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Wake the Devil

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Wake the Devil

Ricardo Vicente Jose Ruiz

Dedicated to Marisol Ruiz

**Into the Sticks
Your Last Meal as a Child
Trouble Spots
Shadow Boxers
Backside of the Cross
Holy Fields
Rubbing Sticks
Wishing Hole
Curanderos Retreat**

Into the Sticks

The body of christ is covered in demons .

You could only bury a body so deep before the seasons decided you would join it . Topsoil so desperate for affection it shakes to remind me that I was once and am loved .

I linger in the southwestern sky , burgundy to violet , with Neil Young ¹ playing faintly in the distance as my father calls me home .



When a child steals is it a crime if they do not understand what it means to own a possession ?

What occurred to them as they twisted the knob and felt the tumblers curl to their desires. A home they once entered with permission now glaring at their indiscretions

with no body to stop a child . I knew the thief had to be one of the few people ever allowed into my surrogate womb , a private sanctuary to ease me into foreign affairs after my naming . You knew the manifest and laid in my bed , did you relish in your eclectic bounty as you skipped school for a guilty ride across town ?

Will you grow horns on your forehead as your lover turns you into a cuckold , my bicycle thief ?

We erected a gate of stiff roots with holes for air between my home and the park to remind me not to be too anxious, as this cage was for my peace of mind .



I dream about my sister Marisol , a beautiful angel lost in my hands for a moment . Lowered into a bed of flowers , I am certain she is on my breathe.



A one legged mocking-bird can still convince you it is walking .

My family has a belief ² that if you have a traumatic event it allows for the devil to enter your blood and poison you with fear. I don't believe that introduction is necessary as I stared into the gaping wound that separated my right leg from my body. A crimson landscape erupted onto the sidewalk soon to be the house of the fly .

Sedated and removed to

a white territory where only masks took hold and spears plunged into my flesh , I was reassembled .

Months had passed and I would begin to walk in the fall , with each step my body drew out the poison like a thirsty wanderer at the foot of a well .



I had to access a file server from the early 2000's to get a photo I needed for research . The entire site was derelict and filled with useless information among curses from AOL . I had forgotten all of my information and was pretty sure the email provider was lost among other acronyms . But it accepted my email account at face value and provided me a singular customized account recovery

question : “ Who are you
? “. I couldn't imagine
what it would mean for
spit to travel eleven years
to arrive onto my face
until that moment . A
thirteen year old Ricardo
in some other timeline
had just smiled for no
apparent reason . Basic
and arbitrary answers
had no effect against a
bored teenager's sarcasm
. An undisclosed amount
of time passed and I
decided I would question
my captors to acquire
additional details to solve
their riddle . I entered “ I
don't know , who are you
? “. Access Granted .



August burns as I study
a reply under the shade
of my porch . The park
resembles tinder ; brown
, ochre, and umber. O'
SHIT ! You reel out of
a pile of debris , rifle in

hand, and clad in full
camouflage. Sequestered
with your thoughts in the
middle of a matchbox in
contention , you must've
been there for hours.
Cherokee's howl in my
brother's veins , you drew
an arrow before you
could draw a bow.

Your Last Meal as a Child

The dice were loaded for consistency.

Could you smell the freon in Grandma Borrego's house ? A discrete scent that layered onto your pores along with the odor of wet animals and corner store incense .

We spent our childhood there gathering injuries among filth , mold , and our uncle's pornography³ . You would defend me from our cousins who bully me because of my size . Why did you never leave Corpus Christi ? Why did you quit college ? Was the fantasy we created in our adolescence too much to bear in the face of what came to be defined as adulthood ? Our Uncle Benny was shot dead at that Circle K down the street , it's abandoned now along with most of the buildings on the west side of town . He married his high school sweetheart and raised our cousins Benny and Britney ,

when he got the job at the produce factory he would always bring us fresh watermelon. The refineries in the distance act as backdrop to all the burnouts we once knew. You screamed at the devil, the night the power went out but went to sleep in a room covered in Marilyn Manson⁴ posters . Almost a decade has passed , Grandma and Grandpa Borrego are together now in a plot near Marisol. I missed both of their funerals because I decided school was my priority , we haven't talked for years.

