

SHANE L. KOYCZAN

GRAFFITI

Graffiti

There are stars
now long gone
who threw their last spears of light
across an unending darkness
but to us
they will ever only be
the stars we see our entire lives

they will never extinguish

if you ever need a reminder of the definition of I don't know

consider that some of the light we see
comes from sources that vanished eons ago

which means maybe everything
is still exploding

I don't know

our questions are tough pills to swallow
not exactly chew able vitamins

and yet the confidence in our uncertainty
somehow gives us permission
to hold one another's sins
to each other's noses
like a puppy held to their own shit
like a child's arm to a cigarette

we turn regret into a hobby
doubt into a pastime
all of this while the winds of change dodge each chime
and the awful sameness of our pain rings out
like a sound we cannot stop hearing

fearing the worst
has become a career option for the brave

our leaders save themselves the trouble of having to care
until the graves dug by mental illness
make mercy a platform worth standing on

put the heart that goes out to us
back in your chest and start breathing
you have work to do

thoughts and prayers are not enough

not when there are razor blades so clever
that they bluff their way past the security guards of our compassion
and cross some wrists like the finish line for a marathon
we are too tired to keep running

not when there are nooses so cunning
that they tangle themselves away from usefulness
and refuse to become the rope needed
to pull us out of this nosedive
we are rehearsing for

I want to believe
that the sleeping pills scattered on your floor
are just dreams you dropped by accident
or the nightmares you tried to flush

but I know what they're for

they're for when the insistence of love sounds like a noise
you cannot bring yourself to listen to any longer

they're for when you want to unplug the speakers
from the stereo
to go as silent as 3:42 am
when the only things still staring back at you
are the stars that might not even be there anymore

some of us run full force toward a closed door
that we come up against like a wall
but others bust through and fall into a room padded with oblivion
that time then seals shut forever

we cannot hit rewind on this track

your song plays only so long as you keep singing it
without you
we will not know the lyrics

I know you are tired of singing
I know your throat is sore
and your voice raw from overuse

I know that tomorrow can feel like an abuse
you are about to suffer

I know how tempting it can be
to want to put a period on the end of this incomplete sentence
because is anybody even reading this?

I don't know

but maybe there is a paintbrush
that can carve it out better than a blade

because the things I've seen made from pain
are works of art
that hang in a gallery
displaying sculptures of relief

maybe when autumn turns a green leaf yellow
its stem becomes a string tightened to a cello
playing the song you never knew you loved most

maybe somewhere there is a ghost
wearing silk sheets
hoping to haunt the living a little more softly

maybe some ghost stories are true

maybe somewhere there is someone
who will love you better
I don't know

I'm not certain of any of this
but at times I take comfort in leaning on the shoulder of I don't know

to rest against the splendour it provides

it promises what could be
never what will be

I don't know if love
is a talented enough hound
to track down any of us

but it could be

I don't know

our lives are Labrynth
and I'm lost too

I dance through its dungeons
I stumble through it's halls
I vanish while I cry the invisible ink
I use to write my mind upon its walls.

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