

Three More Micros

by Foster Trecost

Crossties

Regrets lined behind like crossties on a railroad track.

When nights took too long, he traded his bed for a bucket seat, but answers always lurked around the next corner, and then the next. Back in bed, he continued to drive.

His job involved numbers. Answers appeared with the push of a button, but not the ones he wanted. His boss asked him to leave long before he could leave on his own.

The job before that ended when he forgot to go. For fourteen straight days.

Sometimes he fooled himself into believing it was an accident, but such games resulted in too many questions, which led to midnight drives--the kind where he left his bed and the kind where he didn't have to.

Whichever, there were no answers, only more crossties for as far as he could see.

Small Change

Life seemed okay, for the most part. I had a job, not the best job, but I was working and plenty folks weren't. My apartment was small, but I had a place to live and plenty folks didn't have that, either. Life seemed okay. Mostly okay.

I ducked in a corner store to grab some gum and tossed it on the counter: ninety-seven cents. I gave him a buck.

Mostly okay. Not completely, but mostly.

He handed over my change and I stared at it. Who needs three cents? It seems he sensed my thoughts, because he said sometimes small change is just what we need.

I put the pennies in my pocket. When I got home I lined them on a piece of paper and rolled clear tape across all three. Below, I wrote the words Small Change.

It's been hanging on my fridge ever since.

Worth Saving

It felt like I was somewhere I wasn't supposed to be, like I'd walked in a house that looked like mine, but belonged to someone else. She found me in the kitchen. Her eyes welled with what would soon form tears. I was in the right house, but at ten in the morning I should've been somewhere else.

"Don't cry," I said.

"How much do we have?" She always cut to what mattered most and what mattered most was money. She didn't care how I lost my job, only that I no longer had one.

"Don't worry, I'll find something."

"And then?"

"And then I'll find something. Where are the kids?"

She pointed to the back yard.

I walked to a window and envied the innocence. "Where's the camera?"

"We sold it. The last time."

About a month later, I was working again and with my first check I bought a camera. Nothing fancy, just something that saved scenes worth saving.

About a month after that, we had to sell it.

