

Popcorn Tigers

by Shawn Misener

There are so many couches.

They stretch to the horizon, and for a moment I feel trapped in an Art Van, until I realize that I am not indoors. I am in the Sahel. The earth is cracked beneath me and the air wavers with heat rising from the leather padding on the seats

There are tigers in the distance. They leap over the couches deftly, slowly leaving the sun behind and targeting me. There must be a dozen of them.

I would run, but between my legs a gigantic green elephant rests, chortling from deep inside his chest. I implore him to flee by pulling on his ears but he ignores me and continues his gruff laugh. I am high enough to escape the tigers but cannot contain my fear. They are only a few couches away now.

The last row of furniture is all black leather. In unison the tigers hop onto a couch a piece, sit calmly on their haunches, and reach for remote controls buried in the cushions. Roaring, they paw at the remotes.

The elephant is by now almost crying with laughter. Dull clicks pop in the air around me. The elephant is rapidly changing colors as fast as the tigers can change the channel. Green, red, blue, grey, purple, pink. . . They don't stop tapping the remote. The tigers join the elephant in uproarious laughter.

I realize that I am the only one not getting the humor. The tiger closest to me looks up and sighs. "Chill out my friend," he says. "We're about to make popcorn."

