Farewell, My Lovely



Keep your distance
Keep your distance
When I feel you close to me
What can I do but fall
Keep your distance
Keep your distance
*With us it must be all or none at all**

First, I just need you to know. It’s not you. It’s me.

Through all this time, you never wavered. Your fine taste and ability to deliver potent delight only improved over time. From the first time I felt you on my tongue – me, a mere teenager with raging hormones and no experience in, well, anything – I was at your mercy, your slave in love. You were my constant companion, giver of comfort, shelter, delight. And perhaps most importantly: confidence.

Yes, with you at my side, my social insecurity and fears washed away on a sudsy wave. Emboldened by your strength, I was at last able to speak up, speak out, be seen. With you, I felt myself, at last, to be a man.

And you’ve always been there for me. Sure, I strayed away at times, occasionally tempted by a sassy Scottish lass or a robust Italian red. But it was you, always you and your yeasty kiss, that I came back to.

But no more, dearest. No more.

Somewhere along the way, your vixenish power outmatched my sense of proportion. I would begin to think longingly of you at mid-day, so anxious for our first evening embrace on the patio, or on the lawn, or an illicit dalliance in the office before the work day was through. And once we were together, there was nothing else but to drown in your amber beauty.

Your succor has become a toxin, my dear, and so I say to you, in sorrow more than anger: away and no more.

Make no mistake. As I nurse a bubbly pint glass of tonic and lime, it will surely be you that I am longing for. The empty husks of LaCroix, opened and drained with nary a thought to their pure and sparkly essence, will litter my wake, sad echoes of our once mighty passion.

And worse: there will be times, dearest, when I see you across a crowded room, the plaything of another. Perhaps someone who handles you with the tenderness we once knew, perhaps a rogue of rough trade who treats you cheaply, perhaps even knocking you over with sloppy ineptitude. Either way, your beauty will arouse memories (those that I can remember) of happier times. For truly, what ex-lover fails to be more beautiful when seen with a replacement suitor?

But still: the time has come when we can no longer. The passion is obliterated by habitual compulsion and disregard for the subtler delights on offer in this crazy world of ours.

Please don’t try to call.

Je ne regrette rien. Je regrette tout.

If I cross your path again
Who knows where, who knows when
On some morning without number
On some highway without end

Don’t grasp my hand and say
Fate has brought you here today
*Fate is only fooling with us, friend**

* *lyrics by Richard Thompson, 1991*