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Brooks 5 days ago 3 min read

## The Exorcist in Foster

At some point in an art history class I came across a quote from German impressionist Otto Dix that goes something like this: "All art is exorcism. There's much chaos in this world, in me. I paint to produce order in myself."

Certainly few of us will ever have the misfortune of being as haunted as Otto Dix. Dix was, after all, exposed to the horrors of modern war and the rise of fascism in the nation he loved. Even still, art will perform the role of exorcism for any of us, no matter how major or minor the demon. I've spent an inordinate amount of time on the subject, trying different ways to convey my meaning, forgetting each time that I am a storyteller. For me to describe the phenomena of art as an exorcism as anything other than a story, is a fool's errand.

The most ubiquitous example is the classic break up song. The song is written to exorcise their heartbreak so they can feel just a little bit better even if only for a moment. Then we listen to it and the magic happens. Once we listen to the song we project our own heartbreaks and have been exorcised by the song.

A few years back I created a character named Jacob Foster, who embodies everything I wish I was and everything I wish I wasn't. His debut story featured a trip into a fictionalized version of the devil's tramping ground, where he searches for some horrible evil to inspire his art. It becomes very clear that it's a sort of addiction. He nears blasting his sanity and exposes himself to terror because he fears losing his edge as a writer. Foster invokes demons so that he may exorcise them and exists to try and explain the way I feel about writing. It's magical, dark, beautiful, haunting, and the most important thing in my life.

The second Foster story was the Blood Moon Blues. I wrote it in the midst of what I'll call a break up for the sake of convenience. There was no animosity between us, nothing wrong with either party's conduct. Rather it came down to wrong timing and poor communication.

These became the two largest elements of Blood Moon's conflict. Foster is angry at the universe because to him it seems that every time something good starts to go on, some cosmic cabal conspires to ruin it. As he puts it, "It's easier if you can be mad at somebody, anybody," so he directs his rage at the cosmic powers that be (a common theme in my work).

Throughout the story Foster references that no matter how much he loved her, or how much he wanted to communicate his feelings, he could never be as clear as when he wrote. On paper, you get to see someone's soul without the bullshit of regular interaction, and while this is the most intimate form of communication, it's isolating. For Foster, his lover didn't understand that

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*STET* cut out line: "... he wrote dark horror because it was the way of telling his truth. His way of exorcising his demons." *(Fragment)*

The point of writing this isn't to be some vain bleeding heart. Before writing those stories my feelings were too ambiguous to rationalize. So, I manifested them into those stories. *m* *↑*

**I** exorcised them and felt like I had a better grip on them. If that ain't magic, I don't know what is. Now, when someone reads these they might have an entirely different feeling than the one I gave them. That's perfect. The beauty of artistic exorcism is that the consumer receives and exorcism of whatever they project onto the story.

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