

The Abstracted Man

by Eric Lloyd Blix

The abstracted man lacks an inside. He is a body. A shell. An exterior that encompasses nothing.

The abstracted man yearns to fill himself with adjectives. He lumbers through streets. No adjectives fit. He finds adjectives where we discard them. He carries them in his arms. *Loose. Elemental.* These fail. Something should happen when they spill forth. He should drop to his knees and splay his hands. He should wish to gather. *Frantic.* He should be *Mystified* that no one will help. *Abstracted.* The word does not fit. *Fatherly.* The words fall out. He holds a stuffed bear. It is only the idea.

The abstracted man fends for himself. He should have a creature to accompany him. A pet or a sidekick. We think this. He plods among: A forest. A city. A people. Atoms. A framework. Blocks of things, and schematics. Motes.

We see him when we drop our mail. At the ends of our driveways. We drop our mail in boxes. We lift flags. The abstracted man watches from the gutters. He stands on these, or near them. Even in the spring when the sweepers come through. Our street is clean.

The abstracted man tries on shorts. We are surprised to see him shopping. We stop and watch him turn. We smile at him. We wave. We say hello. We like this image. We wish to be friendly. We feel inclined to try on shorts. We like this idea, that it is himself the abstracted man inspects. In the dressing room mirror.

We see a news report. A child has gone missing. They have checked the city. The woods outside. We have been interviewed. Questioned. There are no leads. Our mood changes. Our arms are empty. This child. Missing. To us idealized.

