

fires

by Brian Michael Barbeito

Fire.

Orange.

Fire.

There were orange and red fires but for the most part they were orange.

Before that, I was just standing there in the dark looking at the streetlights and then past them. I was gonna try to stare into infinity and had high hopes. Due to much cloud cover, I didn't see far at all. Things got real silent then, and in a moment somewhere miles above a plane went past. The sound and feel of its engines and echoes shook something inside of me, making me remember wet spring nights from years before.

Nights that were ripe with crecive flora.

Seasons that might as well have been from another life.

But then the fires. Popping up from asphalt. I got the impression they were made from velvet or cloth, uneasy make-believe things from a sly dream-game. They also seemed that they could have appeared from a magician's trick or quirk of nature not understood as of yet.

Soon I realized they were real.

But that wasn't the thing.

None of that was the thing at all.

The problem was that as I tried to put them out, they multiplied almost exponentially. It was their time, and they knew it. This is where their determination came from.

What would I do?

I tried as best I could to step on them with deliberate force and rightly placed moves. They rose and rose and as I turned around I saw another one, more grandiose than the rest, reaching with too much competence towards the overcast earth ceiling.

With all the invocations and prayers I had made beforehand, I wondered, even as I raced in vain to put them out, what they represented, and what I had done to deserve them.

I knew I was in all kinds of trouble.

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