe it was something that I could hide behind, so I'll never be in a danger of losing again. And there were a few men showing up in my life, here and there, but they never felt 'quite right'. What was the 'quite right' that I was looking for?, I had no idea. They just weren't him, I suppose. Yes they weren't him, but unlike him, they were alive. Why did I feel more comfortable with holding onto a dead man than getting involved with someone alive?

(pause)

My sister took me to a dinner for my fiftieth birthday yesterday. I came back home around nine, I turned on the TV and fell asleep on the couch. He came in my dream. He hadn't done that in a very long time. He wasn't alone. There was a young, beautiful woman with him. They were holding hands. They both looked so young and so beautiful. 'You can let go of me now,' he said. 'I've found someone else. And you should do the same.' 'Now you're telling me,' I said. 'I'm already fifty.' 'I'm sorry, I couldn't come earlier.' He said. 'There was a roadblock in my way.' 'But you promise to love me until the rest of my life!' I heard myself shouting. 'And I'm still alive!' 'Love never dies.' He said. And they were gone.

(pause)

I didn't go to work today. I called in sick. I'll spend most of the day clearing his side of the closet. I'll donate some of his stuff. Vintage clothing is in style nowadays. And when I get tired of working, I'll go out for a long walk in the park. I'll just walk and observe, and listen to trees' branches, the birds, my own footsteps, my heartbeats and my inhales and exhales.

(pause)

Love never dies.

Blackout. END.