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God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen

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God Rest Ye,  
Merry Gentlemen

by Kyle Laurita-Bonometti

They said he’s an insane man, so he’s insane, man. He drinks with an appetite, like his father did before him, and like fathers did before him. Beneath the overpass, he shouts at children he wishes he wasn’t. Whiskey is his best friend so he must be the dog. Together, they drink in the rusted Volvo out back he calls Mother. Brother, O Brother, Where art Thou? they chuckle, and sip down themselves until the rains come forth and they can imagine the windshield wipers whisking back and forth, back and forth, into infinity.

When he died, people were shocked, but not surprised. He was an insane man, they shrugged. Only Whiskey cried. Only Whiskey came to his funeral. Why, Oh why? Whiskey cried, and the officer who shot him shrugged. The jury was out. He was deaf, and he carried a pocket knife. At least he had Whiskey.

The eulogy only mentions the good times. It leaves out his churning gut and his hollow, pitted cheeks. Cheeks that he chewed at in the park while he watched the families, or beneath the overpass while he tried to sleep. It doesn’t mention what he said about carving wood. That it was like loving a woman. Maybe that’s because the women he loved twisted in their sleep. Maybe that’s because they cursed their fathers in the night and swore they’d never forgive him. It was all he could do to hold on.

Now he is dead; watch how husks of ash trees line the street—shaking in the wind, like he once did, beneath the overpass. [IM]