

Shadow of Rage

I was out in the desert at night
on a two-lane highway, walking
I saw sand dunes on both sides of the road.

The sky was black, no stars.
Black storm clouds in the distance.
The ground was black.

Out in the distance
I saw a four-legged beast, hairy —
like a polar bear, but tan.
A man rode on its back.

He was bare-chested, gaunt yet muscular,
with a twisted grin
carved into a face that looked half-rotted
and half-mad.

His eyes burned with cruel intent,
and his skin clung to his bones
like parchment over wire.

He rode the beast
like a warlord from a nightmare,
wielding a long pole sickle
as if it were an extension of his rage —
coming for me.

I ran
I ran down the highway,
chased by shadow of rage.

Suddenly —
I was on a train,
a train out in the scorched desert night.
Outside, a storm churning in the sky,
and the earth below was black as pitch.

Burnt tree stumps — no branches, no leaves,
just charred —
even the sand was burnt.

Suddenly —
I was on the highway again,
running from the beast.

The road became a cage —
bars rising around me like a jail.

I kept running.
And then I came to the end of the cage
and realized I was trapped.

I ran back out,
hoping not to be caught
by the man on the beast.

I escaped.
I continued down the dark desert highway.

In the distance,
mountains rose against the horizon.
I kept going.

I saw a glimpse of light,
a city — possibly civilization.
I kept running.

I arrived,
standing outside of what looked like safety —
alone and uncertain.

It looked like a place of rest,
a place of peace,
a place where the man on the beast
could not reach me.

But I could not enter the city.
I saw no one. Was it empty?

I felt entering was by permission.
A payphone appeared nearby —
old, silent, waiting.

I picked it up and dialed,
hoping someone would answer.
I waited.

Would they let me in?

Clark Champ

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