

“By the Winged Feet of Hermes”

Description



By Joseph Buller

By the Winged Feet of Hermes: A Tale in Two Parts

Part One:

Oh, such horrors,
I shall bestow upon you all this night!
A tale of fear, sorrow, joy and loss.
The fear of my own life,
The sorrow of humanity,
The joy of survival,
And the loss of innocence.

You are correct,
Purveyors of my impending doom.
This night, I shall relay my survival
Aboard the economy carriage
On the Victorian Country train-line!

First, I've to purchase my fare,
But not for the train ride alone, no.
This fare is that which is paid to the ferryman,
So that I may cross over with my soul intact.
Oh, if only that were so!

I stumble on my own foul words,
'A ticket, please sir, for the five-thirty train.'
My hesitation apparent, the ticket master,
Master of tickets corrects me, 'Thirty-five.'

'Pardon, sir?' I query, yet to pay.
'The train leaves at five thirty-five.'
His dominance, like that of the fabled Mr. Grey,
Is earth shattering, but alas, no pleasure envelopes me.
Could this man be God? On an office-stool throne?
If so, then his angels adorn buttoned shirts and navy slacks,
Serving food on 'B' carriage.
I may be wrong.

Regardless, I pay and board the railed shuttle.
Shuttle? Am I to reach the stars?
Or do I get off at Birregurra?
My ticket announces a departure at Melbourne.
My journey to the stars must wait.

What is this? A letter and number,
Coinciding with a carriage and a seat.
I am an honourable man, therefore I shan't stray,
And take my rightful place at B53.
(SILENCE)
Who are you? Are we both to share this chair?

This cannot be true, I insist,
'Sir, this seat belongs to me, as says my parchment!'
With a heavy heart, he vacates the position
I had been allocated.

I look closer, his hat,
This young man's hat,
Words. (Pause) 'Cocaine and Caviar',
Surely this cannot be a healthy diet.
I sit.

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Part Two:

I am surrounded by other weary travellers,
Partaking in this unrelenting quest,
And as seats that were once claimed,
are taken by their rightful heirs,
My surroundings change.
Old faces make way for new.

Each face floods my environment
With individual personas.
I spy a young lady, my pardons,
I hear a young lady, her monologue,
Endless and without pause.

Another deep in cellular discussion,
Analysing the story of her dear mother,
Hinting at a possible return,
To a corrective institution.

I check how much time has passed,
By the winged feet of Hermes! Five minutes!
Another three hours await me.
I search for a distraction on the passing horizon,
To aid me in my journey.

(SILENCE)

Perhaps I shall rest my eyes altogether,
As I recline, my limbs ensnare my belongings,
To prevent the theft of my premium leather wallet wielding my savings and identity.

As I drift, I awaken again to the sound,
Of another passenger entering our carriage.

The raw sound of the engine penetrates my lobes.
Oh, this cannot be.

Void of hope, I stare deep in the abyss,
Frequently subject to the sounds of others.

The breathless one continues until her stop,
The young man,
Mr. Caviar and Cocaine,
Disappeared not long after I sighted him,
Maybe the catering cart was not satisfactory.

I know not more of the convict parent,
Though her daughter left alongside me,
Our into the skyline of Melbourne City,
Void of space, and old faces.

(PAUSE)

I'm sorry, that is too poignant,
Even for me.
But I shall never return by economy,
At least till tomorrow's evening.

There, dear listeners, take heed,
And learn from my mistakes,
Your sanity only costs a few dollars more,
The same amount to upgrade to first class.

You can return to our story on Joseph Buller here.

Category

1. General

Tags

1. ballad
2. By the Winged Feet of Hermes
3. Joseph Buller
4. poem
5. poetry
6. speech

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