

Novocaine

It feels worst when it wears off
The needle I hardly noticed
The numbing melts, a hot and dull electricity
The old pain awakening
I long for the deadening
Despite the chance to feel again

How long has it been
I try to recall, as chemical fades
When I was so eager for sensation
A silky fingers' caress, the burn of the stove,
Pain and pleasure an end a beginning
When my mind could hum, could scream

I was weary
When the book fell into my lap
Cross legged, I forgot my bandages
Dr. Bodhidharma prescribed the Heart of Zen.
Eager for relief I read it's pages
Comfortable as the procedure began

I stalled myself from going on
I forsook the pulsation, rhythm,
I stopped swimming the current, floating the calm
I stood up on the rivers silt
Unmoving. Unmovable. Unmoved.
Unaware my feet had began to sink.

In my mind the Mantra replayed
*"Though I have lived a thousand lives already/
Have committed innumerable sins/Given charity
beyond measuring/
I have not left this world for the next/
I will be as the snake in the bamboo tube/
I will no longer care for this world."*

The words wrapped the soul in spell
The spirit comatose and grateful
Floating above sensation, consequence
Heartbeat steady, slow, faint
Wide eyed, all watching, unaffected
Mind nursing the narcotic, blissful it ceased to exist

I walked careless on broken glass
Indifferent to hunger, thirst
The body weak
The brain mush
I, the Ghost, glowing
Until I came back to exist

The sickening itch awakes me.
My medication nearly gone, the prayer broken
My head just above water
The river poised to drown me
My feet revolt against my better judgment
Freed, the swirling flood absorbs me

Rendezvous

An awkward moment is all that's left.

The smell of your beautiful golden hair.
Only to touch and feel that creamy skin.
And the taste of those rosy-red lips.
Your beautiful bright blue watery eyes.
Had me lost for days.
Feelings of warmth and absolute care.
The closeness we used to bare.
It was a nice little love affair.
Minus the love and lust for air.

Coming Back

As he steps up to the edge
He looks toward the sky
One last time to pray
Before it's time to die

He takes a breath
Begins to fall
Away from his pain
Away from it all

He hits the ground
Begins to die
But from somewhere deep
Begins to cry

Suddenly he thinks of her
Her lovely laugh, eyes so blue
And hears her voice
Saying "I love you"

He cannot believe
What he's just done
His vision fades
His body is numb

He'll never again forget
Her lovely laugh, eyes so blue
He hopes she knows
He loves her too

As he takes this in
He makes it last
Because he knows
There's no coming back

How will it be

In two or three years

When two feet has become four

When no words

Are now an endless stream

How will it be

In five or seven years

When the leaves turn red

When she learns

From someone else

How will it be

In ten or twelve years

When toys are traded

When she says

"Why am I so short"

How will it be

In fifteen or eighteen years

When tests are graded

When one point

Tells her future

How will it be

In twenty or twenty two years

When someone else enters

When she stops

Asking me her future

How will it be

In twenty four or twenty five years

When she welcomes her own

When she asks me

How will it be

[REDACTED]
To: Stephen Gibson

Date: Monday, October 4, 2010 11:02 AM

Subject: engl 2250 writing for peer review

YOU

I've scaled the tops of these dark city walls;
I've reached the top just to be pushed to my fall.
When I turned around to see who was there,
It was You.

There lay my cold silent shell of a man.
The last words to escape my leaking lungs began...
"It was You..."

If you were to run to my tomb,
And if my body were to be exhumed,
You'd find a letter addressed to you.

It reads,
"Dear You,
Its me. Did you forget about my wife my kids,
My poor family, they still don't have a clue...
That it was You."

I've waited patiently all of these years,
Through the bitter hate and these cold vengeful tears.
How could I have been so blind?
Thank God, now my eyes have opened wide.

It was never You.

From: [REDACTED]
To: Stephen Gibson
Date: Thursday, October 7, 2010 7:52 PM
Subject: English 2250 Group Peer Review Re-Submission [REDACTED]

Do you remember ([REDACTED] Poem)

Do you remember when I first moved in?

I was new and alone. You reached out to me and became my best friend.

Do you remember all the fun we used to have?

Playing in your backyard, laughing and goofing off, throwing snowballs on the frozen pond...

Those were some of my favorite times growing up.

Do you remember how it felt to be outcasts?

When the other guys ignored or made fun of us, remember how it felt?

But we didn't need them. I had my best friend with me, what did they matter?

Do you remember growing up? Falling in love for the first time?

We were there for each other when things fell apart, and helped the other pick up the pieces.

Do you remember the arguments we had?

Fighting each other, getting hurt, and then not speaking to one another.

I'd never felt so alone.

Do you remember making up? When we forgave one another and moved on?

I was glad to have my brother back.

Do you remember when I had to leave?

Away for two years, without my best friend... I was really scared to go.

9/29/2010

A Child's Fear

Little Johnny Herbert was a nervous boy. So nervous that he had to finish the 2nd grade at home because the copy machine the class walked by on the way to lunch everyday terrified him. He was absolutely sure that, "It's gonna get me!"

