

Amontillado, Glitter & Lane Splitter

By Kenn Hartmann

I pace the floor, oblivious to the clientele. I stop at the cellar window eye-level with the alley pavement outside; my sickle reflects a neon glow. I turn to face a crowded room for the first time. 'Can I get Amontillado in a cask?' I ask the waitress keeping my eyes focused on her eyes & the glitter on her cheeks, not the clinginess of her blouse or tight skirt. She replies 'because we're in a basement & the sewer smells you'd think that, right?' As it happens, this fine subterranean joint has whiskey in a jar-o. The band starts to jam a random, strangely syncopated rhythm, sounds in tune with every breath in a cavernous abyss. An amplified dead-end alley echo, not loud, just softly weird & wired & an erratic thumping beat. The whiskey straightens me up, arches my back & I shiver. Not sure how I got here, just happenstance – instinct. I had a taste for an enchilada at 2am south side Chicago but I could smell this place, the stale beer & furtive smokers. I had stopped to adjust a bungee cord on my fender. I heard a bass guitar & clink of bottles. It attracted me from under the eerie street lamp into the urban shadows. Silently pushed my bike halfway down the alley to the top of the basement stairs & descended. When the waitress returns with another shot, I tip her well, as bikers do. 'Baby, I been everywhere but nowhere like this.' She says with a sly wink, 'anything goes, by the way, I'm not the waitress. Thanks for the tip & this is my shot.' She slugs it. Everyone seems deep in some illicit dalliance. Perhaps our government hasn't abandoned us, it's we the people who've abandoned the government. In the pre-dawn twilight, a few rats & alley cats scatter at the crisp crack of my throttle.

Warren Buffett, the gazillionaire thinks the printed word ain't dead, but ain't worth investing in, either. If print's dead, just consider words from the grave 'No fear' so sayeth Indian Larry. Spiritual dawns, gasoline fumes & sweet embrace of an itinerant highway breeze, my readers understand this. A million voices have described it. But only one voice exists when mounting a motorcycle & venturing forth. It's the voice of god.



It can't be captured on paper or Internet. It'll never be on television or Youtube. It'll never be sold on Craigslist or Ebay. Perhaps a just wind stirs the soul, a bug kiss on cranium & wrist-twist Insanium. The sky looses a deluge from Heaven; rain stings my cheeks, damn. The wonder of life: soaked, alone & barreling home. Spring's come to Sweet Home & no bones. The June calendar teems with events. On the 6th I ride to Milwaukee with the Illinois Harley crew to visit Water Street & on the 7th the Museum. The Jersey Boys & the infamous Rudderville Run roll into Chicago on the Summer Solstice & then Milwaukee, the heart & soul of HD. Same day as the Freedom Run to Marseilles on the Illinois River. (Note to self: due to construction on I80, the Run starts at Grundy County Fairgrounds). Same day as Mods & Rockers at Delilah's on Lincoln Ave – the Ton-Up Club Chicago – Nortons bippin' & Triumphs a-boppin.' Juke joints everywhere gone be hoppin.' Maybe I be cruisin' & maybe I be stoppin.' Meantime it be rainin' & I be soppin.'

-Kenn Hartmann
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