

Cheap Perfume

He woke up on a Sunday morning, what a way to end the week,
Rubs his eyes and yawning and feels the futures looking bleak
His head divorced his pillow, tries to focus through the gloom
A chink of sunlight through the curtains illuminates the room.

His hand it ventured forwards unprotected by his quilt
Not really wanting to be parted from the sheets of silk
He had to shake temptation, couldn't stretch one single minute
Forgetting all contemplation, to stay in this sorry pit.

Picked up his crumpled T-shirt from the pile on the floor
Still carrying the odours of the wild night before
The stench of stale ale, the smell of cheap perfume
How similar to the scent of the other in the room.

His jeans lay in the corner on the far side of the room
Disregarded in a hurry to the dark side of the moon
His recollections hazy, dribs and drabs keep creeping in
But the time scales going crazy and understanding's looking slim.

He stood up straight and upright, stretching his arms over his head
Trying so hard, not to disturb the other in the bed
Silent fell his footsteps, the cushioned carpet masked the sound
To his denim leggings, he found his feet were bound.

In the darkened corner he sat down on his butt
Pushed his feet right through the leg holes and pulled them on as he stood up.
That's when he first noticed the patch between his toes
That would be hidden in the shadows if the contrast didn't oppose
Its substance felt quite tacky, like he'd dipped his toes in glue
And a voice inside his mind whispered. Where are your socks and shoes?

His eyes surveyed the darkness that shrouded most from sight
And looking to the curtains, he thought, I need a bit more light.
Once more he crossed the bedroom, trying not to make a sound.
Dancing his way round shadowed objects, thrown neglected on the ground,
Until he reached the window, that was blacking out his world
Knowing all would be revealed once the curtains were unfurled.
Taking hold of one of the curtains, between his fingers and his thumb
Slowly letting in the sunlight, its glow sweeping round the room.

Like a rabbit in the headlights, he stopped dead in his tracks
His heart pounding so fast, it was sure to attack.
Once shrouded in the darkness, but now standing out so clear
Magnolia seventies woodchip, covered in crimson smears.
The glare of the light made him squint his eyes tight, until they were almost closed
But through the gap between his lashes, he could see the crimson on his clothes.
He had to work out what happened, had to piece together facts,
Put them into an order that weren't quite so abstract.

He had met up with his friends about a quarter to eight,
They had started early and he'd started late,
So they were on a level and he wasn't quite there,

For some unknown silly reason he had started to care.
He hadn't taken much convincing, from some bloke in the pub
And was soon leaving the toilets giving his nostrils a rub,
With his new found vigour, he was owning the place
Crazy staring eyes, filling the holes in his face,
Finds he's talking bullshit to everyone that he meets
Acting like a celebrity to the strangers he greets.
But everything's blurry, blank spaces are scary,
Just what had he done while he was away with the fairies?

Wait. There was music and people were dancing,
Some of them so close they were almost romancing,
And a face in the crowd had a big bag of pills,
He'd thought he might have one or two for a thrill
He had parted with his money, buying three for ten quid,
Took one straight away with the beer he swigged.

Then somebody's shooting, bang and flash from a gun,
And everyone is screaming and everyone runs,
Hustle and bustle and shouting demands,
"Take care of what I've just put in your hands".
And there in his hand is the big bag of pills,
And he's stood in a club where someone got killed.

He needed an exit, but the doors were surrounded,
So he'd shoved the pills down his undies and trousers,
Put his head down and tried to look indiscreet,
Keeping his eyes on his quickening feet,
Once he was outside he would just run away,
Except "You. Come with me", he'd heard a voice say,
The voice had an odour, the scent of perfume,
The fragrance he could now smell in the room.

Recollections of kissing by the fire escape door,
Running through clutter on the back alley floor.
A queue for a taxi and someone pushed in
And while men were fighting they quietly slipped in.

Travelled by cab, destination unknown,
All the lights are on but nobody's home,
And the girl with the scent couldn't leave him alone,
Kissing his neck and pawing at his clothes.

She'd stopped the cab, she'd tapped on the glass,
Suddenly, everything's going too fast.
They were outside a house, and she's telling him "wait",
He's alone in the taxi and she's gone through the gate.

The driver's impatience, written on his face,
But no one was happy at having to wait.
Something was missing, something was wrong
Grasping at his pockets to find everything's gone.

He's out on the pavement, with a driver in his face,
Shouting and waving all over the place.
Looked down at his bare wrist, that's how he'd covered the cost
Gave the driver his watch and told him to get lost.

Then he'd gathered his bearings and calculated the risks
More substance enhanced than chronically pissed.
He'd had to turn right at the end of the street,
Pass through a couple of dodgy areas being quick on his feet,
Then everything went black and he was fighting for breath,
Falling over backwards, he was nearing death.

An engine was running he could hear its sound,
He was laid on his side, but not on the ground,
The space was really tight, there was no room to spin,
His knees tucked up restricting, under his chin.

Screaming from the lungs when he felt a break in the motion
Hoping a passer by may hear his commotion.
The movement had stopped so he had shouted loud,
Remembered the clicking of a boot lid, then again he'd blacked out.

He was in a house, tied up tight to a chair
Face to face with a large man with too much facial hair,
And he was wanting his pills or he was wanting his cash,
And he was sitting there accused of taking the stash.
He was feeling a fear that made him feel sick,
From the bottom of his stomach, way down in the pit.
Wishing he could be anywhere, but here in this place,
As the hairy, angry man, shoved a gun in his face.

Just as he was convinced he was about to die,
A movement in the shadows caught the corner of his eye,
And a smell was emanating from somewhere deep in the gloom,
The same familiar scent of the same cheap perfume.

He recalls he was shouting, he knew she was there,
She should be the one that was tied to the chair.
It was her that had robbed them and taken their stash
Along with his wallet and all of his cash.

A bright, blinding flash, but there he remain
No bang from the gun or bullet in his brain,
A switch had been flicked, crisp lights lit the scene,
Now he knew where he was, if not where he'd been.
In his own living room, tied to his own chair,

The hallway behind him led to his own stairs,
And laid on his sofa, her hands bound with flex,
Was the cheap scented woman, bleeding and distressed,
And the man with the gun and the over grown chin
Was barking out orders, the future looked grim.

There in his bedroom, at the end of his bed,
Smelling cheap perfume, whilst covered in red,
Standing where he'd knelt only hours before,
He and the woman both knelt on the floor,
Crying like a baby and begging to live,
Promises to say nothing, and money to give,
Whatever he's done, he'll take it all back,
Pain in his head and everything's black.

He's alive on Sunday morning though not understanding how
Not quite understanding what he should be doing now,
That was when he spotted the barrel of the gun,
Poking from the duvet and he had nowhere left to run.
Frozen to the spot, he thought of bolting for the door,
When he found his voice and shouted, "I can't take any more".

Everything was silent, there came no harsh reply
Nobody was moving and no bullets had to fly,
Not even a reaction from the woman in the bed,
The one under the duvet with the cheaply perfumed scent.

Quickly he grabbed her cover, with one swing, swished it away,
And what had nearly been a lover, an empty shell left in its place,
Skin so cold and pail, a kind of yellow tinged with blue,
A hole between her eyes, where the bullet passed right through.
And the sunlight through the window had developed a blue flash,
He doesn't know how he got here or when his dice was cast,
Couldn't see an option, he nowhere left to turn
No promises to judges about the lessons he had learned.
With a smile on his face he saw his last way out
Put his finger on the trigger and the barrel in his mouth.
His final thought it vanished as the gunshot filled the room,
You should never trust a woman if she's wearing cheap perfume.

By Lee Haigh