

I KNOW THE WORLD REASONABLY WELL AND AM RIGHT ABOUT EVERYTHING



CLOUDWARMER

“AN UNREASONABLE MAN”

by Eddie Palmer

54 Degrees. Chance of Rain or Sun.

Willard Manners was a rather average man—tedious in his work, dull in his desires, and repetitive in his daily routine.

Willard regarded himself as a respectable man, while those he encountered in his quiet little town often had no opinion of him.

“There is a strange man,” is all they would sometimes say. Most did not notice him.

Monday was the day Willard wore his brown suit. He walked the same path everyday to work and this sense of routine filled him with contentment. His job as a numbers man gave his life meaning. He organized the affairs of others, and his attention to detail made his coworkers feel they could rely upon him. Most of them had become accustomed to his strange disposition and often left him alone in his work.

Willard regarded himself as a useful member of society.

“I am a happy man,” he repeated to himself. A smile could be seen on his face by those passing by. Those who noticed him. The weather report said a chance of rain but there was not a cloud in the sky.

Willard worked in a four-story brownstone building near the town square. The brownstone had been there for as long as people in the town could remember. No one could remember a time when it wasn't there. As he

arrived, he was startled to see a poorly dressed man sitting on the steps of the building. Beside him, a small portable stereo player faintly played a song on repeat. The song was "Love Is Blue" by Paul Mauriat.

Willard had never heard the song and had never seen the man.

This disruption in Willard's routine upset him greatly.

Willard stood in front of the man, who stared blankly at him with indifference. Those who encountered this man on this specific day sensed his sadness. Willard did not.

"Why are you sitting here?" Willard asked in a forceful tone.

"Why not?" the man replied gently.

Willard frowned. "You can't."

"Why not?"

"This is my place of work. You can't sit here."

"Why not?"

Willard felt something shift within him as the stereo continued playing the song.

"I just told you. This is a respectable office. You can't sit here."

"Why is it respectable?"

Willard exhaled sharply.

He stared at the man, full of bewilderment. As the song continued to play, Willard felt himself unraveling.

"Why are you here?" Willard said, louder now.

"Why are you here?" the man echoed.

"I work here! I provide a service—an invaluable service. I am respected."

"Why?"

The question lingered.

Willard opened his mouth, then closed it.

"Why what?"

"Why are you respected?"

The melody continued on repeat, and Willard became aware of it growing louder, even though it was not.

"Love Is Blue," the man said.

"What?"

"The song. It's called 'Love Is Blue.'"

"I don't care. Turn it off."

"Why?"

"I said turn it off!"

The man tilted his head slightly.

"Love is blue," he repeated.

The phrase settled into Willard's mind, and he did not want it there.

For the first time in years, Willard felt uncontrollable rage overwhelm him.

"LOVE IS NOT BLUE!" cried Willard.

The man stared at Willard, expressionless. He slowly stood up, grabbed his stereo, and walked away into the distance, the song becoming fainter and fainter.

Willard entered the building, shaken. Who was this unreasonable man, and why did he interrupt my routine?

Willard walked up the stairs to his office, not even remembering arriving at his pristine desk.

He sat.

A few coworkers said hello but got no response.

For a time, he did not move.

He adjusted the wooden pencils on his desk and fidgeted with his stapler.

Confused and distraught, Willard began to quietly murmur to himself.

"I am a happy man," he said.

The words felt rehearsed. Detached.

His coworkers had learned over the years to ignore Willard and let him work, although they later noted that he seemed distraught and unhappy that Monday.

Willard attempted to work but something was wrong.

A number did not match.

Willard frowned and checked the column again. His finger traced each number, carefully inspecting each number.

The total was incorrect.

He recalculated.

Incorrect.

Number after number. Incorrect. Incorrect.

Willard pressed his head into his hands.

"I am a happy man."

From somewhere in the office—or somewhere outside—the song faintly began to play again.

Love Is Blue.

He looked up.

The office was empty. Desks unoccupied. Chairs still. The clock on the far wall ticked away.

“What time is it?” Willard murmured to himself.

His coworkers were gone, and the sun was getting low on the horizon and filled the office with a soft orange haze.

He could still faintly hear the song and wanted it to stop.

The music did not grow louder or softer. It remained constant—just there.

“Turn it off,” he muttered, though no one was there to hear him.

“I am a happy man,” he said again, louder this time.

“I am a happy man. I am a happy man. I am—”

His words trembled.

