

The man before

by Cooper Cardone

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I still recall the man before
Never a treasure, always a trove
of relentless neglect, phantom
feeling, exacerbated ecstasy.
Who, I ask again, could that
foolish man have been? Alone?
Only perceived by himself,
he has no frame of reference,
and so he draws his obstacles
miles wide, and the path inches.
On that path, he is blinded
by versions of himself gone,
memory too fresh to mould.
Terrain seems immalleable, yet
it shifts and takes perilous shape.
The shadow of the Man Before
overtakes his own, and he loses
all sense of direction. Confusion
compounds, sending him into
eternal unrest, doomed to
wander his simple path in circles,
relinquished to his darkest inhibitions.
This is the story of the man before,
and it haunts my waking hours,
emulating every action, reaction, inaction.
My pen grows heavy, dreading
each next word with every inkling.
With all my might, I cannot see
the man before as me.
I find myself mysteriously lost.