

Echoes of Madness

by

D. H. Wilhight

I

Damp, cold, dark, death.  
And this is hell.  
No, no fire as you know it  
(or as you thought)  
but a quieter fire  
that consumes only vital delicate parts  
Heart, Mind, Soul.  
This is Hell  
not as you thought.

Death ended my dying.  
What use is pain if there is no feeling  
no suffering?  
Opium's son raped me  
took my manhood  
sucked my life blood thru needle straws.  
And I fell in love.

"Here, have you seen the man?  
The man with the boy.  
I got to find him. Yeah.  
I got to git that boy.  
Got to giiiit hiiiim!"

II

It's really no secret.  
I was murdered.  
Of course, it'll never stand up in court  
Can't prove I ever lived.  
Witness? Witness?  
Momma? Daddy?  
(Dead, and still more deaths to die.)

Silence in death  
Can't hear me S-C-R-E-A-M-I-N-G.  
"Stop! Not here!  
Go away! Run, fool!"

Dying ears are weak.  
Death voices: SILENT.  
They follow.

This is no way to be  
So dead, deeply buried  
hid from heaven's eye  
by concrete walls and iron bars  
outasight, outamind  
alone, estranged, helpless.  
This is death.

No humanity here, no humans  
I know nothing of this existence.  
Who/What am I?  
78392, 5'10", 155 lbs.  
Hair, black and receding.  
Glasses. Negro (Blk).  
Sentence: 12 to 40 years.  
Who/What am I?  
Nobody knows my name.  
This ain't human.  
This is Hell.

My cellie sucks up all the air  
I'm suffocating.  
Tight.  
No room to breathe  
can't waste space  
too many to accommodate  
crowded  
tight  
no air in hell.

III

Hi baby,  
No matter how long you're away  
I'll be true to you and wait.  
I luv you and nothing will ever change this.  
I just wish we were married.  
Luv,  
Stella.  
P.S. Your son started walking today.

Dear Stella,  
Time changes things.  
I've learnt to accept that which I cannot change.  
It's been years  
since I last heard from you.  
I understand that you're married now.  
Best wishes.  
As always,  
Dannye  
P.S. Does my son know that I'm his real father?

IV

Nights.  
Loveless, lonely  
Empty dreams  
Fading memories  
Dry tears  
Silent screams  
Prayers to a dead god.

(How often have I called you  
Softly, in night's yearnings.  
And you - temperamental -  
not always calling back.  
I want to be with you  
embrace and feel your warm breasts  
against my heart  
kiss and move into your deeper heat.  
Move with me  
Move wi..ith mm..me  
I'm forgetting how  
Make me remember  
I'm a man. I'm a man  
It's natural to want you  
Yes, it's been so long.  
So long.)

Mornings.  
Night images fade  
I wake, exhausted.  
Long nights of luvng.  
Feel the emptiness you left.  
Dream woman, I luv you.

V

Dear son,  
Your momma & me tried to raise you rite  
& put the fear of God in you  
But you wdn't take heed  
& the devil made you sin.  
I hate to see you like you are,  
all caged up.  
But I can't help you.  
Put your trust in the Lord  
Read the Bible, & pray  
God can do anything but fail.  
Luv,  
Your daddy  
P.S. Your sister got saved today.

Dear dad,  
I understand why U & Momma  
did what U did in raising me  
And, tho it wd be easy,  
I don't hate U for it.  
Being of existentialist persuasion, philosophically,  
and for all practical intents & purposes,  
god is dead.  
No, the devil didn't make me say that.  
As always,  
Your sun.  
P.S. What are you saved from?  
Who is the devil?  
You are all so confused?

Above  
Invisible against nebulous ceilings  
Patrolling the perimeter  
Peering down thru cross.  
Hairs.  
Arrogant condescension.

Not human  
They have tails of oak  
growing from their sides  
heavy, red.  
From my last misery.  
Sad isn't it?  
Zoo keepers are mad.

Protect me from the greater insanity.

Sadists, I luv you.

Do you know him?  
The devil.  
In time you will.  
Hell is vast engulfing.  
"Stop! Not here!  
Go away! Run, fool!"  
YOU ARE ALL SO CONFUSED.



### Biography of Poets

Imamu Abdul Andemosi Malik "born g. l. bond, march 18, 1951; died january 1971. reborn imamu abdul-malik." He is a native of Toledo, Ohio, where he had high school education. He has also attended various institutions as an undergraduate, including Howard University and Toledo University. He is a poet, essayist, journalist, and playwright. His creative works have been published in various anthologies. Presently he is director of "The Freedom Movement," a black theater ensemble. He is also editor of a monthly newsletter, the HABARI. At the moment, he is "doing time" at the Mansfield State Reformatory for armed robbery and also serving time for a Federal youth corrections act.

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D. H. Wilhight was born December 5, 1948, in Middletown, Ohio where he attended high school, graduating in 1966. Since then, he has had undergraduate education in various institutions like Miami, Wilmington and Ashland. Presently, he is an inmate at the Mansfield State Reformatory serving 10-25 years for armed robbery, and 2-15 years for possession of heroin. His works have appeared in various collegiate anthologies.

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