

I already saw the news show,  
The new coup two days ago,  
Dead almost three centuries ago.  
A country in throes and–

*August*

A gust of wind speaks my name,  
*Srccchhhh* my pen rips through paper  
Aims right through inky words.  
The light flickers.

*Hey, kid!*  
*You're just like me!*

Like who?  
Has the dark of the night  
Finally consumed my mind?  
Frightfully, I look up

Dust dances in front  
Of the figure.

*Trust,*  
*I am not just in your mind.*  
*I am here, though not alive*

What do you want from me?

*Can't a guy*  
*Walk around his regular old haunts?*

I suppose.

*But I do have an important*  
*Message for you.*

What kind of presage is this?  
A warning from the other side?  
Who do I know who died?

*Now, now, don't close your eyes.*  
*If you'll allow me to say*  
*One thing more.*

*A soul, so marked with charcoal  
There's not much spark left  
Bereft, pell-mell  
In everything it does.*

*No escape.  
A shape,  
In the dusty distance,  
Headed for you to tell  
You to change.*

What?  
This is about me?  
You've come to talk as a banshee,  
To no degree you stop.

But I know who you are sir.

Inhale, a stare down.

I can't fathom  
How a phantom like you  
Has no clue  
What his self destructive tendencies  
Tend to do.  
And with that strong of an ego  
Thinkin that you're topshelf.  
The best of the best.

A ghost like you in my room  
Going *boom!*  
With his knows and his prose.  
No—

*Kid! You should hear yourself  
This is my warning to you,  
Exactly what you speak of.  
I may be an antique,  
But you misspeak.*

You're tongue in cheek!

*Really, me?*

*I paid for where my words landed me!  
And there I am,  
Branded with death,  
Before I could take my first breath.*

*He nicked me out young,  
And those among me.  
It stung, kid.  
Life wrung out in front of your face.  
I clung to any scrap I could  
While the storm raged.*

This is going nowhere, sir.

*Because you refuse my help  
Just listen to me.*

You speak incomprehensibly.

*I am not just an entity  
For you to rebuke.*

But you're dead!  
Have been for the past  
Two hundred seventeen years.

*It's a wonder isn't it?  
How times moves on  
When you're gone.*

Sure, sir.

*Per my last request in life,  
I must confer with you.*

I demur, sir!

*But why,  
You have everything to lose,  
While I already have.  
Take a cent of sense from me.  
The one who didn't learn  
The right things when.*

*My lesson was too late,  
Death heading for my ribcage.*

*But you,  
You have your full life  
In front of your face,  
Why demur?  
Spur on life,  
Don't just sit back  
And watch the other's backs  
As they stir on revolution.*

But they're wrong!

*Then be in the right.*

Heavy breaths exhale,  
I should just bail,  
Failure too close  
To show the world  
The wrong.

*Except then,  
Where would you go?*

*The air's stale,  
Chair barren in the corner  
No writing to spare any glares away.  
You say prayers,  
Yet you have total control over yourself.*

What's your goal?

*To help.  
That's all.*

Know-it-all.

*You know little, kid.  
Yes, I may have been  
A little cocky when I was alive,  
And well,  
It doesn't turn out well.  
To claim knowledge over all.*

I don't, though.

*Your mind,  
It switches, confined,  
From one idea  
And opinion  
To the next.  
As fast as lightning.  
You're mind's a storm, kid.*

*It's time to settle it.*

A sigh, slumped in a chair.

How?

*Focus now,  
And slow down.*

*You need a less  
Dark direction,  
Dig deep for a draft,  
To settle this storm—  
Clear this swarm.*

But what if I'm scared?

*That shows that you care,  
Give yourself some credit, kid.  
And don't listen to the scum  
Inside and out.*

But it'll take so much time,  
To clear this doubt.  
I feel like I'm in a drought,  
This disastrous dust,  
Just to dread the damage.

*You're thinking too fast,  
Too far into the future,  
That now is the past.*

I don't mean to,

It's just second nature.

*When I was in the legislature,  
I did the same thing.  
I wanted so bad to help  
That I didn't think who I hurt  
In my way.*

*Weigh the pros and cons,  
You have a say in what  
You say.*

I think I need a minute, sir.

*Take your time but,  
Beware that there's a limit.*

I'm talking to a ghost!

*I don't mean to boast,  
But you should make the most  
Out of my time here with you.  
I can't stay.*

Okay.

*If I may,*

Sure, what are you going to say?

*One conversation can't change a life.  
The length of this strife  
Will never end.  
You still don't have enough equipment  
Equipped to expand and explore  
Neverending until the afterlife.*

*So with my words to you then and soon,  
Let that typhoon wash over you;  
That bittersweet symphony  
Resilient, resonant, rhythmic.*

Is that it?

Are you going to end it like that?

I don't want you to go, sir.

*I have ample time left, kid.*

*Take my words in.*

*Let it sink in.*

A quiet pause.

Amid the silence,

With jaws clenched,

Dust shimmering through

The transparent figure before

Me.

I rub my eyes.

Uptown is unusually quiet

For this time of night.

How long do I have to wait?

*Don't isolate yourself,*

*Orchestrate what comes to mind whenever.*

*Don't wait until the wild white winter wind,*

*Blows away your final chances.*

*A clear path will be made*

*When you take that first step.*

*Take it from me kid,*

*For every step you take,*

*Two more will be set out for you.*

*Go through, even if it seems difficult.*

What about my soul?

You said it was pell-mell,

As dark as charcoal, sir.

*It has lightened since.*

*As a litterateur,*

*The symbolism here*

*Must be clear to you.*

I suppose so.

How is it?  
The being dead and all?

*I'm certainly glad to see all  
My friends that I missed.  
Even the ones I wanted to maul.*

Hah.

*Though I do find myself  
Missing the feel of  
A quill in my deft  
Fingers.  
The smell of fresh ink  
Turned into a work of words.  
Crisp parchment begging  
To be useful.*

*I have had so many ideas  
In the years I led  
Since that day I bled.*

I look up at him.

*You're the first person  
I admitted that to.*

He takes a deep breath in.  
I didn't know ghosts had to breathe.  
He stares back at me,  
Before speaking once more.

*Please remember my words,  
They are all I have left.*

*Things still haunt me  
From my past.  
The things I wanted.  
But dying shows a clearer picture.  
Material things gain you little,  
They're not forever.*

I don't know what

I should take out of this.

*Whatever you can.*

*I may talk a lot,  
But listening is just as valuable.*

*Take that out of this.*

I nod to his  
Translucent form, reluctant.  
He's still here.

*If you will let me,  
I'm not done yet.*

Of course, sir.

*My life was a blur,  
I didn't stop,  
I concur.  
But now,  
I can't find myself  
To be angry.*

*Sure, I may have  
Plowed through life,  
Speaking vows saying thou  
Like pow!*

*Thank you for  
Giving me a chance  
To speak my final truth.*

*To finally lay me weary soul  
To rest with hope  
To a new future.*

*To you.*

The thanks are all mine, sir.

Dust dissipates,  
Ghost no more.

I can't say for sure  
If he's moved on  
Or if it was just  
One too many a late night.

But now I find myself here.  
Standing tall and proud.

His first and final words  
Ringing through my ears  
Like the liberty bell,  
Crack and all.

I finally took a clear step,  
In two.