

The Best Of Times

Sage Francis

It's been a long and lonely trip but I'm glad that I took it because it was well worth it.
I got to read a couple books and do some research before I reached my verdict.
Never thought that I was perfect. Always thought that I had a purpose.
Used to wonder if I'd live to see my first kiss.

The most difficult thing I ever did was recite my own words at a service realizing the person I was addressing probably wasn't looking down from heaven.
Or cooking up something in hell's kitchen, trying to listen in or eaves drop from some another dimension.
It was self serving just like this is.

Conveniently religious on Easter Sunday and on Christmas.
The television went from being a babysitter to a mistress.
Technology made it easy for us to stay in touch while keeping a distance, 'til we just stayed distant and never touched. Now all we do is text too much.

I don't remember much from my youth. Maybe my memory is repressed.
Or I just spent too much time wondering if I'd live to have sex.
Fell in love for the first time in 4th grade but I didn't have the courage to talk to her.
In 8th grade I wrote her the note but I slipped it in someone else's locker.

Considered killing myself 'cause of that.
It was a big deal. It was a blown cover.
It was over for me. My goose was cooked.
Stick a fork in me. The jig is up.
I blew my chances, the rest is history, our future was torn asunder.
It became abundantly clear that I was only brought here to suffer.

At least I didn't include my name.
Thankfully I wrote the whole note in code
and it had 10 layers of scotch tape safety seal making it impossible to open.
Plus, it was set to self destruct.
Whoever read it probably died...laughing.
I wonder if they lived long enough to realize what happened.

A year later, I came to understand that wasn't love that I was feeling for her.
I had someone else to obsess over.
I was older. I was very mature.
I forged my time signature while practicing my parents autograph 'cause I was failing math.
Disconnected the phone when I thought the teacher would call my home.

I checked the mailbox twice a day at the end of a long dirt road.
Steamed open a couple envelopes like I was in private detective mode.
If you snoop around long enough for something in particular you're guaranteed to find it.
For better or worse that's how I learned that it's best to just keep some things private.

It was the best of times. It was the end of times.

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I was always on deck, I was next in line.
An only child with a pen and pad writing a list of things that I could never have.
The walls in my house were paper thin.
Every squabble seemed to get deafening.
If my memory serves me correctly I made it a point to void and forget some things.
Probably to keep from being embarrassed.
Never meant to upset or give grief to my parents.
Kept my secrets...hid my talents...
in my head, never under the mattress.

Therapy couldn't break me.
Never learned a word that would insure safety.
So I spoke softly and I tip toed often.
The door to my room was like a big old coffin.
The way that it creaked when I closed it shut.
Anxieties peaked when it opened up.
As if everything that I was thinking would be exposed.
I still sleep fully clothed.

It was the best of times.

It was beautiful.
It was brutal.
It was cruel.
It was business as usual.

Heaven. It was hell.
Used to wonder if I'd live to see 12.

When I did I figured that I was immortal.
Loved to dance but couldn't make it to the formal.
Couldn't bear watching my imaginary girlfriend
bust a move with any other dudes.

Tone Loc was talking bout a "Wild Thang"
but I was still caught up in some child thangs.
Scared of a God who couldn't spare the rod.
It was clearly a brimstone and fire thang.

Pyromaniac. Kleptomaniac.
Couldn't explain my desire to steal that fire.
Now I add it to my rider.
Like "Please oh please don't throw me in that patch of brier!"

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The school counselor was clueless 'cause I never skipped classes.
Perfect attendance. Imperfect accent.
Speech impediment they could never really fix
and I faked bad eyesight so I could wear glasses.

Considered doing something that would cripple me.
I wanted a wheelchair. I wanted the sympathy.
I wanted straight teeth so then came braces.
4 years of head gear helped me change faces.

It was the best of times. It was the end of times.

Now I wonder if I'll live to see marriage.

Wonder if I'll live long enough to have kids.
Wonder if I'll live to see my kids have kids.
If I do I'm gonna tell 'em how it is.

"Don't listen when they tell you that these are your best years.
Don't let anybody protect your ears.
It's best that you hear what they don't want you to hear.
It's better to have pressure from peers than not have peers.
Beer won't give you chest hair. Spicy food won't make it curl.
When you think you've got it all figured out and then everything collapses...
trust me, kid...it's not the end of the world."