

Assorted Poetry - *Dylan Fisk*

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The Last Goodbye

We didn't cry this time.
Our tears must have sensed a difference in our words
And decided this time wasn't worth the strain it takes to fall.

Perhaps the countdown on my whiteboard kept them at bay,
Or the not-so-distant wedding bells.
Or maybe it was that new word in our vocabulary:
"Last".
The last goodbye.

Oh, how we've idolized such a word,
Grafting it into every conversation about my departure.
The last goodbye.
The last airport drop off.
The last "we'll be okay!"
The last last kiss.

And perhaps there is good reason for our worship.
Hearts aglow, tear ducts dry,
The tunnel is not all darkness now,
As we look towards the imminent end of this digital dance.
So why do I yet mourn?
Who made me this twisted romantic,
Stressing over how,
For something so final,
Anticlimactic his own parting was?

Maybe it was the wordless drive,
Silence filled by the same songs we listen to online.
Or the lack of desperation in your arms,
The careless confidence of your lips.
Or maybe it was the senseless exhaustion,
Trading yawns on the freeway.
“Of course I had to leave in the morning,”
Groans the night owl.

Yet that was our last goodbye,
And we were too hopeful to cry.
Too patient to cry.
Too tired to cry.
What a pity it is to see the light,
And throw away the lanterns.

To Dream or to Die

“To hold on to childish dreams
Or go forth in living-death?”
Says Time with a gun to my head.

It was on the precipice of freedom,
As the sun began to set on all I had known before,
That Time first revealed this dreadful question,
And with it, her constant presence;
A cold, metallic muzzle breathing down my neck.

To dream or to die.
A binary I never thought to ponder.

The world taught me to dream once,
Had me scribbling my earliest desires in crayon...
I wonder where those drawings are now.
Perhaps they fill the walls of caves,
As naive and obsolete as what came from early man.
For then the world taught me a new bedtime story;
One where the monsters aren't defeated
And the hero gives up,
For it costs too much to buy a sword.
The end.

The world then taught me to grieve for death
Yet most adults still walk the Earth as ghosts,
Husks of the children they used to be.
For they chose not to see the gun to their heads,
Treating every doubt that brushed their mind as wisdom,
Salvation from a threat they themselves drew in pen.
They then worshiped uncertainty in a church of their own,
Preaching comfort and conformity,
Their twisted view of normalcy;
Seeing the Cross and choosing to cling to their chains.
And all who dare to stray
Are left alone to play among the stars,
Outcasts, aliens.

To dream or to die.
A binary no one seems to ponder.

And Time gets her wish,
Reaping the souls of those converted to dreamlessness.
Those who've deafened themselves to the music,
Blinded themselves to the light,
Drowned without resistance in her sands,
Yet they never did so alone,
For the gate is wide and the way is easy
Which leads all men to joyless satisfaction:
A death they can't perceive.

The wide, the narrow.
Comfort, ambition.
Belonging, isolation.
My turn.

"To hold on to childish dreams
Or go forth in living-death?"
Again says Time with a gun to my head.
I turn to her, and in my eyes, a flame.
"I dream to live;
I live to dream."

Drifting

A boy once lay his head to rest on pillows of sand,
His feet gently caressed by a blanket of waves,
His skin gently nuzzled by the warmth of the sun.
His body was still, yet his mind was submerged,
Dreaming.

Dreams of floating freely below the surface,
Drifting weightlessly in quiet waters,
Feeling air escape yet paying no mind;
Dreams of floating freely above the clouds,
An immobile astronaut amidst the sea of stars,
Hopeless and helpless in a silent night.
Yet he was content to simply drift,
To call outer space his new home,
To give his soul to the sea.

He didn't know then that he could swim back up,
Simply by waving his arms and legs.
He didn't understand then that he could traverse the cosmos,
Simply by throwing something behind him.
He was ready to let the waves write his story,
To let the stars choose his fate.
To be content simply drifting.

And then, he woke up.
The man rose from his place in the sand,
Stepped away from the spray of the waves,
Hid in shade from the heat of the sun.
Looking out at the sea, he scoffed at his childish dreams.
After all, who could be content simply drifting?

The Writing Process

I will write this in one draft.
It will be perfect.
Every choice I make will be precise.
Every line will be worthy of praise.

I will not try to rhyme.
That takes too long and risks too much.
I will not structure this piece.
Those arbitrary limits prompt revision.

I will not attempt ambiguity.
That leads to improper interpretation.
That will not do.

It will be perfect.
Perfectly clear and perfectly concise.
Perfectly beautiful and perfectly true.
It will be the perfect expression of _____.

