A Story About Leaves

The leaves are nice this time of year. So nice to be walking in all this frondescence. The browns and the reds and the yellows and all the warm colors that belie the chilly winds blowing them about. My jacket fits a bit tight this year. Either I’ve gotten fatter or taller or bigger or it’s time to go and get a new jacket. It is rather quiet out here in the park. The sound of me fiddling with my jacket’s zipper is the only sound that isn’t the wind or the crepitating leaves. The bench is still there, just like I left it. The wood feels grainy and weathered underneath my bare palms. I want to cry. I want to run. I want to curl up and wait for someone to find me and tell me everything is going to be alright and I want to be able to believe that it isn’t a lie this time. I want to do a lot of things, but all I do right now is sit on the old bench. It creaks a little under my weight to protest my sitting on it. I shove my feet through the leaves collected around the bench and get lost in the sea of crunches and crackles that result. He would have enjoyed it too.

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The leaves outside are sticking to the window like plaintive hands begging me to come in. I entertain the thought of going outside and picking up a few. I can bring them in and spend a few minutes looking at them, crackling them, feeling the fragile roughness of them. Then I hear a ping come from my computer. I look back and see that he’s finally replied to the message I sent earlier. The message is filled with love and a certain goofiness that some might find appealing. I sit down and swiftly type up an equally goofy reply, add in a little sauciness, and send. This goes on for a while and it makes for an interesting way to pass the time. Eventually we both get tired and I close the computer, plunging the room into a darkness filled with the afterimage of blue light.

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It hurts to think about it now. Even though it didn’t hurt at the time. Is there a word for that? A hurt that comes to a memory only after you’ve changed? Only after the years have sandblasted that part of you away? There probably is. Some little known word written in a dusty book that few other than specialty collectors or ardent bibliophiles have ever laid eyes on. I peel my Toboggan off my head and let the cool air blow through my hair. It feels good. Feels a little like whispering windy fingers gliding comfortingly, calmly in between follicles. I want to forget, but I can’t.

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More talking, always talking, can’t remember if there was a point where we weren’t talking and flirting and trading honeyed words between us. I suppose it’s nice, but it lacks something that it used to have. Every time we talk it starts to feel like there’s a little less of me in it. A little less of me that feels like I want to spend all my time talking when there’s other things to do. Other much more interesting things. An idea begins in my head and it is awful. If I were a good man I would let it go. If I were a good man I would let the idea float away into the ether of my mind, let it disappear into the cesspool it emerged from. I do not do that. I keep it. I let it fester in my mind and rot whatever good intentions I might have had. I gladly let it consume me. It eats at my heart and my mind and my nerves. My hands shake so much. They shake as they type the words that I can already feel I’m going to regret. Rushing rushing rushing rushing in my head and in my blood.

Then it is silent.

The silence hurts.

The silence is pain

The silence is blame.

The silence is right to blame.

I did this.

No one forced my hand.

No one pushed me to it.

Me.

Alone, so alone.

~

The leaves are still. The air feels tense, expectant. Like the park is listening in on my remembrance and waiting for the wham sentence. Waiting for the definitive end of the story that throws up the table and trashes the room. Sitting on the cusp of a good or a bad end. My lips have gotten a bit cold and chapped out here in the snow, but I smack them apart to say the words all the same.

“He died.” I say into the cold air.

That isn’t quite right.

“I killed him.” I correct myself.