

The Emancipated One

by Brian Michael Barbeito

The town was wet from storms and the church was full while the priest gave an exegesis. The world outside did not bother with words or cleverness busy as it was with the real wisdom of its own natural cycles. During the night before, many sheets of rain arrived to meet small brick houses along inter-coastal waterways.

Since everything was built on swamp-type lands, on wooden piles thrust into the ground, water would creep through shore walls and root systems to arrive in abodes. Jet pumps, hidden mechanical creatures smart with bearings and shafts, had pressure switches and timers that made impellers spit strong short bursts of water to break silence in afternoons.

There was a man among that area that no longer went to church, finding the idea of talk about God outgrown. He meant no harm to any soul, deity, or even idea, and being in the November of his years, considered life's game to have been played well enough. Intelligent, curious, and often contrarian, he could be seen by the water's edge surveying both it and the landscape beyond.

One of his sayings was of how proud he was that he had never read a book. The idea was that other people had sullied their minds with theories not their own, with fantastical propaganda and misinformation of all manner. Sometimes the man could be seen studying papers and diagrams.

Great disdain was supposedly held for domestic animals, yet when a visitor brought a dog the man was seen to produce a longer and make-shift leash from a work rope and to be refilling a water dish with clean cold water. The ideas now being that he was worried the canine was too constricted with the current leash and also that it was important for the animal to remain properly hydrated.

It would not be until afternoon when the sun would appear overhead and dry as if once and for all the night rain's remnants from the area. In the time being, the church in that town was full, save for that old man, broken apart from his peers, watching the

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world instead from places where water met land. Yes, down other streets, the priest continued to talk about scripture while the sun, a shy child or tardy watchman, hid behind cloud cover in the far aerial distance.

Somewhere between it all the jet pumps sounded their vroom and then swish, vroom and then swish.

Vroom and swish...

