

Lokefog

By Adam King

He sat at the kitchen table with this friend who he had once been so close to, and really they had lived through so very much together—not just in the war but after they had gotten out they lived in New York—in a small apartment together. But then they slowly drifted away. His friend was married now. And they had very little to say to one another. In fact, the entire visit was disastrous, and neither of the two old friends felt much like pretending for long that it was anything special

He was at least grateful for what he said at the end of their get-together: “Life is a miserable business and men are torn in different ways.” He didn’t get any response from either the friend or his wife—except for the vacant miserable stares he had received all night, he felt good about it. And added, “each man goes his own way, and really we aren’t ever what we want to be

Then he was given his coat and a couple of pats on the shoulder by the man who had once loved him. Yes, he was certain of it as he emerged from the apartment into the cool grey soft light of an early evening. He decided to walk and spend some time deciphering the evening

It’s all so horrible he said to himself, how men turn to the most abominable things. Does he have any sense of how we used to be? Or how we just were? Any regrets at all? Is he there now weeping on his wife’s breast and also saying, What happened to us? Probably not. He’s only relieved that he can settle back into his familiar world. We can never be what we want to be

That is true, he thought as he pulled out a cigarette and felt a new shiver of joy from being free—combined with the cool, crisp air. It felt good, and the smoke of his cigarette became purple as it meshed with the dark atmosphere. He walked on—three blocks not really thinking anything at all. That was the way he was he could walk and think and come to the most sublime-illuminate realizations, but then he could also walk and think of nothing—his brain completely barren and his mind only tuned to some immortal plethoral humming. The buzzing of the lifeforce itself, but other than that, he was numb to everything except the steam from the cars and the exhaust from their tailpipes lifting gracefully up into nothingness, only becoming somehow fully enmeshed with the longer more shadowy autumn season

I can start things. I mean I'm a genius at beginnings but I can't finish anything. That was profound, and it was all too true. He hadn't amounted to anything, and he blamed everything negative in his life on that fact—that he had never completed anything. He had begun school but had never received a degree. He had fought in a war but that had never quite been resolved. Even his dreams were hazy and they always began colorful but then became a dissipated lokefog. Now a soft rain came down but he didn't care

I suppose we just live—and really that's all. We try to do what's right. We find some joy and we try to hurt as few people as possible, but here I stand alone and empty again. I can't help but mourn, for yesterday in my imagination I had a friend who loved me, and I cherished our past together, but today I find that it is as though we had never even met. We will never see each other again. I suppose each moment in time has its place and then poof it's gone and to try and resurrect a memory or a remnant of that moment is sacrilege, for all of the elements of that particular moment are gone! So then what good is anything? A man has a son, that son grows—

that son that he used to carry and kiss and dance with suddenly doesn't need him, doesn't want him, doesn't even know of the toil and anguish that the father poured into his life—until the father dies and then perhaps. The son will cry and remember

He really had nowhere to go so he bought a book and found a small place to read and drink whisky and dark coffee well into the night until the place closed and as he emerged a light snow was falling and he danced in it and then staggered home filled with the bliss of energy and lights which New York provides singing a song of the dead which he had made up a eulogy for all lost friends