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THE WHEEL



2012

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by Chrys Romeo

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Cover by Chrys Romeo

Zoom. And start. Here it goes. With an exhilarating energy that sets it in motion, the certainty that the next second, and the next too, it will still be moving, still be going, still advancing... on and on, anticipating, like a determined runner, breathing for the next minute of the race.

The Wheel. The magic Wheel. The rain is a part of it, sometimes. As the asphalt flies off under the wheel, the drops of water fill the air like a soft mist. The grey asphalt, still rough and dry, soon begins to seem darker and patches of water mark their random presence, small signs that the road is an unpredictable realm, swept off into the distance. Freedom, completely. It spreads, it unfolds, it awaits.

The rain is an organic presence. It integrates thoughts and metaphysical perception into the view of roaming steamy wet horizon, from the leaves that are timeless, so that suddenly, time is completely mixed up. Rain evokes memories and announces the unknown. It belongs to the Wheel. I think that I do too, sometimes. I wonder though.

I am the Racer. I am the one who sees the rain. I am the one who feels the drops fall even before they do. Because I am flying above the road.

So how does it contain, comprise and extend the bridge to the other side? I don't know. Apparently, it just does.

There it is: the swing. Under the big old oak, the greenish brownish nostalgic oak, so protective and yet so oblivious to whatever goes on around. The swing hangs in chains and whispers softly as the last rays of summer bring a sweetness of autumn over the fields around the wooden house. The swing moves slightly on and off. She sits reading. She sits writing. She is humming. The autumn signs make her frown a little, but she is half absent to the landscape around. She might be twenty by now, twenty or something, it doesn't matter... she's got that permanent charm of the forests beyond the hills, the slender oaks reflect their reddish-brown authentic and natural exuberance in the curls of her hair, as she

sits reading and the swing moves softly while she hums something pensively. As bright and as dramatic as the light fights off its colors into the sunset, to her each minute is new and promising miracles, the depth of life's promise is unknown now. And I am unknown to her too.

Yet I take a step forward. I walk towards the swing where she sits with the notebook in her lap, browsing the scribbled page and humming.

“Hi.”

I am unknown to her now, but this is a changing truth. Will she answer? I might have been well known to a part of her soul, a part that shares authenticity with the autumn woods beyond the hills, long before, or a second before she blinks opening her eyes right to me. She might have been alone until then. Not anymore now. Her eyes remind me of a stray deer cub. Something so vast, so warm and so honestly fragile, craving affection and offering trust, glows in her eyes. Something like a beginning of a smile takes over both of us.

“Well, hello...”

I realize the view is different now and the rain has stopped. There are a few drops left on my sunglasses but the sky, grey and uncertain, is not going to bring more water down, not for a while. I zoom over the road. The only presence in sight is a flying bird over the river.

The swing has disappeared. The rain too, for now.

I look around the restaurant room. The people there are having a good time, each table is very vividly animated, words rise up in the air, the clinking sound of glasses and somewhere, some background music. It's a Chinese restaurant; the tables are round and swinging from one guest to another, with their dishes and their exotic decorations, under the lights of the ceiling. I choose something from the dishes spread around on the turning tables, I'm more interested in conversation now, but from the corner of my eye I glance at the table on the left. I wish we could have sat at the same table, but the guests were officially arranged in specific places. I did not have a say in this. It just happened that way. I glance at her, I want to see if she looks at me, if she noticed my presence. I catch a glimpse of her taking a sip of something and throwing a short veiled and

seemingly inattentive look over the space between our tables. She looks stunning tonight, the lights are reflected in her curly reddish-brown locks, giving away a feeling of freedom and casual calm. She looked at me. I'm sure. I'm so sure of it. She did. I smile and go on with my conversation. After a while, I can't prevent my eyes from taking her direction again. She is talking with the people around her table, but she is not enjoying the evening. I get a feeling she is uninterested in it, there's something bothering her. I wonder what. I catch her eyes checking me out again. And I see her trying to divert another veiled stare behind eyelashes, the next fraction of a second. I wonder if she regrets not being able to come to my table. She seems somehow annoyed. The evening is almost over now. Time goes by. I spin the table; we are playing a game with the Chinese napkins. It's a truth or dare kind of thing. It's a challenge to make up something with words. My turn.

"What was the previous word?" I enquire, the game is amusing, though the spinning table rewarded me with the white napkin that prompts me to continue the story and I am only halfway participating, while I keep my senses alert to the other side of the room.

