



JACLR

Journal of Artistic Creation & Literary Research

JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access Graduate Student Journal of the Universidad Complutense Madrid that publishes interdisciplinary research on literary studies, critical theory, applied linguistics and semiotics, and educational issues. The journal also publishes original contributions in artistic creation in order to promote these works.

Volume 8 Issue 1 (June 2020)

Esther Alós Ordiales
When Shipped Away

Alós Ordiales, Esther: *When Shipped Away*. JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 8.1 (2020) <<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>>©Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

When Shipped Away

It started in the bar around the corner. The bar I never remembered the name of, so it was left to the bar around the corner. Even when the time had passed, too much time and the neighbourhood changed, we moved, the owner sold the place. But it was still the bar around the corner, the bar where it had all started. And where it ended.

It was a whirlwind romance, the kind the movie industry likes to advertise. Woman and man meet at a bar, fall for each other's eyes and get swept up in the romance and fairytale of it all. The day I met him, sleek jeans and a pink shirt. And that cologne, that cologne that surrounded the aroma of his soul, left on my bedsheets for days on end, breezing through my apartment. In his smell, I bloomed. I still remember how that scent of his wafted through the bar around the corner, lingering on my beer and finding a home on the bottles and napkins scattered all over the place. How we laughed about it months after, the way my eyes darted to his as he walked past, searching for the owner of what smelled like hidden dreams. We laughed as we remembered the subtle-less intake of air I took. But we stopped laughing when we remembered his intake of air, a gasp of sorts, an exclamation of admiration, fascination, inclination. That day we spoke what our hearts had kept hidden in their burrows, the first time we shared our soul.

And then there was Madrid. An abrupt change induced by the promise of better lives. Within the busy streets, the loud chatter, the continuous smiles, we found a new home to build on. We even discovered a bar that resembled the bar around the corner, a feeling of giddiness that overtook us when we first encountered it, of feeling we had never actually left home, just evolved with it. And how we fought for it, defending it, refusing to let the illusion fall from our grasp. When it got boarded up and abandoned, we let go. From our hands fell the mirage turned desperation. Because it wasn't the bar around the corner, it never quite crept into our lives with the same sudden fervour of love. We buried our sorrow, we had each other in this new frantic world. We turned to coffee.

And with the introduction of coffee in our lives, we continued to be happy. Thrown into a city with Sunday breakfasts and life based on social interactions, we had coffees with newfound friends. Tuning into the secrets of the city, we found the cheap paces, the homely ones. We entered into the ways of a happy city starting its sunny summer. Madrid accepted us for ten months, which by then had solidified our love. Walking the small streets, strolling throughout the green pockets of air, enjoying the scale numbers going up with each meal shared. And with the meals, we shared our lives and we shared our hearts. I had never met anyone like him, a combination of odd parts merging into my quirks. From eternal conversations of weather and philosophy, of shopping lists and literary analyses, from weekly household tasks to witty irony. And the silences. The silences which at times we secluded ourselves in, a bubble clouded in a display

of misty thoughts, in a comprehension of the volumes unspoken, in the appreciation of sitting and being, of each other.

April is the cruellest month, a synonym found in a commonly adored work, and we left Madrid amidst untroubled vivacity. Paris, the city of love, was to be our upcoming destination. We were excited about the promised romance, we searched for the inside jokes the city whispered, we looked forward to an ever after. We were mistaken. We confused romance with lust, love with terror, appreciation with confusion. But what a city. We fell in love with Paris with a vehemence close to the love we felt towards Madrid. We fell in love with the roaming arms of the river, the moody skies prone to surprise showers, the atmosphere of sophistication. We even fell in love with the crowds of tourists, understanding and smiling along, for Madrid had trained us well, for beauty attracts adoration. It must have been the dream, it must have. It must have been the dream of love in the city of lights, for as we fell in love with Paris too, we were running out of love for each other. Paris had us for half the time Madrid did.

And then we were home, to where it all had started. And conversations no longer revolved around plans, and silences were interrupted with T.V. nonsense when they started becoming uncomfortable. We put our lives in order and held a yard sale, disposing of the baggage in our hearts along with material memories. He sold his pink shirt, I turned the dress of the first night into rags for the kitchen spills. We fell into a spiral of lack of self-control, we forgot past love, we delved into illogical explanations of what seemed an unnatural romance.

And then I was alone. And fake romance played into my life once more, sitting on the bench with the rain falling onto my face, getting drenched in a metaphor of sadness. Except this wasn't a movie anymore, this was my heart crying, yearning for the carefree rain in Paris, for the sunny terraces in Madrid, not this heart-wrenching coldness. And I had never thought reality could involve love so powerful and so deep, I never thought I'd find in someone else what I never knew I needed. He had changed me, helped me grow, and we had evolved together, in a hurricane of emotions and happiness. He had walked away from me, those sleek jeans in a box left behind for goodwill, his hands full and his heart empty. And I had watched him leave, with shredded thoughts and dashed hopes, waiting for the scene in which he would turn around and regret it. Regret the times we had left the disagreement fester between us, regret the times where differences were held accountable for unreasonable responses, regret the moment we decided to not fight for the feelings dripping through our fingers onto the floor. But he continued walking away, taking with him the aroma I once called home, and I continued to sit on the bench until he disappeared from view. Past the bar around the corner.

Bioprofile of the author:

Esther Alós Ordiales is an undergraduate student of English Studies at UCM. Having done an Erasmus year in Copenhagen with specialised master courses in English writing, she has expanded on her passion for writing. She has written a great number of poems and has been writing and managing a creative writing blog since 2013, centring on short stories of abstract nature.

Contact: <ealos@ucm.es>