

**An Old Friend Turned  
Mikey Garrett**

## **Betting Man**

If I was a faithful man, I'd hope to  
find some Indian Paintbrush so that  
I'd have an excuse to engage. I'd see  
her flower as an ordained sign that  
I'm headed in the best direction. I  
found no flower, but hope remains.

If I was a betting man, it would depend  
on what kind of buzz I had. At that dive  
bar, worriless, I syncope back onto the  
sticky leather next to her. A pitcher of  
sour golden courage sits before us,  
lubricating our affection for the other.  
If a wager was possible I would have  
put it all on her, confident in the years  
of our long dance meaning something.

Then again, I do not gamble, I have no  
faith, and I rarely drink. So, I march on.

## **Drunk Love**

Skiing while buzzed, we raced down at sunset.

*If we met right now, I'd like you a lot.*

Jamiroquai plays over the headset

and her magnetic pull on me is taut

the sour of cheap beer on her breath I learn

tastes better on Milly, than it does at home.

With both of our brothers, I must adjourn

to days without her choking monochrome.

Paint chips stuck to my back while the billiards

table predicts fate with a loss so near

to show my affection, worth a milliard,

I must choke down all that imported beer.

But without the aid of this drink so felt

my heart would stay hard, unable to melt.

## **Girl, Dumb**

The IPA's sour holds in my throat while  
her sister-in-law's clay gift is wrapped  
in my hand. The same sister-in-law who—  
with a buzz—begged me to marry her.

Incense in her hair and ragged climbing  
pants. Am I hiking for her or for myself?  
Two figures awkwardly maneuvered  
a promise that this dance will continue.

A roadmap is pressed up against my eyes  
and her name written large is violently  
scribbled out. There are years of data for  
our equation but it's just not adding up.

## **I Do Not Love, Love**

My father dies in his basement on his  
248<sup>th</sup> football game, 2<sup>nd</sup> divorce, and 8<sup>th</sup> big break up.  
My mother and stepfather bicker and  
poke over how to load the dishwasher,  
while my brother and sister-in-law barely  
know each other and my friends all cry  
behind smiles, next to their new, shiny brides.

I am not in love with love like many of my contemporaries. I do not get  
drunk  
off her, nor have I gone great lengths to find her dancing within myself like they all did.

And I question if I have what it takes  
to be the kind of artist who will commit,  
friend who will listen,  
husband who will sacrifice,  
father who will be patient,  
man who will do what's right,  
  
if love is something that I do not love.

## **Begrudged Teetotalism**

On a good day, news not wanted found me  
while my friends' wives eagerly ask of her  
and I paint a tough face that will then blur  
like the echo of her when by the sea.

Now because of her hills, I long to flee  
back to the bottle of nearest liquor  
so I can bark 'no! go back as you were,'  
back with no buzz when I thought I was free.

But I admit that my clean and true way  
is due to my sad lack of sand and stones  
so I teetotal in sour disarray  
with a new ache settled into my bones  
that wasn't there at the start of this day.

Now I try to march on, feeling each groan.

## **I Have Been That Man**

Regrettably, I have been that man.

'Twas not a way assumed by me;

It is he from whom I ran.

Rueful nights slip out the can

with that sour dance mislabeled glee.

Regrettably, I have been that man.

Acid flew, against my plan and

I've built a heart free from thee.

It is he from whom I ran.

When starved visions of her began

I loosened up on jaded memory.

Regrettably, I have been that man.

My legacy's failure aggressively overran

that innate break beneath the willow tree.

It is he from whom I ran.

With pine and desire that greatly span,

slipping into drunken syncope.

Regrettably, I have been that man.

It is he from whom I ran.