

I remember, my Godbrother was a quiet kid.
The strong silent type.

He had five brothers, and you could always tell he was a little different.
I didn't know how different until I started watching his YouTube channel,
a mosh pit of teenage angst, emo graphics, and cringey jokes that make me smile.
I never knew he was an Edge lord.

(for those who don't know)

Edge Lord: is a term coined to represent those who do risqué or extreme things.
Those who love to balance on the abyss

Some would say that they do it for attention.
But most of the time, I think it's just their personality running from a world that wants
them to act normal. Existing in the only place where they can truly find peace.
In one video, he's playing on a railroad.

He's attempting to catch a train. He balances on the tracks, waiting for a car to
hop on. Dashing from one side to the other.

He says, "Y'all probably think this is lame, but it's not. It's so cool".

Over and over, you can hear his excitement.

And when he finally spots a train. You can see his elation.

And this,

is the definition of Edge Lord.

Watching 400 tons of steel fly by, hearing iron thunder against iron and feeling no fear.
Only the wind through your hair, and joy in your heart.
Close your eyes.

Can you see him.

Dancing with locomotives like old friends.

Standing on the edge of life and death,

All grins and not one care bared towards danger.

I think he was numb to the danger.

Most black boys feel realize early on that danger is a question,
and your survival depends on refusing to answer it.

See for most black boys,

dying over your joy is a grim possibility in a society that hates to see us happy,

But loves to drag us down. I got homies like my God brother.

Who find their joy on the wrong side of the law, or the tracks..

I got homies, who don't look for trouble, but will walk around they neighborhoods in the
dead of night hoping trouble finds them, cause looking danger in the eye is the only time
they feel alive.

And even I love to live on the edge sometimes.

My heart races when I fit my car in between gaps a little too close for comfort.

Switching lanes, a little too early or a little too late.

Smiling when I make it through. Make it too another day.

I think all black boys are edge lords.

Gotta learn at an early age to be comfortable with our feet swinging over the abyss.
Cause Society loves to push us to the cliff.

Why you think we always ready to jump off?

Our existence be daredevil, be rebellion.

Our every breath is frowned upon no matter what we smile about.

So excuse us if we grin at grim reaper like old friend.

Yeah we see that nigga, he been walking around this neighborhood for years

We just not scared.

We not looking for trouble, just running from a world that wants us to act "normal".

Existing in the only place where they can truly find peace.

Rather it be the highway,

the block,

or the railroad.

As for my Godbrother.

Last year, on Valentine's Day,

he caught that train.

Or that train caught him.

The details are a bit derailing,

but he just ain't here no more.

But this poem isn't about grief.

It ain't a eulogy.

It's a consecration for every black boy that finds their joy on the edge.

Who look danger in the eye cause it's the only time they feel alive.

A dedication to every Edge Lord that loves to balance on the abyss.

And a celebration of the life of one.

Who fell off.

For Zaire
Gone too Soon
Never Forgotten

I used to find pleasure in getting close enough to the sun to burn.
Letting the pain caress me the color of the night sky.
When I grew tired of being engulfed, I found a home on the moon.
Found comfort in her craters, serenading her surface with songs of my sorrow.

I learned that shooting stars are just as good at keeping secrets as they are at granting wishes.

I've learned that Mars is a dusty red boring as fuck, and Uranus is really as wet as they say it is.

I guess this is the freedom that a spaceship affords.
The last time I left earth, I left for years.
I watched the sun like an ex-lover, stared into her light until I was almost blind.
I went swimming in Neptune and skating on Pluto.
I smoked six backwoods in front of Jupiter just to show that nigga what a gas giant really looks like.
Witnessed water bottle, fill with fumes the color of rocket smoke.
Lit tips liftoff like.

Have you ever seen a blunt launch from your lips?
How it leaves your mouth looking landing pad and takes you somewhere no one can reach.

Your friends, onlookers from a safe distance.
Watching you leave and get closer to them at the same time.
These days, there's something alien about me having my feet on the ground.
Something constricting about being caged below clouds.
I get serotonin anytime I'm able to enjoy the ambiance of a new planet.
Smile at the feeling of foreign soil or the flavor of a new atmosphere.

I dream of dancing with the stars.
Two stepping across the milky way.
The best part about planet hopping is getting a solar system worth of new beginnings.
I know that each sparkle in the sky is a sunrise somewhere.

The promise of a new day.

An opportunity to witness someone else's tomorrow.
I learned that time is only another construct we chain ourselves too.
I Realized that difference is only unrealized similarities.
That connection can be found anywhere you look, and separation only exists if you believe in it.

