

Fall 12-1-1998

In the Glow of the Night

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Recommended Citation

Lydon, Paul (1998) "In the Glow of the Night," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 19 : No. 1 , Article 48.
Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol19/iss1/48>

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IN THE GLOW OF THE NIGHT

We sit at a restaurant table on the patio overlooking the moonlit beach. I enjoy my scotch and soda, and Ella's dark eyes. She's the kind of woman I have a weakness for, needy, complicated, some twenty years younger than I am. I met her two weeks ago, sunning on the beach in the middle of the afternoon.

"We should go for a swim," she says.

"No," I say. "It's too late."

"A swim would do you good."

"The water will be too cold."

"It's at least as warm the air," she says.

"Seventy degrees is plenty warm for swimming."

"We'll go in the morning."

"The water will be cooler then."

"I'm too tired," I say.

She smiles and I catch the gleam in her eye. Ella has a wonderful way of smoothing things over with that look. I pick up my scotch and drink the rest, then watch the moonlight glint off the tops of the waves. The moon is not much tonight, I think, a little less than half-full.

I turn around and wave through the glass window at the waiter inside the bar. He comes outside carrying a tray and his order pad.

"Would you like another, sir?"

"Yes."

"And you, Miss?"

"No, thank you, I'm fine."

He takes the empty glasses and goes inside to get my drink.

"I found a pair of shoes at the market yesterday," Ella says.

She has told me this before, but I play along.

"Are they nice?" I ask.

"Yes, they're very nice," she says. "I wish I had more money."

"I'm sure the economy will improve soon."

The scotch in my drink

is like the moon.

Not quite half-full

"That could take months," Ella says. "I'm sure someone will buy the shoes before then. No one with any money would pass them up."

"Maybe it won't take so long for things to get better," I say.

"One of a kind," the dealer said. Fine imported leather, black, with a fancy design along the ankle. The dealer told me it took him a week to make them."

"He's a good salesman."

"It's hard to find good shoes," Ella says.

I take out my wallet and give her fifty dollars. She takes it and puts it in her purse. I have my ways of smoothing things over too.

The waiter finally comes with my drink. He lays it on the table and leaves a fresh napkin.

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IN THE GLOW OF THE NIGHT

“Are you sure you wouldn’t like another margarita, Miss?”

“No, I’m fine.”

He goes back inside.

“You are too kind,” Ella says.

I wave my arm. “You deserve a new pair of shoes.”

The scotch in my drink is like the moon. Not quite half-full. I watch a pair of boys come down the beach and start to dig for crabs in the sand. They have a big bucket and two short shovels. After a little digging they find a crab and toss it in the bucket. One of them says something and they both laugh.

“We will swim in the morning, then,” Ella says.

“Yes,” I say. “It’ll be nice.”

I finish my drink, and leave some money on the table for the drinks and a tip. We walk out onto the beach barefoot, carrying our shoes. Up close, one of the boys looks older than the other. Maybe, they are brothers, but maybe not. From a distance a woman shouts something I can’t make out. The boys grab their bucket and shovels and scamper down the beach into darkness. Hand in hand, we walk along the seashore in the glow of the night.

— *Paul Lydon*

LOVE: A COMPOSER

Love: a composer
wont to spy an opera
curtained in the heart.

— *Robert N. Georgalas*