"John Herbert! Hurry up, you're holding up the line!" Mrs. Donathorne said with a voice of exacerbation. The music teacher, Mr. Harvey had warned her about Johnny's pathetic, irrational fears earlier that day in the faculty lounge:

"John Herbert is in your AM class isn't he?" Mr. Harvey asked.

"Mm Hm." Mrs. Donathorne mumbled as she slurped up some re-heated noodles she'd brought from home.

"OK, so yesterday, when the class went to the back of the room to get the xylophones, Johnny stopped frozen by this tuba in the corner behind the extra tables. The tuba had its' dust cover on. He looked horrified. I told him to grab his instrument and take his seat but he didn't move or take his eyes off the tuba case."

Mr. Harvey took some coins out of the pocket of his pressed slacks and fidgeted with them in front of the vending machine. He continued, "I went over and told him it was nothing to be afraid of. I pulled the cover off of the tuba and, you should've seen 'em, he threw his little arms over his head like this and cried 'Nooooo!' with his eyes closed tight. It was everything I could do to not bust up laughing for the rest of class. That poor kid has some strangely irrational fears."

"He's just a kid." Mrs. Donathorne said as she rinsed off her tupperware.

*Nattereri

Blurred beyond sight with the flood of the feast,
Torn beyond name by the fangs of the beast;
Crimson clouds march 'cross current and streams,
Raining white flesh, whisp'ring like dreams.

**Nattereri* is the scientific name for piranhas

Sin

Haunted by self-loathing, plagued by my self-doubt,
the heart within me breaking, all hope I am without.
My life around me crumbling, the light fades into dark,
all my efforts are for nothing, my good intentions missed the mark.
No matter how I try, I can't escape my guilt,
I'm trapped inside and can't get out of these barriers that I've built.
The choices that I made, my prison cell became.
I gambled and lost everything in this, the devil's game.
All because of one small choice, how selfish I have been.
Now I have lost everything. Such is the price of Sin.

Birthday

1 The evening is cold and wind whips around my face
2 Leaves the color of the sunset crunch beneath my feet
3 Empty and sad carrying the harsh words of goodbye
4 My young heart beats with the tears of an old soul
5 Heartache so deep coursing through the veins
6 Step by heavy hearted step I walk moving on
7 Soft and soothing rain begins to fall hiding my tears
8 I think back over this long and unexpected day
9 He left before the candles were blown out
10 Taking with him hopes and dreams of any more
11 Tender and unassuming heart fell to pieces
12 I walk back through the memories and regrets
13 Not wanting to believe that this could be real
14 Looking for healing amid impending darkness
15 I light a match, close my eyes and make my wish
16 Be myself and do my best and have that be enough
17 Experience wonder and beauty in every moment
18 Find faith and hope to know life will turn out right
19 Love without reservation and be loved so in return
20 Accomplish goals and dare to believe in dreams
21 Time does not wait but presses forward day by day
22 Through pain and disappointment I will survive
23 And will move on to believe in finding the better one
24 The match goes out, the rain clouds part
25 A moment of hopeful bliss and the match goes out

The Bag

I stumbled onto the grimy subway, tired from a 12 hour day pushing pizzas. The usual smell of stale urine and body odor greeted me like an old friend. I slumped into my usual spot and curled up in my layers of coats and sweaters. The subway car was populated with the usuals; an old Chinese woman with cataracts in her left eye that gleamed at me whenever she glanced in my direction, a bum sleeping off the latest binge in the corner. I could never tell if he was really asleep because he talked loudly, but in-discernibly to himself as he lay huddled. Two stops after I boarded, another young guy, about my age, came on and sat across from me. I had been riding this train for the past six months and I had spoken to him only twice, in casual greeting. Now we just nodded to each other to acknowledge one another's existence.

I pulled my hat down and closed my eyes. I knew better than to fall completely asleep on this ride, but there was no harm in dozing a little on the long trip home. As the train rattled on, the Chinese woman received a call on her phone, which she answered loudly and angrily in her native tongue. Right on time I thought to myself. From the dozens of times that I had heard her repeat this conversation, I felt like I could tell the story myself, even though I didn't speak a word of Chinese. I had always imagined the call came from her husband, angry that she wasn't home yet. She would reprimand him for calling and say that she would be home soon, and on and on. This Chinese rambling lulled me off until I was aware of an alien smell invading my nostrils. It was a very strong cologne, musky and thick. I felt like if I opened my eyes I would be able to see the odor hanging in the air like fog. I peeked out from under my cap and located the source. A large man in a black trench coat and fedora had sat down next to the young man across from me. He was fat, but muscled and he wore a purple silk scarf. His fat face was clean-shaven and glistening with perspiration despite the chill. He held a sturdy green gym bag on his lap and was talking to the man next to him.

"You know someone named Penny?" he asked in a gravelly voice. The young man didn't answer but looked around and squirmed in his seat uncomfortably. The fat man placed a meaty hand on the young man's leg. "I asked you if you know someone named Penny. Do you?" His grating voice carried no anger, and was very calm. The young man grew very still when the fat man's hand landed on his leg, and he nodded stiffly in reply.

