

“All've It”

-by Matt Moberg

I think every human being
eventually has a moment
where they are standing outside in sweatpants
that have lost the will to be pants,
holding a trash bag, a divorce, a parking ticket,
or some other receipt from the universe
that says, “surprise, this too is part of it.”

And then the sky bruises purple.

And the air touches your face
like it knows your whole story.

And suddenly you realize:

all the real is actually unreal.

The dirt.

The breath.

The weird little bones in your hands.

The fact that we are here,

on a floating rock with pollen counts,

paying bills,

missing dead people,

loving living people

who say “leaving now”

while still fully naked and looking for socks.

And still,
the moon clocks in.

No applause.
No benefits.
No note from management saying,
“Great work being ancient and luminous again.”

Just the moon,
working nights
like a single mother with no applause,
packing silver lunches
for every dark thing
that still has to rise.

Tell me that isn't holy.
Tell me there is a better word
than sacred
for the way light keeps returning
with no guarantee
we will actually stop and take note.

I know people who believe in therapy,
probiotics,
tarot,
twelve-step meetings,
manifestation journals,
and waiting exactly eleven minutes
before texting back
so they do not appear emotionally available,
even though their whole nervous system
is standing in the driveway holding flowers.

And underneath all of it,
every ritual,
every doctrine,
every smoothie with chia seeds,
the prayer is the same:

Please let me be loved.
Please let me be forgiven.
Please let this strange little life
mean something
before my lower back
submits its formal resignation.

What is going on?

For real tho—What is this place?

This unbearable tenderness
of being alive long enough
to watch steam lift from coffee in winter
like a soul practicing leaving.

To see your friend laugh so hard
they slap the table
as if joy is a mosquito
they are trying to kill.

To hear a child say “pisghetti”
and, for one shining second,
realize language
has finally been improved.

I know I already noted this in the first piece,
but the older I get,
the less use I have for certainty.

Certainty has never made me pull over
because the sunset looked like God
dropped a jar of peach jam
across the whole midwestern sky
and decided to be lazy
and not clean up.

Certainty has never made me gasp
at rain on hot pavement.

Certainty has never found me
in the cereal aisle,
holding Captain Crunch,
suddenly remembering
that everyone I have ever loved
was made from stardust,
hunger,
and a series of decisions
we probably should have slept on.

No.
It has always been awe.

Awe was the first church.

Before steeples.
Before committees.
Before men got involved
and started making rules about skirts.

Awe was there
with its wild hair
and muddy feet,
saying:

Look.
Look again.
Look until looking
becomes love.

Awe, and soup.

Awe, and someone rubbing your back
when you are sick.

Awe, and old couples at Target
arguing gently about avocados,
as if marriage is not one vow
but ten thousand errands
performed beside the person
who knows exactly
how you like the cart pushed.

Maybe gratitude
was never meant to sound elegant.

Maybe gratitude sounds like:

“Damn.
That woodpecker is trying
to beat that tree from itself.”

Maybe gratitude sounds like:

“Thank you, body,
for continuing to drag me through this world
despite the many slim jims
I have done to you
at gas stations.”

Maybe gratitude sounds like:

“Thank you to the dogs
who lose their entire minds
when we come home
as if we have returned from war
and not Walgreens.”

For me, that might be my gospel.

That joy that does not wait for us
to be impressive but only needs us
to come through the door.

Because the truth is,
this life is devastating.

And ridiculous.

One minute you are 22 and invincible,
driving too fast,
eating gas station nachos
with the confidence of a Greek god.

The next minute you are googling,
“Can sneezing cause a hamstring injury?”
and the answer is,
apparently,
“Welcome to the second half of your life.”

But even now—

even tired,
even grieving,
even emotionally held together
by iced coffee, playlists,
and one very specific wolves hoodie—

we keep finding reasons
to stay soft.

We plant tomatoes
even though grief is real.

We bake bread
even though the news is on fire.

We send photos of the sky
to people we love
with captions like,
“LOOK,”
as if beauty is an emergency
and we are all volunteer firefighters.

We keep saying,
“You have to see this,”
because wonder
is the oldest form
of resurrection.

So here’s to the believers
and the atheists
and the agnostics
and the people whose entire theology
is just trying not to cry
in the DMV line.

Here’s to the people clinging to faith.

Here’s to the people clinging to Xanax
and oat milk
and the one group chat
where nobody pretends to be okay.

Here’s to the tender-hearted weirdos.

The accidental mystics.

The ones who can contemplate mortality
for six straight hours
and then become emotionally attached
to a perfect peach.

The ones who know
despair has a mouth,
but so does laughter.

May we never stop being drop-kicked by beauty
in the middle of a Sunday afternoon.

May we never become so polished
that we forget how to stand
in the Starbucks line of existence
with our dumb, gorgeous hearts open,
feeling the enormity of it all
rattle around in our bones
like thunder
looking for somewhere to laugh.

And may we remember:

whatever else this is,
whatever mess,
whatever miracle,
whatever cosmic group project
no one was prepped for—

all've it is astonishing.
that we are here.
that we have loved enough to be ruined.
that the moon keeps showing up.
that bread exists.

So pass it on.

Tear off a piece
with your bare hands.

Take it in as you take it down.
And then go outside and look at that moon.