

DIY or *Die Trying*

~~Write like it hurts.~~

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DIY or Die Trying (DIYDT)

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Dedication

This Zine was made from the combined efforts of four emerging creatives, who bring out the best of their work with the inspiration of music. Our goal is to bring together unheard voices empowered by a lyric to showcase written word from any author willing to join us.

Those who love music and the artistic crafts are those we work with and for. All together can we make our crafts for the creative community we seek to share out work with so that everyone can enjoy the pieces inspired by profound musical beats, instruments, lyrics and songs.

We hope our work inspires and brings joy to our readers so that they may be inspired themselves and listen out for their own musical inspiration.

This is dedicated to that one guy who cut me off in a Walmart parking lot.

You're an asshole sir.

(Also Radicchio.....He saved us when we needed it.)

“You are not a monster, never say that,” she whispers. “You are just a man who has never been loved gently.”

His closes his eyes, as his forehead presses to hers.

“Don’t you want better?” he asks, his voice cracking almost to a whisper, “A man who could bring you champagne, not bloodstains?”

“I want a man who is himself, and brings me himself,” she replies, “even when, and if he comes to me in pieces.”

~~~~~

After that night, Ace started staying with Brooke.

Just now he keeps a pistol in the drawer by her pruning shears. Sleeps with his arm curled around her almost like she’ll disappear from him while he is asleep.

When she plants marigolds in the front garden. He watches her from the porch, arms crossed, pretending like he’s not waiting for her to look at him.

When she does, he always softens. Always for her.

He still doesn’t smile much. Still doesn’t speak more than he needs to. But he buys her seeds with names that he can’t pronounce. He learns the language of the flowers, like it’s a code.

He calls her “his sunshine girl.”

And She calls him “Her storm.”

But when the world comes back to haunt him, when the ghosts of his past rattle the doorknob, Ace answers with a loaded gun and the softest voice that Brooke has ever heard.

“Not here,” he says. “Not where she grows, or where she is.”

Even though Ace Kane is wanted man, a criminal, a killer, he has one sacred thing left in his world.

And she just so happens to bloom with him.

“That’s called stalking I believe, and it's crazy you seem to assume that I don’t know who he is, I know exactly who he is,” she says, hearing the storm beneath her words, behind her ribs.

The man smiles kindly at her then sets a folded photo on the counter in front of where she stands. Almost like he is unaware of the storm that’s brewing beneath her calm surface. The picture shows Ace, bloodied, cuffed, but of course his eyes are still burning with the promise of death. Her Ace, caged.

“Mr. Ace Kane,” the man says, “is a person of interest in several federal cases. Could we please have your cooperation.”

Brooke smiles then—it was sweet, but her eyes promised something different, there’s a storm brewing within them.

“I don’t cooperate with weeds.”

~~~~~

After twelve days he comes back to her. Twelve aching, rain-drenched days, but he came back.

This time he doesn’t knock. Just steps inside of her shop and closes the door like his chest wasn’t in pieces.

As if his knuckles weren't bruised. As if his coat wasn't torn. But of course, his eyes immediately find hers, just like her's find his. Their eyes meeting. A clash of blue and green. She then notices something different in his eyes, something softer.

She doesn’t speak on it though, too afraid that it was just her mind playing tricks on her.

Just then he drops to his knees in front of her, his jaw clenched like he is chewing glass.

“I’m not good,” he says. “I’m not clean. I’ve done things I can’t tell you. I have always been the monster that they whisper about in prison cells and on the streets. But I will never hurt you. I could never do that.”

She then knelt in front of him and cupped his cheeks on either side of his strong chiseled face.

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You always smell like gasoline and anger and ever since I met you, you've always wore regret like it's some kind of cologne."

He looks away. "So, you're not afraid?"

She steps closer to him, her hands resting lightly on his chest just above his heart, which she somehow knew didn't beat anyone, but her.

"I'm a florist, but don't mistake me for a fool. I know what you are, who you are. I just don't care."

Ace then breathed her in, almost like he was remembering what sunlight felt like after years of being left in the dark.

~~~~~

They never defined it.

Ace would still appear like thunder and vanish like smoke. No texts. No promises. Just the warmth of his hands, as he held her to him in the dark. The way he said her name was the only prayer he'd ever learned.

She gave him wildflower honey and kisses on the scar that was near his temple. He gave her nothing solid, but everything that mattered.

