

Fantasy Inspired Poetry and Verse

by John Currivan

The Soldier's Sword

Stumbling, feet dragging in the dry dust
bleeding, slowly dying
the soldier staggers his last step
and falling, stabs his sword into the soil
burying the blade hilt deep in the earth.

His body open to the air,
blood seeping in the dirt. the razor still and hidden takes seed
spreads roots
and from the exposed edge
of its scabbard sprouts a stem of shining steel.

Time... Time... Time...

Flesh falls off,
Bones yellow,
The soldier vanishes.
The war forgotten.
No grave to mark the man
but inch by inch a glorious shimmering tree grows upward its silver leaves
glinting in the sunlight
an oasis in a wasteland.

The soldier's sword bore fruit metal baubles glittered
from branches and thudded ripe and round into the sand beneath.
People came, settled under the boughs and ate the fruit that fell
and through it they thrived
flourished and grew strong
evolving armadillo plated skin,
and solid conch shell flesh,
they became Steely. Hardened. Focussed. Determined. Armoured
and against the world.

A steel covered army
cruel and cold
passionless and empty, superior to those they slaughter no emotion, no empathy.
They fight and bleed,
they war and win
and long prosperity is their reward.

But Time... Time... Time...

And the tree that grew, from the soldier's sword, reddens..
Scarlets and browns
streak across the bark,
shred around the trunk

and narrow the branches
thin with sharp and hungry rust.
It dies.
It rots.
It grows toxic.
The air around it poisoned
the earth beneath it ruined
a murderous fume
a black smoke plume
spreading outwards like a plague.

And those who had eaten
the fruit of the soldier's sword, slowed and stiffened,
grinded to stops,
and froze in place,
statued,
immortalised and dead.

with Time... Time... Time...

they crumbled to dust
and scattered in the wind.

The seed of the sword
still sits in the soil,
the hilt ever ready to draw,
waiting for the blood of another soldier
to feed and grow it once more.

The Martyr and their Maker - *(A Prayer for Extremists)*

Hold me, Death, hold me,
Lay your fiery hand across me and blast me into blissful eternity.

Touch me, Death, touch me,
let your cold shrapnel seed grow in me spread icy through my veins and arteries.

Lay me down, Death, lay me down, 'Tween earth and sky
I'll spiral through empty space knowing that I'm falling
into your majestic embrace.

Only with you in my heart do I succeed.
Only with you at my back do I parade into glory.

Love me, Death, love me, and let me be remembered

Hold

Hold, like an army
or a dam against the tide.
You know that something's churning intangible and undefined
rushing through rapids
pushing against rocks,
but bar the gate against it
keep it tightly locked.

The tempests try to ruin you and shred you bit by bit
but root your trees
and stiffen your leaves
the shell holds still
and never will
give the faintest clue
of the hellish brew
the glows liquid red within it.

Keep it. Hold on. Don't let it crack.
It will not stay, it cannot last
refuse to drip tears on your sleeve
Don't be vulnerable.
Don't be weak.

You're not porcelain, be the steel
that hides the spinning rotor
that muffles the roaring motor,
that drives you.
Hide it. Hold it. Do not feel.

The levee will eventually rupture
and into splinters burst apart
only then can you freely heal
your wounded battered heart.

The tidal wave will gather
and fall while you are alone,
until then do not let it break you.
Hide it. Keep it. Hold.

Islands

Every nation is an island surrounded by a sea of gore, founded by stronger terrorists through the ever-spinning remorseless wheel of war.

Each scrap of land
and rag of stone,
bought with blood
paid in bone,
believing Hell underground with Heaven in the sky,
not knowing both are here on earth, and that Paradise is a lie.

And many wide-eyed hopeful youths are sent to kill and die
to try and grasp it's worth
and come up only from the dirt
with a handful of ashes
lungs full of smoke
eyes bulging redder
blades dripping wetter,
choking today for a tomorrow that's better.

And in a room far away on a sheet of paper
a map is drafted drawn, re-drawn
each border and boundary each country and county carved through the blood and built on
the bodies
of the boys and girl
the women, the men
who fought in a battle of us versus them.

But our truth won out
God was on our side
the rolling dice of fate
tumbled our number onto it's face so now is our time.
Our time shall last
for an eternity
and victory and history belong to us.

Around them then the sea swells red their burnt out island surrounded crippled inhabitants
with burnt out eyes singing toothless happy lies
believing they have built a paradise.

