

He enters the lobby, his wet shoes kiss on the tile. He steps over pizza boxes and some fliers pasted to the floor with rain. Outside, the sky sounds like a cat purring. There is no elevator, he starts up the stairs at a very ordinary pace. On the landing of the second flight his heart badumdumdum. Smoking is permitted in this apartment. He inhales, it is deep and unsatisfying. His steps are soft thuds on the carpet. Muffled sounds from behind doors, something from behind unit 11, from behind unit 13. He stands in front of unit 16, shakes his umbrella and enters.

He opens his laptop. Clicks category / news. Clicks category /politics. Clicks Americans make up 3rd largest group of asylum seekers coming to Canada. Clicks billions cut in spending but deficit only shaved by 500 million. Clicks centre of economic gravity shifting to Asia. He clicks category /living. Clicks it's easy to get lonely in cities: that's where friendship centres come in. Clicks having work friends can make you happier and more successful: a study. Clicks coffee lovers defy evolution by liking bitter taste, researchers say.

He takes a bath and feels refreshed. Pulls on a yellow-brown cloth coat, ties it slack around the soft of his belly. He sips water in the mirror, he looks at his straight mouth. The sound of nothing, which is the same as the sound of the fluorescent bulb above the mirror and a ringing in his ears. In the mirror he mouths *no thank you*, then he mouths a growl.

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It is 3 am. She is watching a movie. She doesn't like the movie; the main character is a compulsive liar. She wants him to stop. Every time the character has an opportunity to speak the truth, she gets a sick feeling in her mouth. He always decides to lie. She knows the story depends on this but it depresses her. She keeps watching the movie until her eyes close.

in the morning she feels like the particles of her body are further apart than they should be. She goes to the rack of clothes intending to dress, she leans back on the radiator and the warmth spreads gently upward through her body. She sits slumped on the rad staring at the wall.

She turns on the radio. She looks in the fridge; she ate out with a friend the night before and wonders if Marta has left anything. She finds a tub of Greek salad and a pot full of schnitzel. Marta's schnitzel is the best in the world. She has always found this strange because Marta is from the Philippines and schnitzel is not. She eats the schnitzel cold out of the tinfoil, it is cool and firm and oily. The bread crumbs stick to the foil. No one is looking so she licks the foil clean after the schnitzel is gone. She hadn't planned on eating all the schnitzel but it was easy and did not take very long.

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He washes the dishes with a new soap, the apple smell is great, the warm water is a delight, as always. He sorts his recycling, compost, and garbage. He sits in the spot on the couch with the tea and opens the laptop again. He reads from the pdf he's downloaded of *Mrs. Reynolds*. 5 pages tonight, before his brain nods off. It's hard to keep his eyes open, he likes this feeling. It means sleep will come quickly after laying down in bed. So he does. And it does.

And then it is the next morning. It is 8 am. He sleeps his alarm twice and then gets up for good. It is Tuesday. It is his day off. He opens the radio. *A skyscraper elevator plunges 84 floors and everyone survives, and dead whale found with 115 plastic cups in its stomach and then tonight partly cloudy becoming cloudy this evening periods of rain beginning after midnight wind northwest 20 km/h gusting to 40 becoming southwest 30 gusting to 50 early this evening. Temperature steady near 10.*

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On the bus there is a man who's forehead has a smudge. It looks like a soft black tire has driven over his face. He is wearing a long woolen green coat. His pants are woolen too; they are turquoise and are rolled up once with a button keeping each cuff in place. He is tall enough to have his feet flat on the floor, but they are not, they are hovering an inch above it. He is holding his bag like a tortoise shell. His lips are moving. He opens and closes his eyes periodically. His eyes stay closed for about eleven or twelve seconds. As his head tilts upward his eyes close, as his head tilts downwards his eyes open. She wonders if he has a home, if he has someone who loves him, if he has children and if they talk to him. He looks lonely but she could be wrong.

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When she gets to the college she takes the elevator up to the 4th floor. When the doors open, she sees a man who she had had a long conversation with a few months ago. She hasn't seen the man since the long conversation. She is careful not to look him in the eyes; she knows she will have to greet him if she does. She doesn't feel like greeting anyone. She walks down the hall toward her office which she shares with another person. The building smells faintly of popcorn. Someone's office door is open and she can see a Christmas light and hear the burp of a little coffee maker. She walks past the door where the good violinist is always practicing. Today the sound of the violin makes her feel a little better. Some days when she hears the violin it makes her feel very sad and complicated. She notices a black towel shoved in the crack beneath the wooden door. She suspects someone from another office complained about the noise and asked the violinist to do this. This irritates her a little.

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He passes a store he knows the front of the store is window wall from floor to ceiling height an average ceiling height not a high ceiling height. He knows the store and the people inside it so he doesn't look up when he walks by the store and maybe he quickens his pace a little. He is in the mood not to be seen by or waved at or made eye contact with the people inside the store that he knows. Not even for a second. He passes a caramel coloured animal and a person he does not know he smiles at the animal both at the animal and because of the animal the animal looks up at his face. The animal is 5 pounds over weight he thinks if he were to rate the animal on a scale of under to average weight the animal would certainly be over. This gives the animal a nice swing in the middle when it jogs next to it's owner. The woman and her animal walk the sidewalk of the same sidewalk that he walks on which is the sidewalk of the busy street with plenty of construction and the animal is not on a leash. And the woman is not on a leash. Certainly neither the animal nor the woman are on a leash. he likes this. it gives him a good feeling. to know that the animal chooses to stay with the woman and the woman with the animal. If either one wanted to leave they could at any time but they choose to stay with each other because they would rather be with each other than the alternative being without each other. Much as there is a need for fences there is this woman and there is this animal.

