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REVIEW: 'SIZZLING LILAC'

At its best your writing is highly original, lyrical, complex, inventive and entertaining; it has the density of poetry, an idiosyncratic syntax and an unvarying tone, its one style of rap. You've set yourself an ambitious task. The unchanging pace and the lack of plot tension mean the voice alone has to do all the work.

We do learn a little bit about the character and about his relationship; glides a few of his friends; the city itself impresses as a character. But for the most part this is language driven and you are certainly verbally dexterous, a tireless acrobat.

At one point the narrator questions his anger and how it will 'redirect' I wonder is it the lack of an outlet for his rage that makes him inwardly pressured, passive, emitting a steady fizzle but generally avoiding clear output or open engagement.

I think your voice would be more accessible to readers on your side of the Atlantic, your fellow New Yorkers particularly.

This is urban and edgy, evincing a modern angst, a discordance that reflects the narrator's mood: as jaundiced as that chintz in his new apartment.

It wasn't his first choice, nor idea of a nice apartment.

'2500 dollars doesn't get you nice anymore', some forced out residents said.

And that stood true for anywhere the Bridges showed, ahead west of avenues he had seen drilled and ripped open all the smarting summer.

'offered' furnished, words proved amenable to anyone but him. Nothing matched; the living alone asked to haggle and puke. Jaundiced chintz drooled from the only but large pole, crumpled over furniture the owners possessed but could not have possibly bought or matured. A Queen Anne with a missing leg; a pine table, sanded of its amateur paint job; lesser Lichtenstein; twinkling junk passed as bronze, all to justify an overpriced sublet.

At 33, kitsch amused him less but, provided temporary stayed just that, he'll live. The floor plan was the issue. Yes, a master bedroom, large enough for couples in good terms, did overlook a large Pine, its slithering branches he tore up for no better reason he could.

Two nightstands flanked a California King he had no way to measure.

One, wiped-clean, left untouched; the other, strewed with half Bromazepam and Larkin's *High Windows*, creased yet unbent despite insomnia. A self-stamped 'pre-Colombian' chalice that couldn't be, clattering by the window whenever two cars sped, filled for an ashtray.

After 40 Camel burnt to the filter, he hardly feigned to crane his head out. All would be well if only the second bedroom, the reason for moving mid-August like salmons swimming downstream, wasn't carved out of stucco, too brittle for rage or bad news. Or if buying a cradle had been paid forward with love or thanks on her part. But for now, \$2500 granted him a pause and a post-code a toddler apparently needed.

He often heard two things that sounded true, these second-hand whispers: his stutter worsened around her and, since her pregnancy had hardened into real, that he would be a terrible father.

How could they be so swift to judge, before the proof, barely into the third month?

Still, only with the latter he agreed but simpered he never wanted the job in the first place.

After two weeks spent inside proofing the place and finding no solace in dolphin balloons, he was tired of this hatred, scribbling his heart with choices he wasn't behind. No child deserved this. 'enough,' he said to himself but also aloud, unclenching his fist.

While he had installed Bumble to prove he still had the options of youth, if not quite the hair, he had rapidly muted it, dreading a scene yes but far less than her silence. No more. 'Funny, as in terrible, how men shifted from daring to refrain.' he'd often sneer, whirling his wine.

Reasons varied, rather aligned with the epoch (climate, war at the door, millennial parlance). Most were valid though, viral thus easy to give. Some were perhaps temporary, like his rumored talent sinking unnoticed. Pastiche wasn't en vogue. But none, truer but unsaid, that she couldn't play mother to him and a child. No vacancy. He *loved* her too much and didn't want a child, not now at least. He wasn't proud of this, not really, but had stopped blaming himself for thinking it. The whole thing had been her idea, her choice; the rest was conversation.

They were in the arts at large, plural the same as 'latitude' but really putting a dire strain on his alien status. In truth, They dabbled in the periphery, in it for the glory, courting whoever with an affirmed footing on the ladder. Almost naturally, they hadn't married, exclusive but free, to end up non-verbal, estranged 15 blocks apart.

For this love strangely reeking of fear, he now suffered spikes of angst. It was hard to tell apart karma from a fate he alone curved.

Yet, when parenthood was just a tense debate, He had dropped the usual hints he wasn't ready: despondent, snorting cocaine more ardently, fewer showers and blamed her nagging on giving up drugs herself. Please, don't picture two junkies foaming at the sight of it or handy with a shovel should one feel, often rightly, chiseled out of a line.