Warmed Hands on Burnt Bridges

We were connected once,
two islands bridged together,
We traded toured and helped each other
holding fast through the roughest weather.

With nowhere left for the other to go,
We offered shelter, warmth and food,
and when things turned bad, for the other again,
we welcomed them and made it good.

But something happened when winter struck,
And neither of us had better luck,
you walked the bridge between and took,
the first step from my end.

You broke it up, kindled a fire,
and warmed your hands on the heat
but I could not join and share the flame,
there was no first rung for my feet.

The first step of my road was gone,
and your flames didn't even last that long
as the very next day you took the second,
widening further the gap between us
so I watched as you burnt our bridge
and smoked away my trust.

By springtime, there was naught but rope,
where once the connection was strong,
we rebuilt the bridge and never spoke
of past injuries or past wrongs.

But when next, both our times were tough,
you repeated your previous sins
I suffered as you stole from my side again
I watched the end of our friendship begin.

I've built other bridges, to some other friends,
and found ties and connections, just as strong there,
our pathway, is flimsy but walkable,
but there are things that we still can share.

I will never want a friendship to die,
Ours will re flourish I hope,
but if my bridge gets re-abused again
I will cut the fucking rope.

Trailing Hell

Serene steps crack earthquakes through concrete,
Pearly skin,
almost porcelain
shimmers
on a gentle hand raised for
a gentle wave.

It gathers space and dust and air and sound
and with a tiny flick
the welcoming gesture
sweeps a wind of destruction
across the sky.

Clouds shatter
thunder claps
air meets air and dances typhoons
all around and behind her.

And all the while
a childish smile
accompanies laughing giddy eyes
overflowing with innocence and naiveté.

From the mouth a sweet sound escapes
a loving speech in a friendly melody
that turns into a curse,
a promise unfulfilled,
that breeds mistrust
and animosity
each syllable
responsible
for another atrocity
as brothers and sisters clash,
mothers and fathers split
ripping children,
newborn, unborn and unmade
apart at ragged seams.

And still the sunlight gleams
off straight white teeth
pure and neat
and ever so delicate.

She has not even flapped her wings yet.
This angel spreading heaven,
trails a hell behind her.
Forgive her lord. She knows not. She knows not.

Queen of Wakefield

The Sunday shift starts early,
she opens up and pulls the pumps
men trickling in slowly,
to the almost empty room
some here just for pints,
others for a game of pool.

“Alright love!”. “Aye up!”.

Before too long
a portion of people
congregate at the stools beside the bar,
behind the oakwood polished table top,
a barrier
but still they’re not too far from her.

The subjects joke and jest
courting her affections
competing to be the best
jabbing and jibing at bones of contention
but when the chance comes for her to speak
the mob subdue into a silence.
Eyes go wibbly wobbly.
Knobbly knees go knick knack knock.
The royal one merely almost speaks
and the audience completely stops.

“Well... I think...”

Each syllable she speaks a sparkling sceptre,
each consonant pronounced a shining crown,
controlling, gently hypnotising
those nobles gathered round.
Their shoulders resting on the bar stiffen
to hide their urge to suddenly soften
but this Queen has them in her grip
with each little slurp and sip
they take from the pints she pulls.

Her reign continues through the morning
until the desperate courtiers
get drowned out and immersed
with the immigration of others to the pub
families, groups of friends,
the early comers still in love
though their queen has now spread her attentions,

give the newest arrivals her affections.

Yet at the bar they hold their seats
like knights on imagined saddles
silently continuing the noble battle
to have another taste and savour
the Queen of Wakefield's favour.

Young Woman, watching

From the wings she watches,
imagining their roles reversed,
the chorus girl in chorus costume,
the diva dancing in a unique gown
highlighting her from the rest of the crowd.

The Diva's shadow kicks out
synchronised and steady
as it's leader's movements
flicker between light and heavy.

The chorus girl watches breath held for the crescendo
as the lights intensify and the volume grows
and suddenly
The Diva glows,
her gestures flow,
each footfall silent
as landing snow.

The shadow follows the dancer
the chorus girl follows the shadow
each step engrained and practiced by both
each flick and shift learned by rote.

The chorus girl dreams to dance like this,
spreading swirls in the air with each wave of a wrist,
floating effortlessly with each spin and twist.

Seeing herself emulate the performance,
for she doesn't yet know
that she will someday shine with her own light
and needn't be anyone's shadow.