— A FISTFUL OF —

Short Stories

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A C I D
TEST

Spiral. Foresight's glimmering outliers. Denial.

Rain's rushing rapids repeating, suds on eyes on suds on spikes on suds. A spool of crimson-textured, hex-fixated fixtures, fixing for a fix, flies loosely. Deadly drowning dreamer deepens dread's creeping, fix her meagre fetid torpor sleeping.

Half-flown flags at full half-mast hail hole-pocked pucks of vestiges repeating, sickly princely poppy chunks upchucked at Flander's meeting. Old ned, King Kosher's witless witness, weeps awaiting whiplash, hands deceiving. Pickled beggars beg belief in barrels bouncing boisterous to the ceiling. On, and on, and on, and ever on. The freeze-dried climb burns holes in heaven's meeting, scars sublime in goose-stepped rows retreating down the wold, but never leaving.

Skin sacks, parched for liquor, lap at lacquered hazmat tanks before the gangplank, lacking Agent Purple's rigour. Sink once, sink vast, sink soil-slumped as a worm. Twilight calling meekly. Anointed crawlers, all, and wed to creeping. Mopping Mother Mercy's cold, unbridled brow. Sapping sapling's sweetling seeping dew, ill-meant for feeding. Darkness clambers on.

And wraps his loose-lipped rhapsody, so coarse and dispossessed, rough-chopped, divested of all sweetness, round the cut-price plastic

seating. Sunburn's heel turn scorches Geiger's ration tin of mealworms. Air suffused with vitals, vitriolics, vagrants, salt piles. Smoking, smog-choked street poles. Sizzling sweetmeat steeples.

Rage's righteous ruin, in the age of righteous ruin.

Him for a penny, her for a pound, sin for the many, spiral round and round. Termites for the bakers, hangnails for the shed, if dread's what makes the makers, what might they make instead?

A field, dew-dripped and swollen, verdant hills of virtue's grace, grape-dappled, glinting on the vine. Wild herds of windmills, waving wantonly to warblers winging west to nest in thistles, pansy-flecked, perfumed with thyme. Great hosts of lakes, all teeming, troves of oaks between them, greener still than groves of rolling reeds beneath them, shoals of sights unseen, untold delights obscene in richness, life's grand yolk design.

Within whose eager roots a grieving troupe of skulls perform in line. With not a single soul to find.

whats, whys and hows

This short story was written as a form of litmus test for the author, using a structure in which words and ideas can flow as freely as the nib of a pen over paper. The combination of a loose style with the innate authorial desire for order creates, at least in theory, a lyrical narrative that bounces between the conscious and subconscious minds. If your mind could create with language the same way your hands can play with pencils, pianos and chisels, what would it make? What would these mental sketches tell you about the hopes, dreams and fears of the person that created them?

Conceived both as an ode to classic nonsense poetry like Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky", as well as an attempt to emulate the uncanny writing style of AI generators, whose efforts may one day render the entire artistic profession obsolete, Acid Test was an experiment in trying new things. I hope you enjoyed it, and maybe even consider writing one of your own someday.

Until next time, stay safe, stay kind, and as always, especially during these difficult times, remember to stay hydrated!