Inmates

The Good Life

When you said you loved me, did you really love me or did the words just spill out like drool on my pillow. 'Cause I was naked when you said those words, but I felt covered in your whispered worship. And as you passed out fast on my shoulder, I imagined a child waiting so sad and still for his mom to arrive. Did she leave you an orphan, in that big, brown leather chair? Said, " Don't you move a muscle, kid, I'll be back in twenty years," You were scared, you were lonely, but you must've been aware; life is a series of calluses, this is just another layer. So, build'em up, tough it out, yeah, that's your skin - don't let anyone under there.

When you said you needed me, did you really need me or was it just someone - oh, you'd take anything. Am I first on that list of yours, or am I second, or third? So, who's that ahead of me, some harlot from Pittsburgh? Or Detroit, Santa Fe, or San Diego? I know you're so alone, but how much affection does one guy really need? Did you date a lot in high school? Were you always chasing girls? Couldn't you find some young valentine to steal your heart for good? Were you content, or contemptible? Are your memories pleasant, or is it a string of endless flings of bitter resentment. Seems that what you want and what you need doesn't mean a thing, we're just here for the taking.

When you said you'd hurt me, did you think you hurt me? Are you really that cocky? Oh, what a heartbreaker! Well, I've got my armor - yeah, I've been through some battles before - and I met your old girlfriend, she said, "Baby, don't bother." She told me you told her you'd hurt her....funny, how familiar. So, how much of this relationship was rehearsed?

Did you act out as a child? Were you always crying wolf? Attention-starved, you tried too hard to get someone to look. Now you're the wolf in second-hand clothing; I'm the sheep in a pleated skirt. It's an awkward form of payback, but if it works for you - it works. It's that I recognize your off-white lies, still, I lie beside you - and that's what really hurts.

When you said you'd leave me...well, why haven't you left me? What are we still doing here, so desperate for company? There's a greyhound on Jackson Street, there's an airport in Council Bluffs...hell, there's a car in the driveway - fifty ways to get lost.

But as I hold you and listen to you sleeping, I'm starting to wonder if you really believe that you'd ever really leave. Would you leave me, and orphan, in that big, brown leather chair? The one you've lugged around from town to town for all these years. It's the trophy of your childhood, like a shark's tooth or gator skin boots - but this one holds you prisoner - it holds me prisoner too. What we need to set us free is to let go of each other - let go of everything.

When I said I loved you, it was because I loved you. When I said I needed you, well, I really need you. Yeah, I guess you hurt me, for once you're a man of your words. Well, guess what - I'm leaving - I can't be your prisoner.

I won't.

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