

Reignite My Flaming Heart

“Smith Martin has ta’en his great fore-hammer,

And ne’er a word spake he;

But. “Now I will gae down to the well,

For me or it maun dee.”

He has come up wi’ that loathly beast;

“Come out, thou thing unclean,”

And he has lifted his great fore-hammer,

Struck it full betwixt the een.

And straight it made a grin and groan,

A gruesome, horrid din’

Then drew itsel’ in coils and folds

And from the field gan rin

Martin’s taen his leman in his arms

And kiss’d her lay-cauld brow,

“I michtna carry thy sma’ pitcher,

I bear heavier burden now.””

Rekindle My Flaming Heart

Balluderon sings to me

come home and rekindle the flames

stone and grass glimmer golden the place where I was –

I was

meant to be

Martin's ghost sings the song of death and peace

The dead can be dug up and dissected

torn apart and flung by cruel winds

But our bones still bear testimony

rattling along streetlight roads

Disembodied Scots brawling banter about our worth over crackling radio as

we grieve histories carved from nature

broken under the hammers of fate

Balluderon's blades of grass wave forlornly

This is not forever

But it is.

Snuffed out in the forgery

Screams of metal on metal solidify my soul, tainting golden fire to bronze

Clayed, moulded.

Shelved. Documented. Assigned.

Simply existing had never been enough, had it?

My history screams in Balluderonian air

guttural cries of gravel scratching the sky, bursting rain

from wispy cloud wounds

Yet I'm waxed tightly into the moulds of your walls dripping tears and blood

My throat of hardened honeycomb cannot free my roar

and swarms of bees buzz about

creativity diversity innovation inclusiveness love is love human rights you belong etc

but

your hands create parts of me that never existed, saying *this is you now*

Created in your image, god smites my soul to the gravel

All whilst the true oppressors reap the profits

or slumber in heaven

believing they're angels

The ghost of Martin sings the song of death and peace

Gleaming jewelled skin punctured, fractured
across scraps of paper scattered in dusty workshops
dry and blotched – here lies my heart, supposedly.
Not a blade of grass in sight
my memory longs to trace my trail of blood back home
mingled with leaky car oil and its rainbow glares

Rekindle the flames

I breathe in bricks and rocks and walls
as the crane creaks uncomfortably a mechanised insect leg
dangling me from a thread
A slow, long haul from the van to the street gawps stares cameras
Lowered into empty eyes of empty people
Falling into the granite gyre coiling into a concrete
Underworld of blocked, bricky silence the static of footsteps
the closest thing I feel to rain – the real thing glimmers and glosses over me

I now exist to everyone

but no longer to myself.

Balluderon screams as ants of the earth march onwards
burning its soil skin, digging into its narrative
and rewriting stories of survival into stories of shame
The stomach of my memory still growls and pangs
I don't remember which hurt more – the hunger of neglect, or the sword of execution.
I've learned that people love to vanquish the mistakes
they were responsible for

Two years I wait
to face my new creator – no longer Mother Nature with the well of a goddess
but a mortal man with rough hands

Two years before I catch his gaze in the crowd
His pale eyes burn with brief recognition discomfort avoidance
But I don't burn at all

Look at me, you coward

Look at what you did to me

Look at what I did to myself
let a man with money define me *this is you now*

My new lair doesn't last long
invaded by plastic helmets and flimsy jackets
that glower like tinfoil thinking they're golden *let them*
shining under the armour of fences and swords of scaffolding
I'm taken down again but why won't they let me die?
My living corpse is dragged from hollowed caves
ready to be stuffed with neon lights, laminated menus and cash registers
they don't know real treasure when they see it

Another fragment of my story left behind
muffled under the *ka-chings* and *clinks* and *customer announcements*
The echoes of tinny tannoys force me into the void

For a while, I guard the entrance to Boots
Revolving doors consuming and spitting out people
with make-up and medicine and meal deals
Waving purses to cure their problems, their hunger, their ailments
their insecurity

The humans say *money makes the world go round*
But I was moulded from money
and do I look any stronger for it?

