

Night's Quiet Beauty

Stanley Kelman, Jr.

Cool summer nights breathe through open windows,
the air thick with the scent of damp earth and dusk.
Somewhere nearby, a man hums a song,
his voice low, worn smooth by time.

The shadows stretch long, pooling like ink,
but I'm not ready to go home—not yet.
Here, time holds its breath,
and dreams fall soft as rain,
each drop dissolving into the waiting night.

I walk past your door, the faint glow of your window
guiding me—a lighthouse for the shipwrecked.
Behind me, the carnival fades into a blur of color,
its lights bleeding into the dark like spilled paint.

I stop, my feet rooted to the sidewalk,
watching your window, listening to the stillness.
I wonder—did we ever touch the sky,
or did it slip through our fingers like water?
What happened to the nights
when the world was only ours?
What happened to you and me?

Once, the night was unbroken darkness,
its vast silence lit by fire's trembling breath.
Shadows danced on ancient walls,
flickering with fleeting promises.

Now, we've strung up stars of our own—
a billion tiny suns bent to our will—
yet none shine brighter than this single glow:
your window, your stair, your door.

These moments are born of chance,
a fragile alignment of glass and wire.
The bulb will burn out; the room will dim.
This light, too, will fold into memory.

A brief flare in the endless stretch of time—
a halo that gutters like oil lamps
once did in winter winds,
or fires fed with trembling hands
in the hollowed stones of another age.

But tonight, this glow is ours,
a fleeting fragment of eternity.
Do you know? These were the happiest moments—
lamps burning low, the world cocooned in quiet,
just us, suspended beyond the reach of time.

The warmth of your hand in mine,
your laugh, soft as moth wings brushing the dark.
I don't mind, baby, if we sit here forever,
windows flung wide to the summer air,
this fragile now stretched thin across the stars.

Every night, it's the same—I wait,
watching from the street below,
standing in the rain as it falls in steady threads.
Your light spills from the window,
and I feel it pull me back,
holding time in place while the world moves on.

But I remain, caught beneath the velvet sky,
a breath suspended in the folds of silence.

Listen—it's late. The work is done,
and the night is deep, quiet as a secret.
But I stay, baby, I stay,
watching the dreams that drift around us,
their soft descent as fleeting as this moment.

Summer lingers in the air,
and I'm not ready to go home.
Out there, others chase what they've lost
or what they've never held,
their laughter brittle beneath the carnival's glow.

The distant murmurs fade,
the music dissolves into the dark.
But we're here, cradled by shadows,
where the rain, the dreams, this night
fall and vanish, leaving only us—
the silence, and the unnamed ache between us.

Your window wounds the night,
its light spilling like wine across the pavement.
I stand in the shadows, soaked and waiting,
listening for a sound that might not come.

Behind me, the carnival hums faintly,
its lights dimming, its gears slowing,
a tilt-a-whirl spinning memories into the dark.
The air smells of rust and sugared longing,
the kind of sweetness that stings when it breaks.

We hold the shards close, pressing them deep,
as if their edges could carve the truth we've lost.
The carousel spins on,
its horses lacquered with the sweat of those
too afraid to step off.

The rain stitches its own fleeting patterns,
weaving and unweaving the silence.
Your stairs creak beneath the weight of waiting,
but I do not climb.

The night folds around me, its edges fraying,
its tapestry unraveling in the hands of wanderers
who never meant to stay.
I watch the light in your window flicker,
its pulse uncertain, deciding.

Behind me, the carnival collapses into shadow,
its skeleton sinking back into the earth.

Here, on the threshold, I am no one—
a breath caught in the throat of the night.
The rain falls in shapes I can't hold,
its rhythm slipping through my hands.

Your door, half-closed, holds me like a question,
and I wonder if I can answer it
without breaking everything we were.

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