



湖南路上的罗森

又岚

走久后

脚累

去罗森买了可乐

一份关东煮

看到一篇短文

吸引到我的是

字间里的另一生命迹象

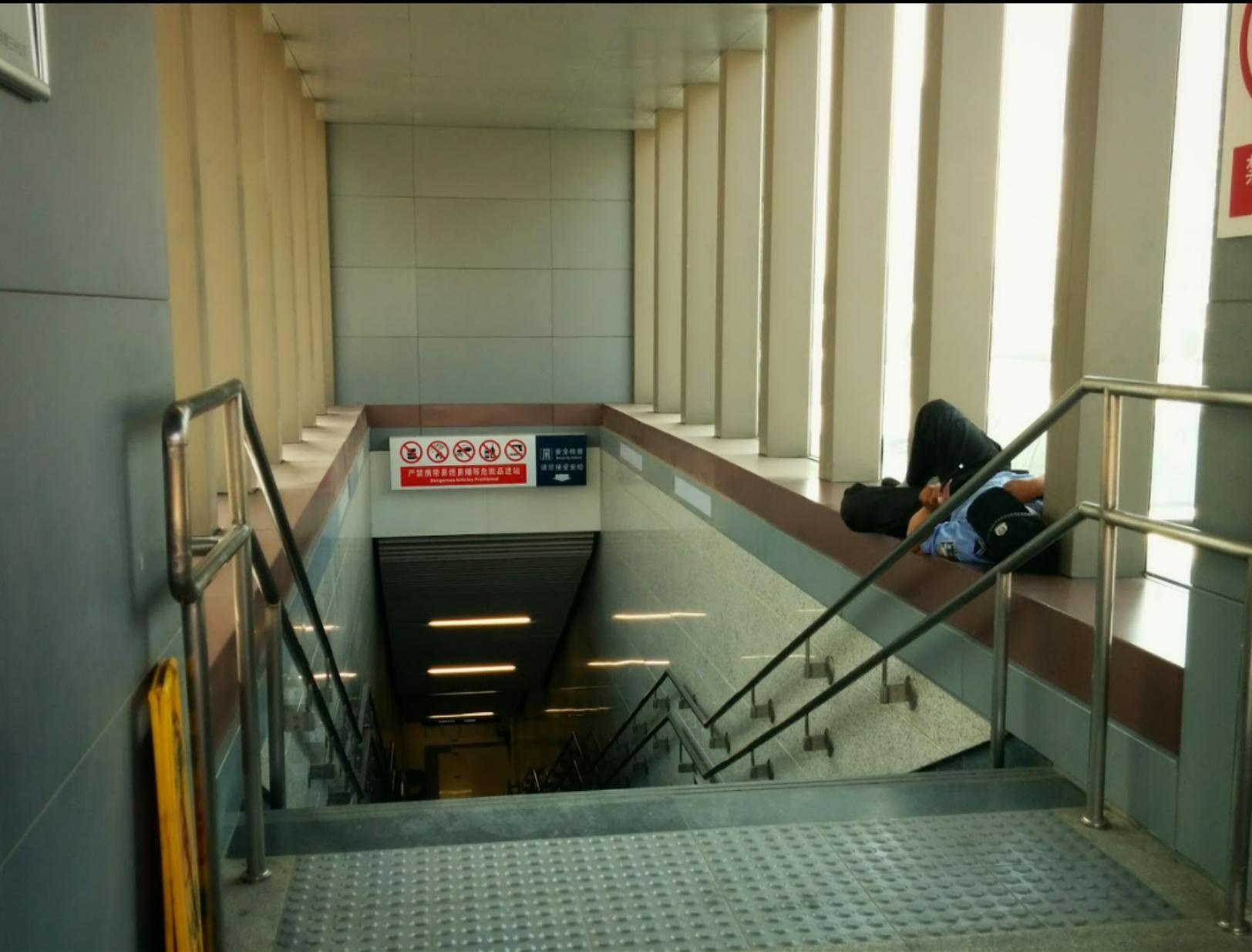
它大概是这位女人

拮据中喂养出的一只怪兽

庞大

翻身就会压塌喂养人，几乎的所有

除了生命



M A livid mammal diddled me in a deli.
E I veil a vivid mime a lame email.
D A valid idea evaded me. A madame dialed
I a dilemma I elide. I level a mile.
E I eddied a dim Limeade divide, I did
V avail a maladied devil,
A a diva, a dill, a dame, a dime.
L Me? I leave me dead. I ave me.

Nicholas Michael Ravnikar

A River's Lullaby

Alma Ariaz

Once, I rowed a river wide.
A symphony, a rhyme;
Tiptoed on a lyre's strings,
A dancer, double-time —

The rhythm didn't faze me much,
I rode along the sound;
I didn't know which way was up,
Defeated, I dove down.
The chords ate up my sanity,
The chorus wet my shoes.
I forwent my humanity,
Condemned, to follow you.

I chased the path you left behind
Your footprints, music notes;
I followed you, you sang me blind,
The vow kept me afloat.
A wicked oath, a guarantee,
My feet plucked off the ground;
My plea was answered, with a sneer;
Returned to Mother's arms.
Then I recalled, there was no song,
The bitter irony;
It's cold, it shatters, isolates,
That was no melody.

I followed you into abyss.
Into your siren song,
Your waters couldn't stomach me,
Despair drew me along.
I never wished to end up here,
But neither could I care.
In rapids, it all disappears;
And I, fool, chased you there.

Sunday Market

A. R. Tivadar

Zamfira carefully shaped her nails. She hated the way square nails felt, but she could bear it until tomorrow. She got her nail polishes from the shoe box she stored them in and got to painting.

“Are you going to make each one different?” Zamfira’s father asked.

“No, they’ll match.” She replied.

They were both in the kitchen that evening. Zamfira did her nails there because the window was open, letting out the steam from the pot and the nasty smell from the polish. They were having potato soup for dinner. They were in the habit of eating everything they had before going out to get more.

