



A Father's Grit

Father sits in a dimly lit room, cradling his grief, his heart a museum of memories,
conundrum portraits hang on walls, opposite sides of the room
He sits all too sober, wrestling demons of vengeance and angels of virtue, in a dry and colorless world of absence and abstinence
wishing for Whiskey, but those days are long gone, today, an empty glass of sorrow is casting shadows he calls good company.
Thinking of the son, gone too soon, a story that ended mid-sentence, left him bereft with a deafening silence, unable to utter the words
choked by the excruciating lump in his throat
He Tries to fight back with all he can muster but nothing's as painful as the smoldering ashes of acceptance he's left to swallow
once, happy go lucky
now, lucky to catch a glimpse of happy
he looks up the sky, doesn't see blue
Just black clouds and broken hearts that he hopes will cover up the retaliatory bomb shot he'd like to take on the Cholo who took Jack's life.
There's no romance in this kind of pain,
No poetic justice waiting at the end of a barrel.
Just a half broken father,
a fighter with a heavyweight heart.
each day looking dead eyed into the sorrow glass memories—
yes, they bring tear drops,
some days an ocean of sadness
others, enough to set the universe on fire
Dad, being from the old school, tries to hold it in, fighting the ache in his chest.
Thinking of Jack, how they used to fight, side by side
In garages and rings, where blood and sweat were nuances of beautiful frames on the canvas.
Now the fights are quieter, lonelier,
punchy memories that jab back sharper than any right hook.
there's an art in being knocked down for the count
and getting back up, but this one leaves dad sideways, like the pieces of Jacks work that still hang on wall, only they leave dad eternally face
down,
Jack's pencil sketch interpretation of McDonough's movie, Locke. Still dad's favorite as he too, now driving alone, utters the same final words,
“Fuck Chicago”
apropos, as he wallows through his internal prison, which, on a good day he calls, “An ode to all Art and war left behind”
Holding an Irish rock in his hand, looking into the hag stone hole he paints in tricolor
hoping to find the answers
His brush strokes are now uppercuts
Heavy, angry, and desperate.
There's no victory in this fight
No heavenly intervention, just a man, his clenched fists and his ghosts.
He stares into the bottom of his empty glass of sorrow.
The boy's face always looking back.
Every day he wakes is another bell rung
Another round, face to face with fate
And a middle finger from the gods he refuses to embrace
Heaving the stone through the glass he watches it shatter all over the room, walking over broken shards it occurs to Jack's old man, he knows he
no longer believes in much, but he does believe in this:
The fight goes on, even if all he's fighting is himself.