

Dark River
By: Isaac Thornton

I

Our minds are caverns
thoughts echo of the past
reappearing in the present
and departing for the future
voices, things, ideas, memories.

I may not remember names
or the things once said
but I will always remember how you made me feel.

The echoes of feelings evoked by words,
utterances of one part idea, other part abyss.
And in the truth speaks this:

II

What is the point of words?
Books and stories and poems
epics of scale, direction and magnitude
vectors whose trajectories collide
to point towards quests of adventure,
daring, danger, and disaster
for tantalizing truth, soon forgot in
the trenches of everyday life.
Ideas which unfurl tentacles to
enrapture minds away, separated
by time and space and everything
in between.

III

We sit on stools supported on three legs
you and I,
three legs of truth, side by side.
And try to defy the undeniable lie
Nihilism; nothing matters, love isn't real,
and nothing matters now and in the end.
You and I, side by side, third I open,

and here we are, sat on stools, daring
to stare eye to eye, staring into the
abyss, defying it to stare back.
Staying late at night on a roller coaster ride.

Looking down at the page, beside you I find my
hand has stopped. The ideas, echoes of my past
have stopped. Yet your hand moves on.
Scribbling that dauntless taunt, waging
its microscopic war against the empty
on the macroscopic scale it's impossible to
fail. Yet looking at you now, looking to the
hair fallen over your eyes,
the freckles that peak
and taunt as your lips
twitch to the side, whispering
the truth you fight
and the desire to move in to you
to feel your shape and mine
blocked only by my hand which still does
refuse to write, that writer's block the final
obstacle to that faulted truth which
dauntlessly speaks plain:

that I've fallen in love with you.

IV

Paint me a River unparted
but seeping from the soil
the nutrients of life
and barrenly does that
River flow from my heart to thee
the colors colliding
paint me the life of my desire
a Thoreau's life of nature and beauty
simplicity for simplicity's sake
together we paint
and the River flows into a lake.

V

If I were a better poet

I could explain to you how I feel.
Let me write you an essay on why I love you.
We are taught that an argument,
the tentacle of which is solely
unfurled in hot pursuit of truth,
must necessarily have three supporting reasons.
Try as I might, I cannot find one
words fail, as the limitations of
language condescend and I
rock my brain, searching for
anything that might describe you.
Something to derive
the sum of your soul.

Reminded of my language's limitations
and I think to some other language.
The reaches of german: Kummerspeck.
Grief bacon.

Language is a funny thing.
Yet still, in the depths of the lake
standing still and shimmering.
Everything falls short. My memory fails.

VI

Though I have not
finished exploring my
own cavern, the recesses
of my psyche, I would
drop the expedition if
only to set alite the
touch in your own mind,
to traverse the binds of that vast, brilliant
Dark.

Because I may not always
remember what you say,
but I will always chill at the
winds off some deep River
whipping through cave corridors
and along stone floors
When I think back

on how you brought
my poor soul back
From the brink.
I rediscover that Dark River
that does take on the appearance of a lake.

But as I sit with you, side by side
and your hand races 'cross the page
drawing breadth and breath away
I can not help but think a thought
which echos with voices long forgot
in caverns deep and dreaded Dark
that you'll ne'er fail to make your mark
and vanquish that nye nihilist lie
that love cannot make you fly.

Why do I-
By Isaac Thornton

I like to play dress up.
I like to play soldier,
play king, play write.
And then you ask me
"Why do you act like that?".
As if personalities were
an apple I could pluck
from the bowl, and once I spot
the blemish of rot, place back.
As if an apple in rot were not the
one that ought to be taken first.
Because I spot another apple
that was handed a better lot.

You wave your hands, bang a pot
and shout, "Put that back.
Explain yourself."
why do I find myself drawn
so enamoured with the act.
Why do I act that way?
Why do I stand up before a
crowd, and raise my voice
up way out loud.
You are right to wonder,

to wander a mile in my shoes
that's what you're trying to do.
As if you and I were something
that could be climbed in and out of.
Become me and decide that you've had enough
climb out and go home.
Calling it quits in the life of another
throwing in the towel because
there's no connection, nothing lost.

