Paddy Wagon

by S.H. Gall

Our walk-up hovers within a stone's throw of the ER's main entrance - and of our venerable Psych Ward.

I've been taken to both, dozens of times. The sirens, though, don't keep me up at night. I sleep well, and I sleep easy, in my personal post-apocalypse.

Some days the paramedics scream past the windows of our living room every sixteen minutes, for hours on end. This is not a popular hospital, but it's busy by necessity. So many are so sick.

I have a prized memory, not of an ambulance, but of a paddy wagon acting as an ambulance. I'm lying in its sterile hold, in a pool of my blood, handcuffed, on the cross-hatched metal floor. I am barely thinking anything, but what I am thinking, with terrible clarity, is that this is precisely where I belong. Where I have *always* belonged, since I was a twinkle in Dad's eye.

That darkness informs the radiance of my current condition. In this world, gratitude is the first function of polarity.

Seth Gall has had work published in China, Canada, and the U.S. His work has appeared in Word Riot, SmokeLong Quarterly, and Nanoism. He is S.H. Gall in decomP Magazine, Nanoism, issues one and 27 of SmokeLong Quarterly, Five Star Literary Stories, and Fictionaut.

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