

The House That Doesn't Feel Like Home

Written

God has already
written your story.
Even the poets.

The difference remains
that we choose to write it
into existence.

The House That Doesn't Feel Like Home

My Father Built These Things by Hand, I Say

it was a green house, a house we knew
was green, not the hue or the paint
of the panel, or the President heads floating
into it, no, no, this was a green house, a green
house so vile and toxic, it breathed a musty
camouflage, a darkness that sat atop the stoop my
father built, a stoop my father cemented like
the times, like the time he gave me condoms before
prom, like the time we discussed my girlfriend and how
both she and his insomnia were make-believe but
both a pretty butterfly in the green grass, both miracles on
a sunny Sunday on a stormy stoop, my father built that
stoop and his depression held the jackhammer, keeps
buzzing to the melody of the stream line, the green
on the glossy coated memory affixed to the sealant, bastardly
it was, a house, a house that didn't feel like home.

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Metal and Magic

As a boy, my father always brought me to the carwash
There was something about metal and magic and the idea
That something could reappear polished
It was like a dream.
It was a father and son moment when our slates were clean
And we, were happy.

As I got older, we stopped going to the car wash
My father didn't seem like he wanted to go anymore
His sadness overshadowed him like a blackened smoke
By now, I knew he wanted to but physically couldn't get up to go
Depression, uncle festered its way into his torso
His polish would never reappear the same
He was a vase with a hairline mosaic

That day I learned that sadness muddles bodies into an unsettled being
I learned the gritty of a man's tongue when anxiety got the best of his throat
And I learned even family can serpent tongue their opinion into a father's suicide note

You see they thought my father fit
for electric shock treatment, thought him fit
To lightning bolt his conscious
To live under the hellfire

They would tell him to get over it
To stop overreacting
Ask him why he can't just be happy again

As if happiness wasn't a roadblock right in front of another roadblock
Depression, doesn't come in seasons, but when it comes, it is always a Fall-out
Depression, is the nosy neighbor who forgot they could just be a neighbor,
They always feel the need to ring the bell

But my father
is not a one-way ticket to a hospital-wing
He is not
admission to your nearest explosion

He is not a warning label
He is just the vessel that God used to test the boundaries
And he's had to live behind them – always

Walking the tightrope above the lion's den and sometimes falling into it
Shouldn't you
Be the one to feel shock after seeing a melancholy man so unscathed

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But one who survived the pain?

Isn't it ok for him to feel pain here?

Isn't it ok for him to feel here?

Now I've tried

I've tried to make him happy

Tried – to bring him to a car wash, maybe he'd reappear clean and polished

I tried to make him whole and failed

Time and time again

And despite it all he keeps living

Keeps moving forward Here

Is a man who thinks he lives in a world that doesn't love him back

He's wrong and he keeps living

When he does, he reminds me he is the bravest man I've ever met

A comic-book dream, nature-loving Demi-God

Each day I drive past a car wash I cling to his voice

I say That waterfall of a man has always been polished

And he shines like it too.

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A Son's Trust

My father told me
He warned me
He said:

Remember who you are.

Only for it to take four years of college and
twice as many girls to totally forget
the places I find sanctuary in.

He told me:

Reach for the moon. Reach for the stars.

But I find myself searching for pussy and power
in these bars--these poems are my walls
incased in brimstone they seldom fall.

I don't trust things too often.

But as for my father,
I trust him often.
I trust him.

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Tomorrow

When tomorrow comes
and the followers roam
they'll ask of our existence.

Tell them we were born into a bottle of warmth
and found out how cold-hearted this cruel world could be.

Tell them
we faced darkness at the split of a cliff
but saw sun before dawn at the edge of a mountain peak.

They'll ask of our existence.

Tell them we've built the back of our homes
with our spine to the sky and power in our palms.

Tell them
we lived in a city that collapsed in the sea
and we mustered the strength to form the monuments we lead.

They'll ask of our existence.

Tell them.

Tell them we lived.