

Jim Morrison Is Not Dead

by Kyle Hemmings

The old albino, skin like a pig's, handed out flyers. Jim Morrison is not dead. He's living in Emerson's cave.

In the mist we waited for him, women who lived at the foot of hills, women of all ages, pressed together like a stack of plates, our bellies full of frangipane or blueberries. Our hearts like tinsel. Around us was the milky sap of temple trees, their funnel-shaped existence. He's coming! cried the albino. There was a drizzle. I covered my head with a polyester hood.

At a good distance, he stood. Hair, gray, stringy, long as a horse's mane. His beard, thick, unkempt. Like a caterpillar, a smile worked across his face. No, he said. It won't be another Miami. Not another Miami.

Something stuck to my throat. The skin of a passion fruit. I hadn't eaten one for years.

He turned and his figure became a shroud. One by one, some of the women followed him.

I imagined.

They would invite him into their houses, feed him, fidget at the thought of stroking his skin. They would shed smiles and swap stories. For days, the women would walk in their houses on tip toes.

I returned home. My husband gone to work, my son at school. The house was empty. I picked up my son's mason jar of worms and packed dirt. He told me it was for a science project for school, but I suspected it was for something else. In the garden out back, I unscrewed the lid, let the worms fall, back into the earth.

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