Theatrics never far, he shut his eyes, fending off larynx-crushing thoughts, and mused that fighting anger was merely to 'redirect'.

Since few plans had historically worked, he now let options dictate, of which tonight he had two.

Both asked for this facial scrub, parching more than it cleansed, leaving exposed a face bent on rounding. By 30, he had rapidly morphed into an egg, no tentative beard, furry patches really, and kneading had ever traced a jawline. He had been said handsome once, if not typically, but not for long. After he slapped himself and sighed at the mirror, he uncovered his most prized, but most narrow, blazer.

Knife to your jugular, you wouldn't unsheathe a sword this slowly. Kilos had piled up, which meant leaving the jacket unbuttoned, a choice hard to pass for one with the gut reasonably enlarged. Bless sweltering Brooklyn to allow it, and, to the jiggle of his boots, he plowed towards the Bridge.

His posture straightened right on Remsen, thrusting up his lips menacingly, his idea of suave.

his cheeks carved under pressure, as the bleeding sun, its rays and urgings better told elsewhere, dipped fast and splashed colors over familial townhouses an unscathed ochre.

Groups, women surely, cackled on rooftops cloaked by uprooted vegetation and enjoyed a bliss he knew, the one shying away anytime his work was politely rejected. Sash windows to the count of six, clean whether up or razing the street, beamed back the best red onto the asphalt, now shimmering onyx. Troubled by mother-daughter acts, he, with a cramped smile, sidestepped to let a couple pass, shellacked and lean.

To the usual smile, he squinted as if to pierce ahead; natural light gave green-enough eyes a touch of gold, or so he said.

A few men, rested eyes behind acetate frames, seeped the calm that didn't depend on a nice watch, though it was there. Convinced men shouldn't care, let alone talk, about melamine-coated kitchen counters or having 'mauve' ready on the tongue, he loathed their now-travestied nature.

'Details over decisions,' he'd lament, searching the table for nods that wouldn't come. Here, steps were full of purpose; they seemed to count them. No stroller there, no sir.

Misogyny briefly waned, drowned in the tumult of the Bridge.

Mustard scents carried his way by what in August qualified as wind, added a degree to cars pressed to cross. Sweat broke over his temples, for which at no point did he blame yesterday's cocaine.

That he favored the Manhattan Bridge over the other, more famous one was another distinction performed pensive, meant to perplex whoever blessed to hear it, essential enough to steer table talk this way. 'Mauve,' he hated to admit, bathing under the sky marbled by cables.

If once on it he couldn't explain why indeed, he still pushed through backward Yankee caps mounted on Wayfarers, thronging from the other side. Wind parted sweat to the flanks. Never would utter the word 'addiction,' lest during these 7 am jeremiads, pleading to, or flirting with, whoever online and awake. Rarely had a product been used to, at once, boast passé cool in one setting and elicit compassion the next.

A talent for such paradox hard to hone into skills, he seethed at his whirling future; the rapidly descending blue night was only troubled by towers of white and orange neons across' twinkling the possible,' but really, once closer, akin to sugar cubes dipped in coffee.

Palms slightly turned outward, he stomped on the bike lane and forced cyclists to swerve, his hour graver, as if on a quest and deaf to the 'fuck off the lane, you cunt'.

And, though he grasped his phone tight as to miss nothing, especially the impossible, Bumble stayed desperately silent.

If an idiot, he was a knowing one, aware he alone still liked these evenings spent in glassed garages split eleven ways into tipis, where 'community' only stopped to towels.

Biggie Smalls, blaring from mounted speakers, was chorused by girls on crushed Adderal, twisting their fingers until the ad-lib '*if you don't know/now you know, Ni...*'

Then, some stopped to exhale, prying for the cursed word to slither out caucasian lips; when it did, tact and entente between skins showed limits.

Prior, all would sit Moroccan style, then unfurl on fraying rugs.

Wines from Salinas, served in stout glasses of which they weren't enough, fueled soft but endless tentatives at swapping.

She'd lounge too and welcomed the attention, the trying. They weren't bad people, not necessarily, but small, delusional then disillusioned with the arts now resting on digital tools for which they were too proud and, regardless, too fat. They loathed this world designed by *change* and of which they only wrote half the rulebook.