~~~~~

One Thursday, the day that Ace would usually casually waltz into her shop, but this one was different, Ace didn't show up. Three days passed, then six. On day number seven, a man in a grey coat walked into Brooke's shop, a smile on his face that was far too polite.

"Miss Anderson?"

She nods, her hands clasped behind her back.

"We've been watching you and watching him. I don't think you understand who he is."

"I didn't say I wanted you here," she says, wiping his blood from her fingers. "I said you're leaking all over my geraniums."

He smiles, barely.

This unfortunate interaction is how it starts. How everything starts.

After that first visit, Ace starts coming back to the store, to see her. He comes back every so often almost like clockwork. Sometimes whole, sometimes broken. Always silent, until she speaks.

Brooke is the embodiment of warmth and sunshine, in floral-print dresses. Her voice soft and her hands always busy—tying bows around bouquets, pressing herbs, scribbling poetry in the margins of her stores invoices. The neighborhood around her store loved her. The strangers she met daily trusted her with secrets they couldn't tell therapists or their close family.

And Ace?

Ace is the man who has an engraved smirk. Full of bad decisions, with a heart that he'd long since given up trying to save. He never smiles. Hardly speaks, unless it is necessary. But for some weird reason, he keeps returning to Brooke. Almost like he is addicted to her warmth, her sunshine.

"I really should be keeping my distance," he mutters to her one night, arms crossed in the shadows of her greenhouse.

This night, she is repotting her lilacs. She loves to do it in the moonlight, dirt smeared on her cheeks like freckles.

"I know," she says, not looking up.

"You don't even ask where I go. What I do."

Brooke hums. "I already know."

He stiffens. "You do?"

She stands and brushes the soil from her hands. "Ace. You always have gunpowder under your nails and callouses that are growing over others. That I know for sure isn't from gardening.

The Fallacy of Tiffany

by Jessica Barton

cry

baby

stuck

to a

Roman candle

cocktail

piece

friends

best

you're

a

faded moon

Stuck on

a classic

hot mess

make your heart

feel

enough

to

like

only

the best

the best for me

baby, you're
Stuck
on

the boy
you held down
Not the boy I
held in

Note: This poem is comprised of lyrics from Fall Out Boy's "Tiffany Blews".

Roses & Gunpowder

by Maddy Lee

The first time that Brooke Anderson saw him, she thought it was just some random Tuesday, but no, apparently the universe has other plans. He bursts into her shop bleeding from his shoulder and tracking mud from his boots across the freshly cleaned floor. The same floors that she had just spent so much time scrubbing, as it was almost time for her to close.

"Please close the door. If you don't, you'll ruin more than just the floor," she says to the unknown man calmly, holding the watering can like it could be used as a weapon.

He doesn't speak, just leans against the doorframe. His eyes heavy but still locked on hers. As she looks over him, she looks down and notices that his hands are bloodied, dark and half-dried. Another thing that she notices is a pistol that is tucked poorly beneath his coat almost like it was a crooked promise.

She tilts her head. "Are you here to kill me or buy peonies?"

The unknown man blinks—slow and predatory—then within seconds, before her eyes, he slumps down to the cold concrete ground and passes out. Right in the middle of her display of daisies no less.

He tells her his name the next morning when he wakes up on the cold ground, surrounded by daisies. He says his name is Ace. No last name. No apology, either.

She feeds him tea steeped with lavender and painkillers. She then stitches his shoulder, in the tiny back room that usually holds buckets of flowers. As she did this, he didn't flinch. Just stare at her with a wary gaze of someone who is used to dark rooms and closed doors.

"I shouldn't be here," he rasps. "You shouldn't want me here."

A Darkened Summer

by Jessica Barton

[redacted] kisses [redacted]
[redacted] feel like [redacted]
[redacted] hits, not [redacted] misses
[redacted] took a shot [redacted]

At [redacted] love [redacted]
And the poets [redacted]
[redacted] never [redacted]

[redacted] stop [redacted]
[redacted] lies [redacted] slipping
We [redacted] fake it [redacted]
Force [redacted] smiles [redacted]
[redacted] comparing myself to [redacted]

[redacted] the doctor [redacted] 'cause I [redacted]
Blame everyone but me [redacted]
And my [redacted] heavy heart
[redacted] never seemed [redacted]

[redacted] hopeful
[redacted] just hopeless [redacted]
But [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted] besides, my reputation's [redacted]

“You’re The Only Game That I Like to Lose” - Provider by Sleep
Token

Provider is a song that is about a love that aches with longing that
both gives and destroys.

half dead

Note: This poem is comprised of lyrics from Fall Out Boy's "I've Got A Dark Alley And A Bad Idea That Says You Should Shut Your Mouth (Summer Song)".