She painted her nails with strawberries, dark red and teal green on a light purple background, with white hand-drawn sparkles. The prettier she made them, the higher she could trade them up. She drew fine details and shadows, with handmade tools she crafted out of her old paint-brushes, that she cut the bristles into sharp points.

Zamfira’s father complimented the final result and served them food. He was getting old, with a greying beard and mis-matching arms. When Zamfira’s older sister, Lăcrimioara, got married, she and her

husband found a nice, plain house. The real estate agent asked for an arm and a leg, the standard price. Zamfira's father haggled for only one arm and his first name.

The agent narrowed his eyes. "An arm, your first name, and your last name."

"Deal." Zamfira's father said. His right arm disappeared from his sleeve.

Lăcrimioara and her man insisted he not do it, but Zamfira's father claimed the house was his wedding gift to them. He was going to



do the same for Zamfira in the future. Once both his children were secure, it wouldn't matter if he didn't have anything anymore.

Although having one arm instead of two did make it more troublesome to do anything. Eventually he found a cheap arm to replace it. It was burnt by the sun, missed 3 fingers and was marked with badly-made tattoos, but otherwise functioned perfectly.

Tomorrow was Sunday, and the Market was going to be set up again, as early as 6 am. Zamfira and her father were going to go at 8. Any hour close to noon made it too hot to walk around the endless stalls.

Zamfira went to bed after dinner. It was full of things, as was her father's room and the rest of their home. In her bedroom were located books, hundreds on shelves and in stacks on top of the furniture, on the nightstands, around the bed. They were old books, retired prints,

collections and serialisations, some older than her dad, with ripped paper covers and authors nobody knows anymore. She got them for cheap, but their total worth combined ought to be in the thousands. It was good to have them as backup in case bad times came.