"Fork. You have to find a rhyme to it."

"Stork!" I reply instantly and without looking, I am aware she is watching intently now, thinking I wouldn't notice it, since I am rolling the game.

So, she is interested to know what I'm doing this evening. I get a sudden feeling of elation, like I could light up the entire room with just a spin of the table. I am happy, for some reason I don't yet understand.

"You have to come up with a connection between fork and stork."

"The stork picked a fork."

The others seem content with my answer and I get to spin the table once again. I do so enthusiastically. Now I can sense her eyes fixed on me; she has become even more interested to watch me display my talents in the Chinese table game. Yet the game is over soon. I get up and I go to the dressing room to pick my coat; I am aware that her eyes follow me with every step and the lights are shining above us. I know that we will soon depart in different directions and

we might never see each other again. I know the hosts wanted to keep us apart by placing us at distant tables. I know they are watching us too. But I cannot go like that, without saying a word to her. I don't give a flying boot what they would think, approve or disapprove. I cannot leave without talking to her. So I go towards her table. I stop in front of her, with my coat hanging on one arm. She lifts her chin and turns her eyes to me. And in that moment, I feel I see her as if for the first time; in that second when our eyes meet, I can sense the bundle of uncertainty, frustration, longing and melancholy that she has built up the whole evening. And yet this is not what strikes me the most. It's the beauty of her eyes. Her soul that I feel breathing so close in front of me. I stand struck by the realization that she needs me and has been waiting for me from the beginning of the evening. She looks at me and then she turns her eyes away, instantly. Now she knows. She has seen, in that fraction of a second, what she was looking for. The unexplained attraction, the knowledge that I do love her madly. She is calm now. She knows for sure. She saw that I remained breathless, right there, the minute I saw her. She knows I consider her astoundingly beautiful. The evening may have gone to both our heads, but that's the truth.

"So", she asks me casually looking to the window where the night has unfolded in blind blackness; she's avoiding my eyes now as the others in the room have noticed us and are staring helplessly, "when is your plane leaving?"

"Tomorrow morning", I reply smiling without really knowing what to say exactly.

She's a bit melancholic.

The others have realized by now they can't keep us apart. They are still watching, astonished and curious.

"And you? When is your plane leaving?" I ask her, returning the question.

"Tomorrow evening."

"So, you'll fly by night?"

"Yes."

"That's odd", I say instinctively.

"Why?" she asks, looking in my eyes again, inquiringly.

I shrug simply.

“I don’t know why.”

She laughs now; my honestly absurd answer has amused her for a while, dissipating her hidden sadness. I am glad I made her smile. I stand there, happy and ready to say more. Just to keep her smiling. But I must go instead.

“I hope we’ll see each other again someday”, I tell her.

The others are waving for me to hurry. She says nothing. She just looks at me, with that expression again, that sinks me into an ocean. I know she doesn’t want to say goodbye. I don’t want it either. So I just turn around and go.

Yes, the rain can do that to you. The rain can bring anything from whenever. And then take it away fast. So how do you deal with it? How do you deal with loss, with sorrow, with the knowledge you have to let go? The Wheel does that to you from time to time. The rain. Pouring on her umbrella, while I hold mine not minding the sprinkling water. The park is wet and empty - people would not go out in such a weather. Nevertheless, there’s a sense of peace, as we walk stepping near and in and beyond the puddles reflecting the uncertain sky and the fresh green leaves.

“Let’s go for coffee”, I say and she smiles.

“Where would you go for a good coffee? Besides, I can’t leave the kids by themselves.”

“OK, I understand.”

I agree with her as I agree with most of her thoughts that I’ve known for years. I agree and I know. I know about her joy and her sorrow, I know about her happiness, her achievements and her struggle to keep the wheel going with so much to do: kids to raise, work to accomplish, cars to park, time to find and organize, meaning to uncover, loyalty to maintain, worries to ease, a father to miss, people to watch disappearing, troubles and joys to share... and me to keep as a friend, beyond such a storm of things to take care of. I know I’m not the one she shares it with the most; she’s not alone. But I witness it and I know it well. And I know for sure she cares. She finds there is reason enough to fit me somewhere among that storm of life to deal with. I look in her eyes and the

