

The Cultural Fanatic

Elizabeth Olsen-Hodges

Hello, sir, I wish to speak to you
I'm curious about your language
Your culture, your ways, you see that I
Would like nothing more than to buy you
A tawny cup of coffee
Simmered in the dim light
Underneath these pinpricked stars
And ask to you about where you've been
Where you're from, who you are
And what poetry resides behind your expressionless face.

You see, when I heard you speak, your thick accent like molasses
It was the most beautiful thing
Wire glasses perched on your face,
Peering at all through dark eyes like
My favorite species of owl
'Tyto alba
May I call you 'Tyto, sir?
Or is your name so exotic
I shant speak it?

'Tyto, sir, I like your dark hair,
Shaggy and oily like the woods must be back in your homeland
I wonder if your mother shares your skin,
The same color of the coffee I want to give you.

Tell me, bands do you like?
I'm sure I've heard of them
Sigur Rós? Gackt? Ilgi?
Is it something so foreign my tongue cannot pronounce it?
Or do you listen to Lady Gaga, 'Tyto, sir,
Like most of us here do.

I'm sorry, Tyto, sir,
For I am a cultural fanatic
A lover for what is not mine
Someone who wishes that they were born in a land
Where concrete does not cover the ground.

I keep seeing you on the bus, Tyto, sir,
I can speak fragments your language
Your capital, your leader, I know, as well
As the names of all your major rivers.

(Tyto, sir, I think I'm in love with you
But I don't have the courage to speak
So I sit here, across from you on this rickety old bus
With two cups of spiced coffee in hand
And try to avoid staring.)

Elizabeth Olsen-Hodges is a freshman in Biology.