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...*move...me...nt*...!!!

by sergio>>>Hernandez...!!!

WHY I LIKE IT: *Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes... “Rapid Eye Movement” by Sergio Hernandez blinks in surreality, and you gotta love when style reflects the depth of montage.*

I’m not going to take the time to fill in the blanks of how I read this story. When you read it, you will make your own narrative for the juxtapositions. What I will tell you is that this story works on four levels (there are probably more, but four is enough for me): authorial – Hernandez’s rich use of language; for the reader – how the audience interprets the work; stylistically – how the structure reflects both eye movement and dreaming; and referentially – being able to craft a story that knows itself as a dream.

I think that is one of the larger strengths of “Rapid Eye Movement.” The way in which the story is wrote is how we experience the concept of the present moment – each blink an image, each breath a concept, each second a lifetime, every dream a reality. Yet there is a longing that emanates from this soviet montage, a hope all but gone except a fever dream, “he speaks to her across the years of her absence, speaks as if she's there beside the bed, still, cool rag against his temple, soft thumbprint on his forearm. Somehow this kindness imagined cools him.” Beckett incarnate, there is repetition that spins across the page creating meaning in no meaning.

Here is a story that you can find as much enjoyment in its imagery on the surface as you can plumbing the depths for its connections. Cinematic in its nature, “Rapid Eye Movement” is a piece that will have you doubling in on yourself as the dream folds and what your left with is questionable.

Five Stars.

QUALITY QUOTABLES *(for the love of language...)*

A day where the concrete and the air conjure equal smells. This day hammers ink all over his fingers. Pleads again, I leave a trail on you, it leads to you, it leaves you empty.

This man comprised of boy parts, sound from without, whips against that skin, dull, grey, a phenomenon without an experience, a yell without saliva, impotent scratching throat, reddening to blood, an element of breath boils inside but the reaction to it stifled.

Rapid Eye Movement

Wake up!

This pasty faced boy in the summer rash of his past, sprawls his hands outward toward what he hopes to be an atmosphere beyond the one he truncates daily. He runs out of room whispering, but all in a bundle under a blanket so thin he sees dead daughters through soft fibers; meshed together. He sees through the disconnect of awake and rem. Sleep a rusty weapon he introduces in soggy actions of high slumber. Wet from trampled dirt, rained and reaping soil from soil. He wraps around his pistol syntax and produces an emergency in the comfort of his twin.

He wrangles brittle twigs, memories that snap in quick surprise at any sound audible.

Level even amongst the softest kiss. This child thinks, a second chance, another one, but knows the falsity lies somewhere beyond this overactive stimulus.

This kid stammers out some, a few words, words that fail like soft born avifauna, moist

feathered and premature. Destined for concrete or mud or water but certainly not life. He spits, that's some kind of cocoon around her, but her, but death it brings, not transformation, but the color grey. He rattles his pillow thick against his widened mouth, like a day he can scream into, a day that sends him plummeting from the sun to a place or time measured by a harsher heat. A day where the concrete and the air conjure equal smells. This day hammers ink all over his fingers. Pleads again, I leave a trail on you, it leads to you, it leaves you empty. But all in moments of cut and paste of unarticulated undefined broken repeating conclusion, the same conclusion as always there ever was. Lost on the cotton of a pillowcase.

Trying to rewrite what cannot be, his pen, his machines, his words implode.

Landlady of the wasteland prefecture scurries rabid knocks on the boys faintly locked door. Pasty faced boy grown into the inward man of a webbed dream; wiping sleep from his eyes and reference from his lips so that none will trace back the sound. In stillness time ellipses until ellipses turns into future. Plugs ears with soft Styrofoam and cradles her loud bark out of context... makes it acceptable, drowns this moment with a yawn.

Skin that helps him feel. This man comprised of boy parts, sound from without, whips against that skin, dull, grey, a phenomenon without an experience, a yell without saliva, impotent scratching throat, reddening to blood, an element of breath boils inside but the reaction to it stifled.

Landlady of the wasteland prefecture. He says, if I wore a gun at my hip, I would aim at

your heart. Deconstruct me outside, in. He says, lower those blinds, girl, I can't see the sky.

If everything was the itchy reverse could we ever go back on anything; could we ever masticate on dreams and awaken in pools of oversensitive sweat glands, their production gleaming everything. Grabbing for regret while arms flail past the present forgetting what has occurred. Making reality the trinket occult.

This boy. Speaking as if in right mind. If I couldn't aim it at you I could use it as a shawl. In the darkness you are my stumbling, you are the measure of my temporary trip. Twelve hours too many as I dissuade this construct. He mimics live words with quivering mumbles. He is forgotten in his alternate self, bed-resting ego on a clear wire, mist rises from his crusted mouth. Sniffs it as it wavers from his face, revolting. Revolted, he edges over on his warming belly.

And still there is knocking. The landlady bends her neck to the left and is met with absence until she looks down and sees a small girl as stiff as a rusted joint. Why do you knock? asks the girl. The question gets answered with more knocking. The girl asks again. Why do you keep knocking? He is asleep. He needs to wake up. He is dreaming loud. He is disturbing the neighbors. He is disturbing himself. He is dying in his dreams. He needs to wake up. Why is he doing that? Asks the girl. There was a girl. She is gone now; he

wants her back. He can't have her. Why not, where'd she go? Asks the girl. The girl is dead. You look like her. The landlady continues knocking. The girl stares. The door does not fly open the boy does not wake up. A stone falls from a small hand and rolls into the grass. Wake up.

Bed-ridden, fevered, he reaches out to no one, but he speaks to her across the years of her absence, speaks as if she's there beside the bed, still, cool rag against his temple, soft thumbprint on his forearm. Somehow this kindness imagined cools him. Outside, the rustling sounds of turkey vultures in the grey. There is nothing else to dream. There is no grabbing, no color, no hands pressing down, no illumination, no open mouth, no night, no mercy, there is no looking away from it, no more seeing, there is no translating this into something that floats, it settles flat and thin, a sheet with no bearing.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *This story is part of a larger collection of short fiction. The stories explore relationships through a lens of near and post-apocalypse. This piece is about having/lacking the ability to travel between a dream state and wakefulness. It's about dying within the unknown. About perpetual loss. You know...happy stuff. Inspired by so much literature, art, music, and film.*

AUTHOR BIO: I am a writer and artist from Los Angeles Ca. I have an MFA in creative writing from Cal Arts.