

A Portrait of Jesus Christ

By Ian Lindsay

WHY WE LIKE IT: Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes: *This person should be editing our verse, writing with such profound imagery. We dare you to look away and sacrifice not knowing something of it. In the first section, from 'deviant beads' to 'like a clubbed tarpon'—a junkie Jesus described? As a panhandling PhD I question whether I have caught every reference. Is the boar throat Homeric? But feast on 'lynx in the sky', 'slipping just east of oblivion...and the beautiful break separating these verses:*

'The same force that floats dead leaves

To the ground...'

Where the spacing reinforces visually what the words sing. Greater scholars than I should read this poem again and again. H.S.

There he is—hunched on the corner
The Florida sun painting
His face with deviant beads
Telling us that business is open:
a pocket full of promises
for sale, that locomotive
lurch in the arm
Scampering your veins
Until you lie down
On a mattress with no sheets
Like a clubbed tarpon.

II.

The crink in his neck from swallowing up
the horizon to the lynx in the sky.
So dim the constellation makes us wonder

If we're made in God's image
Then that son of a bitch
Must have the same ego

Of the boar that lives
In his throat. If he just held on

To the concrete where he stands

To stop himself slipping just east of oblivion.

The moment we went west

We gave in to letting gravity

Do the major lifting.

The dadirri poses;

The same force that floats dead leaves

to the ground. He can hear

The water buffalo

But he can't stop the slaughter.

III.

His asperous face

has been compared with a rocky hill. He wakes

With pain. A cigarette for breakfast

Sludgy coffee

from the bodega with a poisonous dosing

Of sugar for a prediabetic

Who takes a horn's blast

To cross the street.

He joins his liver-spotted

Friends that sit in the garden

Where smoke billows

through the milkweed.

His blue eyes

That have seen so much

But report so little

Gaze skyward, stalking the cerulean pearl.

He cracks a Crazy Stallion, exchanges

Sympathy with the suits passing him

On their way to corner offices.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *This poem was written during the oppressive heat of summer when everyone finds themselves outside and the man at the corner plays games with your semiotic order. The setting of this poem, my city, has its fair share of vices done right out in the open—whether that be gentrification or our beloved homeless. I wrote this poem in the wake of reading the classic Ken Kesey novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Hopefully, this manifesto continues to circulate American minds.*

BIO: *Ian Lindsay is a full time Title 1 public school teacher who holds a degree in creative writing and teaches journalism. Living in the sweltering heat and weirdness of Florida, Ian enjoys hip-hop music, NPR and Vietnamese cuisine. His poetry and fiction can be read at One Person's Trash, Deltona Howl and The Eckerd Review.*