A Man Like Fire

Brown leather jacket and chainsmoker’s breath,
radiating arrogance and an ignorance of death,
brown chelsea boots, perfectly scuffed,
a fiery laugh, a youthful wrath,
slicked-back black hair, taking names,
he is diesel - the whole room is in flames.
A bleak and bitter nihilism
projecting an uncontrollable magnetism.

One blonde here, a brunette there,
reckless disregard and a renegade flare,
women like trophies, pills and cocaine,
hatred and abandon, vicious and inhumane,
beyond true to his nature, an intense life,
the essentials: cigarettes, switchblade knifes.
At the back, he sees the man in the bespoke suit;
and he wishes to be him. That pain is acute.

He approaches with his trademark swagger,
leans over the table and almost staggers.
A tumult of thoughts, hatred and regret,
his desolate ego sensing a threat,
he lights up another one and extends his hand,
weathered aristocrat and the firebrand,
a union like brimstone and ice,
one to cool the other, a last throw of the dice.

Brown leather jacket and chainsmoker’s breath,
relentless anger of infinite depth,
aged silver chains around his neck and wrists,
he strikes the names off his long list.
Outwardly despised, secretly adored,
such black charisma can never be ignored.
Those same chelsea boots, now scuffed and worn,
stepping on the same oaken floor.

Meditating at the Crossroads

The journeyman sits, his robe muddied and stained,
an unkempt beard, his expression bleak and pained,
a crow circles above and snakes hiss in the grass,
cross-legged he sits at the four-pronged impasse.

To the South he sees fire, and a man among the flames,
a pale arsonist, amidst ruins and human remains,
a city crumbling, a people turned to ash,
such great wealth and beauty, all lost in a flash.

To the East he sees rain, and a farmer tending to wheat,
his face is troubled, he is cheerless by the sugar beet,
he carries just enough strawberries to placate a child,
and his eyes envy the foxes, so free and so wild.

To the North he sees a soldier, aged and weathered,
clad in steel armour, in his helm a red feather,
a man respected, a man-skilled and resolute,
loved in his lifetime, a legacy of high repute.
To the West, a rider, wearing a red bandana, riding through forest, mountain and savanna, a radiating smile on his sun-kissed face, as he gallops away, towards the setting sun’s embrace.

The journeyman stands, his robe muddied and stained, an unkempt beard, a smile determined but restrained, a crow circles above and snakes hiss in the grass, as he sets off, through the half-blocked narrow-pass.

Wojciech Toczydlowski is a seventeen-year-old Polish immigrant who has lived in Somerset for over ten years. He has been fascinated by words, languages and linguistics for most of his life. He currently attends Exeter College in Somerset and aims to become a writer professionally later on in life.