

Monogamy

by Cooper Renner

e.e. cummings, T.S. Eliot and Joseph Roth walk into a bar.

"So who's the bad boy now?"

They're like hunters meeting up on the ice for the first time since last winter. They hug, and Roth's lips glance off the bare skin where Eliot has completely trimmed off his sideburns.

cummings starts to sniff, his usual routine. He feigns aloofness while raising one wolfy leg to pee on Eliot's sneakers.

"Bad boy needs a kiss?"

The old bluff. It's no one's fault Eliot has breezy down cold. It's the Lloyds tattoo, the Faber bonuses, the vice cop punching his head under the blade of the guillotine and looking down at the dank straw.

Years pass. cummings and Eliot walk out, arm in sturdy arm, toasting their surface pinknesses. Roth's gizzards, like lichen, haze into oak under the entrance to Goering's ticking chalet.

