

Past Brutalities

by Christian Bell

Lemon Twist

I lived that summer wondering if I'd survive, what would become of me. I'd like to say I was innocent but that's bullshit. I'd like to say, yes, you, but that was that last lemon twist of dagger, wasn't it?

Giant Crushes Carnival

You said, improve your dreams and the writing will flow. Ok, so, I dreamed I was a giant, crushing a summer carnival. The zipper, the carousel, the ferris wheel smashed like spent soda cans. A meth-hazy suburb fleeing like the terrified citizens of Godzilla's Tokyo. This one sticks to me, wet cotton candy on my unconscious mind.

Priorities

Leon Czolgosz, McKinley's assassin and noted anarchist, was tried and executed within two months of firing the fatal shots. Prison authorities wouldn't let his family take away his body; instead, they buried him at the prison and poured sulfuric acid into his coffin so he'd decompose quickly. His letters and clothes were burned. The gun he used, though, has been on permanent display at a museum.

Ponies

You lived where they kept ponies. This is how we envied you. We couldn't ride but wanted to fly free, hair like ocean flags, minds of prairie missiles, weather beaten skulls spelling out time.

Lyman Bostock

That look, always there, your face frozen on that last baseball card. Yeah, I'm here, what're you going to do? Bullets, though, don't give a shit. Your name now etched, frozen into the lore.

Amnesia of Mostly True Past Brutalities

That online site that published my story then opened it up to the

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brutal comments of my writing peers. That editor who not only rejected my stories but sent back a lengthy personal dig. That writing seminar back in 1993 where I was picked apart for five full minutes when I mixed up “their” and “there.” Your last note slid under my apartment door. That long winter, prison of four walls, sermons written in blood.

Bizarro

My heart, in your fist, a lump of diamond turned into finest coal.

