

THE POET'S GAME

Greg Brown

DOWN BY THE RIVER, JUNIOR YEAR, WALKIN' WITH MY GIRL, AND WE CAME UPON A PLACE
WHERE, IN THE TALL GRASS, A COUPLE HAD BEEN MAKIN' LOVE
LEFT THE MARK OF THEIR EMBRACE. I SAID TO HER, "LOOKS LIKE THEY HAD SOME FUN"
SHE SAID TO ME, "LET'S DO THE SAME"

AND STILL I CHASED HER KISSES AND HER FRECKLES IN THE SUN
WHEN I PLAY THE POET GAME

THE YOUNG MAN DOWN IN THE HILL COUNTRY IN THE YEAR OF '22

HE WENT TO MEET HIS FUTURE BRIDE

SHE LIVED IN A ROUGH OLD SHACK WHERE POVERTY BLEW THROUGH

SHE INVITED HIM INSIDE

SHE'D BEEN COOKING, ASHAMED OF FEELIN' SAD

SHE COULD ONLY OFFER HIM BREAD, AND HER NAME

GRANDPA SAID THAT WAS THE BEST GIFT A FELLA EVER HAD

AND HE TAUGHT ME THE POET GAME

I HAD A FRIEND WHO DRANK TOO MUCH AND PLAYED TOO MUCH GUITAR

OH, AND WE SURE GOT ALONG

REEL-TO-REELS ROLLED ACROSS THE COUNTRY NEAR AND FAR

WITH LETTERS, POEMS, AND SONGS

BUT THESE DAYS SHE DON'T TALK TO ME AND HE WON'T TELL ME WHY

I MISS HIM EVERY TIME I SAY HIS NAME

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING OR WHY OUR FRIENDSHIP DIED

WHILE WE PLAYED THE POET GAME

THE FALL RAIN WAS POUNDIN' DOWN ON AN OLD NEW HAMPSHIRE MILL

AND THE RIVER WILD AND HIGH

I WAS TALKIN' TO HER WHILE LEAVES BLEW DOWN LIKE A SUDDEN CHILL

AND THERE WAS WILDNESS IN HER EYES

WE MADE LOVE LIKE WE'D BEEN WAITING ALL OUR LIVES FOR THIS
STRANGERS KNOWIN' NO SHAME
BUT SHE HAD TO LEAVE AT DAWN AND WITH A STICKY FAREWELL KISS
LEFT ME TO PLAY THE POET GAME
I WATCHED MY COUNTRY TURN INTO A COAST-TO-COAST STRIP MALL
AND I CRIED OUT IN SONG
IF WE COULD DO ALL THAT IN THIRTY YEARS, THEN PLEASE TELL ME, YOU-ALL
WHY DOES GOOD CHANGE TAKE SO LONG
WHY DOES THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN OR WHO YOU CHOOSE TO LOVE
STILL LEAD TO SUCH ANGER AND PAIN
WHY DO I THINK IT'S ANY HELP FOR ME TO STILL DREAM ON
PLAYING THE POET GAME
SIRENS WAIL ABOVE THE FIELDS, ANOTHER SOUL GONE DOWN
ANOTHER SUN ABOUT TO RISE
I'VE LOST TRACK OF MY MISTAKES, LIKE BIRDS THAT FLY AROUND
AND DARKEN HALF MY SKIES
TO ALL OF THOSE I'VE HURT, OH I PRAY YOU WILL FORGIVE ME
I TO YOU WILL FREELY DO THE SAME
SO MANY THINGS I DIDN'T SEE WITH MY EYES TURNED INSIDE
PLAYING THE POET GAME
I WALK OUT AT NIGHT TO TAKE A LEAK UNDERNEATH THE STARS
OH YEAH, THAT'S THE LIFE FOR ME
THERE'S ORION AND THE PLEIADES AND I GUESS THAT MUST BE MARS
ALL IS CLEAR AS WE LONG TO BE
I'VE SUNG WHAT I WAS GIVEN; SOME WAS BAD AND SOME WAS GOOD
I NEVER DID KNOW FROM WHERE IT CAME
AND IF I HAD IT ALL TO DO AGAIN I AM NOT SURE I WOULD
PLAY THE POET GAME

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SHALOM, from
SPIKE and JAMIE