

Naked Leavings



Written by
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THE FUNERAL

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Standing silently
Outside the reception hall.
Watching the ashes wed the ground.

Death is all around.
Cold in the earth,
Warm walking on the concrete.

You're gone
Never, yet forever.

We, the remaining, exchange
Tears,
Faces,
Smiles,
Embraces,
Compassionate words,
And understanding looks.

You, the departed, remain
A footprint on life's water,
A ripple on the earth,
A voice on the wind,
A memory of sunshine and rain
That sprinkles nevermore in this realm.

You're gone
Never, yet forever.

Rest in peace
Little one.

The struggle is over.

LIKE TALCUM

Candice James
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The muted sounds of life abound
In this vacuum of snow
Falling like talcum
Onto the freshly showered sheets of grass and cement.
It reminds me of the many
Sparkling powdered dreams
I laid to rest.
They sway to and fro
Amidst their shallow burial ground.
And all the while
The snow falls
Like talcum.

Sometimes,
I think I catch a glimpse of them
Hiding in the deep of regret,
Peeking through the wet hazy surface.
When a pebble drops from my mind
It paints the glass surface of the lake
With one ripple
Perpetually collapsing and expanding
Into something
That is nothing.
And all the while
The snow falls
Like talcum.

The muted sounds of life
Thud in on tiger paws
And claw at reality.
My dreams
Have turned to powder
And all the while
The snow falls
Like talcum.

SEMI BURNED OUT

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An old semi burned out farmhouse
Yaws, creaks and moans
Remembering tears and smiles.
The sunstreaks glisten on the
Charcoal blue keypad roof.
Embers seem to burn anew,
Dancing on a double bladed sword of love.
And, hearts are breaking all over the world,
Aching to be healed; to be touched again.

The loft that held so many lovers
Gently in her embrace, softens her bosom,
Creaks and sighs, whispering of a warm western wind
Wasted so easily by the careless spendthrift lovers.
Bones and dust,
Remnants of dead wheat,
Lay ravaged by the burn
Of lovers passing through,
And hearts are breaking all over the world,
Aching to be healed; to be touched again.

On the farmhouse wall a movie runs in fast forward:
We see ourselves
Walking along the shoreline
Gazing at the water
Too lost in our inner sanctum,
To ever notice the teardrops in the water.

With the best part of us lost forever,
We are the sinners, seeking the forgiveness
We know we know will never come.

Semi burned out, we are the empty shells we created,
Laying wasted on life's broken granite beach
And, hearts are breaking all over the world,
Aching to be healed; to be touched again.

SHORE BOUND STRANGER

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The moon hangs like a luminous disc
Over the pitch black onyx lake,
Smooth like a slab of polished marble
Greedily feeding on the shaft of bright.

Shore bound sits a shadowy man.
His torso is canoed into the trunk of a tree.
He's mesmerized, quietly witnessing
The newborn spiders in the sky,
Stars climbing through the floorboards of dusk;
Glittering sequins on a black velvet curtain.
Some grant wishes. Some sprinkle heartaches.
The stranger on the shore gazes up at them
Wrapped in a baptismal blanket of drizzling rain.

The cry of a loon slides across the lake,
Like an ice skate, scarring the surface.
The stars fall with razor sharp edges
Cutting the stranger free.

A stillness creeps in, beckons,
Lures the shore bound stranger.
Unbound he stands trembling.
With a sudden deep knowledge,
He approaches the shore like a child.
At the edge he becomes a tiny wave
And mingles with the water, the loon,
The stars, the sky and the moon.

The stranger on the shore slips
Silently into the legacy of the lake,
Unshackled, shore bound no more,
Never to be a stranger again.

THE WRONG PEOPLE

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Rain streaking down a dusty window
Plays with the dirt in a paned wrestling match.
Life peeps through this muddy menagerie.
A snowy woman is walking hand in hand
With a midnight man packing a child on his back.
These are the wrong people.
They shouldn't be in charge of these scissors
They use to cut their way through
The wrong side of town.

And the kiss of spring in winter
Is falling through summer's embrace.

The alleys and dumpsters, hiding their secrets,
Loom like scrap metal scars and broken robots.
Danger and death have become clandestine lovers
Lurking stealthily in the shadows
Waiting for the wrong people
To scissor step their beleaguered bodies home.
The horizon is only slightly visible now.
The child on the midnight man's back is softly sobbing.
His tears become part of this relentless rain they're caught in.
The snowy woman caresses the child's fevered forehead
And presses her cold cracked lips to his burning cheek.

