

## **THE JUNGLE by Dani Back**

They are the people your parents warned you about.

The worst of the worst.

Liars,

cheaters,

thieves.

The whole lot of them

Drug addicts of every kind.

IV drug users. - Needles everywhere.

The orange caps strewn across the ground.

The iced out individuals,

tweakers.

Taking everything electronic apart.

Pieces of things scattered all around.

Hearing noises that aren't really there.

Seeing things that don't actually exist.

The twitches.

The endless talking that comes with the high.

The stories they create

that leave you wondering where the truth ends and the lies begin.

The fiending,

selling anything you can find for a shot.

Stealing things that will be worth trading for drugs.

Battery packs,

so the electronics can charge

in this place of NO POWER.

Flashlights, to illuminate the path

in this DARK PLACE.

Tent city.

A palace made of pallets and tarps.

Campfires fueled by anything that will burn.

The smell of burning plastic and human failure.

This is where you go when you've lost all belief.

When your faith has been depleted.

When your river of hope has run dry.

They embrace you like family and stab you in the back every chance they get.

They'll hold you down while someone beats on you.

Then help you up, dust you off, and get you high.

The true definition of frenemies.

People never cease to amaze you in these parts.

Showing you evils that could only exit in hell.  
Demons disguised as men.  
Devils claiming to be your brother.  
Smiling in your face while they rob you of everything.  
Starting with the physical items you possess.  
Not stopping there.  
They continue to take from you.  
Your hopes,  
your dreams,  
ALL of your morals and values.  
It never ends.  
They don't quit until you're an empty shell of a human.  
Until you're down and out and stoop to their level.  
Then they win.  
When you allow them to strip you of all things good.  
All traces of humanity now just a memory.  
This is the future of those who show up here.  
Almost no one succeeds at leaving.  
Only a few lucky ones actually get out.  
Once you're here, you're stuck.  
Drawn back in at every turn.  
It consumes you.  
Eats at you,  
calls to you in the night.  
It will swallow you whole if you aren't strong enough.  
Welcome to the jungle.  
Come join our fun and games.