

Formed
A Personal Essay in Verse, By: Little Tomás

Formed
a word
a retreat theme, an identity, a fact

What does it mean to be formed?
Not created in beauty and truth,
but molded into something else
something different that's not of your own making,
but of another's

Once I was perfectly formed,
Molded to perfection,
Made exactly how another wanted

A model to be replicated
A robot unleashed upon the world;
Unaware of its own actions,
And obeying its master implicitly
Seeking approval and validation at every turn

My master knew something about me that I didn't
He knew that I had freedom,
Yet he needed to keep me a slave,
So he convinced me that freedom was bad,
Evil, the root of suffering
That following my desire would be my downfall

I arrived because that's how it always was
Different time, different place,
But the ritual's the same
Different looks, different stares
But the ritual's the same

Most things change,
But the ritual doesn't:
Same words, same actions, same mantra

As constant as a heartbeat,
The pulse of a people,
An institution
An institution I hate,
people who say things which make me cringe,
people who do things I cannot tolerate,
yet their ritual's the same

So I return
Unsure of why or what for
Except to be calmed by the pulse of the past
The pulse of a heart that I buried in an office,
Burned on a patio,
And left out to perish

The ritual still calms and heals,
Even if I barely believe it means anything

The new ritual has no institution
It happens in private
No audience, no leader,
Only me, myself, and I

I also don't know why the new ritual works
The leader of the old ritual offered an explanation;
His explanation seemed sound
My explanation makes little sense

They say that looking back is powerful
When the Apollo Astronauts went to the Moon,
The Earth is what they remembered
Its fragility and small size.
240,000 miles away

They looked back,
They experienced something new

From the shuttle,
And the ISS,
The windows faced the Earth.
Faced home,

When I look back,
I don't see beauty,
I don't see a wonderful time.
I see pain, suffering, unhappiness.

We create places
Rooms, houses, towns, cities
Whole worlds, entire galaxies
Civilizations with histories spanning millennia
Preceding and proceeding our human existence

We tell stories,
We've always told stories
How much of our history is actually legend?
A story someone told to another

A bedtime story,
Something to inspire them,
Something to convince them to keep living,
To strive to carry on
And keep the species alive?

How many inventions were built on a story?
A notion that things could be different?
A dream forged in the fires of despair
A make-believe story about how the world could work

They say that great science leads to technology,
But in reality, stories lead to technology.

Many people never look down from the trees,
But I always looked down
Looking down was how I knew my place,
Found my footing,
Finished the course in record time.

I looked before I leapt,
Tested the rope,
And made the jump.

It took me many tries before I could jump off,
The first time I slid over the side like I was slipping into a pool
Yet each time it was very satisfying
In that moment I knew I'd done what few others could do

I was once told that you cannot solve problems,
You just break them down into smaller problems;
That you care less about

I didn't know what this meant at the time,
It was the first day of class,
I was naive,
19, full of hope,
Thinking I was the shit

I'd been here before
I knew what was up
I was entering the purest, of pure times

I buried the storms beneath the clouds,
Shrouded in a hazy atmosphere,
Impenetrable to visible light

I wondered who was able to gaze beneath.
Gather the remote sensing package
And gaze into the tornado below

I'm good at hiding,
It's something I learned early on
A survival tactic,
Yet it would come back to bite me

I've never been scared of heights,
Only seldom will I feel the danger when hanging from above
I guess sometimes a few clips and some Kevlar is all it takes
To feel safe,
To know it's gonna be ok

Now, I often don't know
I look down to see what others ignore
I see the drop, but there are no clips and Kevlar
Nothing to hold me up
Just
Air

The world simplifies at this moment
The complex becomes simple:
I either make it, and deal with what's on the other side,
Or I don't, and I deal with what's below me

Either way I have to deal with it,
Which one is better I do not know.
At the end of the day,
One set of problems gets traded for another

The first time I skipped,
I was worried,
Nervous,
Scared

What I was scared of, I still don't know
If I was more scared of never landing,
Or knowing that I was going to land.

I didn't want to land.
I wanted to float there forever,
To be told I was making a mistake,
That I was in the wrong

Yet nothing happened,
I landed like I knew I would.

I did it again,
And again,
And again

Nothing happened,
It was the same every time
Was this freedom?
Or was I just reformed?

I once did what now makes me uncomfortable
My past actions scream inside me
I cry because I now hate the things I said
I cry because of how unhappy he was

I long to be able to act without thinking again
To do what I do now without shame
Yet I'm trapped,
Still seeking validation from the master I left

I crave his praise, his acceptance
The ability to be looked at like everyone else,
Now he just says:
"He was just another pawn, formed by my hands"

At the end of the day,
The light fades.
The blue to amber,
The amber to black

There is nothing natural left to light the sky
Only the artificial lights that block whatever beauty remains
When the fires have gone out,
The houses gone dark,
And the voices fallen silent,
What remains?
What lingers in the dark?

Do we drift alone?
Or are we stalked by a malicious creature?
Simply waiting for the opportunity to strike

I once believed the latter,
But now I believe the former.
I have yet to decide which one is better,
But I'm left with my choice nevertheless

My existence is sad,
Yet strangely peaceful.
There's a calm in loneliness,
Amidst all the pain
Yes, it's easy to give up,
But there's a hidden spark within me
A spark that I long to find

What will my story be?
Will it be one of the dozens I've told others?
Will it be one of the fantastic lies I've told myself?
Will it always be told in greatness and splendor?
Or will it never be told because no one will care?

What details will be glossed over?
Tales swept under the rug,
Files overwritten,
Data disappearing,
Papers burned and creations melted

How many stories were destroyed?
Fantastic lies never told?
Stone-cold truths ignored

Tell me how my story will end,
I'll tell you the beginning,
And the others will make up the middle.

I don't write my own story,
Because I don't trust myself with that power
I prefer to let others define me,
Instead of defining myself
I tremble with fear at each passing glance,
Because whenever one sees me,
They write a small part of my story.
I'd rather set down this pen and others pick it up,
Than face the truth,
that I formed myself.