

JUNE 13, 2020

Dear John Prine,

I'm sad you had to die to pull me into closer orbit. Now I'm a tiny, wobbly Mercury to your sun. I just want to listen to "Paradise" on repeat. Watch or read every interview. Make up for lost time.

Instead of that, right now, I'm eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in the dark and listening to Sturgill Simpson singing songs to his son. It's almost midnight. I'm a few feet away from my own sleeping son. I saw your sons sing "Paradise" for you and for the world of us who miss you. It was something.

"There's nothing more embarrassing," Elizabeth Bishop said, "than being a poet, really." I think that's probably true, for some of us.

You're a poet. Like Bishop, a great one. Not an embarrassed bone in your body. It can be a simple celebration.

Fiona says you believed in God. She says you believed in Heaven, believed that you were headed there.

Simple. Like a song. Start with a blank page and don't write what shouldn't be there.

Savor that endless cigarette, that bottomless vodka and ginger ale. I'll savor the last bites of this PBJ, the subtle sounds of my son sleeping. Paradise in simple pleasures.

Keep us in your prayers. Surely God listens to John Prine, too.

Peace + Love.

TJ