

Brothers

Another Dog Day is coming to its end, and all over the city sky, the dusk has been running its warm reddishness playfully, beautifully.

The Green Market is closed.

Strong, forceful squirts of the thick, fire-hose waters have already sprayed and washed the market counters and the concrete surface beneath. Over there, against the short wall surrounding the market, a mound of wasted fruit and vegetables is piled up, a feast to a few wasps and many more flies. In the uneven concrete surface of the market, there are many small puddles of clear water left behind. Sporadically, from the still wet counters, some of the remaining water drops come off and plop into a puddle below, disturbing its stillness, causing the colorful reflection of the evening sky to begin its wavy, ripply dance, but only to, shortly after, calm down again.

Plop, there it goes anew, only this time over there.

It's peaceful.

Right above the wall of the Green Market is still alive, very alive, swarming with life - people. The reason for this swarm is one of the major

central city bus transportation nodes is located right there, next to the market. 56, 56E, 122, 133, 133E, 136, 139, 139E, 144, 171, 181, 192, 301, 301E, 303, 303E, 307, are the numbers of the bus lines that are beginning and ending their routes there, at the Green Market Station. Also, it's the end of the week, folks are going out, and another, odd rush hour is in place. The incoming buses are choking the jammed bottleneck entrances into the crammed station, and many drivers are opening the doors of their crowded vehicles beforehand. From the packed transporters, people are falling out like potato sacks, but only to spring back up and, nonchalantly, dust off. Once dapper and tidy again, they would, in an evenly smooth, classy, elegant manner, move on through the thickness of the dancing asphalt heat topped with black clouds of so many diesel-engines exhausts, and towards the neon whiteness of the nearby underpass, where they would let slow but strong tunnel stream take and carry them further into the city, *into life*.

Farther away from the gagged bus entrance and the underpass crowd, deeper into the grounds of the Green Market station, at the platform of the lines 133, 133E, a few yards away from the parked and ready-to-take-off 133, there stood K.. While the neglected cigarette between his fingers slowly burns into its ever-growing gray corps, his gaze is lost within his musing. It looks as though he can not decide if he should turn around, get on the bus and go home, or if he should move in the opposite

direction, dive into the powerful underpass current, and further into the city, *into life*.

This is where K.'s long-lasting dilemma comes into play, you know, predicament based on the notion that *so-called life* is nothing more but the reflection of the wrong turn that was, on the global, civilizational-scale-level, taken somewhere down the road and long ago, presumably after the written word was invented and recording of everything had become a thing. And now, all of it can be boiled down to money, booze, amuse, to the bells and whistles of the theme park and its colorful, wheedling delights, to the deception fueled by our own buying into silly promises of the good old chasing the tail game, the hamster-wheel and the rat race game, the carrot on the stick, all the carrots on all the sticks game.

Is that all that we've learned to search for?!

There must be more to it.

But where the heck is it?!

Could discipline be the answer, or could it be that it is just another vegetable, the lettuce or the cabbage, perhaps?!

Is there a formula?!

There must be a formula.

God, I hope there is a formula.

Only one way to find out.

But the promised sweetness of the carrot root...

All right, bunny, hold your horses.

Yes, young K. was experiencing some serious pole pulls...

Limbo?!

...some significant polarization.

Purgatory?!

Torn between the ideas, between the concepts, between the opposites: abstinence or hedonism, tail or head, good or bad, blue or red, beginning or end, birth or dead, female or male, minus or plus, up or down, in or out, left or right, black or white, dark or light, flip or flop...

Plop - there it goes again.

To resist or to give in, that is the question?!

Decisions, responsibilities, decisions, fears, decisions, mistakes, decisions, guilt, decisions, decisions, decisions...

And being just a hair or few older than a quarter of a century, when the heck did he get to be so mature about the shit, you could ask and, perhaps, you should?!

Furthermore, K. wasn't missing seeing that his viewing is just another base, another observatory in the game played by all - *you're appearing*,

thus, you're partaking. Not necessarily a bad thing, though, just another human commonality, the game, the human game, the life game.

But what if one base is better than the other?

Could it be the part of the equation?!

How do I know if one is better than the other?!

Do I follow my gut on it, or...

I should follow my gut, no matter...

Damn! That formula would come in real handy.

Yes, K. was hooked. There was no doubt about it, and there was no backing up either. He knew that. Of course, he could ignore it. He knew that too. And he will try to put it off, to put it on hold. It won't work. He knew that it wouldn't work - *you can't deny yourself, not without some heavy medication, self-prescribed or not.* Yes, the hook was jabbed in deep. What he wasn't aware of just yet, though, was that he himself is both the hook and the bait - but where is the fish, you might ask and, perhaps, you should?!

The other thing that K. also knew was that beautiful *Eva* was somewhere beyond the underpass current, waiting to be found again, to be singled out again so that they could enjoy the games together. Plus, he

could, yet again, tease himself with the idea that maybe, just maybe, she could be the one.

Alas.

The vicious circle of wanting not to want.

Torn so torn.

Indecisive.

Why so serious, son?!

But hey, don't judge him too harshly. The conflict and the solemnity are what he's in need of, at least at the moment, and where he's at is where he's supposed to be, We suppose.

Oh well!

Snapping out of his pondering, K. looks towards the underpass, and his movement makes the forgotten cigarette drop its precious, piled-up cremations. After pulling one more drag from it, K. flicks the rest away, turns around, and while nonchalantly blows the light-gray cloud out of his heavily smoked lungs, he climbs into the nearly empty bus and sits by the left-side window comfortably.

