

So long

by Franklin Goodish

Years later he surveys this place again to post something, anything. He plays "sex on fire," sounds that once fueled him. Now he knows the song is about VD, not unbridled potency. Names and words all seem at once familiar and numbing and noise. He once wanted fame or recognition or acceptance or more. Now he sits in canopy with a cigar and blazing fire and has all he can handle. Stories no longer reach him. He once published and edited and received accolades. Now he sleeps eight, sometimes ten, hours a night. No more coffee and insecurity driving him. No more stories that made him brim and buzz. He reads sites like Juked and Wigleaf now and tries to feel what he used to feel. Not unlike listening to a favorite song that once used to make him thump, listening to it again and again, almost on the verge of truly hearing it again like that first time.

He loves his children and home and wife and dog. He loves his lot. Or at least he likes them all enough to keep things going.

He will never receive an email from Dogzplot or get that feeling when a story was finally right. He tells himself when retired in twenty years he will try again. Or maybe sit in a pool or watch Breaking Bad again, trying to see it for the first time, be surprised as Mr. Chips becomes Scarface. He will Google himself and perhaps find one, maybe two, of his stories. And maybe a recognition of what he had and what he offered and saw and felt and risked.

He sits back and tritely sucks on his cigar and looks out into the dark and feels nothing sick, painful, terrifying, important. The night air is quiet and still and sweet.

