

J.B. Stone

The New Punk

We rage against a dying nation
finding hope in bottom-of-a-barrel rebellion
we engage in the rowdy raucous of protest,
as we chant and call for change. Mohawks
and piercings, don't compare to cardboard
insignia inscribed with hashtags and slogans.

Marching feet replace moshpits, megaphones
replace battle-cries and through a sea of human
bodies, we circle like fast-paced basslines, raising
fists like heavy-pedeled drum beats, holding picket
signs like guitar-smash distortion. As the city square
becomes a stage and the rally turns into a house show

Amazing Grace

Jamie used to sit on the same brownstone stoop, holding a 40 Oz. with the tastes of drowned sorrow and bitter memories.

Smothering the back of his neck with a garbage bag for a pillow wrapped in a collection of torn rags for a blanket hoping not to be suffocated by the desperate need for warmth.

The dumpster-drenched cardboard laying on the curbside is his bed now and these roughshod streets are the bedroom.

He hovers over an open garbage can humming hymns over an alley way bonfire he starts to sing the same song of praise his father would sing him to sleep with:

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me...
I was lost, but now I—I—I—*

He stops, because he can't get through the first verse without breaking down in tears without pounding his fists against a brick wall hoping the mortar layered lining will crack before he does.

Childhood visions of monsters under the bed now stalk him in the streets demons laced in human skin looking to gut him for any loose change he's collected during the day.

A requiem lost in the annals of tainted tributes, because some losses can't be resolved by remembering the deceased and what they would've wanted, nor by the memories of good times to keep one sane.

Some losses can't just be carried on in spirit when its pallbearer is torn and frayed. Some losses push us to our breaking point, a point of no return.

Where our old selves are a shadow of our past and the stains of anguish, death leaves behind leave us in shambles of who we used to be.

This must be what it's like to be trapped in a vicious rut of self-damnation. And no drunkard's Prayer, no beggar's bible can save him from such suffering. A worn out stump looking for a wood chipper to dive into.

Jamie spotted an alternative an 18-wheeler with headlights that called to him like the eyes of death. The night was pitch black.

He jumps in front, in hopes he will join his father in paradise, instead of a bed of maggots and mahogany, in hopes that heaven is a reality instead of a biblical fairy tale.

I am not a religious man, but I still like to think he is in two locations. One beneath the tombstone next to his father and another in lounge chairs, downing cans of genny light with his long lost father, engaged in a state of grace, atop the clouds of eternity.

Post-Mortem Depression

My scenery:

the portrait of
 a phantom brainstem
with cracking foundations
 hovering over a scrapyard
of scrapbooks
 like a spectre lifting the veil
of a rookie corpse
 looking down upon a crowd of tears
except the crowd is of one
 it's the feeling when a soul
doesn't leave the body,
but the smile does