
HAWAIIAN SHIRTS
in the
ELECTRIC CHAIR

poems

Scott Laudati

(KUBOA)

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*This is all dedicated to Sharon Rodriguez,
"the Queen of the underground"*

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Can we live
like this?

it didn't take so long
did it?
your story's
in your
smile, those lips
once said
"i'll
never
love again".

i know
you're a fighter, kid,
life
didn't take
it's time
with
you, but you're
not so bored,
there's still a light
in there.
sure,

you
can sway
like the
breezy
palm trees
of your hometown
but i don't
want to
know
if you can bend ...
can you break?

i remember
your greasy
hair from
the plane,
your legs crossed
on the white sheets,
the slow surrender
of your eyes
when you realized
i thought
you
were beautiful.
it was sudden

and eternal.
i chose you
to erase
all my sorrows.
will you?
you see
life in the raw
and that makes me
trust you.
we know
when
we
find
our own

i think
about what it
will be like.
the coffee.
the date.
the booze.
the bed.
the cigarette.
but
i can

leave those
for the men
that came
before.
i
want
your window,
to
watch
the breeze
through the leaves
of those palms
and wonder
if this life
actually
existed before
you got here

they all want to be artists
they change their majors
from psychology
to sculpting
they change later
from sculpting
to economics
their parents say get a job
save money
you can work your art out on the weekends
most give in
get the job
they sleep around in their twenties
they get pregnant
sometimes for love
usually by accident
they get promoted
they become their refrigerator

some stay on
move to the dominican neighborhoods
move to the outer boroughs

keep hustling
always one contact away from the big gallery
thinking they made the sacrifice
art owes them now
one day it will happen

but it doesn't
or when it does
it's just too late
too much time happened
to question, playing
the ultimate gamble
with no chance to return
and get it right
or rewind
and try again

but they bet their life
and the ashtrays never emptied
and the bottles never corked
and they left something behind
good or bad
they wrote their own epitaphs
and the graveyards
and libraries

and art galleries
all filled
because the artist lived
and the artist left something behind.
but whether the dream
was lived out
or sold out
it's hard to see a family
on a blanket under a free sky
every july 4th
or around a christmas tree every december
or taking a picture
with mickey mouse in the florida summer
and argue
that the love that shares your name
is the only art
worth waking up for

a garden
east of eden

if i could do it all over again
there's not much i would do the same
i would say i love you a lot more
to a lot less people
i would only find brick walls on black and white streets
to kiss against
i would buy a shag carpet every day
and lay in it
and i would never eat until my chest was thin as paper
so you could see that
my heart
looks
like
a heart

and every time i'd say
the house will always smell like fresh flowers
i'd mean it
and every car door i could open for you
i'd open it
and every cage that held a turtle

i'd free it
and every dog that had no home
i'd adopt it
and every door in the house that wasn't painted yellow
i'd paint it
and every bike that had a basket
i'd fill it
and when i promised i was over it
i would be

but when i said
i don't want you to love me any more than you do
i'd still be lying
and i'd still hope that you were smarter than me
and you wouldn't change a thing

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