

THE MOLOTOV COCKTAIL

La Puerta

by Mark Purnell



Jim walked over to the corner bistro late in the day. The hot sun beat down on his white peasant shirt as he made his way to the outdoor bar overlooking a pale blue sea. His hair had grown too long the past few months as he focused intensely on writing poetry in his small bungalow. He'd resolved to cut it, but hadn't made the effort yet.

Today, like every day, he needed some whiskey to fortify himself before a night of writing.

It had become one of his sacred rituals. Every afternoon he would hang at his favorite bar, La Puerta, in the company of his friends and the ever-entertaining bartender, Olivierio. Get himself nicely lubricated while the sun set a deep red. Have a wonderful meal of black beans and rice with some form of protein. Sometimes he'd stay deep into the night for a fun round of off-key drunk karaoke, but would never sing. Over the years, they had all tried to get him up there, offering him the mic on many occasions, but the only thing he'd ever do is dance, drink and eat. Said he had a tin ear and nobody wanted to hear him carry a tune.

Sometimes when the mood gripped him he'd recite a poem or two, but only when he was the most drunk and then his voice would dramatically change octave or tone. Everyone assumed it was because he was *borracho* or being funny, which he seemed to have a real talent for. Under the warm light of the outdoor deck, with a mic in his hand, his hair hanging down over his handsome but aged face, he seemed like someone larger than life. No one could put their finger on it. But then, as soon as he was done reading, he'd stumble off the stage, bid his feast of friends good night and retreat to his "writing hut."

Jim loved the friends he had gathered on the small thin raft of an island far from the glaring spotlight of L.A. He thought of them as he wandered home over the sandy shore, a mythical figure departing into the night. For some reason, reading his poetry and performing a little bit tonight had made him melancholy. For the first time in a long while, he missed his former life. The many women he had loved and who had loved him back a hundred times more. The adoring fans and his band of brothers who broke on through the doors of perception on many a transcendental night.

He had had a good world, more than enough to base a movie on. He had lived out all his fantasies and scaled the strangest of heights, but as he stepped up to the humble hut just off the white sandy beach, it was as if he were back on Trip's rooftop, homeless and staring into the vastness of the night. Penning his every thought and inner feeling as he swam to the moon. Trying to make sense of Jung and the will to power, while learning how to move a crowd of people, how to influence them and trigger a mass psychosis. He wanted to journey as deep into the cerebral and unknown as one could go, a musical psychologist and subconscious explorer, and tonight, sitting at his typewriter a little unsteadily, he would go there again and again as he explored his thoughts in rhyme and meter.

His journey had started on a beach after all, one sunny day in L.A., Ray and him just riffing ideas off each other like dime store cowboys, both surprised that what came out of Jim's mouth was pure gold. They climbed through the tide after that day, penetrated the evening that the city slept to hide. And what a majestic climb it had been. Sacred, profound and serpentine.

But then it all became too much, a chore. His health wasn't great after years of heavy drinking and people just wanted the same thing from him over and over again. To show his meat and act the fool. And so having outgrown his role as the ultimate rock star there was only one thing to do, disappear.

The small island where La Puerta was situated could only be reached by pontoon plane, and was only known to locals. Locals he had met on one of his many strange trips. They welcomed him easily, despite his meager Spanish speaking skills, because they saw a man in need of shelter, a rider on the storm in need of a port. They never bothered him, unless he was out and about at La Puerta or the local market shopping for groceries and beer. He was grateful for their acceptance and friendship.

It had all begun at the beach and it would end there too. He had less and less visitors from afar these days. Pam passed away a few years ago. Ray too. Robby and John were still around, but not up to travelling much, which was fine by Jim. He had his Crystal Ship, his anonymity, and with time his strange and fruitful days would pass too. A legend would return to the earth the way he wanted to. Untethered, unbothered and free. No one was going to throw his meat up on a screen or stage ever again. He had broken through and broken away.



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