

'Bout Time

by Brandon Lee Tenney

"Been searchin this earth wide and far to set down with a soul black as me. Them eyes set brooding in sockets of ice can't but make me wonder how the whole of that face don't melt clean away. Eyes like coals aflame them is. Like the billows itself has caught fire.

"Looking through and into them eyes almost makes me proud to be who I been. To be who I am. Settin with you here makes the search, well, purposeful. Makes me Feel not quite alone in the blackness. What I been planning to do ain't but quite gone how I expected, though. These here feelings you've rustled up in me is new, but familiar. Like lookin at myself in a mirror, 'cept that mirror so damned big, can't see the frame settin around you.

"Son, glad you talked some sense into yourself this passed noon. Glad is what I am that you're here tonight.

"But, credit you as I will, and family we may be – shit, family we are – ain't heads nore tails gonna 'scape you from me this night. Them eyes, they's my eyes. Those hands, my hands. The damned blackness to which we've both receded is my damned blackness. And I ain't meant to be not quite alone inside it. I'm meant to be wholly and completely by my lonesome. Ain't got no right, you don't, to make it any otherwise.

"Now, before I cleanly and slowly cut the life from your throat, you's got but a minute to make your peace with whoever it is that you see fit."

"Pa, I ain't need but ten good seconds. You always was the Devil. You always gonna be the Devil. And I was a damned fool to ever 'spect otherwise.

"I did have hope though."

"Hell, Son. That's the damned problem right there."

Then, cleanly and slowly, he cut the life from his Son's throat. If he was nothing, at least he was of his word. No matter how damned each syllable sure as Hell was.