

Warren Zevon was dying, and everybody in the werewolf community was pretty broken up about it. I know because my paper sent me out to get their reaction to the news.

"He's our Elvis," one werewolf said. We were in a werewolf bar in the Northern Liberties. There's a lot of night-life thereabouts, and most people are too involved in their own stories to hassle minorities. "He's like a god to us. But fuck you if you don't get it."

Everyone in the bar growled when he said that. The little hairs at the base of my neck stood on end.

"This is because of his song Werewolves of London, isn't it? I've heard that's kind of like your national anthem."

A sharp-looking bitch with spectacular breasts jabbed me in the chest with one red-painted claw. "Yeah, sure, we like that song and Splendid Isolation and Excitable Boy and Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner. But it's not the subject, it's - "

"The growl," somebody said.

"No, it's not! It's the sensibility. It's the voice. It's the perspective. We're talking a guy who was so far out of the consensus that he saw things as they are. We're talking someone who was angry at the shit that the people in charge are trying to force down our throats and wasn't willing to call it chocolate."

More growls.

"He was one of us," the first werewolf said. "Whether he knew it or not. He was one of the victims who decided to fight back. He never forgot whose side he was on."

Somebody threw back his head and howled.

"The night he dies," the werewolf said, "you know what I'm going to do? I'm gonna find the smuggest, most complacent record company executive I can and tear him limb from limb!"

"Yeah! Me too!"

"Fuck, yeah!"

"Amen, brother!"

And while they were all howling and slapping hands, I slipped out. I had my quotes. I knew when to cut and run.

I'm not a werewolf myself, and I'm too old to pretend otherwise. But when my main man dies, I'm probably going to get roaring drunk. Maybe I'll break things. Maybe I'll go out and start a few fights. I might throw somebody through a plate-glass window.

Or maybe I'll just sit down and try to write more, tougher, truer, better. Maybe I'll do my tiny bit to carry on the fight.