

Take Heart

Saturday, February 14, 2009

I'm observing Valentine's Day this afternoon by reflecting on the randomness of love. Love gained, love lost, love desired. As preoccupied as we are by it, as earnestly as we strive for it, one would think that falling in love with a suitable companion and staying that way would be as easy as falling off a log, particularly for those of us who still have full use of our limbs and faculties. But it isn't easy, is it? I've fallen in love four times in nearly half a century, relationships ranging in duration from 3 to 17 years (though the last and longest was kept alive for a time by artificial means). And while that record might seem good to some and less good to others, I've been in exile for two years now, calibrating and recalibrating my radar, feeling a bit like the SETI scientist listening for something he knows is out there ... or in here ... and he knows that he'll find it if he can only tune to the right frequency, face the right galaxy. But, save for a few exciting anomalies, the sky ain't talkin'. Would that the damned radar equipment's instruction manual were written in English.

Over the last few days, I've spent quiet casual time with two female friends, both of them single, intelligent, talented and indisputably desirable. Like them, I remain on the outside of the love thing looking in. I don't know their feelings about their singleness, but an equally desirable male friend whom I see far too seldom claims to be at peace with his own. I am not at peace. All four of us are richly deserving of partners and, though I seem to be the only one complaining, I believe that singleness is unnatural.

Even my romantically complacent male friend allows that he might be rationalizing. It's long been my opinion that we can busy ourselves with our careers and our friends and our families to the point that we all but disappear into them. And I'm not suggesting that this is a bad thing. We're nurtured and energized by the love of friends and family, and I know I'd be desperately unhappy without creative outlets, so even careers, soul-killing as they can be sometimes, play an important role in sustaining us. But whenever there's a lull in the music, when the anesthetic wears off between doses, when the friends and families go home to their own lives and beds and the laptop goes to sleep, we recoil from the stillness. We need love, yes, but we also need to be in love. We're born with this addiction, more urgent in some than in others and quite often sublimated, but the only effective cure for it is death. Oh ... and happy Valentine's Day.

Length: 4:03

Music: *Free Fallin'* by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers and *Addicted to Love* by Robert Palmer

Writer, voice: Tim Brosnan



Eloquent coffee cups in Camden, Maine

