



The last several weeks have been consumed with the shock and grief at the loss of my dear friend, Glen Hansard. I first met Glen after a show in Whelans in late 2000. I was 20, writing for a music journal and he graciously gave me a short interview on the spot. Not long after that he introduced me to his best friend Mic Christopher. For some reason the two of them just really liked me and kept me around. The story of their love for each other, deserves its own telling but meeting them when I did changed the direction of my life. I was ambitious. I was training to be a pilot, but I was aiming only towards things that would feed my ego and material wants. Seeing these people live in this completely open and connected way with the world allowed me to remember who I am when I'm not trying to prove something.

There have been many beautiful and fitting tributes written by famous people, people that never knew him, but loved his music, and his oldest friends, but the things that have touched me the most are the stories that if he hadn't passed away might have stayed completely hidden: countless stories of his extraordinary generosity. There was one of a man sharing a video of his very sick daughter singing a duet with Glen before a show, another of a farmer sharing how Glen had noticed his van didn't have the farmer's name on it so Glen arranged it and when the farmer tried to repay him, he refused and the farmer offered to pay it forward in any way he saw fit. Glen said that if it must be to give it to a religious order that took care of him when he was homeless when he was 14. There are probably thousands of these stories. I know I have many and I wanted to just share one because it nearly sandwiches the beginning and end of our time together.

c Classics



Search...
build a big life...
fill it with great moments
Wait Until Spring, Bandini
the set fire to it.. and

JOHN FANTE was born in Colorado in 1909. He began writing in 1929 and published his first short story in the *American Mercury* in 1932. He published numerous stories in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *American Mercury*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Esquire*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. His first novel, *Wait Until Spring, Bandini*, was published in 1938.

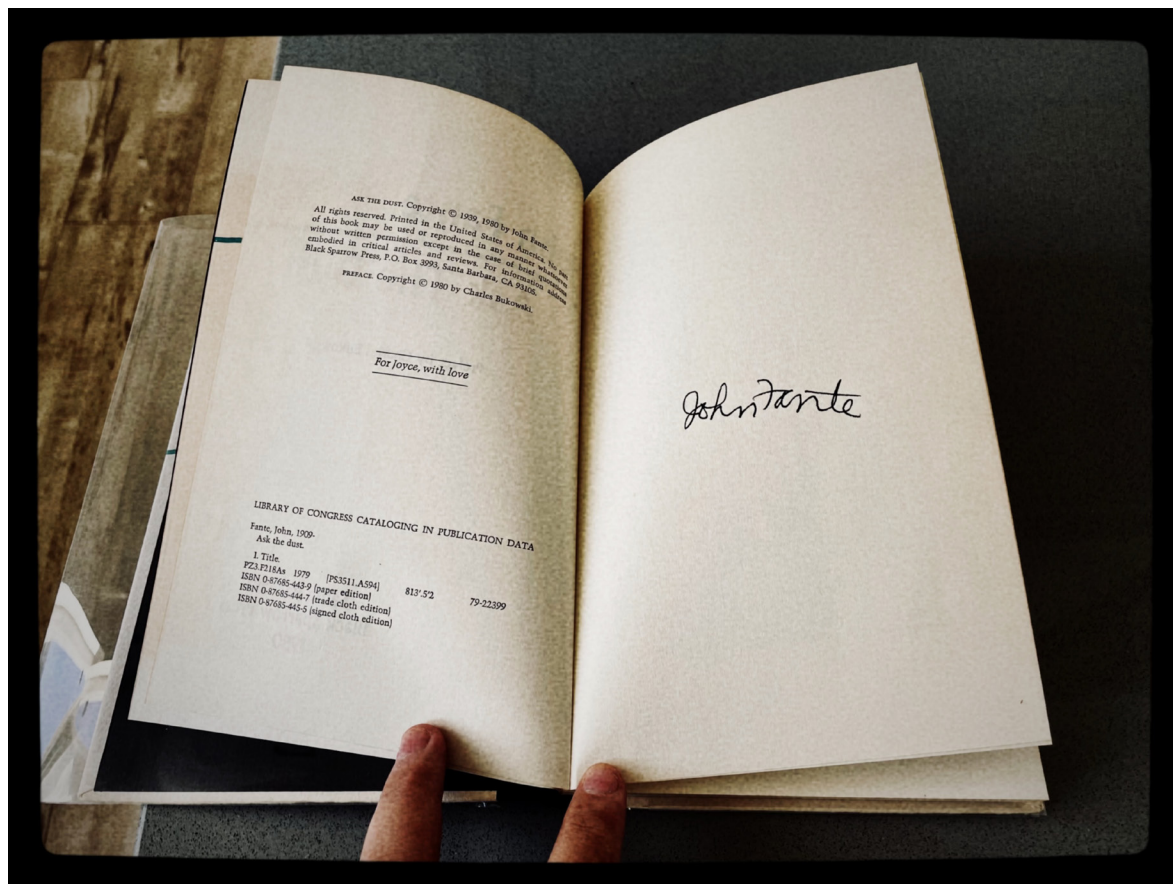
John Fante was stricken with diabetes in 1955 and its complications brought about his blindness in 1978, but he continued to write by dictation to his wife, Joyce, and his final book was *Dreams from Bunker Hill*. He died at the age of 74 on May 8, 1983.

Move
to
the
next
adventure

Your friend...
glen



Jumping forward nearly 20 years. Glen was on tour with Eddie Vedder. He told me he had really big news and he wanted to give me a gift. He wanted to give me a first edition of "Ask the Dust". I already had looked into getting one of them. They only printed 2,000 copies in the 1930s and they were then selling for over \$10,000 each. John Fante was not actually known until near his death in the early 80s. Charles Bukowski was a huge champion for John and it was only in John's later years by which time he had lost his legs and sight from complications with diabetes that he wrote the last of the Bandini Quartet by dictating it to his wife, Joyce. The manuscript for "The Road to Los Angeles", written in the 30s wasn't discovered until after his death in 1983. I did not want to accept a gift like that. It was too much.



Glen contacted me not long after to apologize. He realized he had already given it away to Sean Penn when they were doing a soundtrack together. Being honest, I felt a sense of relief, and besides, this being the reason I don't get a book is a better story anyway. He said he had something else just as good.

They were staying in the Beverly Hills Hotel, always under fake names because of security concerns. I had to ask for Arturo Bandini (Fante's protagonist) at the desk. Arturo was the boy we loved. In love with everything and somehow always racked with Catholic guilt trying to fight whatever system was around him. A hero and an antihero. We had a quiet dinner in the hotel. Glen told me he was going to be a Dad in six months. He handed me a copy of "Ask the Dust" It was the Black Sparrow Press first edition printed in 1980. The print that marked the beginning of his rediscovery. Inside the cover was Fante's signature, all wobbly and wild. The signature of a man who couldn't see, who'd lost his legs, and none of his spirit. There are only 250 of these.



Glen never mentioned this again.

The Stoics talk about “the third thing”, the trap of the third thing. You get to do something kind for another person, they get to benefit and the third thing is what we hope might happen afterwards, gratitude, praise, whatever. I’ve never met anyone so unattached to the kindness they brought into the world. He knew how precious it was to me and we never spoke of it again.

I loved Glen’s music, I loved his ability to create, his courage, his voice, but what I truly admired, and why he became a Northstar for me was how he could connect with everything. Glen saw opportunities to be kind, to be present, he’d see things that no one else would notice, and he could do so without holding on, without crushing the moment, and without demanding anything in return.

I will miss my friend forever.