

Catherine Chandler

Wandering Thoughts

It's summer here, although my weather app
is set to Allentown, where it is noon
(not two) and snowing. Soon the overlap-
ping fullness of the waxing mirror-moon
will, from divergent latitudes, play out,
inspiring Yeatsian fever dreams of loss,
of apples, berries, moths, and silver trout,
beneath Polaris and the Southern Cross.

Then there's the one I love, who seems just fine —
Retired, single, buoyant as can be.
From what I've chanced to see of him online,
It's clear he's long since gotten over me.

Rather than the other way around,
It was I who needed to be found.

I R L

*En Comala comprendí
Que al lugar donde has sido feliz
No debieras tratar de volver.**

— Joaquín Sabina (from “Peces de ciudad”)

Street View shows it’s more or less the same.
Despite what I’ve been told,
the neighborhood appears quite tame —
the laundrette
and deli as they were when I was twelve years old.

The question: to recall or to forget?
Ambivalent, I zoom
in closer, feeling vague regret,
till I can see
the double-block’s high window to my favorite room.

But the narcissus and the climbing tree,
the asphalt ghetto-brick,
the front porch swing, the filigree
are gone.
I exit Google Maps with a reluctant *click*.

Reality’s a foreign lexicon
now that I’m living here,
where caracaras hunt at dawn
and rheas roam
the fertile pampas of this austral hemisphere.

Yet there it was. My bliss. A fledgling poem
penned in the attic of
a Pennsylvania coal town home
whose saving grace
lay under common rafters ringing loud with love

that cannot be observed in cyberspace.

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*Translation:

In Comala I realized
That you mustn't try to return
To the place where you've been happy.

Note: IRL, in Internet culture-speak, is an acronym for *In Real Life*, as opposed to online.