While he agreed, in spirit, it was time to outgrow barbiturates, he, stepping off on Monroe, couldn't but smile at the black Escalade. Terry was on time; August was a slow month. New York, emptied of regulars, then seemed an idea of the city, same, but down the Gulf, sun and abandon revealing fissures in facades the winter hides.

For collateral, dogs had vanished.

Never had felt bad about ditching other dealers since he had been given Terry's number and only resorted to texts sent en masse, dangling bait to famished koi, when Terry slept.

A few cats roamed this garden, fenced on four sides surrounded by tenements in brutal state. All intuitive, They didn't hiss, used to the engines buzzing above.

Muffled by heights, he still couldn't hear the man and his rattling cart, faceless or rather, the face to expect, with an askew snout and poached, as if burnt, skin. Sure, miming a bowl meant spare change but revealing his large swath of 20s amid the squalor felt a risk. He sensed gazes or wished he did, for they would mean danger and a reason to delay decency but also copping. 59, a Jungle meet Menton eatery had closed a year before; he wasn't surprised.

He quickly wiped this smile as to not be served a lesser or lighter batch. Falsely amused by parochial rats' squeaks, he still felt 'that's Real New York, secular New York, Salle's New York' and hoisted himself in. He spoke in borrowed slang for compulsory small talk, questions neither cared for the answers to, and whipped out 200\$, wedged between the index and middle finger. His order manifested before the money did; only a beavering addict is allowed a taste on the armrest.

That one world, where 200 dollars is better, or rather, spent on powders than fruits, bordered another scrapping for apples he tossed, wasn't news. In fact, he would always rage at visible misery, this rising tide of shit, and would scold anyone blaming it on sloth or drug abuse.

Was he milking it? That he never had successfully used poverty in his work saddened him, along with a penchant for lyricism and his cratering absence of wit.

No matter how much he stole others' tones, his homeless, larded with cliches, made a good plea for the middle-class to disappear.

He couldn't speak on what He hadn't experienced. Yet, he cared, so deeply she'd sneer his rambling about the worst facet of city life was whoring and merely an excuse to fail again. 'Stick to what you know.' she'd say, to which he replied, *'if you mean people we know, I don't want to be —*

'You are' she'd cut, *'and there must be room for stories about people scared of Butane.'* Very few liked her humor, too piquant to digest; he did for as long he wasn't the target.

Only grand Causes mattered to him, sure to be made of the marble statues are carved out, not sinks.

A self-defined hustler, Terry, had lived through the 80s and was riddled with scars, each a badge of courage. He had been to prison but never for drugs, neither sale nor possession, and which, depending on the decade, he alternatively sold or fiended for.

Terry had since wisened up: He did both but had disciplined himself into never selling what he used and vice versa. His face blurred age and conventions. Slit eyes, half an inch pushed in, were alert, blue but not just; cheekbones spurred and pointed slightly upward, like a pale faun. He no longer carried that silver-plated desert eagle, which both parties resented.

Solitude of the trade was apparent when Terry invited our man to a party, where he would be tolerated and granted 30 minutes with a clothed harem if he proved large with his stash.

After he politely declined, a concealed blade not too far fetched, he exited and thanked him a million times. Tonight's prospects, or pretexts, rapidly dropped to one.

Now of age (read: ripe) for motherhood, she had not only distanced herself but morphed into something he feared enough to snap out of this love and drool '*Slow Flow cunt*'.

He had regretted it, some say immediately, but not before she had calmly left and shut the front door. Suffering New York on a 1988 budget (12 dollars mango dice. not sparing the 7 dollars fare to Chinatown he'll need soon) was to starve off pastoral enchantment, to stay a son himself, rafting away from adulthood. His jealousy, and reasons for it, had quickly surged. Options narrowed, as did paid features. Sucked up in her new world, of acronyms and shifting ethics, and as his own vanished behind maturity of circumstance, he could have mentioned dwindling libido, his then hers, a soft diss but not necessarily a lie either. Instead, he mocked her maxims, '*you can only enjoy a privilege if you're blind to it.*' close to elbowing open a sliding door.

Perhaps that child, granted he'd see him, was to bridge them back together. It had to.

Hopes swung, went from zero to a resounding yes, even if that had failed, or took 30 years to succeed, when he played the son. You don't prostitute fatherhood. But you don't fuck up your shot either.