"Good." The fat man patted the young man's leg like a master patting his pet. "I'm a...relation of hers," the fat man continued slowly. "I'm in town doing some work and she asked if I could talk with you. She has grown tired of your acquaintance and wants to cut off contact with you. I don't really like to get involved with the relationships of young people, but you know how it is with family." He chuckled and gave the young man's thigh a squeeze. His hand seemed to dwarf the leg it squeezed. The young man grew very still and the color drained from his face.

"Anyway, despite her attempts to make it clear to you that things are over between the two of, you haven't seemed to get the message, so she asked me to clarify the situation." He lifted his green bag and set it on the young man's lap. "Like I said, I was in town working. This is my little project this evening. Open it and take a look." The young man looked at the fat man shyly. The fat man's steely eyes looked back at him unblinking. The young man unzipped the bag and opened it. His mouth dropped open and color returned to his cheeks, a greenish color. "You see my point, I hope. This was just business. Imagine what I could do when my heart was really in it." He took the bag back and zipped it shut as the train slowed into the station. "My stop," he said cheerfully. "You be good now." The fat man stood up, gave the young man's head a pat, and exited the car. As he passed me on the way to the door, a thick red drop fell from the bag and landed with a plop on the toe of my white sneakers.

Awareness

It was another Friday night, movie date night. Jonathan and Rebecca had just gotten out of a movie at the mall and were on their way to the Food Court to buy an ice cream Sunday to share.

Tonight, Jonathan noticed that Rebecca was quiet, and not as talkative as she usually was. She didn't say much during their walk to the mall, and she didn't want to make-out during the movie either. Her silence was beginning to concern him.

They made it to the dairy queen counter and ordered their ice cream Sunday.

"Would you like a drink beautiful?" Jonathan asked Rebecca.

"Sure," Rebecca answered him. "Water will be fine."

Rebecca usually orders a Sprite. Know Jonathan was really worried.

The food court worker gave them their ice cream and drinks, then Jonathan lead Rebecca to a table by the fountain in the center of the food court. They were just starting to eat their ice cream when Jonathan decided to break the silence that had been lingering all evening.

"You've been really quiet tonight Rebecca," Said Jonathan. "Are you feeling all right?"

Rebecca answered grudgingly "I'm fine, thank you."

"I don't think you are," said Jonathan. "You hardly said anything this evening. I'm worried that you may be sick, or have a problem we need to talk about."

Rebecca looked up angrily from the ice cream. "Oh, so now you're concerned with how I'm feeling. What about last night when I tried to talk to you on the phone?"

Jonathan remembered that call. It was during a basketball ball game with his buddies. They were half way through the game, with their team in the lead, when Rebecca called him on his cell phone. She apparently sounded upset, but because he was obsessed with the game he told her that he would call her later to talk—but he never did.

"Is that why you're so upset?" Jonathan said taken aback. "That I didn't call you back last night? Look, I'm sorry I didn't call you back, but we were winning the game. And you know how I am when something like that happens. I just forget what I'm supposed to..."

Rebecca's eyes began to fill with tears as she interrupted Jonathan: "My grandmother died last night."

Jonathan just looked at her. After a moment he still didn't know what to say.

"What?" Jonathan asked.

Rebecca continued, "My grandfather called last night to tell my family that grandmother died of a heart attack earlier that day, and I was the only one home to take a message. My parents were out of town for the weekend, and I needed to talk to someone. I called you, thinking that you would take the time to listen and talk to me. I guess I was wrong."

Jonathan felt like hitting himself in the head with a hammer. Anything to be rid of the guilt he felt right now.

"Rebecca," He began his apology, "I am so sorry. If I had known that, I would have come over to your house. I would have dropped the whole game so that I could be there for you."

"It's not just that that is upsetting me Jonathan." Rebecca said, tears now streaming down her cheeks.

Jonathan was confused now. "Then what is it? What else did I do?"

Rebecca took a napkin and dried her eyes. Then said "It's what you don't do. You don't pay attention to me. Every time I try to have a conversation with you , you are always pre-occupied with something else."

Jonathan protested "That not true!"

Unconditional (I'll Never Stop Loving You)

I wake up thinking of you, Every morning.
This heart was closed, Cobwebs were forming.
Your piercing eyes stole my heart
You changed my life right from the start

I love your touch and all that is you.
I'll never stop, Loving you.
I'll never stop, Loving you.

On a difficult day, You're not there.
Sitting by the window, I cry and stare.
Frustrations builds inside, what to say.
Other priorities you had today.

I want your touch and all that is you.
I'll never stop, Loving you.
I'll never stop, Loving you.

The storm outside, Torrential rain.
My heart is weeping, Wrenching pain.
I will love you always, No conditions.
But you have gone, Your own ambitions.

I need your touch and all that is you.
I'll never stop, Loving you.
I'll never stop, Loving you.