warmth of her soul flows into the cold wet park, like the steam from hot chocolate under the rain. I smile; she sees something and averts her look, unsure of my thoughts. If she wonders whether I am wishing or whether I find myself tempted to cross the border into a new realm, from the past of sharing so much to the present that she has managed miraculously to accept as it is, if she believes I could try to take friendship towards where we know it might drift, she shouldn't. I will not take anything anywhere. She's the one that's doing the taking. Taking me with her in that ride of her life. Willing to care about me and answer messages with kindness. Willing to let me know what's up with her and allowing me to meet her children, to watch traces of her personality reflected in the new life that's one of the best miracles of the Wheel here on earth. Is that friendship? I don't know what that is, but it's certainly more than most people are willing to offer. These days, people have no power to share too much with others. They don't even acknowledge your existence. They don't have enough strength to deal with their own life, much less share something with you. Even more when you are inadequate, as I feel most of the time except for when I ride with the wheel. Being inadequate is one of the most difficult things here on earth. But you wouldn't think there are adequate people and inadequate ones. Nobody is adequate because the notion itself is inadequately inappropriate. And yet, to most people I seem to represent that and be disregarded for it. Except for the time when I ride with the Wheel, I am an unsolved mystery for the others. Life is a puzzle for them and I am one of its most inadequately bewildering pieces. But she is different. She makes me feel comfortable as myself with her, as different as I might seem, I get adequately acceptable and understood... She is precious. She is rare. And I wish I could do something to comfort her sorrow, when I know that she meets the unexpected ups and downs that the Wheel brings to her way. She might find that comfort elsewhere. I may not be the one to ease her troubles and provide a shelter for her caring soul, as much as I wish to hold her and tell her everything will be fine. Yet I feel she knows that. We both know it. I would be there if she wants me to, and only if she wants indeed. The truth remains that we share this awareness. Would that be a part of what

friendship is? Would that be much more? I know the answer to that. With just a gesture, her presence would become irresistibly magical, but I try to guard myself from those unpredictable glimpses of magnetism. I look at her as we walk through the park and I smile, but when she turns her eyes to me, I look away because I don't want to make her uneasy by staring too directly and revealing how I feel - I don't want to add another worry to her life. She shouldn't worry about me. I would walk beside her, but never stand in her way. And she must know that.

I ride along the river most of the time. The river is a living presence. It's sharing the sunrise when it's sunrise, not just reflecting but contributing with thousands of colors, hues and magic; it's slowly dozing off in the afternoon when the sun and the heat melt the blades of grass on the river banks, it's freezing like a moving silver mirror in winter when even the deepest thoughts are cemented in frost and it's playfully reassuring that it goes along perpetually in spring, reminding me of thousands of instants of time when I find something more about life.

Rain and water, water and the river, water and feelings, water ... rolling with the wheel isn't always a very easy ride. Water doesn't make it easy just like that. Once the rain gets heavy, it gets stubborn, it gets worse, it becomes an avalanche. Just like the time when she told me she had to go. She didn't have time or plans for me anymore. I knew from the tone of her voice that she meant forever. She had no intention to include me in her life - she wanted to cut away free. And I just said "okay, bye". Then it got dark outside. And I went to ride away to the end of the earth. To just go, run, though I could not run from what I was feeling. I pedaled and went on, speeded up, passed by the places I knew, passed by the places I didn't know, while the sky accompanied me in my rage to get away from the fact that she was leaving and I didn't understand why, to get away from myself feeling the rough pain; the sky was keeping me in sight like a rhyme, a perfectly parallel rhyme, as I rode along the empty roads, swallowing my anger in the speed of the wheels, to go faster, to go, just go - because there was no why, because there was no why whatsoever. Then thunder came and

more thunder and the sky crowded with darkening clouds and it started pouring down. I was the only one on the road, but there was so much rain suddenly that I could hardly see half a meter ahead. Water filled everything, pouring on my head, pouring from my elbows and down my knees, filling my shoes, covering the road like an impossible curtain, surrounding everything in a cold embrace, reaching the skin, slipping down on my neck, while the thunders continued towering above, like a voice that agreed with me, as if it said “yes you’re right, it’s a terrible thing, just go ahead with it” and I felt somehow compensated for the rage of not understanding why she was leaving without me. I was soaking wet in the rain and the random cars passing by seemed to slow down bewildered that I kept going on; I was determined to keep advancing, moving through the thick water, despite the tornadoes of rain drops that were slamming my face, despite the threatening black clouds that had no end. That’s the bitter side of the wheel, but for its bitterness, it will provide you with its best answer: a storm to chill the pain, the sharp pain of not understanding why. After that ride, I was more able to let go of her, because the sky gave me enough water to drown my rage within.

