

Troubled Man

Untitled

How did we wind up here?

In this forbidden embrace, so unexpected

But aren't the best embraces the ones that come by surprise?

When I arrived to bed she was nude with only her panty around her left ankle, maybe she was in a hast or maybe it was calculated

Her silhouette exposed hips that had bore children that I had grown fond of

I climbed in nude because under garments are an unwanted distraction

She was faced towards the television on her right side

But, there was a problem that required attention

We needed to switch places because she did not know, well she could not have known for we were virgins to one another's bodily idiosyncrasies, that my member curved to the left

So, she turned over on her left side and I positioned myself behind her and we embraced and held one another and talked, and listened, and laughed, and debated, and breathed and laid silent

Then she reached around and placed me inside of her but instructed me not move, just relax so she could feel the throbbing vibration

As we dozed away, my tele buzzed, "Wife," I ignore it

Then hers rang and she spoke briefly in a hushed tone and told me that it was her sister, and she is looking for me but I didn't answer the call

In the morning it was consummated, and then I caught a flight home to assess the damage

Damage

I awake, eyes wide shut, staring at a half empty bottle of Scotch that reminds me of the night before

A nub of a Cohiba rest in the ashtray beside it

Michael Jackson's "she's out of my life" is looping on the record player

This is the day we part

I shower, but I don't shave in defiance

I grab my heather grey slim trousers, white cuff linked shirt, seer sucker sports coat, and ox-blood double monks because that was her favorite fit of mine, the time she called me handsome

I don't deserve this, but I have lived long enough to know that deserve ain't got nothing to do with it

Let me refrain from the self-pity, I was complicit in the destruction of this union

Mistakes were made, sins committed, but I have asked for her forgiveness, and God's, and my own for that matter, and I still don't know if I have been exonerated

But, for two decades our lives have been intertwined as one cord

After this, we split, go our separate ways and forget all that we once shared and all that we once were

I open the door and walk on the porch unsure of my desired direction because she was my guide

It's a spring morning and I smell rain

I walked out onto to the stoop, looked both ways, and decided to just go the way the wind blows....

The Old Man on the Corner

It's late, and I desire a café con leche and a small plate of pan dulce to help me relax

So I walk to the cafe that is two blocks over where the clerk affectionally calls me Negrito

The chill due to the high elevation is in the air and I lift my collar to protect my neck

I am fortunate I am staying in the Condesa Roma section of the City, where shops remain open late

I move without urgency and then stumble upon the Old Man

He is standing upright leaning against the wall, wearing a tan cowboy hat that was once white but over time has changed like all things do, worn boots to the sole, and a checkered shirt tucked in to tattered blue jeans

His skin had the texture and color of a mature leather saddle and he wore a thick mustache that had peppered

As I approached He asked did I wish to hear a song?

I consented, my errand could wait

He offered me a red milk crate and he sat down on a gray one

I noticed a bottle of mezcal and two cups and pointed

He said his grandson worked at the distillery in Oaxaca and brought him a bottle once month as a sign of appreciation for raising him properly, after both parents became victims, then he poured us both a drink

He sang *When a Man Loves a Woman* in the same tone, key and pitch as Percy

And I asked how did he know I was traveling through a period of distress?

He said, "your eyes told on your heart."

I requested that he pour me another, gave him five hundred pesos, begged him not to sing anymore, and we finished the bottle in silence on that corner

Sabado en La Romana

She answered the door in the suit of her birth for he was expected

Names were not exchanged because both felt it was an unnecessary formality

The hue of her skin was the shade of midnight with no moon

Eyes the color of vinegar and hair coarse, but soft to the touch

It was evident that her ancestors had evaded Trujillo's regime and crossed the river during the massacre that nobody wishes to openly discuss

Her English was elementary

His Spanish was limited to only mastering ordering a beer and a whore

But, while dialects can often be barriers to communication between foreigners, they were able to understand the universal language of love that is often spoken without words

He gently grabbed the base of her neck and guided her into his lower region and she performed expertly

Being a gentleman and having skipped supper on purpose, he had her as his final meal of the evening

They both were unselfish

And then, then, cops knocking neighbors yelling babies crying thunder clapping music blaring bodies clashing like waves smashing into the malecon as the tide comes in at dusk

Can't stop, won't stop, the rhythm is methodical and fluid

Two persons engaged in the merengue of love making, switching positions effortlessly and in sync until both reach the peak of ecstasy together as one where one ends the other begins and they are locked in a primal state

They catch their breath, she sips Mama Juana out of a plastic cup and he a cold Presidente that he retrieved from the ice box

They don't talk, nothing can be put into words to express what happened because strangers can't make love, but that's what occurred

As the evening came to a close, he grabbed his satchel off the small nightstand and politely extended payment

She declined his American dollars

?Manana lo mismo? He said in broken Spanish

Lo siento mi amor, Iglesia con mi abuelita

She rolled over onto her right side facing the mustard colored wall, fell into a deep sleep and snored softly so as not to be a nuisance, he remained awake, and read a few chapters of *The Feast of the Goat* until his eyes became heavy

Then the sun rose, they rode to the Capital City, and he joined them for Mass

The Moment

The moment comes and settles like a bird on a soft limb, then vanishes, because that is what moments do

They don't last always and are fleeting, elusive, but always constant and steady

Moments can be sixty seconds of pure contradictions, irony, pain, heartache, elation, disappointment, satisfaction, triumph, but all last the same amount of time if you count right

Like the moment when you first fucked up, no not the last moment, but the first moment, that moment

You will always remember that moment because it is imbedded in the back of your brain where doctors say they can't remove it because it will cause more damage and you need to remember it, so it doesn't happen again

But, reminiscing on the bad moments can take you down a path you've already traveled before in a past moment in time, my advice, avoid those moments cause nothing you can do to change them so let them be

Like the moment when your brother told you, "Dad is gone," and you thought wait what I just spoke to him moments ago, and then you realize that quickly how a moment can knock the breath out of your lungs and leave you gasping for air and wishing you just had one more moment with him

Moments never return, not the same ones anyway, each moment is its own moment

So, value each of them, each and every last one of them

Never let a moment slip away to tell someone you love, that you love them, if you really love them, no don't let that moment go

If somebody ever ask you for a moment, give it to them, because the moment they wanted your time may never return and you will have forever lost that moment, and maybe even them

The moment you realize that life is short is when you start trying to count the moments you have left, moments you wasted on dumb shit, but then it's too late

Remembering lying to your momma with a straight face and thinking you got away with it only to hear her call your name a moment later to give you the ass whipping she promised herself she would give you if she ever caught you lying; you can laugh at the moment now but back then your eyes filled with tears and nose was full of bubbling snot just praying for the moment to pass

Man I miss the moment when I rode my bike all day, played four square in my buddy's driveway because his had perfect squares, hide and go seek until my tongue fell out, egging cars, and thought the moment would never end, and then the street lights came on

Thinking back on good moments can bring you so much joy, like when she took a chance on you and said "I do"

Push baby, push you got this, I see the head, the happiest moment of my life

Now here comes the moment, the one you have been waiting for, longing for, dreaming of, and praying for, don't let it escape, don't let it, please, don't let it, seize it and snatch hold of it with all your might, cause there it goes, another moment