Willard stood abruptly, his chair hitting the floor loudly and echoing throughout the office.

Love Is Blue continued to play, the sound seemingly coming from all directions.

“No,” he said quietly.

The music continued.

He hurriedly ran to the window, the setting sun hitting his eyes.

There he was.

The man.

Standing still on the opposite side of the street.

The man stared at Willard with a blank look of indifference.

Willard opened the office window and screamed, "YOU, SIR, ARE A VERY UNREASONABLE MAN!"

"TURN IT OFF!"

The man picked up his stereo and started to walk away in silence. The volume of the song did not change and remained in Willard's mind.

"Wait!" Willard yelled.

Willard ran into the hallway and down the stairs in a panic, barging into the front door.

The town was empty.

All the people he had been accustomed to seeing in his quiet little town were not there.

Only the man was there, walking casually down the street in the distance.

No matter how quickly Willard ran, the man remained just ahead, the distance between the two never changing.

The melody continued.

Willard chased the man until his breath became sharp and uneven. His legs weak, he stopped and collapsed in the street.

He could see the man stop in the distance and turn around toward Willard.

Out of breath, Willard attempted to speak but couldn't. His legs heavy, he couldn't stand.

The man slowly walked to Willard, and the song became louder.

"No! Turn it off," Willard cried in a whisper.

The man stood over Willard and bent down.

"Love Is Blue, Willard. Remember that," the man said.

Willard felt everything go black and passed out as the sun set over the quiet little town.

He did not show up to work for the remainder of the week. On Friday, his employer notified the police.

"Willard is a punctual man. He has not missed a day of work in 17 years."

The police found his apartment immaculately clean and empty—
except for a small note on the floor which read: "Love Is Blue."

CLOUDWARMER is:

EDDIE PALMER

- 1 I'VE WORKED SO HARD TO CULTIVATE
A DIVERSE ECOSYSTEM OF DYSFUNCTION 4:15
- 2 BEING HUNTED AT WORK FOR SPORT 3:58
- 3 EARTH SHELTERED HOTEL TYPE CITY ABOVE CENTRAL PARK 5:26
- 4 YOU HAVE MY CONSENT TO COMPASSIONATELY EUTHANIZE ME 4:31
- 5 POP ART PSYCHEDELIA CONSTRUCTIVISM SCI FI CONTEXTUAL COLLAPSE IN OUR
HAUNTED LITTLE TOWN 2:59
- 6 IF I AM WORTH ANYTHING LATER I AM WORTH SOMETHING NOW 5:20
- 7 MIDWESTERN GOTHIC DRIFT 3:21
- 8 HANDS RAISED TO COSMIC SKY MELANCHOLY WILL NOT DIE 4:26
- 9 THE FUTURE YOU PLANNED FOR IS NO LONGER AN OPTION 3:04
- 10 WHEREVER THE DRONES GO THEY WANT TO LEAVE 3:45
- 11 WE SHOULD ALL KNOW LESS ABOUT EACH OTHER 4:10
- 12 EVERYTHING HAPPENED TO ME FOREVER 3:56
- 13 ALWAYS CONSUMED BY A NEED TO PROVE ITS OWN COMPLEXITY 5:35
- 14 I AM PILOTING AN OIL TANKER THROUGH THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ 4:34
- 15 LIVING CITY SURVIVAL KIT 5:12
- 16 EVERYONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW YOU WILL LOVE YOU 5:08
- 17 MODERNIST SUBURBAN ACADEMICS TOWN PLANNERS TECHNOCRATS
UBIQUITOUS SURVEILLANCE 4:08
- 18 LET'S END THIS LITTLE CHARADE 4:04
- 19 WHERE WILL YOU BE WHEN IT FINALLY HAPPENS 3:59
- 20 CAN BE QUITE CHARMING IF YOU LET ME OUT OF THE GUILLOTINE 5:38

CLOUDWARMER ONLINE

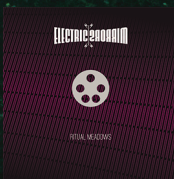
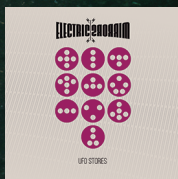
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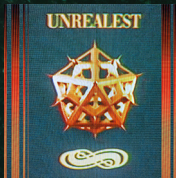
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THANKS FOR ANOTHER FANTASTIC RELEASE,
EDDIE! I'M SURE FANS ARE GOING TO DIG IT AS
MUCH AS I DO.

— Peace, Mike Gregoire

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