Many sellers followed this trick: make everything cheap, so people buy a lot to take advantage of the sale, and before they know it the bill is kilometrical.

The next morning, they put on plain, ugly clothes. If people thought they were rich, they asked for higher prices. They packed some of Zamfira's old canvases, and 50 lei in 10 lei banknotes in an old wallet. The traffic was already hellish, people parking on the grass outside the market and on the sidewalk. Somebody managed to get their car on top of another car.

Zamfira carried the purse with the wallet, holding it with both hands, and Zamfira's father carried her paintings in a cloth bag. Zamfira loved drawing, and people loved art, but few were willing to pay for it. She got used to painting generic things that she wouldn't miss or mind giving to someone else.

They met such a person quite quickly. He wanted Zamfira's painting of the city at night, the street lights and car lights mimicking the stars. Zamfira's father was very capable at haggling. He got the man to give them 2 kilos of flour. For another drawing 2 bottles of oil, for another a large jug of water, for another sugar, for another fruit. "Deal!" They would say and shake her father's hand.

Zamfira frowned as she watched her signature disappear and somebody else's clunky one appeared in its place. Her father carried the bag, now with food, on his shoulder and they continued perusing the market.

Anything could be traded for anything. Most people of Zamfira and her father's income usually asked for food. An antique vase for 10 kilos of plums. 2 chapbooks for a chicken breast and ground beef. A kiss with tongue for booze. More for more booze, enough to treat a wedding party. 10 brand new, popular books for a fully stocked pantry. New, hyped-up books with fancy covers were expensive as all hell. 50, 80, 100 damned lei...

Some vendors were completely shameless in their greed, knowing people could and would pay with whatever they got. A full set of teeth for a new car. A pair of eyes, or more, for an uptown house. One's skin for a healthy heart, or lungs, or bones. Oh, people traded anything for health. Some vendors' wares were themselves. Many people in the

market went with missing parts, or multiple parts, hoarded for that very reason. They stuck out ridiculously from their backs and necks and the tops of their heads. Zamfira's father forbade her from selling her body, the outside or inside of it, for as long as he was still around.

They reached Zamfira's favourite corner of the market, where an old lady was gradually selling her huge book collection. She sat on a lawn chair by a little van, surrounded by her wares. 1 book for 5 lei, 3 books for 10. Some people still sold for money. Zamfira searched the cardboard boxes full of old tomes, fiction, poetry, history, looking for whatever looked interesting. Zamfira's father wondered if Zamfira would grow up to be like that old lady. May God let her get to such an old age, mostly intact.

Next to the old woman were stalls of old trinkets, old tools and screws and mechanical parts, wooden furniture, china and cutlery sets, oil lamps, cuckoo clocks, old radios and pick-ups and record players, stacks upon stacks of vinyls. Around the middle of that section of the Market, somebody was blasting music on a speaker while also offering CDs. That Sunday he was feeling the 70s groove.

In another area of the Market were clothes, rows and rows of tables with mountains of shirts, dresses, pants and jackets, that people could climb, dig and search through. Vendors over there watched like hawks and answered whenever someone shouted for the price. Other tables had more neatly arranged displays of shoes and outfits on coathangers.

Zamfira needed a stylish trench coat for autumn and winter. She was becoming a young lady. They spotted a dark blue one, in the vintage cut Zamfira adored. They made their way to it with calm and even apathetic expressions. If vendors saw you liked something, they asked for higher prices. Oh, Zamfira saw hundreds of things she really liked, every time they went to the Market. Porcelain and ceramic figurines, toys, stained-glass lamps, glass bowls in the shapes of flowers, framed embroidery and other people's paintings. When her father asked for their prices and he found them ludicrous, he'd make them leave, Zamfira reluctantly following behind. She could collect the old lady's cheap books because they were cheap.

"It's high quality wool!" The lady praised her own ware as Zamfira inspected it. "It would fit you perfectly, Miss!"

"It's pretty thick." Zamfira said.

