

# Tending Toward Inertia

*by* Kyle Hemmings

She meets her old dance instructor, named Ira, in the back of a bus that wheezes & squeaks. The passengers seem to deny the small clouds of white exhaust. Zin recalls an early class when Ira was fond of saying, "What is your favorite flower? Imagine how it would dance." Zin doesn't want Ira to return to a drafty studio apartment on Avenue A.

She brings the woman to her apartment in Chelsea, where Ira kneads imaginary bread or invents new dances from wringing Zin's wet skirts, blouses, panties. In the middle of a room, they float, thrust, glide, slash, dab, flick & press until they almost disappear. The old woman pants & looks pale. Not like the old days where they could lunge & sweep forever. The old woman complains that she is constantly hungry.

When the phone rings, the dance instructor answers & says "I am not home."

Zin says "It was for me, Madame."

The old woman says "It doesn't matter. We are the same. The same ilk or elk?"

Zin distracts herself in delicatessens or Laundromats where she washes her leotards & tutus on delicate but extremely flammable. She has a Russian boyfriend who commits suicide three times a week, then becomes a floating island of blue ice.

The old woman tells Zin that she must return home, her rent is due.

"No," says Zin, "you must stay with me. A small but precious shape must be saved."

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She folds the woman up to fit in two dimensional space.

The woman complains of neck pain.

She hides the woman in a closet.

But at night, Zin hears the rain when there is no rain.

She then places the woman in an empty vase.

The woman only grows toward inertia.

Zin unfolds the old woman and buys a new bed. It is softer than the previous.

They both lie down, sleep side to side. They dream of their first dance. They sink.

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