

Börkur Sigurbjörnsson

Smell

flash fiction



Urban Volcano

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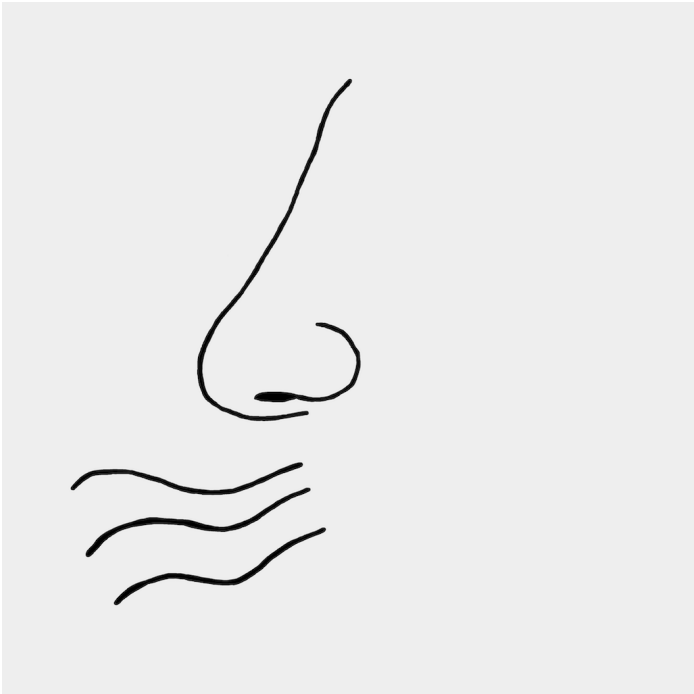
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Illustrations: Börkur Sigurbjörnsson

Publisher: Urban Volcano

<https://urbanvolcano.net/>

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SMELL

I sensed a strong scent of perfume when I stepped into the hallway. It disturbed me. I got all tense. It was as if I had walked into a wall. Literally into the middle of a wall. Freshly poured concrete wall. The wet and viscous concrete surrounded me and held me tight in a straitjacket. I couldn't move. I couldn't breathe. The dense perfume smelling concrete thrust its way into my nose and down to my lungs.

I waved my hands in the air, managed to break loose from the casting mold and practically flew down the stairs. Upon reaching the bottom, I flung the front door open and jumped

onto the sidewalk. Out into the fresh air. Out of the shackles forced on me by the perfume smell. Out into freedom. I danced in circles on the sidewalk with my arms spread out and stretching my head towards the endless clear blue sky.

Having caught my breath again, I stopped the carousel, looked straight ahead and started walking towards the ocean. A stroll along the coast was what I needed at the moment. I needed to gaze at the sea and admire the waves as they threw themselves over the beach, retreated and returned. Rhythmically and predictably.

Life was so weird these days. There was so much to think about. There was so much to understand.

“I suggest we explore where you are on the autism spectrum,” the psychologist had said.

That was the task of the moment. To break this simple sentence up into its constituent atoms and puzzle it back together taking into account everything I had heard, seen and sensed during the entire forty-six years I had been breathing on this earth.

Smell was one of the sensations that occupied my mind these days. I could not remember having ever felt the smell of perfume as so invasive. These days I could not stand it. This sudden intolerance was so weird. Yet it felt somehow so natural.

What was the explanation? Was I finally allowing myself to connect with my own sense of smell rather than just accepting blankly that this was how normal people smelt like? Had I stopped mirroring my own sense of smell in the sense of smell

that was simplest to have so I could seamlessly integrate with my surrounding?

My answer was yes. Yes, I had started to smell what I really smelt rather than smelling what I assumed society expected me to smell.

I breathed deeply in through the nose and devoured the smell of the sea. Yummy. This was a smell I liked. It felt liberating.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Börkur is an avid storyteller with a keen eye for quirky characters, funny dialogs and vivid scenario descriptions. Much of his writing falls within the genre of realistic fiction and his stories are more often than not based on real events in the author's life. Although the tales contain grains of truth, they are melded with fiction, making the reader curious to know the line between reality and fantasy.

Books

Among Other Things, flash fiction (2024)

Talk To Strangers, short stories (2019)

Flash 52, flash fiction (2017)

999 Abroad, short stories (2012)

Links

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