

soul, baby

by Victoria Munn

Soul? Who's got soul? That nothingness that holds us together, between the spaces, in and out of the cracks in our minds and bodies. The soul weighs something, you know. It's been proven. Some guy did a study where he weighed people before and after death, and they weighed less after death - proving they lost a soul.

I lost mine early. Traded it, you might say. Souls are high commodities in certain circles, and I decided it was easy-peasy to just give mine up for what I wanted. The girl I wanted. She was beautiful, you see? And I loved her, or I thought I did. So I signed on the dotted line and gave up my soul.

It wasn't a hard process. Someone came in the middle of the night and ripped it out. How, you ask? I'm not sure. It involved some chanting, a little smoke, and poof! I was soulless. I know it was true because I was lighter the next morning. Plus, I no longer felt anything.

That's right. Loving that girl. Pointless. She loved me now, to be sure, that was the trade. She was sweet and kind, patient, but I couldn't love her back. I didn't have a soul. And that's what they're good for. Love. Hate. Anything you want to feel.

So I wanted to trade back. Heck, she wasn't worth anything to me anymore. And my soul was damned important. But I didn't realize how hard that was going to be. See, there's some weird people out there, and one of them had my soul. In a jar or something. And I needed to find her. She was the one who'd ripped it from me in the first place.

So I went to this little blues club everyone said was more than a blues club and waited. She was there, the woman, and I went over.

Bought her a drink, Bud Light. Thought she looked like a beer girl. She waved it away, so I took a swig. Asked for my soul. She cackled. Can you believe that? The woman actually cackled. Said there was no backsies. I'd given her possession of my soul forever.

So I went from that blues club and sat on the stoop in front of my house. Soulless. Don't ever wish for what you think you want - you just might get it, my mom always said. She was so right. My woman came down and asked what was wrong. I didn't tell her I was without a soul, I just left.

Did you know you can't buy a soul? I tried. It was damned hard to find anyone in the community who even had souls, but no one would sell. So I went on, the man without a soul.

We had kids, me and the woman, and they had souls. I could tell, they loved us a lot. I tried, I really tried, but the love just wouldn't come. They grew up and had families of their own. I grew old and frightened. How would I meet my maker if I didn't have a soul? I knew that someone held it, but who?

My soul woman had my jar of soul, I just knew it. I went to find her, and she wasn't at any of the usual places. Finally, i went to that old blues club, now a sushi techno bar laundromat. There sat a little old lady. I bought her a Bud Light. She drank it. She laughed again as I asked for my soul, saying they're for keeps. Unless... I gave up one of my children's souls in replacement.

Hell yes! I picked the oldest one. He was always a big pain. Bad father or not, I wanted my soul so bad I could taste it. Plus, he'd had a soul longer than I did.

I got my soul back just in time to die. Damn straight. Who's got soul? Me.

