

The Herd, Under Pressure

"My dearest Grandma" was the way he always started the letter, it wasn't the only occasion he wrote to keep it together, "Thank you for the birthday present, it'll really come in handy I'm writing quietly, 'cause I hope you're not angry, Mum and Dad are yelling at each other, like every night, like every night, I end up locking my door and I write. Would you please be able to visit, and maybe make 'em make up? I'd hate to think that it was me that made my parents break up. Next year I'll be in high school, I'm pretty nervous, actually, though I know it's common, I don't want no broken family. It's my fault, and I don't like it here, and it's my fault, and now my little brother's in tears, and Gran, I hope you're not mad, I swear I'll try to be good, 'cause Mum and Dad'll get along much better when I'm being good"; signin' it, "Love, your Grandson";, quietly he stored it in the cupboard with the others, and tightly held his brother, he was...

Under pressure, I'm heating up.
Under pressure, calm, but it's all front.
Under pressure, boiling point has come...

Fast forward twelve years, and he's been out of home for seven, never really understood the way he carried it all with him, even years later, he hated things gettin' too heated, whole section of his history he tried to delete. New school, new city, reason justified his leaving, he couldn't leave his guilt seeing his mother's spirit beaten, she was bleeding, eyes streaming, he had to depart, frightened sunken-eyed kid became the life of the party, only been in town a term, social life like a soap star, still wrote his grandmother the occasional postcard, "Doin' fine, working hard";, he thought that she'd be relieved, and perhaps a little proud of all the things he'd achieved. HDs and team captain, a prize in his class, a string of love affairs, but never close enough to see the scars, kept the cards to his chest, stressed to less and conflict, between the lines, his Grandma, only one who heard his bomb tick, he was...

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"Child, I miss you greatly, haven't got many letters lately, I just wrote to let you know that it's OK to show when you're under pressure. Though I never really needed to explain this is true, I see a lot of your dear father when I'm looking at you. He worked hard, and enjoyed inebriation, and really, that's a trait that doesn't skip a generation. Once removed, I see clearer than most, dear boy, I see though your illusions, boy, all life's lessons are under pressure."

Now he's old enough to know better, looking through those old letters, that he's never sent, he's sure the past is omnipresent, he won't resent the sum total of experience, from delirious days, to some so serious. "Never got those letters, but be sure that I'm hearing this";. They're really just signposts, landmarks, clippings, some repetitive themes, like record players skipping. He has torn off the layers and always found something different inside him, tiny sparks like stars colliding, and they let him live again, he's never giving in, and without those few friends that always meant well, it might have never got to "all's well that ends well";,

pen fell, swiftly, why he's writing now is still a mystery,
has the feeling history forgotten tends to repeat,
so some nights before sleep, he writes to keep it in his sights,
and when it's close enough to touch, he lets fly,
just to get by, by any means, to walk the path of many dreams,
the penny seems to fall at the very last moment,
the ability to love is like the vast ocean,
and with lead-lidded focus, he writes the last lines of this one,
and signs off, "With love, your Grandson".