I will submit it as soon as the pen dries.
It will be workshopped and they will love it.
No critiques, no questions.
Every word of theirs will be praise and adoration.

And so, it will have been done.
A single draft, no mistakes, no revisions.
Nothing but flawless reviews from the jury.
My fragile heart will have been preserved.

I will tuck it away on my shelf.
When someone asks to read it, I will fetch it.
They will love it, as everyone does.
I will smile my empty smile.

Faithful Deliverance

“Deliver us!” you heard the cry,
And sent your shepherd from on high.
A babe, you sent him down the stream,
To manifest your people’s dream.
He grew, a prince of foreign land,
And saw his people, slaves of sand.
To set them free, that was his call,
From Elohim, the Lord of All.
With wrath he came, nine plagues to start,
Yet hardened was the Pharaoh’s heart.
Until the tenth, firstborns were slain,
To end Egypt’s oppressive reign.
And though the slaves were not yet through,
Your shepherd cut the sea in two.
And through this man, curved staff in hand,
You brought them to the promised land.

“Deliver us!” you heard the cry,
And sent your shepherd from on high.
A babe, you sent through virgin womb,
To break the powers of the tomb.
He grew, a perfect prince of peace,
And called the slaves of sin to cease.
To free us from Creation’s fall,
You dwelt with us, great Lord of All.
With love he came, the kingdom’s key,
Yet love they saw as heresy.
Condemned to death, a cross to bear,
A crown of thorns, was forced to wear.
And though your son on cross had bled,
Your shepherd crushed the serpent’s head.
And through whom rose to your right hand,
You’ll bring us to the promised land.

I Can't See the Stars Anymore

As night falls and moon shines its routine white,
And sun retreats behind its pitch-dark sheet,
My eyes, so wonder-filled, place sky in site,
But I can't see the stars anymore.

Now, lights from distant windows fill the scene,
And blinding white floods all the fields and streets,
Which chase away what made the night serene,
So I can't see the stars anymore.

Perhaps if, in the darkness, they saw blue,
Recalled the strokes which made canvas complete,
They'd see the starry night the way I do,
Yet I can't see the stars anymore.

Alas, the common man sees not but black,
And darkness makes the common man retreat,
And towers of light are built to fight it back,
And I can't see the stars anymore.

Now the world is ruled by neon signs,
And bright billboards where different lights compete,
Which form a cloud through which no small spark shines,
Now I can't see the stars anymore.

In Christ's Hands My Vessel Lies - Dylan Fisk

Oh Lord, how helplessly I drift along,
Caught in the rapid tides of rushing life,
Not able to a single day prolong,
And drowned by constant bustling and strife.

To oars I cling, a heart that craves control,
Yet finds it not amidst each wild wave;
Like nature overpowers mortal soul,
From worldly chaos, my own strength fails to save.

How deafening that rapid river be!
Unending noise drowns every thought and prayer,
And I, so lost in that cacophony,
Soon of Your Word and will am unaware.

It's when I fin'ly let You have my heart,
And all control surrender, nought withheld,
You then return my vessel to its start,
Where waters lie still and rushing sounds are quelled.

What joy to have Another board my boat!
Who teaches me to look beyond the tide,
And hear beyond the rapid river's notes,
And leave to Him the oars, my newfound guide.

When navigation I to Christ entrust,
My mind is free upon each day to dwell.
My heart finds out no longer guard it must,
And 'round itself its walls of pride can fell.

Then I bring You all turbulence and strife;
You make me sail on slow and silent seas,
To bring me rest and recenter my life,
On You who fills my sails with every breeze.

So Jesus, claim my vessel for Yourself!
And captivate each thought below its deck,
For when you enter into my deepest self.
Your peace and wonder redefine my trek.

What King is This?

What King is this whose service I delight?
Who comes along to battle with His knight,
And gives Himself up without hesitance,
To put an end to sin and severance.

What King is this who'd sacrifice it all,
To bring us knights redemption from the Fall?
Who leaves His throne on high and dwells below,
To take our curse and bear our rightful blow.

What King is this who loves His enemy?
Who dies as much for them as he does me?
Who dines with those that spit upon his feet,
To show even the lowest love so sweet.

What King is this who flips the world around?
Whose hands wash servants' feet upon the ground?
Who makes the lowest high and highest low,
To humble pride and provide hope to woe.

What King is this who rises from the grave?
Our victory in hand, us sinners saved?
Firstfruits of risen life, he seals His vow,
To raise our souls and endless life endow.