That's the cost of being a skinwalker.
A chameleon who takes on the shape of another
Becoming someone else
Transforming, traversin dark empties to find the next entity
Actors are the opposite of people
We substitute personality for flexibility,
The rigidity of direction bent to the will of the word.
So let me speak true.

Let me speak to you
Because when you ask,
"Why do you act like that?"
You are really asking,
"What's wrong with you?"
I think the better question is
"Why do you act?"
Because I know the answer
Because that question is a way of understanding
To act like a person you have to know their motivation
They're not so different. That question and I.

"Why do I think like that?"
As the bubbling drives of comedy and tragedy
As I strive to make all my world the stage
I might change my cage but it's easier to change my brain.
A name frayed at the end, switched for another and
one personality discarded for another from the page.
Interlocking puzzle pieces of a mosaic of life and me.
To escape one's own mind to inhabit another,
Lose track of their why and return to mine.

The Video Game.
By Isaac Thornton

If art were a video game
I'd main in word play.
If art were a college
I'd major in unemployment.

Alright, who turned the difficulty up to impossible?

Like the muse which I so
desperately grasp at,
the yield of my harvest
does also leave my
bank account starved.
Straws which I suck to
strain the pain away
an orchestra's cacophony of
discount soda pop all
harshly whispering "Get a job!".
I'm a socialist who doesn't
like free money, the government
stipend does nothing to end
the guilt of an unemployment check:
a thin string, strumming
along a guitar body, humming
a song of a life that was.
A life that could be.

I'm a writer because
while oher's lean back
on drink, and comfort
I find comfort in play.
Not that there's anything
wrong with drink, there's
just the echo of a
deep and gnawing
hunger which does remind
me of the grief once suffered
at the hands of drink.
so instead I play.
Bounce the words
around like I'm dribbling

for the N.B.A. through my mind
but on paper... not so much.
But I play for a purpose-
there must be some
kind of meaning in all
this, and how else am
I to find it then with
words to describe
the look in your eye
as we meet and together
die.

The imagination sets alight
the fires of complete delight-
taint the childish eye of truth.

Words are the key to the door
to the basement of understanding
and through that door you can hear
the faintest strumming of chords
the music of the universe.
I wrote you a love song,
and no you don't have to give it a listen
you've already heard it....
A long time ago you heard it from another:
in the voice of a mother
complaining that you haven't done your chores.
I'm just a marionette of a broken record on repeat
but that song plays on
And even though I can't sing
let me whisper a tune, lingering;
with a strum and a resonate note,
I would carry the weight of the world
perform for you and never choke
if only to have my love unfold....
The only performer who plays without an audience
a street performer on a busy sidewalk in my basement
playing not to be heard, but to be listened
that song is already here and it's whispering a steady tune
called "I love you."

Isn't that enough?
Do we have to be broken bottles rolling on sidewalks

Hunting for prospects in a dried up river?
Is it better to be loved or feared?
It is safer to be feared
But I don't want to play it safe.
I want the chaos of love, and
hate and that weird bit in between.
Safety is nothing without companionship.
Oscar Wilde said that all art is quite useless,
Let me prove him wrong.
Where words stop music starts.
Let me use my words.
let me use words weave you a sweater of meaning
let me use words to plant the seeds of ideas
which unfurl their leaves and soak up the sun
and the father, and the holy spirit,
who's song can be felt once more.

In a way I do have a job.
It isn't ringing in orders
or exchanging with mobs
in the daily exchange of words
I find more joy and purpose
in the prose of everyday life
because through all the strife
the bow in the rain points away from earth,
betraying the beauty in the wake of death
a smile beaks and
when it does, my
heart soars for a mile.
In love and death
I do - compile.