



I. Fallones

She had the overwhelming

feeling that we were alone in this world.

She said to me "Come and look thru the windows", and I went and looked around and could only be aware of the typical landscape of one of those ordinary evenights rounding October: foggy shrubs smoothing sadly along deserted streets in the city, and the moon like a white giant patch across the darkened sky.

"Don't you realize?", she screamed, "Can't you see?", again she screamed and her voice multiplied echoes in the fall (*can't you see? can't you see? can't you see?*).

"We're all alone", she whispered, "Totally alone in this world".

"What?", said I, "Why do you think so?"

"Don't you realize?", she screamed again, and her shouting was shooting in the middle of the night: solitude standing, a stone cast towards the moon. She said "Let's go out. Somewhere. To see what's new".

I said yes. So she'd be quiet. I'd have given anything so she'd be quiet. To get all those crazy ideas out of her head. Her poor alienated little head filled with golden hair. Like a Barbie doll. And that's how I used to think about her sometimes: my little Barbie doll, lost in her little beautiful Barbie world, filled with broken dreams and lost illusions.

So I said to myself: ok, Barbie, let's go out, let's be swallowed like Jonah by the fog of these restless times of October, let's be lovingly mugged by zealous maladroits in the midnight hour. And so we did go out. The fog shrouded us in and we walked and walked streets and streets and streets and miles and meters and square feet.

"See?", she kept saying, almost to herself. I could overhear her. And I could also see. Or (let's rephrase) I could not see. Not a soul. No one around. Miles and miles and not one in any where. And so we walked, crisscrossing the city, perimeter, area, and diameter, and never we glimpsed anybody.

"See?", she said, "We're all alone". I was amazed. Alone in this world with my little beautiful Barbie doll of blonde hair and small ambitions. Alone. No music. No friends. No Saturday night matinee, no Sunday morning drives. Alone. No nothing. Like in a crystal bell. Like in a 3D

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cube. No lights, no colors whatsoever. Fog shrouding in, decuplicating time and time again. And there we were. All alone.

"Cannot be like this", I said to Barbie.

We went to a restaurant. We went to the movies. We went to a shopping mall, to the market, we entered empty churches. But there never was anyone around. I kept saying all the time "Cannot be like this", but it was very likely that it could be like this, and it was.

She was silent. Had the look of a public funeral and glass in her eyes. Her small beautiful world had been smashed to bits and pieces.

"You have to understand", I said to her, but she was beyond comprehension.

"I don't get it", she whispered, "One day it's ALL here, and next thing you know, ALL'S gone. I don't get it", time and time again, "I don't get it", she said.

She stopped being Barbie doll and became wind-up toy. Well, I thought, we can do whatever we choose to do. Stay late in the cathedral. Start drinking and never stop, without never having to worry about going to work on the next day. Free beers every day. Free foods. We could scream our lungs out and the cops would never come to check out on us. Because there were no cops. There was no one, there was nothing. No people, no cats, no dogs. Nothing at all. Just clouds and wind and moon and fog. Nothing else. Her and me. No one else.

"Let's check some houses", I said to her. "Maybe someone's home", I whispered.

We started entering houses of people. We started invading private places, spying alien motions. Frozen instants of lifetime perpetuity. Lovely living rooms decorated with bath curtains and Klee's paintings on the walls, dining rooms with giant sand clocks stopped in the ultimate grain of time, corridors filled with expensive books, cheap plastic toys scattered on the floor, black tilings, white tilings, tidy bathrooms, blood-stains over basement floors and, in some way, we knew that it had nothing to do with the things we were looking for.

LP's over kitchen shelves, pots and cans: a small universe for a small crowd of passers-by. House by house. Two, three, four. Six, seven, fifteen. And only in the 23rd house we found a boy and a girl lying asleep over a bare mattress.

"Well", said my Barbie doll as her eyes faded behind tears. "We're not alone", she said and her voice broke.

They slept with a natural grace, inspiration, aspiration, just like an after-party of strippers and sodden popcorn.

"I'm gonna wake 'em up", she whispered.

"Don't do it", said I, "they must be tired, let 'em sleep".

"I don't care", she said, "I'm gonna wake 'em up, they have to know what's going on".

And so she went and woke them up. I tried to stop her, but it was already too late. The sleeping girl had opened her eyes and winked in confusion.

"What's up?", the girl asked and I felt a knot in my throat at that very moment. I just didn't know what to say.

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