I've seen the vast expanse of the galaxy.

Can you imagine that every adventure has its own gravity?

Something new to pull you in.

Can you imagine, waking up to a unique perspective every day.
I have found a place, in broadening horizons, in trading perspectives.
I have found a home, in seeing everything and belonging to nothing.
In drifting with no goal, but every destination.
I have spread myself thin.

Done seen too much, just not enough to sit still.
Just enough to know there's far more than meets the eye.
Met just enough to know there is always somewhere better to be.
Left too many parts of me in too many different places

There are those that fear silence, but I find solace in space.

In all the vast and empty.

My family can be, uncomfortably close.
My Grandmother and my Aunt wear the same size so they share clothes.
and by sharing,
 I mean steal.
 Shoes. And shorts.
 No greater frustration than recognizing your shirt, on someone else.
It's a sign of affection.

 The type of closeness that distances creates.
A way to hold onto the ones you love when they get too far.
 Family time has always been a get in as you fit in sort of situation.
 See my family, is distant. Spread apart. At any one moment,
we probably got at least one aunt deployed, my little brother is in his room annoyed, my
mother is off advocating for some underrepresented minority, and I'm off at college trying
to be some sort of super poet.

 My father feels like we barely see each other. He's a family Man.
Firmly believes that the best way to change the world, is to raise strong children.
 You can see it in his actions.

 How he loves, like a cancer man.
 Like the tides, and the sand.
 How he has his highs and lows, but he's always there.
My father was constantly there. Uncle Sam's worst nightmare.
 A black man who raised his kids.
 The most effective form of protest.
 The type of consistent that schedules are made of.
 Tried to be everything he never had.
 See, his father, was a rolling stone. An absentee asshole.
 And they say the apple doesn't fall from the tree.

Cause they both ended up,
 A bit crabby,
 especially if you pinch a nerve.

 My father's wrath is a tidal wave. How it crashed over everything in the house.
But my mother, could swim. Could breath underwater. Never drowned under brutal
words and anger issues. Something like skin of steel.

 A super woman. Always flying somewhere to save a cat, in a tree, or a
community in chaos.

Or anything other than her home.

 The type to solve everyone's problems but her own, A space cadet.
With the ability to be in a room full of people and another planet at the same time.
Too busy creating her own reality to realize she's running late in ours.
Always ahead and behind,

 the type of inconsistent that divorces are made of.
And I, am a fruit from my family tree. And no matter how distant I get;
 I can still come home and realize this crab apple hasn't fallen far.

 I don't share shirts but I stole their imperfections.
No greater frustration than recognizing your flaws, on someone else.

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A space cadet, with anger issues.

The type of instability that breakups are made of.

I've noticed,

I can only be uncomfortably close or far away.

I don't let people in because it's hard to stay.

My sister never accepts my reasons for leaving.

I don't know how to tell her I'm always fleeing from Demons.

My brother, he used to drive me crazy.

Now he's stuck in the same environment that made me.

And I can tell he misses me.

The way he his hugs feel like the last time I've seen him.

The way he holds me close like I've gone too far.

A sign of affection.

The type of closeness that distance creates.

Some days I am the drunk.

 All smolder and angry. Crashing around the room.
Lumbering. Like a bull in a China shop.

 And on the days that I am the drunk,
she is the can.

 Swallowed and empty. Drained, and discarded in a pile of crushed and broken.
Other days.

Other days she's the drunk.

Messy.

Staggering.

Giggling out smiles too pretty to ignore.

 Spilling all over the room,
 stone and liquid,
 at the same time.

And when she is the drunk,
I am the bottle.

 And the cellar. Every bottle in the cellar.

Glass rigid. Care demanding. Type fragile. Prone to cut when broken.

Neither of us is old enough to drink,

But this poem isn't about alcohol.

 I mean. Sometimes it gets involved.

 But most of the time, we're drunk in love. Beyoncé style.

 Her Queen B mentality married to My Hov sized ego.

She always drafting albums. I stay sketching blueprints.

 Some Days, we be red carpet flawless enough to upgrade any room we reside in.

 Other nights end up bitter,
with me regretting ever telling her tea,
 because now she's in the bathroom drowning her tears in lemonade.

Either way, shit always ends up

Blue

sometimes black.

Tidal like the way ink runs out of our pens.

How we turn a family feud into something Hollywood worthy

Both of us are trying to Run this town but can't take care of each other.

She thinks I'm trying to control her.

I think she takes my love for granted.

Most of this is too good to be true.

But it's all okay until one of us gets drunk.

