

Poetry of Roger Simon

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At the Bookstore

In the *Rare Book Room* of the Strand I went looking for you,
 Three floors up and left off the red elevator,
 Past the gentlemen's leather chairs upholstered with hammered nails
 And over the plush Persian rug.
 I skipped the trajectory of *Classic Pulp*.
 (Imagine you using *House of the Wolf*
 As a platform for your commitment to tomorrow),
 Casting about instead in *Manager's Picks*:
 (Martin Amos, James Joyce and Faulkner)
 Good company, but not your cup of tea, I guess.
 Moving on, I nosed through *Treasures Under Glass*
 (Lee Friedlander, "*Self Portrait, Inscribed*"),
 And—relieved not to find you lurking there—
 I zigzagged on to *Signed Copies and Ephemera*.

But the wish wouldn't take.

This is not a disaster, as only you would say—
 (Who could parse a sentence with a verb riding on Hope
 Like a pro)—So tomorrow I'll try again,
 Just to be in motion, trying to do something,
 Or change something, making over a world
 You could see—with your quiet searchlight gaze—
 That I could never quite imagine by myself.

At the Easel

Confession. I would like to paint your face.
 Maybe I will. It won't be among your heroes sitting
 Exuberant upon proud stores of libraries. Nor resting,
 Charmed, and tightly clasped between the hearts of friends.
 Nor even at Lake Rosseau with its peaceful blues brandishing
 Breakers upon your exuberant love for Wendy. Nor can I paint you
 Resolute like wind, gazing straight into the maw
 Of that dreaded beast that took you one September.
 Yet I concede: Whereever you are I'll someday dip my brush
 And paint you like the portrait in my mind. I'll be the shade

That traces the certain voyage your eyes made
When crinkling up to the edge of your smile,
And then I'll explode into colour—like tablets, a covenant—
With your voice sounding the deeps.

I Sing the Poet Electric – To Roger I. Simon
By Judith P. Robertson

You are the archive in which I store my future
The book of hours through which I measure faith
I read within the pages of your countenance
Contested memory's fierce counselor and face
Upon the great wide staircase of your record
You greatly give yourself in what is good
We lean from out your skies to capture wonder
Merci, monsieur, et toujours, Après Vous

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