

“Endings”

by

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Sometimes, he sits in the bell tower. The hands upon his back stretch their fingers to feel the sun like plants, and when he leans forward, they clench into fists and weigh him down.

Poor broken birdie with no wings to soar.

~

Ring the bells for the souls who aren't there, but open the doors for the soulless.

~

He tells me to believe in my dreams and to listen to what they show me. He says they will lead me to the truth.

~

In his mind is a barren wasteland where everything he touches turns to stone.

~

Open the cathedral doors and find the hands on his back clasped in prayer.

“Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned.”

~

He sleeps fitfully through the night, and in his sleep speaks of mirages. He wakes with tears streaming down his face and the hands twist to embrace him and it seems that he'd like nothing more than to be strangled.

~

In this cathedral, there is a barren wasteland protected by a barren soul. And in its grief it flourishes.

~

I saw him spitting broken teeth onto the ground.

~

He tells me his name is Jeremiah, and that he comes from a city built of bone and held together with mortar mixed from tears.

When he smiles, I notice that his teeth are made of cracked glass.

~

Don't judge, lest ye be judged.

~

At night, the hands on his back play shadow games on the wall, and Jeremiah juggles stone fire in his palms. He turns to smile, and in the way he smiles, it's clear that he sees someone else.

~

The holy water was missing this morning.

I found Jeremiah sprinkling it over a patch of broken grass. When I asked what he was doing, he said he was growing a miracle.

~

I dreamed tonight that I knelt with Jeremiah and prayed.

I held his hands in mine and as we sat on the bloodstained floor the hands on his back sheltered us from the sin raining down.

Jeremiah told me to believe in my dreams.

~

These stained glass windows shine upon him, face down on the pews. The mangled hands on his back stretch and writhe and the light dapples on their broken fingernails when they reach for things that are no longer there.

The pew is turning to stone.

~

I buried Jeremiah in holy ground.

I sprinkled broken teeth into the hole, folded his broken hands and in his eyes I found grace.

~

In this barren land filled with barren souls is an abandoned cathedral, protected by the hands of God.

~

Mea Culpa, mea culpa.

Forgive me, Father.

I've sinned.