Dragged past Desperate Dan slingshot tactically aimed at his head

I'm craned beside a black, boxy bin

my scent of clean air and smoky fires finally conquered

by the tacky stench of trash, cigarettes and joints

mingled with Greggs sausage rolls and cheap coffee.

Here I am.

This is you now

Sleeping bags surround me like crumpled caterpillars

Untrusting eyes staring straight through

Boots Pandora Costa Waterstones Tesco New Look, all kinds of bags

brushing past their faces, whilst the children

clamour around my tail, greedy little eyes ogling at my size

and scrappy fingernails chipping away at my skin

my mind says no but the fire is gone

my history is ablaze in the flames of profit

an invisible wildfire consuming Balluderon's touch

rough hands and distant gazes melting like coins in a furnace

but the bronze ghost of my body? Flogged for free

prostituted to these menacing pests

I thought being free would feel better than this

look at these tiny humans, climbing a once monstrous beast
while slightly bigger humans ignore the raspy pleas
of the eyes on the street
begging for change

Some people misunderstand
absentmindedly dunking coins into their cracked coffee cups

I want to see the change that means something

There's fire in those eyes
burning pavements, all this burning
they wait for the rain to drown us out
or smoulder us to stone

If we blink hard enough could we spark a wildfire?

I hear the echoes of stilettos on altars
Drag queens sauntering past the crevices where Holy Mary once stood
Teenagers clamouring under the cross

Fairy lights glimmering across altars
illuminating the prophets
No burdens here
No one left behind
Cash and card won't corrupt the religion, nor the uprising
fused together within walls of centuries

If money itself isn't evil then who is?

Rock lungs strain for Balluderon
dissolving on a stone tongue
You want what's right in front of you
But can't you see? We're chained

Chained to the constraints of the city's mind
Chained under the glare of The Caird (just out of reach from my eyes)
under which you were gutted from the lives of your mothers and fathers
skeleton cars trundling away, jaunty dead thunderings
under my gnarled feet

Remember: our bones bear testimony
they ache for the people and places we leave behind

My home of stolen sky sings the bard of

smiles, strokes, skin, stars of fire-drunken mornings, as the
pale pink haze of rebirth melts and fizzes into the Tay

the city pumping its polluted blood

and its heart?

All one big beating corpse

You walk the skeletons of broken promises

unanswered emails

Screaming your existence into the void won't matter

unless someone more powerful screams it for you

but screams get lost in translation

the language of gold and fire is extinguished

burned throats cannot rasp their protests

If only we all spoke in ash and charcoal and failure yet

you leave the promised land

a different person

than the one you felt destined to be

Balluderon still screams

Look at me –

No better than glorified stained glass
Far too fragile for miracles
Your face reflects into the dirty halos of my porous black sockets
bobbing backpacks and Bluetooth headphones brushing past
my diseased skin
bronze tinged green with everything
chipped away by light-up trainers and chubby legs pulling themselves higher
innocently attempting to ascend to a better world
upon relics of destruction
upon a body *my body*
which isn't theirs to mount

Ladies and gentlemen: the new generation,
raised to never ask for permission.

They climb towards rough hands
that will shove themselves inside those tiny bodies
and remould them
Walking statues of the city
perfect stone hearts
climbing upon each other, silent tears oozing beneath the hammers
bearing a weight they never asked for
Believing this is recognition
 this is legacy
 this is love

They'll be you one day enveloped in headphones
darting their jaded eyes away from strangers
paving their way nowhere

Martin's ghost sings the song of death and peace

I'm meant to be

Home

My heart is a heavy burden on the streets

a memory soaring in haunted ashes

an unforgiving hammer forging me down

Martin's ghost sings the song of death and peace

My ghost whispers

This is forever

References

Epigraph

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