And what is it with this wheel that keeps bringing this and that?

Why is the world so fascinated by wheels, and yet not able to realize that everything is spreading on a big invisible wheel, rolling on and on within the world and rolling the world within it? Clocks made up of tiny wheels with metal teeth, vehicles on wheels, even the sun is a burning sphere of light, surrounded by planets that make circles around it... whatever advances and moves relies on a wheel. Round and round. That’s life. On and on. Endlessly, infinitely. Our galaxy is a spinning wheel too, by the way...

“You don’t think you’ve just invented the wheel, do you.”

Yes, why is the wheel so important? Just notice how present it is: what goes around comes around. In whatever shapes and sizes, there you have it. The wheel rules. The wheel rolls. The wheel breathes in your life.

As there are summer nights too. The Wheel has got so much power when it rolls by its summer tricks: foliage everywhere, brightly sharp moon above, the

dusk unfolding with the blossomed trees that fill the night sky, the whispers of the leaves and the fantastic alluring certainty that something extraordinary awaits and will happen, will appear soon... the best of life's mystery, yet to become better. The road is covered by the shades of trees and pedaling along seems like such an adventure, as the night gets deeper. It's worth having flashlights on your bike. Blinking blue and red, just like a patrol car's signal. Blue-red-blue-red-blue-red-blue rays blinking endlessly in the dark, reassuring, as the swishing tires on the asphalt are throwing now and then stranded pebbles across the sidewalk.

Of course, you have to change the batteries from time to time, if you want to keep the lights blinking and the wheels rolling. You must renew them. The Wheel is about renewal too. In its very best definition.

Renewal will bring the summer charm. When it comes, it seems a lifetime ago you've felt it in the same way, awakening your senses of being alive. The presence of the abounding miracles, unspoken, untamed. The Wheel will throw them at your feet, overwhelmingly: in just a random summer evening, as the light is purple enigmatic, getting ready to become a story, timelessly reappearing, there goes your revelation, your most awaited motivation and meaningful gift of life. As the road and the minutes roll on and keep rolling by, somewhere, on the way, you get to find it.

And what is it? Yes, what is it exactly?...

For each one it might be something different.

The ocean, the waves... She walks on the beach; the rain is gone, but the beach is deserted. I am there behind the dunes; I've just started my bike on the sand and when I notice her, I stand there leaning on the metal handle bar. I watch her silently. The grey sky above and the splashing waves of foam increase the feeling of chill. She wraps the jacket around her, she steps bare feet in the cold sand - and there it is again, that look of a lost and lonely deer. I see her from a distance, she wraps the jacket tightly around her and gets in the telephone booth. The telephone doesn't work; I don't know who she wants to call, but she lets it hang down by its wire; the phone seems useless. She turns

around suddenly, as if she felt my presence, and the next moment she looks at me through the glass. I am once again blown away. My mind and my heart stop at the same time, sinking my soul right under her glance. The immensity of the ocean appears. And I know that this is one of summer's magical moments that goes on and on and remains out of time. See? It takes just a second. And the grandeur of life, the wonder of the universe, the meaning of meanings, the answer of eternity, the call of love is revealed and offered to you, just like that. Just a moment, and you have it within your grasp. No telephone is needed. Just watch the Wheel turning, and you'll see it.

I know, because I've seen it along my way...

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And who am I? I am nobody exactly. That's right, you heard it well. I am not although I am, I don't exist, though I am here and I am a part of everything. I can relate, but I cannot identify with. I am as immaterial as the Wheel itself. I can be seen, but sometimes I go unseen and denied. I am alive, though I don't exactly live as most people do and many people do not admit my existence, nor are they happy to acknowledge it. Others are happy to meet me, if they recognize the Wheel in my eyes. Yet even though most people talk about me, they don't speak to me directly.

I am mostly unknown, though I am known well enough and sometimes much more. I am known in this world and in other worlds too, as there are invisible energies above us, and they recognize me from time to time. The universe is much more generous and has no fears admitting I exist, since I belong to it... I am the Unknown that rides with the Wheel.

I am the Racer.

And now you know it too - if you were wondering about me.

But enough about me; let's discuss something else now.

Let me tell you about the glass walls. You haven't noticed them yet?... No? You will.

Remember the phone booth on the beach and the instant when she turned to look at me? She looked at me through a window. It was made of glass. Her hands touched it, they might as well have touched my soul beyond it, but nevertheless, the glass is there. I've visited that moment many times in my mind, and I realized it is unique in its truth.

