

Shady Gate

Ferron

When I was young the mom next door would have tea at our house and she said her heart was broke and she told me that life was based on faith in the Evermore but me I was always trying to find a way to get a dime and go outside and play. It was pretty weird my childhood years, especially with the transference of those dreaded adult fears that I remember a song the moms would sing and we'd sing along...

"If you go through that Shady Gate
Have someone near who is for you
Someone who will not mind to wait
As you go slow through shady gate."

He left my mom when I was ten. She said she didn't give a damn...that they'd never amount to anything and they woke me up one night in the middle of an awful fight and I heard him yell 'What about my needs?' and her hiss back "Why don't you wake up all the neighbours too but please just leave me be, another kid would finish me" and in the morning while I ate my cereal he left...I didn't look so I didn't see...and she got a better job in the new department store and me I had to rush right home from school and feed the kids...they didn't ask about him much.

But I asked her once about 'Shady Gate'. It was late one night whiel we were hanging out the laundry and she said that Shady Gate was when sweet time won't wait, it's like when a choice gets made like a deck been laid and maybe the sun will shine or maybe it won't at all but whatever is coming for you you get to have it all. And I wanted to ask her then exactly what he'd meant by 'needs' but we had to rush inside the winter made her fingers split and bleed.

And he knocked upon the door before my next birthday and my mom looked real upset and she sent us out to play and when we came back in it looked like she'd been crying hard and him he tried to hug us then and he said he loved us all. He said, "Anything you want all you have to do is say" and my mind raced to the brand new pair of jeans I'd seen at school that day but you know that night when we slept the monsters didn't come and I dreamt we sang the song out loud only this time with a drum...

"If you go through that Shady Gate
Have someone near who is for you
Someone who will not mind to wait
As you go slow through Shady Gate"

...I like the way you held your head and how you

muttered right out loud...the things you said...you
were so serious and I didn't believe at first you
saying
there was still some place you had to go and still
something you had to know. "Well, wash your face"
my good friend tells me and "Clean your house in
troubled times"...I must admit it helps an awful lot to
go on loving what you love you see I've even trained
my mind, I'm not afraid to look behind. It's a cool
night
falling with the night birds calling and I dare not
wonder where you be. But it's times like this I wish I
had a line to mother love or even just another word
for Eternity.