

THE COSMONAUT'S LAST MESSAGE TO THE WOMAN HE ONCE LOVED IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

David Greig

KEITH: I get drunk. Can I be honest with you? I can't control myself. Something wild rises up in me and I just talk to anybody. I tell the truth. I tell lies. Whatever. I met this Russian girl, the one I was telling you about, in this club that's supposed to be a place where film people go or something. She was dancing a striptease to 'Je t'aime' (*He sings a portion of this tune*) and when she came over to my table so I could give her some money I told her it was my favourite piece of music, which it isn't. It's just ... a piece of music I know, but I wanted to have something kind to say to her. I just wanted to say something kind....

I'm under no illusions about her motivation. But something ...
Have another whisky.
Barman, two Ardbeg.
In Gaelic, 'whisky' means water of life.
I seem to be able to talk to anyone over a whisky.
If only you could sit down with everybody over a whisky. If only every single encounter was just two people, and a wooden table and a whisky.
It's tearing me apart to be honest with you. It really is. I'm shaken up.
You Norwegians suppress, don't you? You're Calvinist? Norwegians?
Fish. Oil. Silence and Fear.
You're just like us Scots.
When I was young I thought I'd be free of it, not like my father. I travelled the entire world. I lived in foreign cities. Work camps in the middle of Amazonia. The desert. Even the middle of the sea. I thought I'd escaped. But it steals over you, doesn't it, like a damp towel over a flame.