

Börkur Sigurbjörnsson

The storm

short story



Urban Volcano

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Börkur Sigurbjörnsson

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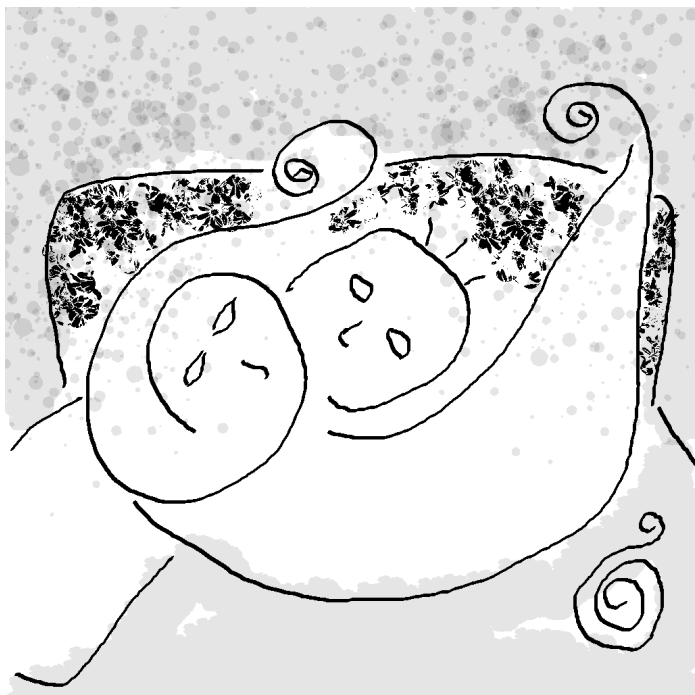
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THE STORM

I open my eyes and stare at the ceiling. I cannot sleep. I listen. The wind howls at the window, producing a soft whistling sound when it tries to make its way through a crack between the window and the frame.

I close my eyes. The wind blows me thousands of kilometers north and decades back in time. From my apartment in Barcelona, over the Atlantic Ocean and on to a farm on the east coast of Iceland. I sit on the bed and stare out through the window. I cannot

see much because the snowstorm is so dense. I cannot sleep. I enjoy sitting in the warm room and watching the storm dancing outside. There is something about the storm that fascinates me. Its power. Its strength.

I open my eyes. You lie beside me sleeping soundly. You are surrounded by an aura of silence. You look as if you are having a pleasant dream. To you the wind is just a breeze. You don't know about the snowstorm. I have told you stories but you haven't experienced it firsthand. Not yet. Maybe we should travel to Iceland one day in winter. Maybe I should introduce you to the snowstorm.

I close my eyes. My mother enters the room and sits besides me on the bed. Together we watch the storm outside. "Is it the wind?" she asks. "Yes," I reply and I lean my head on her shoulder. She wraps her arm around me and caresses my forehead. "Don't be afraid," she says. "You are safe in here. Now, go to sleep." She lays me carefully onto the bed and forces me to close my eyes with a gentle stroke over my eyelids. I lie awake with my eyes closed—listening to the storm.

I open my eyes. Two decades by the Mediterranean Sea have not managed to erase from my mind the association between the howling of the wind and the image of the snowstorm. A storm is rare around here. Too rare to blow the association out of my mind. Even

as I lie awake and stare at the ceiling I can see the storm. It is snowing in my mind.

I close my eyes. I get out of bed and walk into the living room. My grandmother is sitting in an armchair at the far end of the room. She is knitting. She raises her head and puts the knitting needles aside when I enter. I walk over to her chair. "Is it the wind?" she asks. "Yes," I reply and crawl onto her lap. "Don't be afraid," she says. "You are safe in here. Now, go to sleep." She caresses the back of my head and sings a lullaby. After a while my grandfather picks me up from my grandmother's lap and carries me back to my bed.

I open my eyes. You are awake. You are watching me. I smile to you as if to apologize for being awake. "Is it the wind?" you ask. "Yes," I reply. You move closer and lay your head on my shoulder. "Don't be afraid," you say. "You are safe here in the south. Now, go to sleep." You take my hand and stroke it gently.

I close my eyes. Your aura of silence surrounds me. I listen to the storm, but all I can hear is a breeze. I fall asleep.

Börkur Sigurbjörnsson 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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