

The Street Of God Knows What & Other Stories

by Kevin Army

spot1

Inflatable Punching Bag

Underdog carried him through. It was the year Elvis died. There was a fire just a few miles from the hospital, on the mountain of the devil. An extinct volcano overlooking a grim, dry and close-minded suburb.

He almost bled to death. Underdog became his power animal, brought him slowly back to health. He would learn the isolation of sickness many times throughout his life. Various fictitious animals would be his strength. His companions.

One night he woke up with Underdog laying next to him, breathing softly. He marveled at how fiction could make reality so much better.

The fire stopped. Elvis stayed dead and became a fiction of sorts. Somewhere in the magma of his soul he rebuilt and grew, found trajectory and purpose.

Years later a boyfriend gave him an Underdog punching bag for Christmas. It outlasted the boyfriend, and stands watch day and night over the bedpost, next to a large thumb piano and a family of skunks.

blue

Lack Of Oxygen

Under water, she becomes immersed in the sadness. Look at the bird across the wave. It is searching too. A complete companionship offered two for one. The swelling persists, then wanes. Was that a sea lion or kelp?

There are no easy answers, as there are no answers here. Just water and a lack of oxygen. She's afraid to surface. What if she's seen like this?

Things ripple and dance here, an endless massage, another world offered up. A disrupted life and dance. "Find the vision to play in order to destroy the other." Some things offer comfort, others hallucinations. A byway of life in this alternate universe, right here in the laws of our world.

The county fair. The darkness after it left. The pursuit and the loneliness. Her breath, expanding and forgiving, peaceful and emptied out of all previous content. Connected and alone. Alone and floating under, ever under.

staples

The Street Of God Knows What

These things emerge: The broken lines on his face; the outbreak of sadness in his eyes. The willow tree in the front yard. The newspapers he can't throw out. He takes pictures every day out on the street of God knows what. His black cat looks at him sadly, wanting something I'm pretty sure he can't give.

I see him on the local cable access channel, doing something for the city council.

We don't speak. One day, it looks like he's going to move out. He's posted do not park signs on our block. A moving truck is parked there all day. They fill it with trash and newspapers. The strange yellow van he filled with papers is towed off.

It's been a few weeks now, he's still here. I guess everyone deserves a fresh start. I'm hoping to take a picture of the cat later on.

rail

