

La Dispute

"St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Blues"

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â€” Stained-glass and the choir sing out that strong and
ceaseless
Chorus here. â€” So sweet the voices, sweep like leaves
into the street.
â€” On Eastern, a celebration carried on for God and
hope and
Refugeâ€” To keep each other, life; give shelter from
the storm. And
Keep warm. â€” The congregation gathers outside in
the parking lot, each
Service doneâ€” They keep the old hymn rolling on and
on andâ€” I see
The scene in color each day driving out to Eastown,
â€” That old
Abandoned church and have I gone the same sad way?
â€” â€” Have I
Gone the same sad way? â€” â€” Through the sixties
flourished and the
Seventies in flux. â€” The eighties fluctuate each year
unclear of when
The money would dry up. â€” And when the nineties
violent crime and
Rising unemployment rates came byâ€” That parking lot
grew dim and thin
Of sinners and saintsâ€” Until the voices, unceasing,
slowly faded to
Blackâ€” Until the weeds stormed the concrete from
unattended cracks.
â€” It had to know, had to feel that glory never coming
back,
â€” Like I could feel it when the passion left, the last of
what I had,
â€” It had to know like I knew. â€” And I can't find it still.
â€” Might not ever. â€” â€” Ten years now standing
vacant.
â€” Ten years on empty, maybe more. â€” Once held the
faith of
Hundreds, â€” Soon one more cell phone store. â€” For
years they
Gathered hereâ€” Inside the building sound and
trueâ€” To sing their

Praises to a god that gave them hope
To carry on, to carry through.
So, I've been thinking about that,
Sometimes go slow when I
Drive by, How a home of stone and a house so
holy Grows so
Empty over time. What gave those people
purpose Past death
Approaching constantly Now left to crumble slowly,
Now left to
Wither with the weeds. Now left to ice and vandals,
The
Advent candles long since gone, The old
foundation shifting hard,
The concrete overgrown, but That stained-glass
window sits
Untouched amongst the brickwork worn, A symbol
of the beauty only
Perfect at that moment we were born. And just the
other day I swear
I saw a man there Pulling weeds out of the concrete,
sweeping up and
Patching cracks, I saw him lift a rag to wash the
years of filth
From off those windows. Made me wonder if there's
anyone like that
For you and me and Anybody else who broke and
lost hope.

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