Besides this Alechinsky print he had conned her cousin into trading him, these 200\$ proved among the best deal possible, for an evening dawning into car horns and shady curbs. Loads in those vials. But that Terry's supply gave wings and lulled into self-love, drifting alongside the plate's rotation, was true but no longer. He mostly did it for courage and to whip up cigarettes into debates. But it was ideas of reconciliation, some nice, some not, that pelted instead, while colored dots popped in his eyes along the twin urges for more and to shit.

Temperature wouldn't drop and only blazing through the syncope of the Lower East Side (loosies and phone cards haggled diagonally on and off

Delancey), gelled sweat into a salty paste. Heads could have swiveled. He wouldn't have budged, as if anyone's that mattered already had.

Excited and guilty, he strode north over pierced open garbage, be damned pants seams, and leaped between lightbulbs as rats followed an odor, it is true, quite potent. Pitch-black arounds made one brave enough to crawl up the leg he then frantically shook.

Passed a shriek he wasn't proud of, the urgency made the subway an oven, not an option.

Neither were yellow and green Delis, lying 'GOURMET' with neons placarded above. *Casa Robespierre*, less knuckles than Aperol, was also a bet he wouldn't place. Blinded by tail lights, He wouldn't tire either and swallowed Houston at an alarming speed. His neck followed the shoulders, in small nudges. Posture held, stiff as in plaster. Near-solid beads of sweat whirled into the heavy air as he slid between smokers exiled across Forsyth, on this swab of yellowed grass and bento boxes. Nature's call then shot him straight inside the Bowery hotel, where everything cooled but those insisting with tartan.

They had been in love, in equal parts.

In the realm of stuff said, some sneered or 'warned' him he rafted perhaps, but alone.

He had snubbed them as wronged feminists and frustrated gays, both of which proved true since.

In his exile, they saw karma, these friends she had hated from the prefix.

Besides a 3-year difference, the Ural had separated them for another 26. She called Spanish a dialect; somehow, the first two made valid the third. Alerting signs he blamed on the cultural schism quickly added. But he *understood* or, rather, *kept understanding*.

He was deft with it, for how swiftly she fired 'patronizing' and 'oppressor,' always preludes to leaving and also, because she was for sin. That he pardoned the inexcusable from beautiful women was often said, mainly by those he would not.

Conversely, amid blue balloons and this rosy mousse, it was her new friends, but the same type, who had cheered her for having coaxed, or conned, a man into it, also known as where they failed. To sum her up as a body, a trunk with

no core, would be unfair, of course, for love rarely thrived on how wide legs can spread. She was good, trailed the Sorel school but excelled at peddling herself. Sharp in her critics, she wouldn't indulge laziness, whether stained hoodies or overusing 'forlorn', no matter how good it felt. That two nuisances couldn't work it out, unlike rats and pigeons, plunged him into despair so vast he had penned letters and tried reminiscing with photos, stolen while she slept. Her loathing then went beyond body odors.

'Left, down the vestibule. Tab or cash mate?' said the rolled-sleeved bartender, helpful but ten years his junior.

In the dark he could find them but was sure, along with flushing, a drink ordered with proper diction then playing ingenue camouflaged what really went down.

If he had wasted, as opposed to ruined, his youth, stalls had bettered with years.

Varnished birch, a stool, and rum-scented towels surely differed from *Clockwork* and pressing his forehead against the light switch, clutching his phone in his right hand while he traced with the left. Front teeth then crunched the baggie closed. He could do that then, laughing, and could do more without dreary mornings spent pranging about what should have been and who she fucked in the interlude; whether his work will be duly recognized and enameled with a brochure.

Then, he wasn't stuck in this new adolescence, where no one cares beyond the day's circumstance, accepting castration for love in crumbs, pale to the unyielding, if one-sided, parental sort.

But he wouldn't whine unless there was a gain.

Raspy coughs covered snorting and bagging paraphernalia. He finger-licked any dust, wiped his face, and burst out the booth to face a forming queue of women.

In the right toilets, He wasn't in the wrong but still felt shaky, grazing Mennonite's hats and angled shoulders spurring from linen dresses.

Whiffs of fern, not sweat, crawled up nostrils otherwise permanently blocked when a faint shoulder tap sent shivers down the spine.

'Sorry to stress you but could I be a leech? Mine's asleep. Find me later and pay you back when he'—

That he didn't conjure the vial before she finished surprised him.

