The Terminal Tavern

David Wilcox

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By David Wilcox
Ah, what a beautiful place.
It is so lush and quiet in these walls.
It's a place where the sound really stands a chance of finding its way.
And I'm grateful 'cause, man, there are a lot of gigs that's just really hard.
The sound doesn't stand a chance.
A lot of times there's a gig that's between somewhere and somewhere else.
You really wouldn't go there to play it, but the booking agent says "Well you're on your way. Why don't you stop and play, you know, the Terminal Tavern."
As my friend Gamble would say, "What a skull orchard."
I mean imagine straining good, fine art sensibility through that veil of chicken wire.
It's the kind of place where you gaze about you at those walls of pecky Cyprus and pine wood adorned with frontier memorabilia and mint-condition tire tool sets.
And the ceiling under slung with fish net encrusted with detritus and streaming down through the steaming midnight air, a million shattered dreams that dangle like declensions of despair.
And the daily drunks just line the walls like lemmings in repose.
The festering booze assaulting their entrails, like time-release suicide.
They're stuck to that sticky floor and they're not moving.
And you think, "What do they need?"
Well, I don't have that.
What have I got?
I've got an acoustic guitar, it's not enough.
I've got words.
I wonder if they stand a chance to be heard.
Maybe music doesn't stand a chance.
I mean, I can make sound.
I have vocal chords.
I have strings.
I can make sound.
Who needs sound?
We need music and music is much bigger than that.
Music is timing with a capital "T."
Music is hearing a song that sounds like your song, 'cause it's just what you've been dreaming of or thinking of, or praying for.
Suddenly it's speaking right to you.
And sure, there're all these other people here but they're just superfluous.
It's your song and it was meant just for you.
It hits home and it's real, 'cause it's coming from some place much bigger.

But in that place you look around and you think, "Oh man there's no chance for this to happen. There're so many distractions."
There's always distractions.
All you can do is send it out.
I think Sting's analogy of songs is a great one saying, "It's a message in a bottle."
You take all your best hopes and dreams and send it out in a bottle.
Toss it in the ocean.
Whoever gets it and when they get it, well it has more to do with the ocean than it has to do with you.
That's good, the ocean can be trusted, if the timing is right.
Send it out as best you can.

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