

Ode to Kerry von Erich or, of Fritz von Erich's five sons only one survived him, and it was not Kerry Von Erich

by Tyler King

A curse is not born in the dark. A curse is born to a name, a babyface, a body which glimmers & destroys. A curse can hold you, cradle you in its beautiful arms, convince you that love feels like being crushed to dust. Fuselage smolders, monitor beeps. Almighty pop, a hush prestiged into a roar. Your name, the second one he gave you. You take the history on the chin, no sell the crumbling sunrise. The lights rise, spark, collapse. Pain is a wager against eternity. Your father, a gambling man, makes sure the lights stay on you.

You have a champion on his knees. You have a champion on his back, blinking blood from dizzy eyes. You have it now, it's in your hands. A coup de gras, a blessed ringing. Your name, your second holy name. Almighty pop, a lineage prestiged into a graveyard. This is a headline, a cable television spot. The rest runs like water down your back; older brother becomes a whispered prayer. Older brother becomes a pane of glass. Older brother becomes a younger brother. Younger brother becomes a star on a flag. Younger brother becomes a twitching dream in a Texas sky.

Your father's hands are gold calloused & open. You walk into them, fit & tight & ready.

Over your shoulder the parade of brothers marches laughing into the river's mouth.

A curse holds your body down & your breath flees before it like a scared lover. Like the easiest mark in the world. You feel your heart, the shadow it casts. Smoke & ash in the dust rotted afternoon. Your father runs a hand through your hair & you know, you know how a curse can love. Like a father can love, only worse. At the end I hope you knew the difference; a father names you, a curse names you twice.