"Yes, it would be more suitable for cold weather." She said. "But it's not bulky at all. It would fall perfectly on your waist and hips! It

reaches just to your knees, so your slender legs will still be visible.”

Zamfira glared the woman’s way. She herself was being inspected. If it were a man it’d be even more creepy. And as this coat was worth an entire leg!

“There’s a loose thread over here.” Zamfira’s father butted in, pointing at a button, where the thread holding it was sticking out. “We’d rather buy things we wouldn’t have to fix, but whatever. What do you want for it?”

The woman glared at him, then put back on a cordial smile. “What are you offering?”

“Would you give it for this set of nail polish?” Zamfira asked, presenting her hands.

“Your nails?” The woman asked.

“Just the nail polish.” Zamfira dryly repeated.

“Are they gel nails?” She asked, taking a closer look.

“No, no, it’s regular polish.”

“They look so good, though! Alright, deal!”

The strawberries disappeared off Zamfira’s nails and appeared on the woman’s second set of hands. She vainly admired them, then folded Zamfira’s new coat and put it in a plastic bag. “Enjoy wearing it!”

They were walking away from the woman’s stall when Zamfira’s father looked up. He made wide eyes. It was still bright outside, but black storm clouds were approaching from the horizon.

“We should get back to the car.” He said.

They made their way out the market along with other shoppers, the vendors around them hurriedly putting their things away. In the grass field turned parking lot the rain started. First as a drizzle, fine cold needles falling on them, then a proper torrent, like a shower head on full blast. Zamfira and her father ran to the car, holding bags above their heads.

“Where is it?!” Zamfira cried out.

“Further back! By that truck!”

“Gaaah!”

The next ordeal was getting out of the parking lot, then out of the traffic jam, everybody leaving all at once. Zamfira’s father turned on the AC to warm and dry them up. They’d be stuck there for a while.

“At least we managed to get some things!” He said, looking at the backseat with all the food and the trench coat.

“Yeah!” Zamfira said, wiping the raindrops off the stack of books in her lap.



For Sale In The Goblin Market

Jenny Olson

So many things for sale
If you knew the time
And location
Of the Goblin Market

Potions, wands
Spells, creatures
Whatever you want to buy
As you peruse the wares for sale

Wizen, gnarly
Beady eyes
Whatever you want he's got
At the Goblin Market

Sitting, waiting
Waiting, scanning
The crowds looking
For one particular customer

Barker, calling
Heard, him
He's waited for you
To buy his special ware

Horror, exclaiming
Gift, purchased
Small rounded glass
Containing the monster you

Examining, laughing
Gleefully, delighting
For all I can do
With the captured you

Now

You are helpless
Like I was
Forever, captured
Forever, mine
Bought at the Goblin Market



Submechanophobia

Gálvez Caballero

Maurice is sleeping,
peaceful, near dreaming...
but alas! For the rumbling
makes him jump in
and get out of bed,
and toast some raw bread
along with warm milk
and then back to there.

Yet the rumbling increases,
but studies were showing:
no matter how worrying
the rumbling, It's far.
"No panic," says sonar.
"The enemy's smart!
He just wouldn't come up
where the scientists are!"

So of course, he comes out,
the short end being taken.
Hurrying from the valve's cranking,
he comes up in deep waters
and behold, a Kraken!

Foul beast abound.
The rumbling of turbines
The fast, sucking force.
O, God how could he
Thought to take it alone!

He thrusts and spasms,
he chokes and tires,
another notch on the sub:
Defeated by rumbling.

why are you smiling?
you ask me
you had just said something
and not out of laughter
with you or
at you. I smiled.

I tried being an active listener.
it wasn't that I wasn't listening,
but
you had just said something
and I smiled
because I heard it.
not really listened
heard it from you
I smiled.

Alex Prestia





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the photographer would like to remain anonymous

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“In the Fruit Aisle” and editing
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(Ballad of Bippy and Cole will continue in spring)