Azul Thinking

by *Andrew Bald*

Am I blue?
Am I blue
Ain't these tears
In these eyes tellin' you?
Am I blue
You'll be too
If your schemes like your dreams
Done fell through
Was a time
I was her only one
Now I am
The sad and lonely one, oh yes I am
Was I gay?
Till today
Now she's gone and we're through
Am I blue?
Was a time
I was her only one
Now I am
The sad and lonely one
I'm such a lonely one.
Was I gay?
Till today
Now she's gone and we're through
Am I blue?

Am I Blue. Ray Charles, *The Genius of Ray Charles*, 1959

Like Nothing Known Before

by Jessica Barton

When I've been
well I mean
a
feeling

riding through the
stars like

Running red lights
And I'm pissed

When I get to
the end of the

Fever-dream

Silent waves

a
world always spinning
faster my own
problem

Hold me
like

we made
a dream of ours
a diamond
but got no treasure

I'm just a [redacted] comet [redacted]
Screaming at [redacted] night [redacted]
And [redacted]

[redacted] I [redacted]
[redacted] didn't make [redacted] it [redacted]
[redacted] end [redacted] the [redacted]
[redacted] tangerine [redacted]
[redacted] killers [redacted]
[redacted] put [redacted] fun in [redacted]

[redacted]
The world [redacted] can't keep up [redacted]
[redacted] my [redacted]
[redacted] soulmate [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] I thought [redacted]
[redacted] somehow [redacted] I would [redacted]
[redacted] get by [redacted]
[redacted] on the horizon

[redacted]
The world [redacted] can't keep [redacted]
[redacted] time [redacted]

Bad Deal

by *Andrew Bald*

"I will meet you
at the crossroads."
That's the last thing
it said to me.
It's been ten years
since it came
to make the deal.

Here at the Crossroads, where I chose to deal with the devil.
Here I buried a lock of my hair. Dirt from a graveyard. A black cat's
bone. And a photo of
myself.

Here I sold my soul, a worthless thing unloved and unvalued, for
promises of greatness.

It wasn't worth it.

The fame
was fleeting
and the talent
was pointless.
Now it's come
to collect.
I don't know
what to do.
Here,
at the crossroads
is where he'll come
For me.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] like [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] a [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] grudge

Note: This poem is comprised of lyrics from Fall Out Boy's "Hold Me Like A Grudge".

“How To Save A Life” is a poem deeply inspired by the song by
“The Fray.”

I Promise You

by *Andrew Bald*

You're gone now.
And yet I can't get you out
of my head.
What happened,
is always on a loop,
playing over and over
again.
I don't know what
to do now.
I don't know what
you'd want.
But I know what I want.
And I know
what they deserve.
Revenge.

Move [redacted]

[redacted] past the days of Bomb [redacted] s
[redacted] be free
[redacted] you [redacted] devils know [redacted] vile
An army [redacted] to silence m [redacted] e
Of [redacted] that [redacted]
[redacted] r [redacted] ial

Lights out

[redacted], [redacted] ha | s | it [redacted]
Li | t [redacted] up
Gu [redacted] n [redacted] s [redacted]
[redacted] out
[redacted]

[redacted] start somewhere, [redacted] start sometime
[redacted] here, [redacted] now [redacted]

[redacted] hell can't stop [redacted]
[redacted] stop [redacted]
[redacted] hell [redacted] now
[redacted] hell can't stop [redacted]
[redacted] stop [redacted]
All hell [redacted] stop us now

Guerilla Radio. Rage Against the Machine, *The Battle of Los*

Angeles, 1999

How To Save A Life

by *Jade Jacob*

You should know by now
that feeding on a lizard's tail
won't turn you into a God.

It won't grow wing-shaped crowns
or taste slippery, like pickles
drowning in cherry-soda.

