

THE MAN WHO WAS GOING NOWHERE

—Ankur Agarwal

Once, a sun beam struck this place, which was called ‘nowhere’. There were some flagellates; and a strange one-eyed man living amidst these. The man was huge and squirming among the multiplying flagellates. It had been warm and dark, some kind of radiation had been coming in. Till some errant urchin turned a reflecting mirror, and the place turned into Archimedes’ hell. As the flagellates died, one could now see the man; an eye

where you and me have noses, a skin all green and scourged, and squatting on ‘nothing’ ... Many years passed, and the one-eyed man was still there; and one day he accidentally moved. Now he lived among flies, and he didn’t mind them a bit. But one day, he tried to see how a fly tastes like: he moved to catch it. He chased it all over, but ‘nowhere’ was too small. He chased and he chased and he chased. Till he fell out of ‘nowhere’ and ‘none’ knows where he went. ‘none’ cared, for we had got rid of the ‘squatter’.

FIRST THE CHILD-SNATCHING BAG

—Ryan Dilbert

The lit cigarette falls from the kidnapper’s mouth as he sleeps on the couch. The kidnapper is dressed in a felt suit with a two-dimensional black hat. The first thing to catch fire is his child-snatching bag. It was once a pristine white, but is now the color of faded bubble gum stains and snot streaks. The kidnapper was drinking earlier, some eight-dollar whisky that they have since discontinued. The felt clothes light quickly and soon the kidnapper wakes up to the smell of his burning skin.

He prefers stealing chubby Chinese kids though they don’t sell as well. He adores how their cheeks hang off their face like dumplings. They smell different, like what cherries would smell like if you roasted them.

The kidnapper is on fire and in horrible pain and in shock. He rolls around on the ground, his gangly limbs flopping around like a puppet’s. He finds God in that fire. His remorse is sudden and sincere. His tears evaporate before they fall from his eyes. The fire department finds the kidnapper’s burnt corpse knelt in new prayer.

GOD’S WRATH

—Alex Galper Translated by Misha Delibash

years back
she chose someone else.
depression,
thoughts of suicide.
the other day
i met him on the street;
a broken man
cried on my shoulder:
“why?
why did she have to choose me?
why this god’s wrath?
take her! take her away!
at once!!!”

BERRY HILL

—Adam Moorad • Excerpt from “Berry Hill”

Out of breath, Cope squalors backward, huffing and puffing. He drops the hammer on the ground—Clang-GA-Lang—and wipes his face with his sleeve, sawing his nose with the cuff.

Licking his lips, Dix saunters over to Cope, ROLL’EM OVER, and picks the hammer off the ground then scuttles-up gently to take over, clutching the handle. Step back now, he regrips the mallet and strikes, digging iron knob into a kidney then a shoulder blade, getting in deep, tangling the scoop and having to RRRIP the handle out with a HEAVE as he looks for a fresh mall of flesh.

You’ve done tore’em-up all ready, Cope!

So he finds the brain and lands the spade with a POP that almost echoes in the thick night air with a crunch like Styrofoam as the brine strings from the metal sroat, DAMN BHOY, Cope kaws, pinching his nose.

It starts to stink as the body voids.

Look at THAT—He’s shit’em self, and the odor crawls-up into the stillness, red and white, as a fishy sweat seeps out rumen and blood and meat pump volcanically from the freshly cut punctures, glistening waxy crescents in the moonlight.

Dix swings again, pivoting with his gait, shredding maw with stroke after stroke and the body’s dermal peels curled and twisted, growing milky with blood and loam, spraying slosh and clicking against the razor kneads hailing down from the strikes. The rips SPLIT and shred.

Dix tears out the hammer and staggers over, the muscles fluttering between his ear and jawbone. They watch the TWITCH of the mangled form, wiggling with death throes facedown on the wet cement, toes pointing and bouncing fiercely and riding the quivers.

PUMP-PUMP

Look at dat—Never seen nothin’ lika dat before. Suppose its ah tremor. Aw man—he’s pissin’em self now. Sheat—Can’t make’m smell no worse— Haha. Got that right.