

Calm and Level

by Brian Michael Barbeito

The funeral grounds look level and calm. We leave the urban world behind for an instant.

The other world has claimed someone. But we are in limbo.

It is a terrible thing when a connection or breakthrough moment is not achieved or granted by the universe.

Cars travel from churches along side roads to main ones and then to smaller almost secretive ones again.

Partners, wives, husbands, and even aunts and friends and faces only somewhat recognizable.

This is what purlieu means. These groups and at the edge of the regular world for an ending.

All this. Because the rest of the world would not notice such a thing. What need would it have for an unknown grouping of souls lowering fancy boxes as marble watches, or else trees glum and out of season now continue, apologizing to the world for still going?

Someone reads a map...

Go here, and go here. Left.

Are you sure? Are you sure left?

Just trust me.

Iron gates watch from the distance. People shine with a sullen and sunken aura. A collective dourness.

We walk on the dead. We stare straight like soldiers amidst some peculiar dream embedded with its own pageantry.

Afterwards driving out from there, a worse thought settles. Those workers, men and women both in suits- curt, well-studied, explained and explanatory, scrubbed, shined, and adjusted, knowing the exact pitch and tone and manner and way to put everything- absolutely every nuance and discernment mastered.

They are paid.

They are being nice and competent because they are being paid.

Someone has to pay someone to bury the dead and to give directions, to field questions on fields of mute bones.

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What other way could it be?

Going out.

Going out.

Turn right now.

Are you sure?

Yes, are you like an idiot or something? Turn right.

Ya. Of course. Right. I am turning right.

A glance backwards to satisfy a certain waywardness or else out of extra care and reverence.

The funeral grounds look level and calm and indifferent.

No angel or token sign arrives to assuage anything.

Just the same old same old same old same old.

Wind.

Branches that don't know you.

Limestone by the edges of asphalt.

No limes though.

Wind.

I wanted to hear a chime in the distance, like in the movies or like in books or even like in the imagination, but there is nothing.

Just wind.

And wind.

Maybe it is declaring something over and over until it is understood.

Maybe we are thick and dull. Modern dullards that the Gnostics would get a belly laugh from.

No.

No message.

No wise man in the corridor or pathway either.

The leaves didn't show up in our tea cup.

No chime.

Just some wind that is winding.

Wind.

Slightly scented somehow with Southern smells of city subterfuge.

But mostly there is nothing.

Save for the funeral grounds looking level and calm.

Everything is calm and level, I say.

Calm and level. Yup. .. just like the dead themselves, says the beloved.

