

# Big City

by Kyle Hemmings

She enters the city with the windup and silent tick of the best sex toy, a bounce and a slow burn, recent advances in plastics have made rabbit hearts obsolete. The man with the pug-ugly nose and fat lip tells her to sign on the dotted line and asks her to dance nude. He dims the lights and she's no choice. Her body turning to wisp and sunblind movement, she dances to an old Edith Piaf and her steps are out-of-sync but below the concrete floor the rabbits of despair swoon and blush. You're hired, he says in mud-stodgy tone. He proceeds to penetrate her from behind; there is no other way, until she forgets the Plains and the too seldom rain, an angel's piss, her father used to joke until his rubber band of a heart stretched and nearly killed the both of them. After she found out he had buried The Last Dead Indian, she no longer slept with him. In the city, the evenings take on a purplish hue just before sunset, not entirely toxic, claims the blind paperboy who delivers each day's news with a rasp and a pigeon's smeared blood across her door. The apartment is paid in full by the club, which is really an after hours hangout for the grifted and the philosophically maimed. She takes her hamburgers medium rare and the pickles remind her of the taste of last night's penis before she stuffed the stranger's apologies in a jar. He made a slow rattle on the way out. Over time, which is kept and set without fail by the rabbits underground, she falls in love with a one-eyed man whose hands play her like a cello. But he too disappears into the London Fog of his own inarticulateness. She cries for days, for no one, really. Then, one day, the blind paper boy knocks, offers her a fistful of damask-scented plastic flowers, cheaper than what she can find on any street corner below neon and electric unblinking eye. No, she says softly, not wanting to wound him any further. She covers her breasts in a bathrobe and closes the door. That night, on

her way to The Strip, she finds a dead pigeon outside her door. It's wearing a tag with her apartment number. She brings it inside, holds the carcass, petting it, refusing to let it go. She wants to feed it. But that, she knows, is another of life's great hoaxes and anyway, she's out of bread

