

The Quaker

By: Corey Lehman

A cold morning on the street across from The Cranthean Hall's frosted windows. Inside, a low rumbling heard through the ground. A low bass drum thump, on beat for all passersby to hear, all passerby except for one. A man who did not hear any such thumping. A man coldly situated on a bench at the end of the block. Just a building or two away from the commotion. From across the street he looked the part of a homeless man, whom had too much to drink. The man saw the rhythm emanating from the place down the street, but not the snow. He curled his arms into the thin plaid shirt he wore. Shaking from the shoulders down, he waited uncomfortably. The man carried something with him, a memento piece which may have explained his appearance. Overgrown 5 o' clock shadow with more grey than the frosted tips of his beard let on. His possession personified his appearance to be, at first sight of the ever-busy passerby, a starving artist. Judging as they did, onlookers guessed that the fidgeting man on the bench was a few nickels short of a dollar in all aspects of his life, but the guitar by his side was the only thing he ever kept in his possession that didn't, again presumably, get repossessed.

A cold wind swept up a violent mist of snow and ice particles and the man shuddered. The Cranthean Hall played a percussive orchestra of snow that battered its windows. The swirl of wind and cold pushed the deaf man to move. He was reluctant to do so when the vibrations were so close. The man heard no thoughts outside his own head, only felt the remnant voices of rhythm. The language he had learned, before he could read and write, he remained enclosed during times when he felt the stillness in the air. He listened with his skin, and on most days, his heart did the talking.

When he only moved to the places his mind declared real. Across the country or across the street. His reality remained restless when the sky bright world came out to play. His heart led him in the right direction, but his mind respectfully declined his heart's foolishness and often made the man on the bench move in the opposite direction. How he coped in his current reality, which had led him to The

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Cranthean, was to find the vibrations that matched his soul. When he heard the rumbling of instruments in tune. The man was happy. The vibrations eased his heartache and quieted his mind. He was allowed to see again and be in the stillness of the reality that depicted him as a starving artist as most would seem to deduce. The man lived for the rhythm and the harmony that seemed to fester and flourish. When the vibrations came alive, he did too. Out of the sun and in the elements. The man shivered and shook, all the while his mind buzzed along with the rhythms from the Cranthean hall.

The man rose from the icicle laden bench and walked down the street towards the Cranthean as the sun was giving away to the dark halls of space. The deaf man walked across the street, onto the sidewalk, as cars rushed by. The audience of The Cranthean Hall exited out into the snow drifts looking on towards the deaf man as he made his way past the parking lot. The absence of the rhythm felt like an insufferable punishment that pitted in his gut.

A booming crowd of applause erupted in the hall. The balcony shifted as the audience gave a standing ovation to the performance of "The Quaker: in C Minor". A wide roundabout stage in the middle of the auditorium flooded with house lights and the band rose to bow, Instruments at their sides. The composer who arranged the performance also turned his back toward the ensemble at his command and bowed. He carried an uncanny resemblance to the deaf man who lived for the vibrations. His attire differed, but the composer and the man outside fleeing the scene, shared the same mind.

They called him "The Quaker" because his arrangement with the same name had breathed life into the orchestral community. He was a man in exile from reality, save for the music in his mind. The music performed at the Cranthean mimicked the tune that the deaf man, who he really was, heard when his soul cried out. The Quaker escaped through the staff entrance of the Cranthean and did not look back. The cold had set a heavy mood in the outside air. The Quaker made his way around the

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building towards the parking lot across the street. A swelling audience appearing outside the entrance to the Cranthean Hall.

Poem

The deaf man heard no cheers for or against his ruin. He simply ran from his thoughts, subsequently, he ran from his world that could be turned upside down in an instant. The triggers hidden in the noises of his perception encumbered his world. He too felt the heaviness in the air, his world had quickly begun to warp, as if his skin were being penetrated by scars and nightmares. Heavy memories and the absent of his vibrational solace. A sudden urge to escape his inner turmoil, now being projected onto the world, by running as fast as he could.

The Quaker might see his fans in the crowd, the same crowds however, contain his enemy's screams that scorn him. To hear their words or read their lips is a difficult chore. Reality is unkind to the deaf

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man with an altering mind. The Quaker and the deaf man walked along the same path. The change in their perceptions, change inside them. The outside world is like a great opening of influence that alters the deaf man's mind. The deaf man seeks the vibrations in his heart that make his day bearable, but only earthquakes make the pain go away.

The Quaker approaches the shuddering man walking down the sidewalk, a tear in his eye. The plane of existence the Quaker and the deaf man walk exist without vibration in the air. The Quaker, now at the back of the deaf man fades into the visceral sheet of snow, combining with the deaf man's soul.

The day the deaf man sees the Quaker is the day they both die.