

THE MIGRANT

a novella by

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one

what is it? it's like 11pm or something and i stir a gram of crank in my whisky and then the phone rings and christ on the crapper it's vince who tells me i should scoot on over to his place tomorrow night he's got something for me something i wouldn't wanna miss what some good gear? i ask vince is talking ultra fast discharging words like machine gun fire nah nothin like that can get that any day of the week but just as good in fact better vince says why don't you tell me what it is? i say impatiently and vince sizzles with laughter that sounds like a burst of static interference coming over a radio and instructs me to just get the fuck over there tomorrow evening there's somebody he wants me to meet he's gotta little proposition for me and i say yeah ok and i ask him what time and he says fuck it he doesn't know anytime after it starts getting dark perhaps about 7 or somethin he says he'll get some drinks in and then he puts the phone down still coughing and spitting his awful wheezing insidious laugh

as usual i've been unable to sleep and i sit down with my whisky/cocaine cocktail peering out the window at the city lights

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undulating flicking on and off like tiny parasites jumping on the skin of a sleeping animal there is love down there somewhere there is romance there is murder and hate there is someone getting crushed under the wheels of a truck at 2am but above all there is hopelessness an all pervading futility in the bowling alleys and the bars and the soup kitchens and in the searing white steam rising from the hot-dog stands there's no substance to any of it it will all turn to dust and every one of us is nothing more than a genetic sequence in a family bloodline as nepotism gives birth to new generations of waste this is a dead city toxicity seeping up through the cracks in the pavements we each find only brief moments of happiness none of it lasts it's like we're all just desperately holding onto the debris and everything around us is shattered

i live on the 37th floor in beetham tower overlooking holloway circus the sliding glass doors open onto my sky garden and the dark oily labyrinth of the canals around old turn junction and gas street basin i've been watching them for the last few weeks tearing down the derelict factories along the railway embankments where the ghosts of a million men still dwell having shitted away their lives in endless ball-breaking hernia-inducing labour i don't know where i came from and i don't know yet where i am heading but i do understand a few things i've seen life and i've seen death it's all perfectly signed and sealed the moment you are born the sky may be black as a velvet shawl and the stars glittering bright and some might consider

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these beautiful images with abandon but to me it's nothing but an empty vacuous expanse we are born into slavery and a world where those who believe themselves to be free are the most enslaved of all

sometimes i watch the constant stream of broken hearted queers going in and out of the public toilets for a quick blowjob a city can be assessed on that the more glory-holes there are between cubicles in public toilets the more lost and barren hearts there are out there everyone is looking for some kind of human connection even if it's only a desperate physical semblance of it we are all just trying to act like normal people but it is a flawed approximation of normal and whilst some of us are several mistakes from the gutter most of us are only one away and this is a constant unconscious knowledge lurking in the back of our mind and having that knowledge turns people into psychos the long shadow of death moves stealthily over what is left of civilisation as everyone wilfully eats shit and dies man is defeated disenfranchised it makes no difference to me looking through human history one can only assume violence is the ascendant arbiter of the human race and genocide could be considered a mercy killing as far as i am concerned only fools place value on something as fleeting as love and money too everything dissolves in the end because one day you'll be buried deep in the dirt and all that hatred you carry around inside you will be known only to the worms so i ask you what difference does it make?

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one day there will be a time that does not know us when my
time comes leave a plastic toy on my grave and think of me not in
terms of spirit but in terms of soil and earth and sea and stars
accept my love across the empty expanse of time across all the
lost generations between us leave a plastic toy on my grave and
think of me no more because i was never really here at all
everything is all only fiction

as the machines tear down the walls the twisting iron girders
groan as they fall like the mournful cry of whales it echoes all
across this drab city but i doubt whether anyone hears the
soliloquy and at least i have the temerity to look in the mirror and
know that i am a failure and a fuck-up everyone thinks they're
such a fucking big-shot these days they strut around styling it to
the world like they're the big winner on a tv game show going
look at me look at me coca-cola and nike will be the
conciliators of society succeeding where all religions and political
ideologies have failed in turning the populace into a whitewashed
amorphous pulp buying their identities off the peg in high-street
shops i sit down at my desk and write on a sheet of paper
before making it into a paper plane and launching it from my
window

**you're walking around wearing your guts on the outside
and the world got its meat hooks stuck right in your flesh**

i wish i could paint the world i'd paint everything in flat bright

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colours so that nothing looked real it would all look clean and defined with thick rigid outlines and everything two dimensional like an andy warhol painting that's how i'd paint the world we can all pretend to be some big-shot but we're all losers in the end because in the end ultimately and finally we are all insignificant like a momentary blip on a radar screen and just before they send a man to the electric chair he might leave his cell walls smeared with shit but after he dies somebody comes along and cleans the shit off and there is no trace of his protest ever having existed at all and that just about sums it up for all of us

i am on the run running from something i could never escape from i'm running from something inside myself these days i measure out my life only in the time between cigarettes but right at this moment i can't stand the creeping silence i can't stand the silence pervading this room any longer all i can hear is my own blood rushing through my veins i grab my coat off its peg near the door and walk out i get the elevator down and walk out onto the streets the light emitted from the street lamps transmutes into a haze in the cold early morning fog that is starting to crawl over the city and cast a miserable orange hue on the damp pavements

i walk under the subway beneath the queensway and wander down to hurst street and into a telephone box to look at the cards pinned up in there i'll do this for you i'll do that for you they all promise they were all essentially the fucking same the

