

Wert Jones

Wert Jones looked so much like Bob Dylan
it was inevitable he'd act the part.
Silent and mysterious in school,
he'd suddenly pull a harmonica out of his back pocket
and sing an enthusiastic version of Three Blind Mice.
An audience would gather,
and he'd punctuate his bitter, spitten lines
with wailing blues harp riffs.

What is this guy doing in high school?
I asked myself.
A persona so accomplished and nuanced
he was ready for Vegas.

We'd see Wert high in a pine on Friday night,
our headlights picking up his mop of curls,
faded jeans and chukka boots,
throat open as he raved to the moon, raccoons, possums.
We'd howl at Wert, scream out our scorn and jealousy,
on the way to a keg party, looking for girls
with Farrah Fawcett hairdos and platform shoes.

It was surprising to learn Wert had family,
three seemingly sane older brothers
who looked nothing like him or Bob Dylan.
Three redneck construction workers
whose imaginations ran the gamut from beer to pussy.

I admired Wert for his willingness to stand out,
ignore the laughter, taunts and jeers.
What is this guy doing in high school?
we cowards wondered,
safe in the brain where we locked our thoughts.

Andy Roberts

Atlanta Review Fall 2016