

Dream World

by John Olson

I don't mind being dead. It's ok. Really. I've discovered a whole new way of being based on non-being. What else can you do? I like being invisible. I like groaning and rattling chains. I used to be a writer. Still am. In fact, it might be more accurate to say that it's not me that's dead, but literature. It was killed by Facebook. It was killed by Twitter. It was killed by poorly funded public schools. Look at me now: opium greets the brain with a hug. I live in a dream world. There are many other artists and poets and writers here. I've met Keats. Can you believe it? What a nice guy. And Shakespeare. We had a blast. Now I know where Falstaff comes from. I've ceased thinking of writing as a mode toward pedagogy and social change and more as a total, unabashed indulgence. A pharmacology. Pennies tossed into a fountain. It's tempting to squeeze it, but what's to squeeze? There is nothing to squeeze. The realm of writing is an abstract, Hegelian sort of place or non-place for beings or non-beings. A non-place for non-beings. Former residents of Planet Earth. Who are now forgotten except in little books that get published occasionally and then set on the shelves of a small press distributor like still born babies in jars of formaldehyde. I used to hit the bars on Pike Street. Now I cook, and sew, and manufacture little embellishments of language. Doilies, I guess you could call them. Remember doilies? Nobody uses doilies anymore. They went out of style sometime at the latter end of the 20th century. My favorite coffee mug has a picture of the Beatles on it. How twentieth-century is that? It's the Beatles as they appeared on their *Rubber Soul* album, the one with "Norwegian Wood" and "Nowhere Man" in which they resembled the romantic poets of England's Regency period. Cry on the debris, I say. Let it happen. Nothing is ever truly dead. This is a proposal of snow. It falls, turns the world to a monotone of white, then goes. Sun comes out and it's gone. It is our veins that carry that indispensable burden of ourselves. That red liquid working its way round and round. Can that be dead? Yes. But

meanwhile, bank your grace on a laughing smell. Embrace a peacock. Dance your candy into accordions and coins. Dimes and silver dollars. Dig a hole. Drive a cab. I know what it's like to be dead. I know what it is to be sad.