How many times have I seen the city of glass appearing in the air, with its walls of transparent bliss and deceiving flashes of light?... You wouldn't think light can be deceiving, in its rainbow of colors, but it can create as many illusions as the strands of dust that float invisibly astray in the sunshine. As I speed up above the heated asphalt, the river beside me sends sharp beams like pointed swords that hurt the eyes; the glimmering water is unbelievably cruel when intense light meets its surface. Good thing I've got my sunglasses on. The sun is in the middle of the sky now, in its full power, heating up and melting everything in sight. I keep my speed, I keep my thoughts, and then I start to get a glimpse of the glass city. First, its uncertain contours, rising up in the air, in the sharp heat of the day, transparent lines that are forming walls, bright towers and windows... and thousands of colors that appear in the horizon, sprinkled like fireworks over the smooth surface of glass. I see the city in the distance and I know that she is there. She has always been there, like a prisoner of the glass, a prisoner of her own choice.

As I get closer to the gate, the invisible frame of the gate that's trembling in the heat of the sun, I can feel the tires of the bike starting to melt on the asphalt; a second more and they could break into pieces; the only thing that prevents them from turning into a liquid like black pitch is the speed and the air. She is there, somewhere, lost inside the city of glass, and I will not stop until I find her. Now the river has disappeared from sight, along with the horizon and the only remaining view is the glass, the walls surrounding a square and a fountain with pure water, sprinkling in shiny drops and filling the air with soft surreal music. I notice her sitting next to the fountain, like an immaterial angel of light and

assorted colors; she has become like that since she's been living in that city of illusion. There's something so perfectly appealing and alluring about her appearance, the blinking jewels, the sophisticated dazzling gown, her flawless smile and make up, turning her into a fairy tale vision. Now, who wouldn't be charmed and completely stunned by such a sight?... Yet somehow, I find myself wondering about that girl walking barefoot on the beach, or the disarmingly honest and natural memory of her in the swing by the woods, the authentic, unarranged passion and overwhelming energy of life, I wonder why, when and how it happened, if she went from behind the glass of the phone booth to the castle of walls and glamour where she is now. She has changed for sure, maybe for the better, maybe for the inevitable, yet for one moment I seem to find it hard to recognize her. She smiles at me so peacefully, from that unreal perfection of appearance, and looking into her eyes I feel there's something like a surrendering velvet veil, like a hidden lake in the amber of sunset. There it is, it's still there, a hint of a trace of that heart of immeasurable warmth, the mystery of the woods and the lost deer, still glancing at me. She sits by the fountain and the light throws golden reflexes in her hair, but now I know it's still her, a part of her hidden somewhere, of her true self; it hasn't been washed away completely by the singing fountain. I cling to the brakes on the bike, my fingers slow down on the metal bars and I stop near her. I haven't taken off my sunglasses, because the view is almost blinding.

“Hi”, I say and it feels similar yet slightly different from the first time I ever saw her.

In the meantime, I'm not the same anymore either. I've changed too, in my own way, becoming more of myself over the years. I've been on the road so long, that I've enhanced my power, my determination and my definition of belonging to truth and freedom. But she recognizes me. She knows it's me, by some miraculous, unexplained knowledge that we both share, as a gift from above, reminiscence from where we don't know we met a long time ago, recognizing each other undoubtedly before we even knew we could or we would ever encounter one another in this life.

“Hello”, she replies and smiles, leaning on the edge of the fountain, extending a hand to play with the water in the well.

I watch the ripples wave around the clear water, dancing slowly in the sun and returning to touch her hand lazily. The sparks of reflected light hit my sunglasses, yet I stand still.

“So how are you?” I ask her.

“I’m happy”, she answers. “Living each day as it comes and thankful for it...”

At least she’s sincere, I say to myself. She is aware that somewhere inside her there’s still a struggle to keep some natural authenticity from the girl that used to be and integrate it in her everyday life, as an excuse for the fact that she has become more of a sparkling appearance than an exuberance of truth. Maybe she is a combination of both, or maybe she is trying to justify to herself her presence in the city of glass; she can’t possibly be unaware of what it really is.

“Come with me”, I say.

“You know I can’t”, she answers in that same playful manner, not looking at me now, but at the clear water of the fountain, where her hand is still slowly making waves.

