
this city is red

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Built on the bones of a thousand generations, this city is main street, each generation with its own stories told in back alleys and city core, hells kitchen, little chicago, with cracked blood filled sidewalks tell tales of broken bodies and defeated minds, nightmares released with each bottle emptied, inhaling a bag full of poison with visions, just to live another day, muting out the voices that hold your memories and enemies, this city is red, north end country song red, a promise followed down from a northern road, seeking a dream armed only with hope, walking down portage to wolseley to st. james then north again, with the same answer, no room, no job, don't bother me, I'll call the cops, shoulders lowered we carry on, finding solace in a pipe full of dreams, watching a liquid filled needle enter vein, fill with blood then empty again, spinning, spinning, always out of control, the room goes round and round, it doesn't seem so bad now, there's always tomorrow, a brighter happier day ahead, these are only dreams, we can't fly, this city is red, full of lies, deceit and false promises, full of fumbling stumbling young suburban men in fancy cars with fancy ideas, full of hate and venom, they cruise selkirk, low track, higgins and main in the cover of darkness, they hunt the weak and the poor, who spit out your semen and take your cash, but they leave a little bit of themselves in you, regardless of your misplaced anger, you disgust yourself, they know you'll be back, your hate doesn't disguise your need, this city is red, it can be ugly and beautiful at the same time, pure white snow of winter hides the needles and the pain, sound of the drum, muted by the walls, regalia of colour flash across a gymnasium floor, the song echoes off the walls, slips through the crack of the door, the song echoes off the walls and travels down main and selkirk, west to st. james, bouncing off portage to tuxedo, blinds closed to silence the drum, nothing

changes but the year, this city is red, ceremony red, silent witness to the past, held in darkness, rattling the bones that hold memories, rattle and drum speaks the old language, this song is older than this memory, voices whisper through the ghost dancer wrapped in blankets, he breaks free and speaks the old way again, this city is red, I can walk it at night, hidden in shadows, my footsteps echo yours, you walk/run to avoid your fear, that fear is me, daytime finds me invisible, you see what you only want to see, venting your rage in the local rag, haven't we paid enough, what more do they want, get a job, work like everyone else, an eyesore, better dead than red, this city is red, a colour divided only by imaginary borders afraid to cross, hiding our faces into ourselves, but some of us sneak across those invisible lines, we tell stories, we laugh, we cry, we heal, we dance, we sing, our heartbeat is the drum, we wake the bones that rattle your hate, this city is dirty, but it's farmer dirty, blowing in from the prairies, white skin browned by the summer sun, knows this land, they are my neighbours, this city hides its hate but we have felt it for so long, we know it's there, buried beneath the manicured lawns, behind the drapes, inside your gates, the shadows hold your fears, holding onto your lies, this city is red, main street red, white, blue sirens criss-cross its face, the hunter becomes the hunted, covering his tracks and scent with the stink of back alleys, no one ventures there after dark, we speak to ghosts that live there, dumped outside the city limits, we become bones, part of a forgotten story, one line in the pages of this city's past, filed away as a statistic, an unfortunate ending to a heartbeat, this city is red, a blood red history you have chosen to ignore and when you become dust, I will dance on your ashes, when the seed of a new flower blossoms, after your ashes have settled becoming one with the soil, I will dance again

sleeping with eyes wide open
mind wanders in and out
range of voices speaking in tongues
long thought lost buried in stone tablets
confusion within
no comprehension
sleeping with eyes wide open
fade in fade out
becoming blurred in my memory
where that first appeared
listing all my sins for all to see
unable to defend myself I sought penance in dreams
sleeping with eyes wide open
memories scattered
strewn haphazardly
fragments of life left behind
without rhyme or reason
swept beneath a dream
vision interrupted
imagination easily distracted
cobwebbed thoughts dust covered in the attic of my mind
sudden recognition of a familiar scent
between chance meetings on travels behind the Windsor
the music book marking the nights
losing ideas behind a haze of smoke
drifting between worlds
back alley paths littered with spent prophylactics
the soft footsteps and quiet moans
echo, echo, echo, echo
but the words of the song
remain within the walls of red city

and the freaks, gangbangers and wannabes crawl out of the 'burbs
into the neon lit background of a downtown thought abandoned
til you peel back the dirt and concrete
looking to score
and when you rise above the stink and smog
with self induced visions
one can see the distance without borders or horizons
leaving reality unimpeded
we walk the silent streets after the city sleeps
we sing
this city is red
this city is red
i know the trails hidden beneath the concrete paths
i listen carefully
when the moon is full
i still hear its heartbeat
and the chant is never forgotten
the old ones never left
they never stopped dancing
that beat that lies beneath the soil
is slowly waking
red city

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