Troll

Shane Koyczan

Once upon a time, you and all your kind
lived underneath bridges
had ridges for ribs that dropped off into empty chests
as if your hearts were all stolen treasures
as if an excavation crew were hired to dig up and remove the part of you that let you feel
and while the world above you invented the wheel you stayed put
knowing that would one day roll over top of you to get to where it's going
you had an endlessly flowing supply line of food
you began to brood over humanity and made meals of our hope
as if crushing our spirits would make your mirrors cast better reflections than the ones they gave
as if the only way you could save yourselves was to make the world ugly so no one would notice you hided in it
you learned to knit pain into a kind of camouflage
treated hope like a mirage that you could use to lure in your next meal
you lived off our fears, you could taste what we feared
and every night, as the moon at bedtime stories on sunlight
you took darkness as an invite to head out into the woods
you curled your hands into wrecking balls
your breath became squalls, you made rocks rumble,
you made land shiver, you made boys and girls pray that someone would deliver them from you
we told them, you aren't real
and then one day, the world changed
but you all stayed the same
just migrated from living underneath bridges to living underneath information superhighways
days and nights became meaningless, each already deep in chest became an abyss no one would ever find the bottom of
concepts like love fell into your gravity
we turned ourselves into life preservers hoping to save as many as we could
but the fathers who guarded closet doors and the mothers who secured the floors under beds all shook their heads not knowing how to deal with you
you, who crept into our lives, with tongues like knifes stabbing your words into our skin
you began to begin uploading yourselves into our homes
you had computer screens for eyes and software for bones
you turned your hate into stones
and hurled them at beauty, as if you couldn't bear to see anything other than ugly
anything different
you had fingernails like flint and scraped them against decency hoping we would be the ones to all catch fire
you all had smiles like one-way barbed wire not meant to keep us out, but to keep us in
always like a firing pin, you spoke in explosions
it isn't cute

it isn't funny
you talked strangers into death
and laughed
and as each family learns to graft skin over the wounds you gave them, you helm yourself into the scar
you have coaxed the sober back into bars, handed out cigars at memorials
offered nooses, cliffs, and pills to those who unfortunately found you before they found help
you praised suffering
waltzed in between tragedies, gracefully dipping miseries as if we would be somehow impressed by the dexterity of your animosity
you cheered on rape
dashed through police tape as if it were the finish line in a race on who could be awful first
even now
you somehow see this as an invitation to turn your keyboards into catapults
wondering which one of you can be the first to hate us best
your loathing
already dressed in riot gear
ready to incite rage
as if each message board is a stage who you recite hostility turning freedom of speech into freedom of cruelty
we are stuck with you
the same way you are stuck with you
your mind is glue and it keeps malice fastened there like cheap wallpaper
we were once upon a time told that none of you exist
we dismissed you as make believe or myth, now
on only with resolve
we can no longer afford to tell ourselves, that you aren't real
we will not let you make your dinners out of the things we feel.
Song Discussions is protected by U.S. Patent 9401941. Other patents pending.

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