

## 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.

Forceful jets of the fire-hose waters have already washed the market counters and the concrete surface beneath. Over there, against the short wall surrounding the place, a mound of wasted fruit and vegetables is piled up - a feast to a few wasps and many more flies. In the uneven floor of the market, there are lots of small pools of clear water left behind. Sporadically, from the still wet counters, some of the remaining water drops would come off and plop into a puddle below disturbing its stillness, causing the colorful reflection of the evening sky to begin its wavy dance but merely to, shortly after, quiet 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 city bus transportation nodes that is located right next to the market; 56, 56E, 122, 133, 133E, 136, 139, 139E, 144, 171, 181, 192, 301, 301E, 303, 303E, 307, are

the titles 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, the folks are going out, and another, odd rush hour is in place; many incoming buses are *choking* the bottleneck entrance into the already crammed station, and some drivers are opening the doors of their crowded vehicles beforehand. Regardless of the unloading location, though, out of those 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 elegant manner, move on through the thickness of the dancing asphalt heat filled with hot black clouds of the diesel-engines exhausts, and towards the neon whiteness of the nearby underpass, where they would let slow but strong tunnel stream to take and carry them further into the city, *into life*.

Farther away from the gagged entrance and the underpass crowd, deeper into the grounds of the Green Market Station, at the empty 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 pondering. 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 life*.

This is where K.'s long-lasting dilemma comes into play, you know, a 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 on 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, the rat race, 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, in hell, 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, good or bad, tail or head, blue or red, beginning or end, birth or death, 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 vantage point in the game played by all - you're appearing, thus, you're partaking. Not necessarily a bad thing, though, just another 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, 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 the heck is the fish, you might ask and, perhaps, you should?! The other thing he 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, *again*. Plus, he would, yet anew, get the opportunity to 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 pensiveness, K. looks towards the underpass, and his movement knocks off the cigarette's precious piled-up cremations. After taking one more drag from it, he flicks the rest away, turns around,

and while casually 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. At the platform across the station's driveway, 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 bus - the rhythmic movement given by the work of its diesel engine in neutral - felt nice, lulling, comforting, a perfect rocking to slip you into asleep. But he 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 packed dirt. It, the dirt, was conditioned by the powerful sun-ball which, seated in its highnoonishness, seemed closer, a centimeter or two bigger than usual, and it was its emission 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, but *where it was emerging from* would be the question harder to answer even to himself. And although he had never been there before, he knew that the weather there was always like that. More importantly, he also knew that behind that burnt hump, there was a desert - the place that he always wanted to see -

and yet, for some reason unknown, he made a quarter turn and went away from it, he went left.

The sun and the heat were snipped away instantly, 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 was filling it. And even though he could see the bottom of the not-so-deep streambed, the visibility was, naturally, limited so 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 regardless of the visibility's quality, K. could clearly see that elements there were always like that.

And again, in spite of his desire to see the desert, K. went down, into that dry waterway, 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 range seemingly shorter, deteriorated, but he just continued to walk towards the other bank, as he imagined.

At one point, K. felt slight soil shifting, then his whole body shivered as well, and he stopped stranded with no bank or anything else in sight. He felt that he wasn't alone. The idea that he might have gone down the wrong path came to his mind, and as soon as doubt settled in, he found himself back in front of the bold 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 baked bulge and behind it where he found himself on the edge of this 30-fathom deep dive; like a huge body of water - a lake or a sea, this time around - having had ebbed entirely and permanently a million or so years ago, leaving behind its parched dirt-bed empty, transformed into this 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 in that puffiness had settled in already, and K. found himself in front of it instantaneously. Under it, in its solid 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 he stood there waiting, watching, the thought of how there was something familiar 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 long, black beard, the man sent another smile, took a perpendicular turn, walked to the edge of the shade, and K. noticed his bare feet. Once at the edge, and like in the attempt to collect



something, the man casually gestured again, only this time inwards, to himself, and K. noticed that too. Right then, the slight shifting occurred, K.'s whole body shivered a little and he thought how, this time around, it must be the cloud rather than soil movement.

"What are you doing here," the man asked while turning around to face K. anew, and K. said that he wanted to go further, deeper into the desert. The man said how there is no need for that, and then he started telling the story about the cloud and him. He said that they were brothers. If he'd leave the shade, they would both be gone, dead. Naturally, the same outcome was awaiting if his big brother would let the old and strong desert winds separate them. "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, his knee first then the arm, or was it the other way around?! Like an old person was doing it, only evenly stronger, faster; it took him only a jiff. Once seated again and looking back at K., through his thick and long, blue beard, he sends 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 cliff, taking in one more look at the brothers and the dancing desert in the distance.

K. opened his eyes into 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 mamma'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 and 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*.