Darning Mark's jumper: wearing love and sorrow

Karen de Perthuis

ABSTRACT

Some garments demand a narrative of their own. Such was the case with a jumper that I darned for my partner in the winter of 2010. The jumper was old and moth-eaten; Mark was gravely ill with only a few months left to live. In the process of darning, each stitch was an act of love, each passage of the needle restoring something that had been eaten away.

This article explores the multiple levels of meaning that run through the narrative I have woven around darning Mark’s jumper – an irreplaceable garment – at once priceless but worthless, worn but unwearable, empty yet embodied. It explores the concept of the fetish and draws on Igor Kopytoff’s analysis of our relationship to commodities and things in the modern, capitalist economy, where discarding and replacing old clothes with new is the default option. The theoretical heart of this paper, however, lies with Elizabeth Wilson’s writings on the ‘quasi-magical properties and meanings’ of a garment and with the work of Peter Stallybrass, who has written brilliantly on how in moments of crisis, in the ruptures of our lives, in mourning, it is to these irrational attachments that we turn.

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Love and Sorrow is an album by David Murray which was recorded in 1993 and released on the Japanese DIW label. It features performances by Murray's Quartet which included John Hicks and Fred Hopkins. Allmusic awarded the album 3 stars.

- "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To" (Cole Porter) - 9:14.
- "Old Folks" (Dedette Lee Hill, Willard Robison) - 10:47.
- "Forever I Love You" (Tex Allen) - 5:25.
- "Sorrow Song (For W.E.B. Dubois)" (David Murray) - 12:28.
- "A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing" (Billy Strayhorn) - 6:29.

O maiden, fresher than the first green leaf With which the fearful springtide flecks the lea, Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee That thou hast half my heart, for bitter grief Doth hold the other half in sovranty. Thou art my heart's sun in love's crystalline: Yet on both sides at once thou canst not shine: Thine is the bright side of my heart, and thine My heart's day, but the shadow of my heart, Issue of its own substance, my heart's night Thou canst not lighten even with thy light, All powerful in beauty as thou. Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit sleep They never learnt to love who never knew to weep. Alfred Lord Tennyson. Topic(s) of this poem: love, sorrow.

Willard Robison - 10:47. "Forever I Love You" (Tex Allen) - 5:25. "Sorrow Song (For W.E.B. Dubois)" (David Murray) - 12:28. "A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing" (Billy Strayhorn) - 6:29. O maiden, fresher than the first green leaf With which the fearful springtide flecks the lea, Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee That thou hast half my heart, for bitter grief Doth hold the other half in sovranty. Thou art my heart's sun in love's crystalline: Yet on both sides at once thou canst not shine: Thine is the bright side of my heart, and thine My heart's day, but the shadow of my heart, Issue of its own substance, my heart's night Thou canst not lighten even with thy light, All powerful in beauty as thou. Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit sleep They never learnt to love who never knew to weep. Alfred Lord Tennyson. Topic(s) of this poem: love, sorrow.

Poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson : 95 / 193. « prev. poem. next poem ». Comments about Love and Sorrow by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Abstract: Some garments demand a narrative of their own. Such was the case with a jumper that I darned for my partner in the winter of 2010. The jumper was old and moth-eaten; Mark was gravely ill with only a few months left to live. In the process of darning, each stitch was an act of love, each passage of the needle restoring something that had been eaten away. This article explores the multiple levels of meaning that run through the narrative I have woven around darning Mark’s jumper – an irreplaceable garment – at once priceless but worthless, worn but unwearable, empty yet embodied.