And it’s true. I know she can’t. Not because she couldn’t, but because most of her doesn’t really want to leave the city. And where would she come with me anyway? With me and my bike, what would she do on the road? I come from another world, a completely different scenery where raw freedom would never replace the glistening shiny walls that surround her. How many times have I asked her to come with me? In my mind, I have asked her time and time again. And I have given up time after time. And I have returned to find her again and again.

“Let’s go. Let’s just get away from it all. Let’s leave it all behind.”

I say that just for myself, only to pronounce the words and hear them becoming alive, because otherwise I know it’s useless to attempt to ask. She doesn’t want to leave it all behind. And I cannot stay there either. One of us must break the spell. But the spell will always draw me to her, like a string that

doesn't erode through time, like an irresistible mystery of destiny. In spite of the fact that I know for certain we have different ways, different destinies - if there is such a thing as a destiny, or a mission.

“ I am surprised but happy to see you again”, she says. “I enjoy your presence.”

I don't completely believe her words, because she is more attentive to the golden fountain than to me and my bike. And then I notice people coming to the square and I wonder if she meant me or the people, hundreds, then thousands, millions coming in crowds to fill the peaceful square with noises, with shouts and mixed feelings. I wonder if she meant she enjoyed their presence or mine. I wonder if she makes any difference at all between us. And I start believing it doesn't matter anymore either way. We are surrounded by the crowds. I realize they are elbowing each other; they want to get ahead of one another, they are becoming a storm of chaos, grunting and yelling. The fountain seems to bring out the worst in them, the worst of human nature: greed, envy, deceit, vanity, hostility, selfishness, cowardice, dissimulation, dark intentions and horrible outcomes. Evoking moments of history when the worst of human nature has turned the world into a nightmare is pointless. I look at her angelic figure and I understand that she likes to be in front of that crowd: it gives her a sense of purpose and a feeling of being perfect. She doesn't notice the mud and the curses, or maybe she doesn't want to. She smiles blissfully unaware and happy, while they turn the square into a puddle of mud, ambition and frenzy. And who would refuse the illusion of admiration? Or the temptation of becoming an icon with a purpose? And who would refuse them that hungry greed for something better, an excuse to escape the nightmare, a detour from their own inability to be more meaningful, the hope of finding a piece of heaven in a life of challenge and effort, who could tame the insatiable lust of thousands of souls that are looking for a greater meaning in their confounding lives? Suffering and worries, struggles and disappointments, that is what they are getting away from when they come to that square in thousands and millions, that is what the city of glass offers them: an illusion of a moment, a time off. And she is a vision of

something that can dumb their senses and make them forget life is unfair. Of course each of them wants her for their own. The fountain blinds their eyes. Like a prize. Like a blessing. And they seem so willing to adore her unconditionally. Yet I stand in another place, from where I can see the worst that can't be seen from there up high, where she is happily gifting them with smiles and they reply with mad applause. From where I stand, I see the uselessness of the golden fountain, the mud of the crowd, like ugly monsters mocking each other and filling the square with venom and hate. The crowd is erratic, unreliable and mindless, to the point of becoming hysterical. As the golden light of the fountain pours above them, as they fight to get ahead of one another, there seems to be some justification for that show eventually, as absurd and contradicting as it seems. But I've had enough of that by now, I am beyond any resources of patience to witness that any longer. There's no meaning in being there anymore. Now I turn around and leave the square, because the people have gotten between me and her and I can't see her clearly anymore. The girl in the swing is long gone. Only the fairy in the gown stands in the glass city. I don't distinguish her features too well now; she is lost in the crowd, the only thing that remains is the shiny aura of the glass walls that are disappearing swiftly, very fast. I start my wheels in the opposite direction, because I don't want the glass city to swallow me, I might disappear too if I remain there. The glass city is angry at me for being there, it's angry at me for being different, for bringing my truth, for revealing and defying its illusion to my thoughts; it envies me for my wheels and my freedom, it's angry at me and it wants to erase me completely, it's very bothered by my existence; it becomes a storm of hate roaring around me, as I pedal on faster, I can feel the walls following me, ready to eat me out, to devour me and my bike, so I don't look over my shoulder, I just clench my teeth and keep going ahead.

In a few moments, I can see the perpetual river again, I can feel the air cooling off and the atmosphere becoming silent; the tornado of the glass city has disappeared from sight in the blink of an eye, in a whirl of colors, broken glass and bitter dust. Life has returned to its truth once again. I breathe deeply the

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