Across the street, the 307 had arrived, and K. watched the same proceedings of falling out, getting up, dusting off. The monotonous, light, and steady shaking of the 133 - the rhythm given by the work of its diesel engine in neutral - felt nice, lulling, comforting, perfect rocking to slip you into asleep.

K. wasn't sleepy, though.

Or tired either.

Not at all.

The door closed, and K. could tell that the ride had begun.

Although he was aware of the bus ride, aware of the passengers and their occasional small talk, K. could clearly see that naked, pointy hill in front of his closed eyes. By naked, We mean no grass, not a single blade, just that baked, packed dirt. It, the dirt, was conditioned by the powerful sun-ball which, seated in its highnoonishness, seemed closer, centimeter or two bigger than usual, and it was its heat that made everything go go-go dancing in the distance.

K. wasn't bothered by the heat, though, he couldn't feel it - *after all, this was only a vision*, he could say if someone would ask - and although he had never been there before, he knew that the weather was like that every day. More importantly, he also knew that behind that pointy, bold, and burnt hump, there was a desert, the place that he always wanted to see, and yet, for some reason unknown, he went left.

The sun and the heat were gone, like snipped-away gone, and K. was standing on the edge of the riverbank. There was no water in the trenched bed but rather this lazy, low-floating fog filling it out. And even though he could see the bottom of the not-so-deep riverbed, the visibility was,

naturally, limited, and he couldn't see the other side, the other bank - for some reason, he didn't think that this might be a lake or a sea, perhaps, but rather a river bed. But no matter the visibility, good or bad, he could see that elements there were always like that.

And again, in spite of his desire to see the desert, K. went down, into the river bed, into the cloud, and he started walking towards the other, imaginary bank. With every step, the fog seemed to get denser, thicker, and the visibility distance seemingly shorter, worsened, but he just continued walking towards the other bank, as he imagined.

At one point, K.'s whole body shivered, and he stopped stranded and with no bank in sight still. Although he felt that he wasn't alone, K. felt no fear. He did, though, entertain the idea that he might have gone down the wrong path, and as soon as doubt settled in, he found himself back in front of the nude hill again.

Back at the beginning.

Back into the sunshine.

K. felt glad about this change.

This time, K. waited for nothing and went straight around the bold bulge and behind it, where he found himself on the top of this cliff, this uplift, this 30 yards deep dive; like a huge body of water - a lake or a sea, this time around - having had receded itself a million or so years ago, leaving behind its parched dirt-bed, deep, empty, transformed,

transfigured into the beautiful, sun-bathed desert with its wide open, distant and dancing horizon.

Although there was no fog in this deep waterbed, on the left, and below K.'s feet, so to speak, there was a little white cloud bathed in the sun; it was so close to the ground that it seemed like it was touching it, and K. was looking at it from above.

Interest into the puffy form had settled in already, and K. found himself in front of the desert cloud instantly. Under it, in its thick shade, there was a man sitting on the ground. Through his thick red beard, he sends a smile, and K. knew that he shouldn't do as he intended.

While K. stood there waiting, watching, the thought of how *there was something peculiar in the way the man was bringing himself up* had employed his mind for a sec'; like he had seen it before, or something.

When the man, in all the whiteness of his tunic, straightened up and looked at him again, K. knew that now is okay to do as originally intended.

K. stepped under the cloud and into the shade.

With the barely noticeable arm gesture, the man offered him to sit, but K. didn't feel like it. The man asked if he wanted something, but K. said that he was alright. Through his thick black beard, the man sent another smile, made a few steps towards the edge of the shade, and K. noticed his bare feet. Once near the edge, and like in the attempt to collect something,

the man casually gestured again, only this time outwards and through the outer layer of the shade, so to speak, and K. noticed that too.

“What are you doing here”, the man asked while turning around to face K. anew.

“I wanted to go further, deeper into the desert,” said K..

“There is no need for that,” said the man and started telling the story about cloud and him. He said that they were brothers. If he’d leave the shade, they would both die, he said. The same outcome was awaiting if the big brother would let old and strong desert winds blow him away.

“There can be only Us,” he said.

The next thing he said was a punch line of that Siamese brother’s joke, and it cracked him up. After a short and rhythmic seizure of laughter, he went back to his original spot; the curious way of bringing himself down, though... it looked familiar to K... his knee first then the arm, or was it another way around?! Like an old person was doing it, or something, only evenly faster, stronger. It took him only a jif.

Once seated again and looking back at K., through his thick blue beard, the man sent another smile, and K. knew that his visit had come to its end.

With that thought, K. found himself back on the top of the uplift, taking in one more look at the brothers and the dancing desert in the distance.

K. opened his eyes to the lit-up inside of the bus that had gotten busier with more passengers taking the seats and a few standing too. And no, there was no red-headed kid on the seat in front of him; there was no black-headed sleepy head leaning onto her momma's shoulder; no, there was no blue-headed kiddo who, instead of going sleeping and drooling, looked up at now present K. curiously. No, this didn't take place.

What did happen, though, is that the movement of the bus still felt lulling, comforting. But sleepy or not, the next stop was his, and K. got up and moved towards the door.

While taking off, the bus engine growled stronger, louder, the warm night air took in another hot, black, diesel cloud, and while K. went to the right and home, the 133 continued towards the last stop and turnaround.

Across the road, farther left from the closed newspaper stand and a locked up ice cream bar freezer, under the crown of the old linden tree, is the settlement's always-most-crowded bus stop. There, at the stop, in the darkness of the broken streetlight, many cigarette embers could be seen illuminating many faces - the crowd ready to hit the town, and *into life*.

