

2020-21 6th Chapel Arts Short Story Competition Entry (over 16)  
Nic Bostin

BLUE

1971

My old man, he's a singer in the park, he's a walker in the rain and a dancer in the dark. When he comes home he takes me in his loving arms and says how gorgeous I am. I keep telling him we don't need a marriage certificate to make it official. He's my old man, keeping away my blues. But when he's gone, I get so lonely. The bed's too big, the frying pan's too wide. In fact, I often think I am on a lonely road and travelling, travelling, looking for something, what can it be? Then I hate him just a little and love him just a little too; I love him when I forget about me. I want to be strong, to live long, to go wild and wreck my stockings while I dance to the sounds of a jukebox. I want to knit him a sweater and write him a love letter, I want to make him feel better, to make him feel free.

It didn't last of course.

1972

I remember thinking about California. I couldn't settle. I was sitting in a park in Paris, reading the news and it looked bad because people wouldn't give peace a chance; that was just a dream some of us had. But I didn't want to stay there - it was too old and cold. But if I were in California I'd see the friends I wanted to be with. You might not believe it but I'd even kiss the sunset pig. I went to a party down a red dirt road and met lots of young people, strangely looking at glossy fashion magazines. I listened to the radio and wanted to say "Make me feel better, rock and roll man, I'm your biggest fan."

1973

Then there was that old guy I lived with for a while - Carey. He was a scruffy beach bum. . He smartened up when he took me out for a meal in the evenings and told me to put on my jewellery. But I was restless again. The wind came up from Africa and I couldn't sleep. I was sad to leave him, but that place really wasn't my home. Living on the beach my fingernails became filthy and I had beach tar on my feet. I began to miss my clean white linen and my fancy French perfumes. He was a mean old daddy but I liked him. I thought "Perhaps I'll go to Amsterdam or Rome and rent a piano and put some flowers in my room." On my last night with him there was a starry sky and there was scratchy rock and roll music playing from a beachside cafe.

1974

Starry skies - that reminds me. I was on a plane and I could see the stars as it banked after take-off. Was I doing the right thing? He had the loving I liked all right and I thought "Turn this plane around. I shouldn't have got on this flight tonight." Incredible to think now that I was served pink champagne. I turned my headphones up high and the music was playing "Goodbye baby, love is blind" and I couldn't get him out of my mind.

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1975

And there was Richard. The last time I saw him was in 1968. It was in Detroit. He told me that all romantics shared the same fate and I laughed at him. He said "The trouble with you is that you expect pretty men to tell you pretty lies, Miss Moonface." He was my best friend at the time though we were quite different. Look what happened to him. He married a figure skater and bought her all the things she wished for - even a dishwasher and a coffee percolator which in 1968 were pretty rare and very expensive. And when I knew him he liked subdued lighting in his flat and if he had a choice would sit in darkness. But after marriage you could look through his lounge window and see him and the figure skater sitting there under an awful fluorescent light.

1976

I've always liked drinking wine, preferably red - Cabernet, Shiraz, Merlot, Pinot and all that stuff. There was one guy - I won't mention his name - who I was so in love with I wrote a special song about him. I compared him to a fine wine, in fact twelve bottles of the stuff. I wrote "I could drink a case of you and still be on my feet." Much later a friend of mine in England wrote to me and said that a radio programme there had a poll of favourite love songs and this song of mine came out at number one. I couldn't believe it. The song meant such a lot to me and I was amazed to be told that it meant such a lot to other people too.

1977

And now it's coming up to Christmas and trees are being erected in town squares and in living rooms. Meanwhile, choirs are singing songs of joy and peace. But me - I just wish I had a frozen river I could skate away on. I drove my latest man away. I'm so hard to handle. I'm selfish and sad. And now he's gone. When will I ever learn?

1978

I also wrote a song for a guy called Blue. The words just floated into my head and to anyone else they must have seemed very obscure. But he liked it though I suspect he didn't understand it. I said "Here is a song for you." Just like all the others I suppose.

Thanks Joni.