

Adjustments

By J.A. Moad II

Rendered from embattled dreams, he empties himself onto saddled leather atop rubber and chrome. Driving sorrow into pedals and gears, he climbs and falls on a twisted road beneath a billion dying stars. Rising out of scorched earth and sand, Reno beckons, bending darkness into light, and luring him back into storm and fire.

Dice in hand, ablaze with desire, he burns once more in the desert of all that was. Borne by a desperate wind, flickering with longing and need, a last profit resurrects him upstairs into night's end. Where, dark-hallwayed into dim rooms, a hollow game of take and give unfolds pained-silence like the flower of a stolen girl.

In the cornered stillness, long past imagining the lie of love, he enters the void of her, pretending to pretend that a life can begin again. And in the sway of the night's demise, dispatched into worn and weary arms, he takes and takes, giving the spent of him in soiled bills that won't buy either of them back.

Adjusting

By J.A. Moad II

Shielded by satin walls, the fringe of a whispered transaction, she imagines the like of him. Alone, curiosity lingers on in the vestige of self—a relic of the life denied. Measuring uncertainty in the footfall of boots atop planked floors, she wonders, might the night's last burden be conveyed in quiet words or by savage commands?

Shackled to the great squandering of men, she adheres to the scriptures of servitude. On bruised flesh, rendered in the half-life of hope, she yields to the call to give and give alone. Shedding the raiment of place and time, they uncoil the bartered night into the contours of desire, searching for a lost promise in the remnants of faith.

At night's end, at last in mourning's grasp, she cradles the fragmented remains of the discarded boy within—a body maneuvering in search of solace behind restless, guarded eyes. Each of them piecing together the scattered shards of what remains. As if a fusion of the broken and maimed might become one, might forge anew a strength to believe.