

Forever Blowing Bubbles

By Kevin Limiti

–It’s been a long time since those days, I say, taking a drink.

Perfectly, cinematically, punctual, he nods his head, takes a shot. He looks the same, but different. No longer the guido he used to be, he now looks like just what he is: an ex-con.

This ex-con isn’t dressed stylish. He’s wearing a baggy sweatshirt and grey sweat pants, and he is chain smoking like crazy. I still can’t get over how people get caught up in that filthy habit. I should speak. I inhale tar when I’m with friends, but only with friends. It’s social suicide, done communally for the most part.

Silence; I have to say something. We used to act so tough back in those days, I say, laughing. That’s right, laugh, I think. Laugh as if something was funny.

The ex-con shakes his head.

–I’m not like that anymore.

Just on cue, he takes another shot. In that aspect, we are the same; never thirsty; always drinking. Just like back in high school. Drink from 12 to 12, and then I go home and sleep. That was everyday; but then I grew up. Somewhere it hit me. It never hit him, apparently, until he was locked up. He licks his lips.

–I ain’t so tough.

No, you’re not. No tougher than I was or any of our gang. In the end, we were just teenagers with a criminal streak.

–So what now? What is left, now that you’re out of jail? Are you going to rob more people? Are you going to get a job? Are you going to go back to school?

–I don’t even know what I’m going to do now.

Then his mouth quivers, and he cries.

And now it’s my turn to take a shot. I pat him on his shoulder. I say to him in a false English accent, Don’t worry, mate. We’ll figure out something fir yeh.

I’m drunk and thinking about Green Street Hooligans, forever blowing bubbles in the air; meaningless violence, alcohol, and, least importantly, soccer. We used to beat people up just for the fuck of it. Why not? When you go home with all your bent up frustrations, what else are you going to do? Hang out in White Castle? I like to take all my problems, and imagine it’s a face. Then I put that face on someone I don’t like. Then I stomp that face repeatedly, and the problem goes away; for a little bit. Sometimes the scars are permanent.

And then the song plays, I guess that this is growing up, and I suddenly want a time machine. Then I think about it again, and I change my mind.

Outside the bar, we are fucked up. The ex-con is worse. He can’t stand straight, so I try and hold him up but I’m stumbling all over the place too. The streets are dark and empty. He suddenly starts to sing:

*I’m forever blowing bubbles
 Pretty bubbles in the air
 They fly so high, they reach the sky
 And just like my dreams they fade and die*

Then he raises his hands up in the shape of a V. I do the same and join in:

*Fortune's always hiding; I've looked everywhere
I'm forever blowing bubbles, Pretty Bubbles in the air!*

UNITED! We clap three times rhythmically UNITED!

We are not English. We don't even like soccer. We pay no attention to the lyrics. We don't even need to. It's not even a song anymore, it's a battle cry. It doesn't matter what the context, or even where it came from. We adopted it, so this is what it is.

That's how I remember it. That's how everyone remembered it.

Finally, the ex-con says something.

–Maybe we were always chasing things that we could never catch.

And I say with a drunken slur: Dude, we can have it if we want. But we're not gonna get it by beating up rich kids and stealing people's money. Let's just chill for now.

Suddenly I want another beer. Suddenly I want another cigarette. Suddenly I want to smoke some grass. Suddenly I want to go home and write everything that just happened down.

When I say goodbye to him, it's a warm embrace. A manly embrace, if you will. No homo because, of course, if you express anything that even remotely resembles affection, you are a faggot. I ask him if he's okay and he says yes. I don't believe him.

–Take it easy man.

I go home. I open up the fridge. I drink another beer. I roll a joint and I smoke it. I sit at the computer and I type up a story about somebody just like me.

And I hope he reaches the age of 20.

Kevin Limiti is a 19 year old writer, who has been published for flash fiction and short stories in several magazines and has a monthly music column on Damngoodtunes.com. He lives in Lynbrook, New York.