Or drained.

 When I stop being battery enough to charge your empty, and you have to
fill yourself with something warm enough to keep the chills away.

Or

 when I realize that seven cups is number enough to intoxicate me completely,
to numb the pain, to cloud the shame, and forget the blame.

 She gets drunk and her truth foams out her mouth,

I get drunk and my spill my fears all over the bathroom floor.
But this poem, isn't about alcohol.

My family started recycling after I sat in science class one day and conceptualized the
number of beers cans my father had already contributed to the local landfill.

She cry's so much,
her mother thought a glass of her favorite coping mechanism would help replace the
tears.

Watching how our parents deal with their darkness is an ad for some of our strongest
vices.

I'm stuck trying not to become the lumbering bull that turned my childhood into a china
shop,

Her mother nursed her a habit for popping pills a little more powerful than ibuprofen.
We both found out together that there are easier ways to drown our sorrows.
Cuddled in the sea of covers on our bed.
In our sweat.

Tongues, painting necks

Days, chasing checks.

But when the affection begins to trigger the depression.

And we start to lose direction cause of poor connection

We get drunk,

Except, she's not the can,

but she's still crushed
cause I don't make her feel like she is a model.

Like, she's in demand.

But, she can't support,
so, I take the weight but I'm bout to break cause she doesn't stand.

And I'm not the bottle.

But I'm still a bunch of broken pieces she has to coddle.

And it cuts her hands,

but she'd rather bleed than choose where to eat.

So I plot the course cause she doesn't plan.

And I live on the throttle.

But it's always 5 o'clock somewhere so we stay in a Jam.

Like, when she no longer needs me glass rigid enough to contain her.

Or, when I can't help but clean up the mess her beautiful makes on our floors.

Or, when we're both supposed to have left a long time ago for something important

But, instead we choose to get so intoxicated off each other that we skip the occasion.

We learned how to cope through watching our parent's separations.

And spent more time filling cups than fulfilling expectations

Our relation never got to it's destination.

Because we got drunk, instead.

If you give a man a fish. He will eat for a day.
If you teach a man to fish, he will eat for a week. But if you starve a man.
He will spend his days hunting after anything to satiate his hunger.
He will look at food with a steady gaze.
And unwavering focus.
His mouth will fill with enough drool to spill out of the corners of his smile.
I've seen starving men,
walking the streets with full stomachs and empty hearts.
Their habits twisted.
Their morals shrunken.
They seek, Only to fill their desire.

In the wild.
Starving raccoons will dig through the trash.
Starving vultures will pick dead things off the tarmac.
Starving wolves learn to hunt in packs. Working together to capture their prey.
They will all consume until they are full and satisfied
A starving man
Will revert back to its animal state.
Will go on the prowl.
Will choose its opportunities with patience.
It will lay in wait until its target is alone..
Will take anything it can get
Will dig through the trash, will pick at dead things.

See starving men will trade tools for table scraps.
Would rather pick over bones than value the potential of a seed.
They will never think to plant a garden. To grow.
They will never seek to sow,
But only look to hoe.. Men never taught how to till earth. To cultivate. They may be
taught to fish tho. But taught nothing of preserving life. Just told that there are plenty of
fish in the sea. Just given bait. Lines, to be thrown out. Hoping for a catch.
See, if you teach a starving man to fish, he will eat the river. Fuck the ecosystem.
Because men are not taught to plant seeds.
To grow.
But to search for the simplest source of satisfaction.

And I, have seen so many starving men turn animals.
When the hunger turns to lust.
When the steady gaze is unwanted
And the unwavering focus is uncomfortable
When the smile is alarming. And the drooling, terrifying.
When the stomach is filled with alcohol
The heart is filled with cruelty
the habits with abuse.

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And the morals nonexistent.

I have heard football teams turn wolf pack.
Seen nice guys that stay on the prowl.
Choosing their opportunities with patience.
Looking only to keep throwing bait until something falls for the line,
in the hopes of hooking up,
prepared to sink her.
Taught nothing about preserving life,
Prepared to eat the river but never taught about the ecosystem.
Just consumed by the desire to take anything he can pull out the water.

So, the next time you teach a man to fish.
Make sure you teach him about fish culture.
About Making sure they truly want to be caught.
Not throwing bait if nothing is biting your line. Teach him about ecosystems and
cultivation.
About patience and waiting.
Teach him about overfishing, and its impacts on the next generation.
The concept of preservation.
Taking only what he needs and saving the rest for later.
If you gonna teach a man to fish, teach him to properly.
Or let him starve.