

The Lost Meaning

by Darryl Price

of any cautionary tale is
somewhere found rolling around in your
own sweet voice for me. Your sound's still
listing there inside my wobbly
head. My head is too often in
my open hands, grinning behind
its face-mask like a parade on float.
There are things coming together
that neither one of us will see
until they are right on top of
us, but we have lived through them all
once before. If you paint a sad

enough picture for the truth, they
will ask you why you didn't sing
a happier song. If you make
up a brave something to whistle
as you crouch through a tunnel of
swirling leaves, they'll want to know where
your next funny picture of the
burning moon is to come from. No
one believes you are doing your
best. They always think they could steer
your fragile life away from the
jagged, dripping rocks if you would

only let them. As Carol said,
don't let them get away with that
petty kind of sick juvenile
manipulation. Direction

is another purely sticky
organic thing in a dangerous world—we
don't need to go as far as the next
universe. If it was as fixed
as they believe, you would be made only
of the molten rocks. But as it is you
get to be the presence that is truly
your self. That's where all the magic

can begin to make some real contact
with the rest of the earthly realms.
And from there, my dears, you may at
last sincerely find peace as goodness and some
happiness as light, although they hate those
two words almost as much as they
hate this dream we are currently having together. That
shouldn't stop us. Look. Here we are,
making it all up as we go. Here we are, we
are shaking all of the roots to heaven, we
are dancing all of the rivers to hell,
loosening all of the bad knots one by one by one.

Bonus poem:

The Lights Went Out

The door you used
had quite a kick
to it. The air
was combustibile after that--

on Lonesome Avenue, harmful

or fatal if swallowed.
The stairs you took
swept sideways behind you,

daring anyone to love
you without it being
an improbable crime. Didn't
mean to laugh, but

obviously I'd failed again
to utter all the
right things that make
these things seem better. One

of us has changed.
Oh I doubt there's
a glorious moment to
come on Lonesome Avenue.

