

David King

This flash fiction piece is written from the perspective of a modern-day "King David". It explores themes of addiction, human psychology, desire, narcissism, religion, tragedy, and acceptance.

I used to be a cocaine addict.

For nearly three decades, I stumbled and tripped through a murky, yet affable darkness. The giant whose shadow I'd ensconced myself with was both charming and precarious. It took bravery to resist him. To look him in his black, provoking eyes and pull the trigger. When he finally fell, the ground I stood on crumbled and cracked. He almost buried me. But I severed his head. I put it on a pike and left it for the buzzards. Sayonara.

I used to hate women.

I am not proud of this by any means. It's my mother's fault. I think Freud and I would've got on famously. After all, Mother is a boy's introduction to the wondrous world of women. It's difficult then, if at an early age, your mother proves to be deceptive and cruel. It took years to relinquish the hatred I had for women, and for her. I am reluctant to admit this, but I

mistreated every female who entered my life. Now, I fear, I will die alone. Perhaps I deserve it. Who knows? Only God knows.

I used to believe in God.

I prayed fervently. I worshipped regularly. Dancing daily in the streets, arching my back, protruding my chest towards the heavens. He and I were inseparable. I suppose you could say I was a man after his own heart. That was until my son, my golden one, was snatched away by an intruder. An intruder I am still trying to understand, and I'm not convinced I ever will. How is it that God helped my grandmother find a new apartment, yet he ignored the cries of an infant? My infant? Perhaps I'm just being narcissistic. But then again, perhaps not.

I used to be a musician.

A singer. A painter. A poet. It's always intrigued me – creating art. It's magic in its truest sense. Invisible, non-tangible ideas, drawn from the frigid depths of an atom-less psyche. Transformed into something physical. Something with molecules. Something which can be observed, measured, experienced, repeated. Something that matters. Perhaps there's a reason we find Magi in the word Imagination. Words are fascinating. I mean, did Jews invent Jewellery? Now I'm just being ridiculous. As a proud descendent of the tribe of Judah, I apologize...

I'd prefer to begin my tale with the day I met Beth – my ex. Like all exes, she marked the center of my universe. She held more buried treasure in her pinky than any other woman I have ever known. Regardless of our relationship failing, and contrary to what you may have read in the newspapers, we were meant for each other. My corpse will be carted to the mortuary believing that to be so.

The year was 1993. I was living in a penthouse apartment off King St. West. It was mid-July. The air was muggy and dense. I had a breathtaking view of the city. I mean, I could see everything. What I saw that day was unforgettable. A woman, not a day over twenty, swimming in her roof-top pool. Hair: poker-straight, and black. Figure: voluptuous, but firm. She was sculpted by the gods for Christ's sake.

I was close enough to see her bronzed-skin glisten, yet far enough to avoid any blemishes. She was perfect. And, after touring with my band for over a year, I had seen my share of gorgeous women.

Observing her bob, dip, paddle, stroke, back and forth, like some aquatic goddess my mind was made, I had to have her. No matter the cost.

Within forty-eight hours I had her name, her apartment number, her shoe size. I knew where she got her cappuccino; I knew her brand of cigarettes, even her favourite meal.

When you're a rising star, people tend to be drawn to you. I was blowing through copious amounts of cocaine, spending lavishly. The people around at the time, I liken them to corns and bunions—they were always at my feet. They'd do anything I asked, so long as I kept them fueled and fed.

I remember hearing an interview with David Bowie; he was discussing his experience living in Los Angeles—how easy it is to be served in that town. Any thing, any time, at your service, sir. That's how it was for me as well. When I set my sights on something, it wasn't long before I had it. However, with regards to Beth, there was a slight problem. She was married.

So, I had her husband murdered. Seriously. For one gram of cocaine and a bottle of blended Scotch, his throat was slit, and he was left in a heap. His entire history leaking out of his body, seeping into the tarmac. Every laugh. Every quarrel. Birthdays. Bar-Mitzvahs. All of it.

Eliminated.

My execution is now scheduled for April 5th, and I feel that I am ready. A man such as I will inevitably find it difficult to fathom nonexistence, but I suppose this is due to narcissism. For out of the billions of humans on this cruel planet, more than ninety percent are blissfully unaware that I ever was. Why then should it be so inconceivable, so harrowing for *me* to accept?

I now realize the ego is an illusion. There is no tiny man between my ears or behind my eyes. Perhaps when we awaken to this fact, when we willingly sacrifice ourselves, it is *then* we can truly transcend, rise and live forever. When one accepts, they are not a separate entity, that underneath it all, boundaries are nothing but a figment of the imagination, that humankind is a product of the cosmos, not a foreigner rotting apart from it, well then, it is quite impossible to ever really disappear, isn't it? And, therefore, Robert Plant had it when in a shrill falsetto he wailed: 'All is one and one is all'. It is in realizing *this* that we can finally ascend on our stairway to heaven.