

Love in the Time of Ebola

by Lynn Beighley

Me: In my orange hazmat, the one that makes my eyes look intensely blue.

Him: His flexi-human-hamster ball. Fun, but a bit informal for a first date, I think.

We're outside because doorways are not easy for him.

After some impromptu rounds of bumper balls on the square, he deflates a little and almost sits on a bench. I offer to fetch us some coffees, and before I can stop him, he uses tongs to slip a decommed bill through his front slit.

I can't expect him to take it back in, now that it's out, so I take it.

Hazmats are worth it, really.

I fetch our hyperheated bevs and moonwalk out to him. He's rolled over on his back and can't get up. And I laugh, I can't help it. He's a human beetle.

He glares at me as he rights himself. I put his drink in his tongs, but he doesn't take it in the ball.

I sip mine, trusting that I won't die this time.

He makes some friendly noises, but excuses himself. He drops the drink, and it splats on the square. He rolls away.

