

BLOOD WILL TELL

He asked me, "Was it worth it? In lieu of what befell?"
But truth is not an absolute when only blood will tell
If kinship, romance, fact and fiction are truly what they seem
And if six friends will sacrifice their lives or self esteem

I only wanted truth, the others, let me say
Each of us has desire which may create dismay

Together we would beat the odds by using equal force
Swiftly claiming casino gamings then rushing out the door
With weapons at the ready, triggers at the quick
And only 90 seconds to justify the risk

We came, we saw, we conquered, overthrew a throne
Screamed across the Golden Dunes into Mexico

Some will tell of victory as others tell of loss
Some will tally winnings as others tally costs
But when it comes to loyalty and the water which it swells
Only blood knows the depth, only blood will tell

We followed the Spanish Trail like Gringos in a line
Celebrated like Conquistadors in the El Dorado mines
Siesta in the afternoon, fiesta through the night
And not a hint of distant winds about to turn the tide

All for one and one for all when money gets divided
A share for each who ran the risk for what the risk provided

To each his own, fond farewell, silence won't betray you
Unless a tongue wets its whistle to avoid the legal statute
Agreed, each share stays complete, 12 months to the day
We wept and vowed allegiance before we parted ways

East and west, north and south, only I remained
Living life as before with debts I worked to pay

Some will strive for glory as others strive for love
Some want it all for whoring as others rise above
But when it comes to money and the myth which it dispels
Only blood knows right from wrong, only blood will tell

Chipping at their bounty, some chipped away their vows
In delusional assumption of talents unendowed
Twelve months passed before the year as dollars turned to cents
Luring a pair in self-deception to seek the throne again

Their weapons all but shaking, their triggers all but slick
90 seconds devoured them like vipers in a pit

You never know what you'll do when push proceeds to shove
Nor how you'll rearrange events when torture's not a bluff
I like to think I am a man whose vows are his beliefs
But then again I've never had a soft spot for deceit

A subtle click rustled me in the dark and silent night
I found myself staring down a Kickman's .45

Some will cry in panic as others weep in peace
Some will run the gamut as others softly plead
But when it comes to self-respect and the region where it dwells
Only blood knows the border, only blood will tell

Across the floor spread my share, complete, as yet unbound
Denominations wrapped with their faded bands around
His fists and words flew at me, but each and every time
I refused to name my partners in the 90-second crime

"We're the last of a dying breed," he whispered in my ear
"Who keep their word despite the debt, the doubt, the mortal fear"

Once the blood is shed, the line can't be erased
The mark burns deep within your soul like a scar upon your face
Five of six broke an oath, turned against the rest
Provided shares in deficit before they met their death

Holstering his gun, he smiled a crooked line
Dispersed the truth and mystery of blood he left behind

Some would die in morning; some would die at night
Some would cry imploring as others calmly lied
But when it came to resolve and the suffering it quelled
Only blood knew dispensation, only blood would tell

With bruises on my body, lacerations on my head
I watched him bag the faded bands, set them on the bed
He asked me, "Was it worth it? In lieu of what befell?"
But truth is not an absolute when only blood will tell

"I hold no grudges, nor do I curse those left for dead
I only know my solemn code and try to live by it"

He exited the door, forever from my life
And for all the logic in the world I still don't know why
An angel's wings enshrouded me with moral predilections
Endearing a man of lethal means with mutual discretions

We only seek veracity, others, let me say
Each of us has desire which may create dismay

Some are friends for purpose; some are friends for sin
Some are friends despite the odds and last until the end
But when it comes to judging the criterion we compel
Only blood knows the truth, only blood will tell

- James Grayford