Laughter Past

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Laughter Past

Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay’s first paragraph.

"The sun was shining hot that day, but the cool breeze made it bearable. It was one of those days that you brave the fact that you’re growing older. It saddens you to recall days of carefree innocence, when the only thing that mattered was that you had a peanut-butter and jelly sandwich for lunch. And you realize that someday you’ll be looking back, trying to recapture the feeling of today."

Cover Page Footnote
Laughter Past

by
Jennifer Kircher

The sun was shining hot that day, but the cool breeze made it bearable. It was one of those days that you brace the fact that you’re growing older. It saddens you to recall days of carefree innocence, when the only thing that mattered was that you had a peanut-butter and jelly sandwich for lunch. And you realize that someday you’ll be looking back, trying to recapture the feeling of today.

I remembered last March, when I decided to end things with him. It was at this same spot, this same beach. I could hear this same ocean as I wiped away my tears of frustration. But, in making that decision, I was filled with an incredible high. I could barely put into words. It was as if I had been scrapes free of all excess, enabling me to run faster than in all my dreams I’d imagined. Free.

In a different lifetime
You held my heart
We were so certain of ourselves
We built a common dream.

Ten months later, and I’m laying in the sand, watching the tide. An older couple is attempting to take a dip in the water. They’re both slightly overweight; she’s wearing a pink bathing suit made for the ‘fuller figure,’ with a little skirt. He has kind of wild looking white hair, like he forgot to comb it, then stepped into the wind. He’s got jean shorts on that are cut off at about the knee, and a white V-necked undershirt, that turns nearly see-through when splashed. Just as they step further into the surf, a wave crashes violently at her feet. The force catches her off guard, and she starts tipping back. The man grabs her elbow with a supportive smile, and gives her a peck on the cheek.

My dear friend
We’ve lost that dream some time ago
But I’m quite certain it was real
I could touch it, breathe it, live it

A young girl is walking down the beach with her grandparents. They are each holding a small, tanned hand. The breeze picks up, ruffling her sunstreaked hair. It flies into her face, catching in her smile. With an easy toss of her head, her hair is taken by the wind behind her. I can’t hear their words, only the steady pounding of the surf and the squawking of the gulls, but I can see their laughter. It is full. The air is thick with mist and the girl breaks free of her grandparents’ hold and runs. It feels like slow motion. A flock of seagulls swill over her head, encompassing her in a flurry of wings. She stretches her arms, as if trying to gather their strength, and join them on the breeze.

What is that wind of change that comes along
And blows your dreams away
Still, the spirit of that time
Lurks forever in a corner of your heart

An older couple walks past slowly, soaking up the midafternoon sun. They’re holding hands. He looks at her and smiles, I’m hoping I’ll be happy for so long.

Good-bye old friend
I knew you for one moment in all of time.

For a strange moment, I wonder where you are. I wonder where I am.