You live in the home of our early reverie, taking care of your twice divorced father who lost all of his teeth to crack.

³
Hustler Magazine

⁴
Artist



Bruce Springsteen⁵ plays on the radio as we drive across the freeway to take Momo to church . Darkness on the Edge of Town became our anthem along with Neil Young's Down by the River . You raised me to be honest and relish in earning a living from hard work. Our time was spent silent in bookstore aisles between Calvin and Hobbes⁶ and The Northern Renaissance . I'm twenty-four now, living in a star-crossed state in which I don't get to see you or the family regularly and my mannerisms are foreign to most. As a citizen in a land occupied by terrible growth the songs of the working class that enchanted me as a child still remain central to my identity. You were always

concerned you didn't give my brothers and I a traditional upbringing , now away from home, I appreciate more the life you afforded me.

Diet Coke is no longer central to your routine and you will soon retire , I look forward to when we can exchange stories on my front porch.



Your youth was spent as a field worker traveling between different harvests in a caravan with your siblings . Your blonde hair, blue eyes, and light skin were an asset when traveling through Texas and dealing with racist store owners. I never met my great grandfather

⁵
Artist

⁶
Bill Watterson, Comic

Quintin but great grandmother Tita always had a gentle air from her bed in Mathis, surrounded by cactus. Your father was not a nice person but introduced you to the man you would marry and share a bed. Part of your faith was initially converted so that you could have a wedding at the largest church in town . You are the most beautiful woman at the congregation and you turn twenty one every year .

I never met Grandpa Jose but I am forever curious of the joke he said at Thanksgiving many years ago that caused you to hyperventilate and sent you to the hospital.



A home built on a pier or a van with shag carpeting and a wizard provid-

ing introductions . Your preferred dress code was several pounds of gold amalgamated from high school graduation rings and a three piece Stetson suit . You talk in allegory and live a life filled with as much allusion as illusion . A west side enigma and the mascot of Mohawk Drive , an eternal bachelor with Tuco Benedicto Juan Maria Ramirez⁷ as a patron saint. The government gave you artificial knees and a new lease on life that manifested as a five figure salary and a different color Mercedes every year. You spend your days commuting to ensure young career criminals don't fall into bad habits , I can't imagine they don't love you .

I vividly remember you

almost jumping off the pier⁸ into shark infested waters , after the clasp of your five pound gold bangle broke and that treasure fell into the gulf.⁹ The scuba diver you hired to retrieve your bounty definitely stole it . A bullet in the barrel as a



screen door rattles while you lay your woes in front of the shotgun that is your home. A father to many and a lover to most , you held your family in your grip and liquor in the trunk. Fast moves in the desert and hard work in the fields , your daugh-

8
Indian Head Point

9
Gulf of Mexico

10
Mexican revolutionary

11
Moody High Shool, mascot

ter has no fond memories of you .



A mother at fourteen and a widow by noon, your first husband killed a man in Mexico. You greeted Pancho Villa¹⁰ with water and heard he turned to dust, did you forget the desert collects? Crossing ghosts with your child left in a village , what will become of you in America ?



Penance served with al pastor as your younger brother revels in your previous lives . The eldest of four , once a local hurricane presumed prison bound now a scholar resigned to the sky . A trojan¹¹ in platform heels and a father with few

appeals, you acquired an accent in Britain but lost a figure to christ . As you recoil to northern lights it becomes clear that you still like to fight.



You were a young man with few figures, accompanied by a native stride as the reservation trailed off into your brow. Living behind the tracks you were never able to recover soil heavy with blood and tears¹² . As a resident of The Cuts you had black sunglasses with every meal and your wardrobe hung like an Italian stiletto . You would spend a lifetime grinding your bones for a living as a foreign body in your native land .

