

Christian Bell

by Christian Bell

Night Life

Then things started getting weird. I could give you a time frame but it was back when times didn't matter really, one hour as good as the next and the minutes used to be minutes not the digital counting that makes this crazy world now spin. Here was Christian Bell, his name was the hum of crowds, whispers in dark breezeways between colonial-style row homes, the name of that new limited edition special release draft written in metallic blue chalk at top and center of the humungous chalkboard that dangled from the ceiling, tantalizing the necks and tongues of gathered night crowds. Forces were swirling around the edges of the evening. Here, drink this drink, and he did. Here's a door, come in here, listen to what we have to say. A gun in your hand, here's what you need to do. The night went loco and he was separated from his companions. There were many bars with many themes and many crowds and you know you got to wear the uniform but his was indiscriminate enough to slide into all. Pose for this photo. Say these words. Your night, your night. At one point, there is the perfect confluence of moods and chemicals and physical feeling and it's walking on air. Can you feel the, what should we say, love? Before it all disintegrates.

Faces of Death

I. He slipped from the top of the 24 story building and plunged to his death. Of all things, it was a banana peel. What was it doing up there? What was he doing up there?

II. He's captured in a North African country, tried by faceless men in a gray stone room, and decapitated. Only one of the men spoke English to him and it was a relaying of the harsh words of the faceless. American pig, agent of evil, etc. He asks the translator various things, trying to lighten the mood: can I call my mother, can I email my overlord Satan and say that I'm not making it for dinner,

what would you do for a Klondike bar? No one is amused.

III. He's walking across the street and gets hit by a bus. The bus launches him into the intersection where he's hit by a cab. The cab knocks him into a construction zone, where he lands on wet concrete. An overhead bird lets loose, bombs the back of his brand new shirt with excrement. Thieves pinch his wallet. A bulldozer crushes his briefcase.

IV. He's written out of the story. The author has second thoughts and decides to extricate him from the story. This requires some significant rewriting in parts. The author finishes the task, is satisfied with the result. The reader is none the wiser.

V. An overdose of gunshot. Self-inflicted pills. Drowning in carbon monoxide. A tube into the driver's side window running from the sea.

Philosophy 101

He devolved into rumor or started out that way. Chicken or the egg, that sort of thing.

Self-titled releases are wasted on the young.

Entries on self-philosophy are bullshit.

It is more important to be immersed in the work, writing for writing's sake, than anything else.

I am a man not yet formed.

Wannabe Icon

We're standing on a street corner. It's night, breaths are steam in the frost pinch air, and we're plotting what the next move will be. Three beers in, and maybe there's been a jigger or two of Southern

Comfort. He's standing there in his black wool coat, buttoned up several, hands as fists in pockets fighting for warmth, and, uncharacteristic of him, he's got a lit cigarette dangling from his mouth. Cars are passing by. The evening is electric hum, lights burning off in blur. You look at him and you want a snapshot, an iconic freeze frame that looks like many others before him and not one completely original and he might say to you, it's all been done before anyway. Time is burning away into null, and that cigarette, damn that cigarette is more ash than tobacco now, more spent than potential, and the sky is shifting and so is the scene and you got to get that picture and words to go with it, and he says, The writing is my lexicon, I believe the stories, and damn, we've heard it before and we've seen it before, but damn.

The Long Protracted Goodbye

On page 1,314 of his goodbye letter, he wrote about how his relationship with one of his aunts ended because of a dispute concerning a horse. There isn't much context to it, and, like most of his long protracted goodbye, is rambling and a desperate attempt to not actually end and say goodbye but to keep going. We don't truly know why he is saying goodbye, and, depending on your sensibilities, you feel as if you've been bamboozled into something else by, at most, page 707, he contradicts earlier indications of declining health. On page 1, he states, simply, I do not want to die.

Atrocity

They're using his head for a bowling ball. For the love of--. The camera crews made their way in and they're filming this. Laughing gangly teenage kids and their dumb demented goofball fathers and toddlers and little kids standing around the perimeters anxious. Holy shit! Don't ask about the eyes, the frozen choked zombie like expression on his bloated lips. Someone please stop this. He's being treated like some spike-footed green jacketed madman Manson-eyed despot and it's not right, it's not right! What are those things they're using for pins. Turn the camera away! Don't do this.

Oh, no, the kid, the tattered prodigy of these third world tribal streets, just bowled a strike. Stop the feed. Please don't you have--

That One Guitar

His biggest regret is that he should've learned to play electric guitar. He should've been a guitar player in a metal band. By the time he reached 40 and had a family and mortgage and full-time job, it would've become impractical and the desire to play dark suffocating nightclubs to small groups of intoxicated patrons would've waned, but it would've been about those early years, those dreams. The lights are out, the crowd is clapping, chanting, poised to storm the gates, you're plugged in, ready to own, and, boom--

