

Cupid and Psyche: A Very Short Story

by Dagan Sassarini

This is a time and place yet untouched. The storm fills the morning sky and drop by drop beats down upon the city. She finds the upward queues of lights obtrusive as they cut through a sky on the constant edge of daylight. Weightless shadows no longer tell the truth of time, no longer drift across the sidewalks, no longer hide the city's secrets from a familiar sun.

Numberless passengers board and depart the carriage at regular intervals, all but a few on schedules predictable as the metro system and weekly weather report.

"This is the divine illusion," she surmises in a soft breath. *"The passage of time appears as a mass breaking in the wind and sinking beneath the waves. We watch it fall in a single direction as our movements and their residue form a single, narrow path beneath our soles."*

This is her treatise; she documents as the metropolis around her inhales and exhales. Passengers onboard carry oxygen throughout the circulatory system of a respiring city. Water streams down the window against a turbulent red sky.

The carriage hums gently as it glides above the tracks toward an approaching interchange. He stands quietly behind a sliding yellow gate, craning his head from left to right. He is collecting images, processing light.

He imagines, *"These are memories without a history, those not yet lost."*

Then time moves forward as a river of immigrants coalesce up a stairwell to the station platform. Screens on support columns flash green with an announcement. Light floods between the electric blue tracks then disappears with a reverberating hum. He steps over a reflection of platform lights and into the carriage.

Fully present in their seats, they spot glimpses of time passing before their eyes. Images shift as buildings rise up and stain the landscape with an indelible veneer. The two of them are reminded that – throughout time – the world presses on without them. Imbibing changes of the landscape, they nod at beauty after beauty willingly forsaken in pursuit of another. A maelstrom of red clouds engulfs the carriage like a violent reconciliation. They listen to the silence, a beating silence; hear the constant hum of empty space.

In the fullness of time, they break their silence with a kiss.