

I Want to Hear Our Voices

Tennessee Woolf, January 2014

There is something I want in the company of men.
I think it may be masculinity.
Theirs and mine.

Mine that has weathered away
like chipped paint,
flakes blown to the corner of the garage
with the other dirt and debris,
where nearby hangs a rake and a hoe.

We've been silenced, men, haven't we?
Our deeper knowing voices.
By ourselves. By societal habit.
Distracted by the games of contemporary life,
the battle rooms of sport and work.
Addicted to the numbing of spirit
that comes from a bottle, a remote control, and wifi.

What is true for you, real for you, man?
For us, men?
I want to hear our voices.
Not the ones that we routinely speak
to impress our women, or silence them.
Not the guarded ones like when we first meet other men,
proving ourselves, chests puffed, feathers plumed, and cocks dragging.

Like, are you afraid that your youth is passing?
I am. I've started dreaming about it lately.
It was always there for me.
But then, in a blink, it wasn't.

I usually can't squat to tie my shoe.
I have to get on one knee.
The man I see in the mirror
has wrinkled, squinted eyes like my uncles, like my grandmother.
And what is left of my hair is cut very short.
because it's the best way I know to work with absence.

I want to hear what is real to you.
What aches to ooze
from your silence, your wound,
from your buried DNA memory
that knows we need each other.

Without apology.
Without performance.

Just raw and true for you.
I want to hear what are you chasing
in those images,
in your dreams,
or in that porn?

And what is chasing you?
To be born.
To find you.
To claim you.
To call you, brother.

Men,
from the silence,
from the song,
from the drum,
I want to hear our voices.

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