Besides the unspoken rule you never refuse a girl the intimacy of a stall, rarely sex but still a start, it was the anger he couldn't explain, gnashing his stomach along with enzymes and the drugs meant to ease passage into this night. She was *all* women and pretty enough, though, by that, he often meant slim. Yet he knew not to be deceived by oval faces plunging into arrows. Their sweetness was a rumor, only tempted believers into more beliefs. He, for one, asked for peace and having enough. Eyebrows had disappeared thanks to intense plucking while crayon sublimed pupils the size of raisins. He feigned not to understand, his habit surely not enough, or not showing enough, for entitled strangers to dare asking, as if he were too loaded or too alone to say no, some wound easy to infect. Mute, shaking his head made him mildly proud, which, as he passed a glass carafe, didn't ask for much. His excitement veered into surreal as spots, bouncing around the veil of his eyes, matched the orange and gold Marrakesh tapestry, melting into soup. Good camouflage, he sneered.

Discreet for the hour, they were still easy to find.

With New York vacated, bottom tier admirers had been invited. Our man had status there, earned by never vexing anyone louder. But interest in his exoticism was flailing and had to be replaced with generosity and baseless good mood, somewhat safer than lurking around Picador or digging trenches on 5th.

After niceties, the group, gender irrelevant then, circled the one with the local praise. Women, massed by the hearth, were of age and had a say, along with Hujar-printed tops. Swift to critique automation, they could spell Alechinsky, an improvement to how vivid the colors.

Some argued about Sadoun, others about fashion and these new avenues Dealers represent. *'Falling off a tax bracket doesn't mean redistribution'* or close. Most had long-term wives or partners; none was here. Some betted on bare curves; most, however, worked and curried laughs. As no one basks under LEDs, few stomached their office selves. He had tried that, networking with false anecdotes, then, as anyone betrayed by honesty, corruption,

seduction, all evidence of poor salesmanship. The alluring possibility that he was an artist and only that had failed to convince her.

Simon Steel, whom they celebrated, was 47 tomorrow, our man invited to the a birthday drink before a party on Columbus. One glance, and he knew who else wouldn't make the cut. Another bloke, bald and self-scared, waded in a black tunic and smoldered the gift. Some murmured, guessed who pitched in what: those more generous orbited closer a square, soberly wrapped but not a book. Simon knew what it was, content but embarrassed to appear so, and welcomed the addition of cropped tops.

Along with his failures chain-smoking inside worsened, she had stopped trashing the work to focus on the man and was equally acid. Believing him reasonably good, she still braced for regular life, to the end not of ambitions but of pubescent dreams, as if he were starting a rap career at thirty.

After leafing through the 4th draft, She would sigh, her faded overall timidly pushing out carnal breasts and used both hands to rest her pointy chin.

That she wasn't typical either was a source of tension. She'd label her fellows' gold diggers' or 'dumb whores' when wrecked on wine and avidly scouted any Russian-speaking tables for silicone; she envied their ease; he'd flip the insults whenever she bitched about money.

Arguments across the saddest of kitchens were common; and so was the banal behind. Her eyes would then sharpen into pics; her mouth twitched as if another set of canines was sprouting.

He knew then to brace for the tale of his penniless father, similarly born with a huge head start, who would crawl back to his mum, not him, after a lifelong absence, best justified by the low number of fucks given.

Her English, usually so scented, was then seamless, the attack honed to perfection.

Those were kill shots, reserved for grand occasions like his Visa getting declined; the darts of a maternal instinct, strong with a fetus then a large prawn, a weekly ally.

Half-truths proved love, and the strain money put on it, but also that she dreaded turning 35 and rumored barren. Or being seen entangled with him this human cramp, buying rounds to whoever praised his work and pressed a quick lap to the toilets.

The white noise of flutes and Blossom Dearie faded as one dropped his mezcal a waiter rushed to replace. A toast referred to New York as Gotham and snatched some laughs, a few squirmed down the vestibule, disappearing behind excuses like authors behind the third person.

Unfazed, He then joked celebrating a native's 47th year meant skipping to the first sale or first divorce; some of those had passed in dog years.

Jowls dropped to ear-level; rampant obesity, 20 pounds till' there, wouldn't inflate these cheeks, carved inwards and seemingly emptied of jaws.

Only when veneers gleamed a hue of white nature forbade, He felt certain about Simon's teeth.