And the kiss of spring in winter
Is still falling through summer's embrace.

The wrong people never do the right things.
They never escape the frosty side of living.
They were cursed at birth to walk the earth
Searching for dead glory in a nowhere place.
The snowy woman knows this.
The midnight man's face shows this.
The child's eyes are dulled with fading hope.

The kiss of spring in winter
Has finally fallen through summer's weakened embrace
And the wrong people never even felt it's touch.

WASTELAND

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Like a feverish river running rampant
Through freshly carved caverns of pain,
This moment clings to the shore it's battering.
This place in time is somehow out of time
But still it continues to beat with a heart of its own.

This wasteland of rivers, caverns,
Moments, shorelines and magic
Is not new to me.
I've walked this terrain with stumbling footsteps
Trying to correctly ascertain the color of its tears,
The depth of its devastation,
The measure of its iniquity,
The level of its pain.

I will walk it again and again
Until this broken pain can bend,
Until this wasteland's at an end.

STONES

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When I was a child
I used to walk toward the ocean with expectation.
I used to listen to her subtle sounds.
I would walk the beach listening to her music.
When it became too beautiful
I would search the shoreline for stones.

I would carefully screen each stone
Almost to the point of interviewing them.
I chose only to pick the smooth flat ones that would skip.
When a stone skips over the water
It spends more time up in the air than on the surface.

I'm not a child anymore.
I'm an adult now and,
I've become very much like the stones
I used to so carelessly skip,
More out of my element than in it.

DAMAGE AND HAVOC

Candice James
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On the west corner where vine and gate intermingle
Stands a quaint yet shoddy little house of bricks.
Her crumbling mortar is like weakened veins
Running through the heart and soul of her.
She shudders and breathes shallowly in a sea
Of faded memories and frightening nightmares
Chewing each other ferociously to the bone,
Mixing old blood with new in a bizarre game of tag.
Some nights when I pass by, cloaked in the dark,
I swear I can hear her weeping softly at the moon
And chanting a mystical spell to any sky doctor
Who will listen, who might be able to cure her
Of her ills and woes and weakened veins that
Remind her constantly of her impending death;
The complete annihilation of all her elements.

I have walked dozens of desolate streets and faces
That scream out to me "Pity me. Pity me"!
I feign oblivion to their terror filled voices and eyes.
To me they are not there nor are they here
In my world of living dead ghostly apparitions.
A posse of cold hard rain is falling fast and closing in
On the outlaw teardrops that escaped down the
Cheek of some cherished memory slain in error.
Oh the damage we do when we choose to love.
Oh the havoc we wreak when we kill a heart.

The noise and cadence of the traffic passing by
Soothes the torn metal edge of my weeping scars
Inflicted as I tried to escape this prison of tears.
Years whisper by in a hush of lost moments
We leave streets filled with carnage and debris.
These streets brimming with beaten, broken hearts;
These streets we will never walk again.

Oh the damage we do when we choose to love.
Oh the havoc we wreak when we kill a heart.

BREATHLESS

Candice James
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Scrambled patterns
Weaving their way through the rain slicked streets
Of a dusty dream, stand at attention
In the living room of death,
Out of breath, gasping for redemption.

Destruction's gravel strewn path
Paves the way for destiny's sky jump.
Hooking onto a makeshift heaven
Of hellish motives and dampened dreams
Rigidly bent into horror stricken figurines.

Sometimes these figurines scream a fierce banshee wail.
Sometimes they dance.
Sometimes they sleep.

I see a sailboat on the horizon
But there is no breeze.
It remains motionless.
The figurines are sleeping,
And I,
I remain breathless.

GOD'S PAINTBRUSH

Candice James
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The newly recruited soldier trees line up,
Ablaze with sunshine sheeted icicles from the
Far side of an undiscovered dimension.
I stare quite amazed at this amazing
Unsullied artwork randomly dropped
From the edge of God's paintbrush.

There is a remnant of something so familiar
It calls in a voice I almost remember.
Somewhere unseen, in the realm of heaven
The music and the angels have switched identities
To feel what it would be like to be something else
Other than what they've always been.
Here in the visible realm
I long to switch identities with you
To feel what it's like to be you,
But given the chance I'd decline it
Because I don't want you to know
What it's like to be me.
I don't want you to understand me
Because I don't understand myself.
I can't allow anyone to get that close.
That would make me too vulnerable.

