

Grace Knows Our Talk

The diner at the end of the street,
with flickering neon and chipped plates,
is where I went with friends to talk,
of dreams of youthful pride and jest,
of fool's gold and Holy Grail nights,
waiting for Grace to fill our cups with more time.
And the chrome and steel face kept time--
Toulouse Lautrec people poured in from the street,
and we made use of our lazy, autumn nights,
by watching Grace balance her dinner plates,
while pontificating over Wallace's *Infinite Jest*,
bathing in the chatter and clatter of midnight talk.
Yet, often the ghost of neon would talk,
and speak of Cabbages and Kings in time,
and the sadness we poked of in jest,
would sing in the siren wailing down the street,
and Grace would jump with a start breaking her plates,
leaving the bus boy to clean and tidy the nights.
So, who will serve up the neon nights?
Grace with her coffee, kindness and jest,
her grill cheese and fries on white and blue plates..?
Yes, she will step aside to give us more time,
in this diner at the end of the street,
in the times when Grace abides our talk.
"Go on. Laugh. Keep to your talk.
You've ordered, joked, mused over these neon nights.
You've watched the night hawks of this corner street.
You've overstayed your welcome in your usual jest.
You've talked without noticing the time.
You've placed my tip over empty plates!"
Grace takes away our plates...
An empty feast for owls who squawk and talk.
The light of dawn betrays the time,
as we walk out into the dying night.
We remain in silence, lest we feel the need to jest,
And head home down the lonely street.
The waitress who works at the end of the street,
is kind enough to serve our plates...
and she lives her life as we talk, and talk, and talk.

Ships Passed

Shoulders hunched, no time for tea.
Feeling tired and cheated, time slips away from me.
What is left upon the shore by the sea,
is the wreckage of a long forgotten ship's debris.

For I have cherished my pride in days of joy,
only to realize the fate of a castaway's ploy,
became the S.O.S. of some unwanted toy,
bobbing upon the waves like a see through buoy.

And my insecurities eat me whole,
so I listen to the many voices that toll,
hard and heavy on a middle-aged soul,
finally carrying my hands like a beggars bowl.

How certain I was in steering the mast,
to make the brilliance of the ocean last,
but my own shadow in time was cast,
making me a captain of nothing but ships passed.

So I remain stranded upon this island of me,
the ship's voyage conquered by the sea,
and I see the skeleton of my years as thee,
making a mockery of my fight to live free.

Hunter

I remember the day,
when his face appeared,
on the cover of the Rolling Stone.
The magazine is now tacked to my wall,
to remind me,
when you try to swallow,
the country whole,
you're bound to choke,
shooting pistols
at the moon.

The lesson of this tale,
is a sordid affair—
dogs fighting in alleys,
over pieces of meat.
No sense in putting the puzzle
together,
because the stripes,
forever blaze red,
with each new generation.

Go to hell!
Flags draped over Harley Davidson,
a golf shirt and khaki shorts,
to remind Las Vegas he didn't give a damn.

I don't want to carry this torch.
I want to see the road through.
I want to ride the gravy train.
I want the American Kitchen.
I want the two cars and the Foreman Grill.

The bitterest pill to swallow,
of this American banner,
isn't the jagged stars,
but knowing,
deep in my heart,
that the Fear and Loathing,
was aimed at me—
a middle American schmuck,
not realizing,
the destination,
of the ticket.

Detroit Shoes

Lying my body down,
on a damp lawn after the rain,
with the night canopy above,
the stars twinkling,
beyond the telephone wires,
So I'd be thinking who's talking to whom—
how far in this universe we have come.

The Detroit air smelled of cars,
the tension in the air of impending,
obsolescence,
FoMo Co and GM letting Uncle Sam go,
letting the assembly lines,
stop on a cold September morning.

If there was a way out of here—
Listening to Lou Reed,
on an old turn table with the needle bent,
watching out my window,
the glass rattling in the autumn wind,
the wood frame warping.

Chicago.
City of freedom.
City of rebirth.
With a backpack full of twelve years,
of stuff—
a Salvador Dali book and Ginsberg's Howl,
I am a man out of a suitcase,
at age twelve,
walking in Detroit shoes,
over Carl Sandburg's grave.

Leave a Message

Refuge from thoughts,
refuge from panic stricken woes,
of confused mind rubbish,
fears of the face betraying days gone by.
Refuge from the sound of machinery,
squealing in the night—
Somebody working out there,
to make the gears of society,
turn.
Refuge, I beg,
from the horrors,
of the nerves attached to my soul,
the singing note of loneliness,
in this aching skin.

Polish bread on the table,
tomato juice for the hang over,
a kitchen table full of papers,
with the bare light bulb hanging overhead.

The humming refrigerator.

There is a mirror by the door,
so I can see myself coming and going—
Dirty framed mirror,
betraying what I am longing.
The circles under the eyes,
the thinning hair,
grease stains around the door knob.

I am a guest in this city flat—
Crucified on my own flesh and bone,
scarecrow with the stuffing falling out,
so I am always tucking the heart back in,
so I can leave again for the store,
buying toothpaste,
for sentimental hygiene,
and some soap too.

The phone is ringing,
but the machine will pick up,
because I have failed to record a message,
to let you know, it's me.