Tainted sunglasses rammed back the last of locks, tired cool shot down when Simon grabbed the armchair to heave himself, balking at the stiletto-perched twig who suggested it first. Colored spots enlarged, and sweat trickled down eyes our man strained not to rub.

Simon then invited to his side and aid the oval-faced girl, doubling as his daughter.

Genetics wasn't obvious; their fused faces justified the hatred for 'moist.'

He asked her to unwrap, slightly bowed as he spread his arms. With clammy hands, she shredded it whole in 3 tears and revealed, oh surprise, a painting she would, wrongly, label abstract until he mimed 'turn.'

Our man wasn't shy with grand phrases, curt or not. But 'time is a flat circle' was a bit much. He never knew when using it was right; her portrait, current but painted weeks after her birth, made it less vain.

That wasn't his best, though that wasn't the point.

Fears had distorted features; two chins pointed a different way; hair, grazing her shoulders, whirled to reveal a large neck devoid of veins.

Crossed-leg but seemingly clothed against her will, nothing in her poise implied sex; etched, her eyes were white balls, lingering with apparent boredom over the maestro at work. Should angles say anything, he had betted his wife's genes prevailed.

Some malignant cunt, out of earshot and twirling a piss-colored bourbon, sneered the mother, then also a wife, had only posed knowing this wouldn't happen. He was blind to Simon's nightmares, these worried blue strokes; creamy Azur tamed the sickish red of earlobes.

In this anguish, he felt the contractions, the contrarian envies, a father translating what may into pastel shrubs and grand trees disappearing into a country sky. Brushes foreseeing memories were startlingly accurate; she had escaped, but not unscathed. And yet, amid Karlia and Vogues dragged on by these vines dropping from the roof, both their figures brightened. Under yolk lights, excesses weren't so visible; both had been lifelong.

Perhaps the story behind the work, its travels, balanced its mediocrity. Simon, then painting but no painter, had been forced to sell it to write off a debt, not much but a lot when you're new everywhere, whether trade or in town. Now that all was well, the title earned and kept, friends had gathered and closed the dangerous loop.

Subtlety in Simon's work was usually like plot to porn, but it played here, all feelings no technic. Long passed, hesitations then sizzled in lilac and tamed his Saturnine reputation, never caring about children beyond conception. That wasn't here, not that it was usurped, as the absence of his rumored other 6 daughters and sons could attest.

The embrace lasted beyond their applause, stopping with a 20-serving, pistachio-based monstrosity trolleyed over the cemented terrace. The smattering parted, posed before it like a choir. But the bubbled pair stayed deaf to this. If calling her entitled for fear to use much harsher for someone so facile with '*peasants*,' was tempting, she now let out a smile true enough to surprise herself.

She jerked to embrace him, with Simon heaving her small frame to lip-level. Each plunged in the other's neck; she knocked over a few glasses as she tried meshing her fingers around his leather coat; in his snare, he was careful, conveyed love without hurt. Our man risked a swan comparison, and, somewhere in all this, amid the tepid art and fumes of late-night truffle aioli, he knew there was a lesson and couldn't see it.

Our man had been there once and hadn't trusted the stench of these fatherly laughs, shelled out for answers to his questions. Had this one been alone, abandoned by all but greying courtesans, or accused to 'weaponize nostalgia,' he would have seen the alerts and told his friends and penned some more.

But familiar tropes were now fridge magnets, too remote from this world, better made of cogent hours spent bristling about *Hunger*. Still, besides afflictions passed down the tree and worn out apologies never lasting beyond mild anger, more seemed at work. That he knew and looking for it terrified him, like tiptoeing around a manor he knows creaks.

He resisted facile parallels, coke-fueled temptations to call and babble sonnets, promises soon erased by reproaches or worse.

Spasms redoubled, scorched his throat anytime he swallowed saliva, which didn't help gliding out the lobby unseen; a Camel, pinched between two fingers, was a fair cover. Terror, cold in any tongue, followed, as did the urge to leave for nowhere real. He waddled between guests with better bone structures and a sea of diverse conversations surprisingly aligning, his eyes swole in real-time. Finger marks on the glass panes, along with a kite-like motion, were enough for people on this bench to abruptly slide to the curb. He labored to breathe, staring at the desert of missed calls.

Every media, down to the most debasing, popped open, scrambling the glazed selves.