The living cradling adults
are dead; you don't have time
for pop-tabs to explode or to bristle

your fatigue or to grope at someone's
fork. The white is so fat with discharge
that you can't see beyond the whiff

or sharp tongues. If you just spit
in the choke-hold, the snow won't go far
up-deep. Snake, separate your own bones;

eat your own scales, swallow stiff
and far until the blades of it cut through
the black box—it shouldn't be too hard.

“Capital “P”” is a free-verse, fragmented poem both inspired by Lisa Robertson’s poetry collection “Boat” and Carl Angelo’s song called “Alright?”

What Is It Good For?

by *Andrew Bald*

world war
A weapon of
shots at the
casket
truth devoured
in the shadow of
The eyes
who burn
for the thirst for blood
bullets and bombs
stuff
More Gore
None above the cord
Lights out
Li t
up
Gu n s
out

Capital "P"

by *Jade Jacob*

I've held a breath
than the lives I have
Stretched across
the pacific is
specifically
where I've seen
of the jelly
dip

This blood
resting below
is a thumb-print
lines of eight
blessed of song,
The river
that remember
home

An angled cobalt
drawn from the throat
This Baybayin
of my bloodline
Stubborn.
Strong. ⁰⁰¹
of standing after shatter
that breaks through

longer
lived.
the arctic
on my skin
by the east
the orbit
gaslight
and dive

-hued badge
my clavicle
of the sun,
wounds,
sweat and soil.
veins
where my
in Lipa

canopy
of a bagio.
on the bones
Malakas--
Steady.
The sound
the breath
broken brick.

Bernardine.

A capital

"P".

"Though there is madness, yet there is method in it."

-Polonius

“Memento Amori” is a poem inspired by the musical score and narrative of the movie “28 Years Later.”

Where Orange Knows My Name

by *Jade Jacob*

Today, I was higher than the sun
in a world of orange ignored by steel
bones.

There were sticks of moist grass
born in divisions of mist and floating gas—
pastures of snow

trickling against the edges of small
dunes and standing birk-
wood and saddled stallions

evaporating quickly to merge
with alien blues.

I had to ignore the growing pains
of my pit when I passed the Moon
Family Pond swept down

a hill cornered by my Father’s models
the Earth fell and I rose between the wheels

of his car and the windows of brushstrokes,

I knew by then I should’ve been born here.

Memento Amori

by *Jade Jacob*

There shall be no womb if I be the first to die. Threescore and ten or more olde Mistresses and Misters shall not abide with limbs weary from slumber, and sorrow writ upon their visages above clay, or silt, or sand.

Clasp no hands together, nor be still. There shall be no prayers for me; I shall not be smother'd beneath false grass, nor shaped unto a marble'd wall inside chokèd space— but walk forward beyond the gardens of fountains and their rotting rails and seek me.

Seek me where I am formèd in likeness with my bone-brothers of basalt and shale. My love may set me amongst gravel'd grains in some other stead:

a mantel, or a stretch of raw-hued timber upon this Earth— yet let me be with Mother, Mother of Earth, not in some stately chamber where silence is lived-in and unresting.

Let me climb through thickets and wind through the water'd brooks in this air untainted by evil, till the sundered-halved sky forward blackens and I shall wear it as my own flesh.

Yea, I would drift gladly; fold unto the gagging bosom of this ancient orb and lie beneath the loam with beetles and with bones. But do not cry for me. *Memento mori.*

You and the lichen know my face and I shall not be forsaken. We mightn't wonder where the dead people go but I wonder of the man who bore my father's countenance, his shirt fast tucked as for ceremony.

The sun did beat upon tin'd roofs and he stood beneath it wrinkled.
Now he is dead and alone. Let us not think upon this.

Instead, how does one vanish, and the world boil rice still? Whilst
children pursue dogs through alleyways and mangoes ripen then
rot within trees?

But: remember we must die. Remember as my father's hand
did mark my flesh, his sides made round with laughter's girth till
mirth itself ran lean.

Not the grievances, nor the rot of corruptions that do devour all
death, and are named in tongues unknown—

Hughè's was right: The stories do bide within the bones of bodies
bless'd and Black.

The stories bide but remember we must love.

"Where Orange Knows My Name" is a poem inspired both by the
scenery that can be found in Orangeville, Ontario as well as the
songs "Alien Blues" by Vundabar and "Growing Pains" by COIN.