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By Rp Verlaine

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**WHY I LIKE IT:***Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... Rp is spicy and saucy, cheeky and naughty, and I suspect, a bit of a rascal. If this isn't praise enough to turn straight to his pages, let me pitch a few phrases... On second thought, one or two liners do not do him justice. Most of Verlaine's comic indulgences are delightfully discursive and roguishly rambling narratives. Okay just one naturally without any context: "The night ends / with a brief / asterisk of a kiss..."*

*(To maintain poet's spacing each poem appears on its own page. HOTS in action!)*

## **When She Calls**

The connection is  
always bad or maybe  
we're mute to hearing  
the same problems  
and no answers.

We took classes together  
once and shared a bed a  
few times, but that's long  
since passed and there's  
less to say and both  
our voices are tired.

She tells me her husband  
never looks at her and  
her 25-year-old son won't  
leave the house or find a job.

I tell her I got lucky

the night before. A blonde  
named Sassy or Sissy I had  
over the sink in the ladies  
room. regulars joke no true  
lady would enter.

When the mailman came  
with two packages, I reached  
in my pocket for a dollar.  
Finding the blonde's panties  
I'd removed instead.  
I said, "hey you want these?"  
but he left quickly without  
answering. Which was  
almost rude.

"Some life you have," she says.  
I say goodbye and hang up.  
it's all blind luck r it's  
having none at all.

## The Ferris Wheel

Slow and ponderous  
is love's tilt a whirl  
as we inhale the night  
under luminescent stars.  
My long fingers close, in  
milliseconds to hers  
for a connection  
tenuous as a kiss  
outside of intimacy.  
My vodka laced lips  
to hers of pointed  
sarcasm and stale  
cigarette breath  
look for space,  
she denies.

She says *no*,  
*this won't work*  
when a loud jolt  
brings the gears  
to a sudden stop,

suspending us  
while she chain-smokes,  
offering only clouds  
of disappearing white.

She, inches away,  
forever in the 30  
soundless seconds,  
but for gears grinding  
that it takes to  
come down.

Before our escape  
into another bar  
to get drunk enough  
to chance the impossible  
odds of being sober enough  
to walk away from the  
familiar escapes  
that are traps themselves.

The night ends  
with a brief

asterisk of a kiss

fouled by liquor and smoke

what would repel most

yet hold the promise

of more.

Maybe it's why

since then I've

always had a weakness

for stale cigarette

breath.

## **Answered By Silence**

Thinking of  
the lipstick on  
her half open mouth  
always leaving me  
a little room  
for doubt.

In a bar  
where half a dozen beers  
barely register until  
I switch to whiskey,  
walking backwards,  
every kiss for perspective.

Answered by silence  
are any such replies  
and none to my  
ten texts and calls.

## **Always A Hitch**

As they say...

“It wasn’t chill”

Cold more

like it.

The dour

rainy mist

thin as hope

abandoned in

a prison yard

ALL DAY

I Stuck out

a weary thumb.

Got six long mean

index fingers chasing

cruel trails

of laughter.

Until luck

interfered &

I got a ride

7/12/98

the date

on a

road in Denver.

**THE POET SPEAKS...** *Most of the poems were written in the early morning hours on a kindle fire using the Jotter Pad word processor.*

*Often I worked on them listening to music as varied as Lou Reed, Liz Phair, Procol Harum, The Doors and Thelonious Monk.*

*Poets I was reading were personal favorites such as Dennis Cooper, Adrienne Rich, Charles Bukowski Sylvia Plath and Jim Daniels.*

*Of the poems published here, The Ferris Wheel was influenced by seeing James Dean and Julie Harris in one during East of Eden. While B.L.M Protests was directly influenced by my muse Jesse, who attended dozens of the rallies and was both arrested and assaulted by police several times (going to the emergency room twice) for peacefully protesting.*

*Poetry, whether its the verbal/visual artistry of e.e. cummings or the profundity in brevity of modern haiku poets like Nick Virgilio and Lori Minor, leave me in a better place than where I was before their words touched me. For*

*poets like Plath, Sexton and Hart Crane, now long gone, their words resonate and their tragic ends are life lessons for us to learn and be moved by. Their best work never fails me.*

*I write to speak of my times on a personal level, with the brave hope others might be touched by what I write as well.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** Rp Verlaine, a retired English teacher living in New York City, has an MFA in creative writing from City College. He has several collections of poetry including *Femme Fatales Movie Starlets & Rockers* (2018) and *Lies From The Autobiography 1-3* (2018-2020).