THE DECONSTRUCTED ANGEL

after Shane McRae

It all fell apart, makeshift didn't last long: rusty nails, glue and string, couldn't hold it together; neither could prayers from the faithful. Hard to know what angels have to do with belief anyway, they are more akin to ghosts and ghouls. I don't understand saints and angels, miracles and virgins; it all depends on smoke and choirs, the reflected soft warmth of icons.

The angel fell, the angel broke, the angel couldn't last. He was cobbled together, jerry-built, a metaphor for a country run by businessmen and clowns. God was put aside, it was power that everybody wanted. I thought I might do an interview, talk about Creation and the Fall, ask why the serpent was even there.

Were we always meant to grovel? Does the Supreme Being appreciate these awful songs, fancy-dress robes, po-faced public prayers? Deconstruct the angel and we are left with incense, sermons for the stupid, moist handshakes, maybe weak coffee after church.

This is what Spirit has moved us to become, forced us to believe: hooded racists shoot the blacks, businessmen cheat on their wives, murderers stand for president, liars have always won. We should allow gaps and silences in conversation, highlight the holes in conservative theology. God does not grant wealth or privilege, does not like guns or slavery, and isn't keen on liars and cheats.

We can talk all night, get nothing done, smile and march for peace. Sometimes the news makes me so angry I want to bomb them all to hell.

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rml@stridebooks.co.uk