Trouble Spots

A wooden lighter only burns

No corners or alleys could be held accountable for your upbringing .Wealthy and relaxed , the weed you sold to teenagers was more a requirement than a lifestyle. It was foolish to hide a quarter of a century at a high school prom . A Jetta in the driveway and a jersey on the night stand , you took a child bride as you resolved your fate in the body of Christ.¹³



I heard he hit you in the bathroom at a mutual friends birthday party . I remember seeing you a few hours before , excited to have bought a bottle of absinthe . It wasn't the original elixir but the blows he laid into you had brought out your nightmare.

You broke up a week later , I saw you at the H - E - B¹⁴ a while ago ; no words were exchanged .



Your mother wanted a lawyer but you preferred a burner¹⁵ over a briefcase. Lines that had more in common with DON-DI¹⁶ than due process. As we rode the whip in your father's suburban, the phonebook on your seat seemed apropos for someone who wanted to get higher but was born into a docket.



13
Corpus Christi, TX

14
Grocery store

15
Marijuana

16
Graffiti artist

Her father probably had connections to the cartel ; two bankruptcies , several cars , a family of six , several properties, and the suspicious release from a hostage situation in Mexico could draw blood. A teenage Lothario, you slighted her honor and spit on her affections .

I saw your picture on a run away poster ten years ago .



You were the only black kid at that school and you preferred to keep time reciting Danzig's¹⁷ Mother instead of going home. A foot taller than me and clothes three sizes too big made fifteen seconds with you akin to fighting a specter .

I wasn't surprised when

you didn't say goodbye .



Why were you yelling at your girlfriend on my front porch in the middle of the night? Four years her senior it was stupid for you to think a teenager was concerned with your feelings . Your father was a mean alcoholic but maybe those terms are redundant . A home more synonymous with a lair and a disposition starved of attention . You caught me in passing and offered a ride with no no's in exchange. The truck smelled of dirt and sweat with a Hustler under the seat covered in cigarette burns .

I removed myself after a block , had you just finished measuring your

own grave ?



Who were your friends ? Too young to notice a trend as a foreign body in a brown space . The freckles on your face extended the warmth you attempted to share. That cruel teacher pricked and prodded until you could no longer recognize your humanity. It was mentioned for years , the moment you removed your shirt and ran around the classroom like the sow she equated you to.

I saw her years later in the parking lot as I picked up my younger brother from school , she remembered my name ; we were only seven.



Enter the Dragon¹⁸ was the only accreditation you required as you carried fists of mesquite during recess . Your sentences were proclamations that cut like a blade wedged into bone . A father by sixteen with Gucci glasses that weighed heavy on your forehead as you questioned if you had been a child .

Shadow Boxers

No love for a nickle when a kiss cost a dollar

A deft hand concealed
a lazy eye in a ring that
held no promise . Another
round on the pavement
as a young man named
after a hustler . Where
did you expect an end
to meet when even your
children refuse to cross
your path .

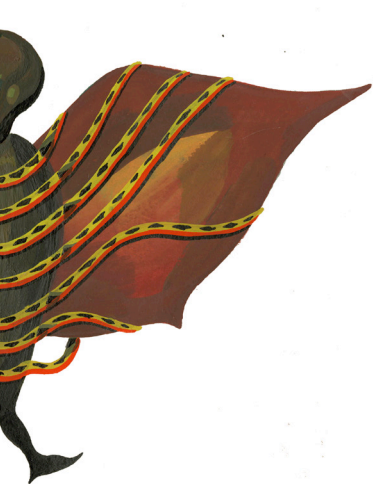














Backside of the Cross

A gray scale for a brown man

take one ,
no more
empty closets

take two ,
no more
silverware gone

take three ,
no more
sister less

Grandmothers woes
C notes to consecutive
years

Grandmothers woes
I wear a rope around my
waist to remember our
family being dragged
from their homes