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Unlocking her office door is noisy, the brass plate on the key smacking the wood. It is an old door and she likes that about the office. Half of her hopes the other person who she shares the office with isn't there, the other half hopes he

is. When the door opens she is relieved that the office is empty. Last time she saw the other person who she shares the office with, he had moved his hands a lot moved his mouth a lot moved his legs and pacing back and pacing fourth explaining explaining explaining without asking. When she left it felt like she had been beaten up although she doesn't blame the man who she shares the office with for her feeling this way.

The office is empty and almost as soon as she is there she feels like leaving. The piano is out of tune and sounds very loud in the morning which is still and she probably should eat some breakfast anyway so she unties her bag and leaves some books on the shelf before locking up and heading down toward the café on the first floor.

In the café on the first floor she stares at the sandwiches and the wraps and the different coloured pitas. She looks at three different salads and carefully searches for one without wilted greens. All the salads look fresh and are without wilted greens but she puts them back in the fridge and walks over to the soup bar. She looks at the soup. The cream of mushroom looks like a big wet lump and no, tomato soup makes her mouth feel like when tickling turns from funny to not funny. She moves to the pizza tower. All meat. She settles for a carrot muffin and a coffee, black. On her way out from the café she sees a group of students from one of her classes, they ignore her as she walks by. She knows they saw her and this makes her feel confused. The confusion turns into bitterness and she decides to take the bus back downtown and work from home for the rest of the day.

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His car is parked on the street. A ticket is tucked under a windshield wiper for \$30. He is not allowed to park here. Or rather he is allowed to park here but only between the hours of 6p.m. and 20 minutes ago. He will need to call an office about this or else hand over the \$30 dollars. He puts the ticket on the dashboard so he remembers. This has happened before and it does not ruin his day. He makes the drive to the library at a very ordinary pace. He turns the volume on the radio. *Global heat waves are damaging beetle sperm, and that could be bad news for the entire planet and tiny people have evolved in rainforests because its where tiny steps are better and you live in hell every day: the tragedy of forgetting your child in the car.* He is not so focused with thoughts of the library that he can't hear the radio warnings but he also feels that really *what can a warning do. A warning cannot help him through the day or rest of the month or through till his next birthday or even through the time it takes him to get to the library. Not in any way. Much as there is a need for warnings, what can a warning do.*

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On the bus on the way home she takes a seat in the middle, sometimes she sits at the very front, sometimes at the very back but usually, like today, she sits in the middle, on a seat facing the aisle. One of her favourite things to do on the bus is look at people's shoes. She likes to look at every part of every person on the bus, but she particularly likes to notice their shoes. She is not exactly sure what shoes say about their owners. Today, even though it is snowing and slushy wet outside, most people are wearing shoes. Most shoes on this bus are white, especially the shoes on other girls. Adidas, with a little green strip on the heel. Nike and adidas and new balance and converse and blundstones, black and teal and peach and blue and orange and pink. and beige. Some people have nice shiny leather boots. She is wearing her black leather boots and they are not shiny. They are covered in mud. She wonders how everyone keeps their shoes so clean and new looking.

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Another one of her favourite things to do on the bus is choose the person she'd most like to talk to, she knows it's only based on how they look and what they're wearing and doing and etcetera. But it's still a fun game. Maybe someday she will actually talk to a stranger in this way, but not today. She has found the person, he is reading a book, an old paperback that she guesses was probably printed before she was alive. The book is older than her and it is also older than the man who is reading it. Realizing this makes her feel a bit funny but the feeling passes not too slowly. She cranes her neck to see the title types it into the phone 30/11 Cologne, Germany @ Club Volta TICKETS SOLD OUT. Scroll down *1930 novel, in the genre of a Southern Gothic by American author said that he wrote the novel from midnight to 4:00 AM over the course of six weeks and that he did not change a word of it wrote it while working at a power plant* title derived from Homer, reads: *as I lay dying the woman with the dog's eyes would not close my eyes as I descended into hell.*

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In the library he and many other people bustle around. He finds the book he's looking for, reads for two hours, and does the self check out. He gets a phone call while he's reading it's from someone he works with but the call is not work related. The conversation is honest and nice anyway. He leaves the library. He leaves to meet his mother on her lunch. He and his mother live in the same city. His father lives there too, with his mother. They are together. His brother and sister live inside the city also, with their romantic loves. He has a brother in law from his sister and he has a sister in law from his brother, not in a legally recognized way but surely in a common law way he thinks any way. All of them except the brother in law were born in the city. The brother in law doesn't like the city in any particular way but he also doesn't like the city he was born in in any particular way. He finds this a little bit sad but very understandable. When it starts to make him too sad he counts one two three up to thirty and usually then he's not quite as sad but still sometimes sad enough.

Category / news. *Flu season off to slow start in Southwestern Ontario and 9-1-what? one third of 911 calls are non emergencies and feds ordered to postpone award of \$60B warship contract because ship may not meet some requirements like speed.* Category / living. The moon is in Leo. a discussion with a female family member might be important today, details about your private life might be made public but fear not because whatever people are saying it's probably positive. Category / living. Clicks growing concerns: take Christmas decorating one day at a time and washing winter away and this week's flyers.