



Anthony Botti

Two Poems

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Sunday Phone Call

All last night I held conversations with you. You stubbed out your cigar, striding barefoot into my dreams and went on sparring with me though your last month in the hospital was silent. How do I make this a normal Sunday evening? Make a plate of spaghetti, walk up the dirt road with the dog, rent a foreign film. Instead I down Jameson neat by the woodstove. When the phone rings

in the kitchen, I forget that it can't be you. Remember Christmas Eve of '68 when you drilled me to repeat that new telephone number over and over in the passenger seat, just in case I got lost among the holiday crowds at Gimbel's Department Store.

Asleep, I hear your voice young again, rallying fast tennis balls at me across the hot clay court. The call

tonight is my sister letting me know that your tombstone cannot be placed until the earth settles. Outside geese over the house call in distress, the unbroken dark pressing around me. It feels like snow, enough to blanket your nameless grave. It has been almost 40 years.
639-3224.

Copenhagen

You don't apologize for being hard
to know. A loneliness breaks out
between two people after years together

that can't quite be put down.
While I paced the back porch
last night listening for the rain to stop,
you walked narrow streets

in another country in sunlight. By morning
only lowing cattle broke

the monotony of rain. *I don't mind
being away from you. That's not
the problem.* We speak
to each other in the silence that separates
us. *You have it your way.*
Summer is already come and gone. Still

you and I do not span
the distance inside the passing days.

Now you've come back
in September, still hoarding
your silence. I raise my glass, say *skål*
as you taught me in your native tongue
and take a sip of Aquavit
even though your shot
remains untouched on the table.

Anthony Botti has published poems in *Wild Violet*, *The MacGuffin*, *Comstock Review*, *Common Ground Review*, *Gertrude Journal*, and elsewhere. He lives in Boston.

Image: Gimbels Department Store, from the Encyclopedia of the Greater Philadelphia (website).