

Busted in Utah

Stoop Life

Oh youth, oh life,
Oh, all that is squandered on the young.
To sit and drink and laugh and love.
To shake off life's worries like a dog soaked wet with rain.
Nothing sticks to you,
you with insufficient funds and unlimited friends.
With health and vigor
perched atop a stoop like you were the king of the world.
What courts you rule over,
you lords and ladies of the sand.
This will all blow away eventually, but until then,
this kingdom where you smoke cigarettes and howl at the moon,
where you sing Don McLean at midnight as your voice is carried by the wind.
This is yours, and this is it.
Life as good as you'll ever know it.
On a stoop in the desert under the pale moonlight.
To be immortal, and then passing, and then nothing more again.

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A Night With Uranium Miners

There are more desperate souls than those who land in Bullfrog.
Desperate, distressed, or just divinely flawed.
Cracking knuckled hands left scarred by prison gang tattoos.
Wearing splotchy skin like coffee grounds spilled across white tile floors.
With faces cast from tire tread, all gold teeth rims and darkened bags,
and eyes, what bottomless eyes. Eyes that have seen it all.

The worst job in America must exist somewhere.
That work that prisoners wouldn't do
amidst their cries of violated civil rights and Attica renewed.
A job you'd only find this far away from eyes that claim to care.
But once do we meet these miners who take on this challenge,
these diggers of uranium, god's greatest toxin, cored from hollow earth.

That they'd be here and we'd be here feels much more than chance.
A mirror reflecting back the way things could've been.
At a bar in the desert under a blanket of stars
where booze and songs were shared by most.
Here, until it was over, and the breaking fit of fistfights sent us sailing
back to worlds where we'd meet no more.

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Burr Trail

Pioneers aren't dead and gone.
We've just buried them deep within ourselves,
far beneath careers built on cooking numbers like venison flanks
for digital overlords already fattened by past kills.
But they're still out there. Pioneers, that is.
Still waiting for that by and by.

Their awakening doesn't require epic summits.
Sometimes, they are roused by the smallest spark,
by that first breath of fresh air to churn the soul.
On foot, or by car.
On Utah back roads or Kansas fields of wheat,
they're livened from the sky.

Go west, you say, or nay, just go at all.
Go and wander; go and save your soul.
And when you get there, when you
breath back life into that restless DNA,
then you may watch and wander.
Then you may wander and see.

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Mosquito Cove

Off Highway 9,
Exactly where they'd said you'd be.
Sandy turnouts and makeshift camp spots.
Beggar hideaways from the real.
This is the land of Rainbow people, of Manson family gone to seed.
And yet it all feels so vaguely familiar.
And yet, we claim it for our own.

And yet...

The Virgin River flows a chalky gray blue current,
The tamaracks and cottonwood line her gentle bank.
This place feels eternal minus the crushed beer cans faded by the sun.
The way we wash ourselves in this clean river.
The way the water runs away.
It never stops, not once.
Like these moments
leaving us too soon.

Pt. 2

Night bequeaths a special promise,
A peace tucked among the reeds and shore.
The crickets know this oath.
The catfish mudding low beneath the creek.
We are only witness.
Passengers doomed by sun's coming light.

And yet...

We are here around the campfire telling tales that define us and
make up who we dream to be.
Inky black silences the critters,
The hanger-on's who listen to our words until sleep claims their dusty eyes.
Even a late night dip, splashing waves and sloshing beer,
even this won't rouse them from their slumber.

For this hour belongs to us.
We the invaders of their natural bliss, the one that came before us
and that one day will return long after we are gone.
We love this world they lend us, yet it is inevitable that we leave.
A dream saved for those who'll follow in our wake.
A dream, one that couldn't be.

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Untitled

When I die, I will rise in a slot canyon in Utah
As the burning sun passes overhead.
Misty air that smells of earth will surround me.
Shadows and rays of light will marry in the air.
Friends will follow before and after
Round twisting, bending routes of stone.
The crunch of gravel underfoot,
That burning desire for more,
Will lead us over and on.
Explorers all, we will rest in grand cathedrals with
Overhanging slabs of sandstone giving shade.
Where green moss grows from weeping seeps
And canyons stretch unending just ahead,
Waiting for us to catch our breath and venture further on.