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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).