

I.

The window was open and could not prevent the fresh air from entering the room. Neither could it stop the raindrops from soaking the pages of the antiquarian edition of Plato. On the outside, the street was filled by cars, parked along buildings from before the war, heading towards the yellow baroque church at its end. From one of the buildings, you could hear someone playing the piano.

Kristof was absolutely focused,—his technique perfect—and the music would have sounded heavenly to anyone but him. Of course, he was aware that he played well, recognized the elegant moves of his fingers and how the moves were transformed into harmonious sounds. That was not enough for him though. Simply a record of well-executed craft. Kristof stopped this effort and stood frozen staring at the instrument. God knows how much of his time passed in that pose, how many plans he drew up and rejected instantly in his mind. Still, nothing gave him the rush. He wondered what it was like to be an astronaut trapped by gravity, having the stars every night only to torture you with their shining promise from beyond the empty space. Only astronauts could have understood him at that moment.

There was this one time when he had too many drinks and ordered a call-girl. It was not something truly exceptional; in fact, he was a regular visitor in several bars around the city. There were also days when he was willing to invite some of the female customers of these establishments over to his apartment for a private piano recital. Only with that brown-skinned call-girl, only then did he experience the mysteries of the world, yet he never looked for her again. Maybe he was ashamed or afraid or perhaps simply believed that to her, he was no different than some artisan's tool.

Hours passed. It was still raining outside when he finally moved. Kristof went to the bathroom and searched for the box on the back of the dresser. Inside the box carefully placed was a small pack of heroin. He thought about trying it, but simply wasn't ready. "Pure magic" is what she said. And yet again, what a terrible, agonizing end that was!

II.

Kristof locks the door. 'Gosh, I forgot my umbrella! Anyway, I cannot go back there right now.'" Turns out a wise decision from him, as he steps in a steady rhythm and soon the rain is left behind.

Not long after, the architectural setting of his footpath also changes. Now taller, much narrower structures rise around him like concrete Babylonian echoes. Ablaze colors are missing from them, except for the red reflections from the descending sun in the countless windows. Kristof is confidently navigating around the urban net until he reaches another domain. Now the buildings look like big cubes marked with condensed initials and stylized symbols of the corporate age.

One of them is marked with a big hole in the graffiti-covered wall on the other side of the railway. Kristof can easily sneak inside. Once in there, he turns to the ruined brick hall that serves as outer fence of the parking area. He walks through the bushes and junk straight in its darkness. The mixture of smells gives away the poorly kept secret that the place is not yet abandoned.

Kristof passes further into the inner rooms. They are dry and full with all sorts of broken furniture—of which every ruin-pub in town would be proud. The same cannot be said about its inhabitants.

III.

He found her lying there on a ripped off beige backseat. Her dog companion barked happily at him and Kristof rewarded the poor pet for the positive attitude with a can of stew. Then he gently sat next to her waiting for her to become more responsive. She did not really belong here with the clean clothes on and blonde hair. Strangely, she couldn't fit anywhere else.

“I see you are trying to refresh this cave of yours” commented he on the vase with mixture of artificial and real flowers placed on top of the open drawer in which he carefully folded the laundry. She seemed to ignore his words, mumbling and scratching her hands beneath the sleeves of the tangerine hoodie. Then she raised and went straight to him, squeezing her arms around him and holding him there. “I'm glad you came, poor Stan also missed you.” She wandered around the room like she was trying to put some order in it, but was simply moving things to different places. “Let's go out, I want to walk in the sun!”

“We should move quickly then, it is sunset already.”

“Really? I want to see the stars then and we could go to the river! You can pretend to be my sun, right? Did you bring me a present today, sunshine?” She smiled when he presented her

with the plastic pack. “Thank you, honey! That is our little secret, isn’t it?” Another long hug. “Let’s move, you said it yourself or we might miss our surge!”

IV.

A month from now Kristof will see her unconscious body on the floor. As always, he would feed the dog and then try to wake her up. When he realizes that she has no pulse, he will choke with the scream of guilt and shock. He will then call her parents; they know him and deserve to hear the news from him. He will wait for her father and even help him recover the body. Only after a serious bath can the dog stay with him. What will happen to this last unconsumed dose? He will never know: it will remain in a dark corner of the ruined hall. Over the night there will be a fire that destroys most of it, but it will not be started by him.

On that day, Kristof will play the piano again and will feel his music finally.