

The Class of '61

by Larry Strattnr

Sometimes, when the moon is dark, damp night curls my fingers into woven bones. I remember faces of the fallen. All blasted, burned, all lost, they scroll across my inner eyes, a strip of microfilm pulled through a reader in a musty library, jumping one, jumping next, each sticking to my slowly cooking brain.

When faces come, I am wont to drink, a fearful continuity. Labels on my bottles are not pasted straight. Whiskey courses down my throat, smoothing tonsil tar-stones of a thousand Chesterfields.

No glass. My coin is spent on bottles. My throat's in the grip of nicotine. My head is nailed to yesterday. My heart is lost among my memories.

We were so bold. So wired. So taut. So joyfully insane. The sun seared us as we died. Who guessed the cost? Not us. Not you. How could I think, "perhaps?"

Me? I cannot bring myself to care. Whiskey will suffice. I only turn my face to rain. Even a drop cannot be trusted as it promotes decay. For me the sun will never rise.

Time unwinds the filmstrip yet again. Remembered faces stare ahead. Black eyes see nothing in the grinding light.

This is what remains. Whisky and the smooth-worn stones. Eyes and empty bottles shining in the flood.

