

Loneliness

No, I don't mean the kind
that visits you
when you are truly alone.

I mean the loneliness
that gnaws from within
even when you find yourself
in a room full of other people—
who still cannot see what you see,
understand what you understand,
feel the emptiness that is all around them.

Sometimes you do your best
to explain—though
mostly you just don't try anymore.

Ask any artist; ask any poet,
or composer,
who may have been awarded
every available prize (though perhaps not)
and yet for whom the loneliness
still lingers:
haunting that most recent canvas,
spurring on his latest verse,
swimming in the flood formed
by individual notes of her musical score
which fall upon us like glistening raindrops
out of a gray sky.

It's that kind of loneliness, the kind
which you may forget for a time
when you are in the arms of your lover
or after you have ingested
the right controlled substance,
but only for a time because then
the feelings return demanding that we
pay homage to our despair.

It's a loneliness that can eat you from within
if you aren't careful.

It's a loneliness
that can eat you
from within
even if you are.

Steve Bloom
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