

All Those Moments Will Be Lost in Time, Like Tears in Rain

Late in the day
Late in the year
Lately I've been
Having very bad dreams
Home Before Dark

It was a Thursday towards the end of the year and we were scheduled for band practice at the Hellfire Club after art school. It was already dark, bone cold and the rain was thrashing the streets. Taxi weather, if you could afford it. I turned up but, for whatever reason, nobody else did.

So I needed to re-orientate and do something else with this unexpected, unexplained night off. Somewhere out of this shite weather. First stop was the Griffin. Which is where I clocked Crockett. In the snug. He'd just left school and was a regular at our gigs. Often helped out as a roadie. Came from an anonymous suburb called Clarkston. I'd never been there.

After a couple of pints, he said we should get a bottle of whisky and go back to my flat. It was an outrageous, perhaps perilous idea. The hard stuff wasn't our drug of choice. Big medicine. But as we tend to say in the aftermath of a self-inflicted disaster, it seemed like a good idea at the time. Maybe, as a carry-out, it was just more portable than a ton of cans. Anyway, we did it and trudged up the long road. Half an hour later we were sitting on my bed passing the bottle. Talking.

Later, Crockett said, "Have you still got those mushrooms?"

Just in case you think I am about to make an omelette, some

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context is required: a week or two earlier a fellow traveller called Max, in return for some slight favour, had gifted me an Embassy Regal fag packet stuffed with magic mushrooms. I just shoved it in my top drawer. Chances were it was going to get binned.

In the autumn, the cognoscenti harvested the nipple-headed little fungi in fields and on golf courses. I'd heard of one pilgrim who entered a field where there was a good crop. He spent a happy hour or so there, browsing and grazing, until he became aware, somewhere behind him, of a huge, black, ominous, snorting presence. A bull. He sprinted as if his feet had sprouted wings and flung himself over a barbed wire fence into a gorse thicket. Gasping like a decked fish, scraped raw but at least safe, he looked back into the field. It was a bin-liner.

So this wasn't our drug of choice either, but for the second time that night, here we were choosing it. The questionable decisions were stacking up.

We took a small handful each and waited. Nothing happened. Crockett said, "Give me the rest of these things." So we finished what was there. Then it started happening. Crockett said, with some urgency, "I need to see Tracy," his new squeeze who lived only a couple of blocks away. Why this should occur to him now was unclear. If he was that keen, he could have seen her hours ago instead of coming to my flat.

Because it was past midnight by now and I really did not want to go traipsing round the freezing streets on a plotline detour in the pissing rain. But I had to.

And to my surprise, I began to have a great time. The lights on the wet, glistening streets made it feel like being inside a giant chandelier. All the parked cars had Disneyesque personalities. Hilariously, a cheeky wee red sports car kept nudging the rear end of a pissed-off white Transit van.

Crockett, though, was marching ahead with serious intent and

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I could barely keep up. When we got there, it turned out Tracy wasn't in.

So we headed for The Wee C's flat on Woodlands Road. And luckily he *was* in. Also there was his pal Custard, an ample black guy in a safari jacket, who was skinning up. We sat chatting, listening to reggae in the warm kitchen, gently steaming by the gas fire. It was like being on a lush, illuminated tropical island in this dark urban ocean. And then, in minutes, Crockett got up. We had to go again. Chasing the small hours while the black sky drained its contents on us.

When I caught up with him I saw that he had tears streaming down his face and I realised I had to be a grown-up. I said, "Come on, Croc, let's head back. Cup of tea. It's been a long night."

Crockett still lived at home with his folks. Under fairly strict house rules. His dad was a cop. We were all kids but he was even more of a kid than we were, so you could argue that we had a duty of care. Chances are his parents felt it was safe for him to regularly overnight it with us in Glasgow. We were older, responsible, respectable boys from good homes in further education. We'd look after him. And I'm confident that if I'd said in my defence that he had scripted and directed this bleak pantomime, I would have lost that case.

Still, now I had a crisis on my hands. Because sitting opposite me in my bedroom, sobbing uncontrollably, Crockett was saying, "Can you go and phone my mum? Tell them to come and get me."

I remembered reading about how to deal with a bad acid trip in a student survival manual. What was essential was reassurance. The pharmaceuticals amplified every wrinkle in the psycho-situation, and the means to pull things back was to fabricate a sense of safety, support and normality. At the expense of truth, if necessary. What they believed was happening to them, wasn't. And you had to make them believe that something else,

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something better, or more ordinary, was. Or would be soon. So I said, "Okay."

I went into the hall, lifted the handset and depressed the phone-hook. "Hello," I said. Pause. "Hello, yes, Mrs Campbell? Yes, it's Connor's friend, Roddy, from the band. Connor is here... No, no, no, he's fine, he's with me and..." so on. I paced out the dialogue. Crockett would overhear the concerned conversation and know that his mum now knew what was happening, would understand, and be on her way to collect him. We'd both sit waiting, talking. The mood would lift and as the effects wore off and he relaxed, we would crash out and wake the following morning, salvaged from the wreckage of the night.

I put the phone down, went back into my room and sat on the bed. Still sobbing but now with a hopeful-dog expression he hiccupped, "Did you phone?" "Aye, I did. You heard me. They're on their way." He looked at me straight. And then, with a cold look and a hard edge to his voice, he said, "You *never* fucking phoned," and stood up and headed for the telephone.

I threw myself between him and the door. Took him by the shoulders, looked at him straight and said, "Crockett, it is after four o'clock in the morning and you are off your face on booze and drugs. Now, what are your folks going to say when you tell them that, or they figure it out? And what about me? Because one thing's for sure, it'll be my fault and you won't be coming back into Glasgow or going to gigs again any time soon. Goodbye to all that."

His expression changed as dramatically as if a prosthetic mask had been whipped off his face. He now wore a look of utter shock, collapsed back into his chair, put his face in his hands, leaned forward and said, "Oh fuck. Oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck." He looked up at me, his eyes wet and shining with gratitude. "Oh fuck man, I love you."

All Those Moments Will Be Lost

It brings to mind the rain-soaked monologue by the dying replicant in *Bladerunner*: “I have seen things you people would not believe... All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain.”

But it was not time to die yet.