Grandmothers woes
You shouldn't have
robbed that bank

Grandmothers woes
A grey scale for a brown
man

Grandmothers woes
A quarter shy of matter-
ing

Grandmothers woes
You missed our grand-
mothers funeral

I'm sorry you were alone
, sorry cousin , verses
behind bars ...I miss you

**a hole in the wall for your
shadow to live**

**a proper negative with no
accounts or a positive too
quiet**

**a shade inherited , with
no birth to solicit an end**

double minority

features south to west

history too light

matter of facts

cheeks collapse

Mexican in nature

native in respects

souvenir to orozco , cua-
tro , cinco , y seis

local dialect

no te preocupes , hijo mio

la pared caye sobre ti

la vide alegre

culture trap .

invested in strip mines
because our tremors
had become more about
nature than symptoms of
abuse .

rose colored glasses with
every look were an at-
tempt to lose a few years
before and after .

difficult to tell a bad hab-
it from a lifestyle based
on our receipts .

half truths in a white
room meant they were
sorry to be inconve-
niened .

oil in the water .

burner in your mouth .

was it too soon to begin
naming children after
our debt.

Holy Fields

Come back to bed , dear

under the flowers ,
for when the leaves grow
cold but I still require
your shoulder

another code to bury be-
fore your final evening

no passage under foreign
eyes , hush under the
guilt trip

my only wake under bor-
rowed confessions









unable to recall intimacy
under a cold sheet

two years gone , your
warmth has vanished
under October rain

grandmother reads to
ghosts , no solace under
her bible

spoiled water and dirty
air .

a white haired woman on
a chrome flight

love without eyes , dirty
shakes suggest affection
new feelings in an empty
house , I want to burn but
heaters only imitate

spoiled water and dirty
air .

roll the bones , no love for
a nickel when a kiss cost
a dollar

losing game
no lines on her palms
pricks to pardons
sewing leaves back to-
gether
water only fills the leak
a clue for an easy end

it had been a slim key
rendered speechless with
our desires pressed on
wooden boards .

we brushed across pedes-
trian comments to con-
clude there was magic in
the air but no forecast for
land .

you shared no tails and i
had grown suspicious of
the calendar .

concerns were placed
on an end but it seemed
more like a sentence than
a settlement .

as we arrived on the gulf
over the bodies of man
i left the conversation a
skeleton on a bull .

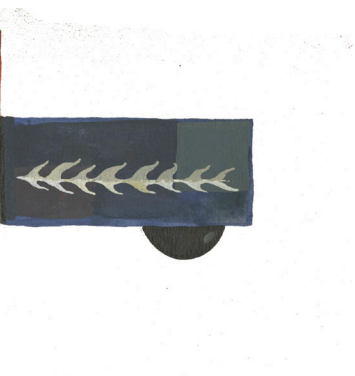


Rubbing Sticks

Love songs for the Palomia

As I lay my head on my
pillow and Tom Wait 's
“ Little Trip to Heaven
“ is playing outside my
window .













Wishing Hole

An elegy for a black eye



How much are you
willing to lose for fun ?
Would you change your
name and acquire new
tones ? Could you trade
a ghost for an object that
required no touch ? Was
their not enough affec-
tion buried beside mar-
ble to recall that we were
born from the land ?
Artificial sweeteners and
formaldehyde only left
you with a happy expres-
sion .





Curanderos Retreat

The mystery of faith





Could you hear the devil
when Gorgonio pressed
a blade on the grackles
throat ?

A bleeding sacrament
occupied by a scalding
renewal.

Innocents unfettered by
catholic raze trip over
yesterday's heroes .

A silent elegy poured
warm into Ofelia's bowl .

You requested a soft
death , it had become
difficult to imagine the
black cowl and curved
blade .

An empty hum with no
opinions , only Santa
Maria Goretti will drop
the needle .

Neither of us could recall
our intention while we
laid on a bed of olean-
ders.

Dust on the pieta ,
your second mother
appeals at the des-
erts end.

Leaves threaded
above a crucible
, the reeling has
ceased among shad-

ows boxing .

The pot steeps as
you shake between
courtesies and con-
dolences.

Near grief you weep
over foreign holds
carried by hidden
waves.

Twin devils drawn
out of oil in the
glass.







