



INSPIRED BY GEORGE HARRISON + 1

By

Zachary Hartung

Why I Like it: *Poetry Editor, Hezekiah, writes:*

Zachary Hartung has an interesting bent, getting 'Philosophical in the Mall' "Seeing banners of almost-naked women / advertising underwear / while seeing women throughout the mall / walking in tight booty shorts and tank tops, and wondering why my sexual attraction feels shameful." Then, next, contemplating if his fellow shoppers have "ever heard / of Noam Chomsky, / or have ever read the works of Plath or Bukowski." 'Inspired by George Harrison,' he writes, "There is no such thing / as forever / —only forever changing."..."Walk away. / You'll be okay." (Spacing is poet's own.)

Philosophical in the Mall

Surreal awareness
while shopping with my friends.

Walking through the toys section in Macy's
and feeling this brief, heavy rush
of sadness.

Seeing banners of almost-naked women
advertising underwear
while seeing women throughout the mall
walking in tight booty shorts and tank tops,
and wondering why my sexual attraction
feels shameful
despite our hyper-sexualized culture
insisting it to be natural.

I look at everyone around me
and wonder if they've ever heard
of Noam Chomsky,
or have ever read the works
of Plath or Bukowski.

I buy new clothes and feel a boost
of self-esteem,
till I'm hit with the grim
realization
that the elites have me
by the neck
and I'm being exactly
what they want me to be:
distracted
by product
away from their unethical practices,
distracted
by "cultural issues"
away from policies
that keep corporations bailed out
and taxpayers in chains.

Inspired by George Harrison

Alone on a bench in a forest
I embrace with loving arms
the truth:

*all things
must pass.*

What a blessing
to live
through different chapters;
different phases,
different perspectives,
new friends,
new lovers.
Every ending
a new beginning.

There is no such thing
as forever
—only forever changing.

Soak up the comedy
suffer the tragedy
then walk away,
you'll be okay.

Walk away.
You'll be okay.

THE POET SPEAKS: *These poems were written after having been forced to digest some harsh realizations. And to these realizations I raise my glass, for if they weren't so harsh then I would've been without these poems.*

I began writing poetry in 2020 after having been inspired by Jim Morrison, and have since been influenced by other writers; Allen Ginsberg, Charles Bukowski, Sylvia Plath, and Robert Bly. I'm also quite obsessed with the English Romantics, particularly with John Keats, William Wordsworth, and William Blake.

Poetry captures the present moment. It helps us express what can't be flushed out into a fictional novel or a nonfictional memoir. Through familiar language, we become familiarized with complex emotions.

AUTHOR BIO: Zachary Hartung is a poet and musician from Virginia, holding a bachelor's degree in English from George Mason University. He has also appeared in the Spring 2023 issue of *The Raven Review*.