I prefer to hide safely amid these soldier trees
Protected from the relentless x-ray eyes
That could and would lay my being bare
And leave it to the mercy of the elements
For the seagulls and crows to feed on.

I prefer to be part of this unsullied artwork
Randomly dropped from God's paintbrush,
Listening for that voice I almost remember,
Searching for the Artist that drew me.

THE DREAM VANISHED

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She sewed sequins onto the frame
Of the dream she planned to wear forever;
Sparkling, shimmering
Within their own illumination;
The way her body and spirit
Shone iridescently in the mirror.

She walked into the mirror
And exchanged places
With her antagonistic reflection.
This new privacy so coveted felt so good
Encased in one way glass, slightly rippling
At the inner reaches and the outer edges.
Smooth to the touch, abrasive to the soul.

She stepped out of the mirror, spun around
And peered into the changed reflectionless mirror
And it felt good. It was good. It was completion.
She had become what she wanted to be.
Nothing, least of all herself.

She sat down on the duvet and deftly
Began picking the sequins off the frame
Of the dream she'd planned to wear forever.
She put them away in her special drawer
Of useless and unrequired things,

She threw the frame
Into the flaming fireplace.
It flared brightly
And then,
The dream vanished.

PERDITION'S PROPHECY

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The emptiness falls through the trees,
Creeps through the grass,
Climbs through my window and embraces me
With a lonely lustful kiss.
It bruises my lips and strangles my heart
Inside this dream that recurs
And runs without intermissions.

It's a lonely night's dream
And a dreamy night's loneliness.
The language is indecipherable
Like hieroglyphics of the heart.
The beat is indistinct, muffled
Like cards dropped on carpet,
Unshuffled, undealt, unmoved;
Like tiny cardboard houses collapsing
Exposing hidden closets, harboring
Dark secrets and ghostly images.

In the distance a hollow bell rings
Inside the silent echo
Of this stolen midnight mass.

Just past the road not taken,
On the highway to perdition's prophecy,
Each step is witnessed by a teardrop
Spilled within it's own obscurity.

PREMATURELY DEAD

Candice James
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Many of the living in my world
Have become prematurely dead to me.

I wished and prayed they'd come into my life
Then I winked and blinked them out of existence;
Scissored their paper hearts
Out of my living breathing mansion of love.
I buried each disappointment along with a
Tiny chunk of my heart deep underground
Where I'll never ever be able to find it again.
I've thrown away all my maps and directions.
I never want to visit this random village of venom again.

I've seen sunsets so rich and luxurious in color
And been tempted to revisit the graveside of
A few undead ghosts I so mercilessly killed
In a heartbeat; In a heartache; In my heart.
I have the power to resurrect them at will,
But I do not choose to give them life or love.
They drained the love and life out of me
Then shelled me, ate me up ravenously and
Spit me out like a rancid piece of meat;

Many still living in my world cause me discomfort
Like a fishbone that's stuck but doesn't choke.
I long to delete them from the book of life.
Hang them outside the scope of my vision;
Outside the range of my hearing;
Dead to me.

Yes, many of the living in my world
Have become prematurely dead to me.

Dead to me
Forever.

THINGS ALWAYS CHANGE

Candice James
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These cracks in the floor of my mind
Show me there is a darker reality
Than this gas lit world I stumble through.
I try in hopeless desperation to slip into
One of the many shadow beings
That drift across this blazing landscape
Like vapor ghosts clouding my eyes
With wisps of fog and lost sentiment.

The journey and the tedium
Have somehow switched identities
And fallen into a sea of broken glass
The color of dark burgundy wine,
Red blood, and luxurious purple dreams.
It's a stained glass teardrop kind of day
That just won't quit. It dampens my
Twilight moments and sweetens nothing
Except the salty residue of each teardrop.

Blades of grass keep whispering my name
Behind my back. They speak of the jungles
They've whisked my unsuspecting feet toward
Where vines of emotion kiss my ankles as I
Continue my perilous climb out of this delirium;
Out of this destruction; to a new rebirth.

Things change. Things always change.
Myself and I are living proof.
Part of me turned left and strutted down a
Path of crumbling righteousness and
Burned out ghostly palaces.
Part of me turned right
And stumbled aimlessly down a gravel path
Of phantom heartaches and funeral pyres.
Where memories fade, break, die, vanish forever.

We used to walk all our streets together.
Now we walk each avenue alone wondering
How we lost each other along the way.

Things change. Things always change.
Myself and I are living proof.

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