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underlying pretence was the offering of love sean styne isn't looking for love i no longer believed in love but love for a price? yeah yeah yeah i believe in that kind of love in this world it's quite possibly the only true kind of love there is the kind of love where there is some sort of quantifiable exchange and we know where we stand where the cool hard cash forms the parameters of our affections and they're not just drawn out in the sand waiting to be washed away by the sea

down here in the area known as the gay triangle many of the calling-cards were rent-boys barely legal young pretty boys with names like nikki mascara and luna lashes and then one card caught my eye it was pink and in thick gold embossed lettering it says simply ABUSE ME CALL GLORIA there is a tiny colour photo of gloria she's blonde sitting on a chair with legs spread silky red french knickers great tits and thighs especially the thighs and sean styne had always been a leg man beneath the picture there is gloria's telephone number i stare more closely at the small photo looking to see if i can see any hint of hairy arms or a cock tucked away in those knickers and i can't i pluck the card off and read it again ABUSE ME i slip gloria's card into my coat pocket

i wander around the icy deserted streets aimlessly for a while along digbeth there is a billboard that says simply with bold black letters on a white background **YOU ARE NOT AS HAPPY AS YOU THINK** and underneath in smaller letters it says **find out**

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why soon...

i walk down to the papershop on st martin's square near the bullring the shop wasn't open yet but the pakistani owners were inside hauling in the piles of early morning newspapers so i hammer on the door and ask them through the window theatrically puffing through my fingers if i can buy 20 park drive and a box of matches one of the guys taps his wristwatch with his index finger and looks a little irritated but concedes with a half-hearted shrug and casually flips the latch open on the door and lets me in and i buy the cigarettes and carry on walking on the box it says smoking has been linked to cancer and other life-threatening diseases i put one between my lips with impunity and light it we already know smoking is a slow method of suicide

later that night i'm over at vince's ground floor flat for this meeting he wanted to set up and the crank i tooted before i came out is starting to kick the fuck in there's a midget on vince's sofa well he's not genetically a midget he's just this skinny little man and the arms and legs of his cheap grey suit are too long the jacket is just miles too big around the shoulders and he's sitting there smiling and drinking this black russian he's got collar length black hair all thick like elvis presley loaded up with what must be a tub-full of shiny grease and it's slicked back and he's sitting there drinking this tall black russian with his pale clammy looking skin wearing big square mirror sunglasses he looks like a cheap street hustler with his own twisted vision of glamour

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vince is pottering about absolutely wankered with the bottle of vodka in his hand in just a pair of baggy denim shorts his quivering beer gut hanging over the waistband a cigarette hangs from his lips and flaps up and down as he speaks beauty takes a myriad of different forms but vincent gordon with his flabby gut and psoriasis riddled scaly red-raw flesh and patches of straw hair on his scalp does not pertain to a single one of them he wasn't an oil-painting when we were younger and now his teeth have turned completely yellow to add to the list vince and the midget-man have been drinking and they're both pretty smashed and are about to lay some once in a lifetime opportunity on me

is this who you wanted me to meet i ask pointing at the dwarf on the sofa yeah yeah vince says nodding enthusiastically this is dickie the midget holds out his hand and introduces himself with a confident smile dickie montano he says in this little buzz-saw voice i shake his hand sean i tell him sean styne

the tv is blaring in the corner the news is on and there is a group of muslim women on talking about how they're being persecuted on a daily basis in british society you can't see their faces only their nervy eyes darting from side to side through the narrow slit in the black scarves they wear swaddling their heads THEY'RE FULL OF SHIT shouts dickie montano ramming his fist in the direction of the tv it's all a crock of shit he says islamaophobia is a bullshit word created to facilitate greater social leverage vince sits down in the opposite facing chair and nods sagely and

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says damn true that think about it vince says a group of religious zealots who manage to establish their credentials as society's victims are the ones who actually control society itself with their tom-fuckery

there is no stopping vince now he swigs wildly from his bottle of vodka and motors on those holding up bullshit religion as some sort of empirical fact must be judged on their actions he says there is no god vince proclaims authoritatively raising his index finger in the air human beings with all our foibles are the masters of life on earth and these pedlars of bullshit gotta be put to question just as they would put humanity to question they gotta be stopped and their bogus ideology disempowered of all influence in any public office vince's face has become contorted in drunken anger he's fucking scarlet dickie the midget chimes in that if there is a god it isn't a high enough authority for him to take any notice of

vince goes on to add that he's talking about christians and all the fucking jews too all of the bastards he says after all a christian influenced government is a religious militia too damn fucking right the dwarf says demolish all the mosques and churches wipe them off the face of the earth it's 2014 and even after all these years the underpinnings of all these wars is still religion he clenches his fists and hammers the arms of the chair some muslim community leader called abdul someone-or-other from bradford is wheeled out for the cameras now and he's saying

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quite sedately that love of british culture must not be used as an excuse for islamophobia his hatred of british society is clear and he rattles on and on about the installation of sharia law in britain NO YOU CUNT dickie montano screams spilling his black russian and islam shouldn't be used as an excuse for britishaphobia either now there's a word for you dickie says BRITISHOPHOBIA oh yeah baby vince intones somewhat musically in agreement two can fucking play at that game he sings two can play at *that fucking game*

i pick up an empty glass and silently hold it out for vince to fill up with vodka i must admit to having a few thoughts on these issues but can't say that i have much interest in discussing the subject at hand with our two reactionaries here suffice to say that i believe wars are engineered by politicians and the media and in the absence of people having the temerity to simply refuse to fight wars there's not a lot anyone can do about it the whole notion of nationality as an identity protected by a military force is the most futile of human delusions create and demonise an enemy before engineering a plan of attack as for religion itself it's just a commercial enterprise i call it the plastic jesus principle they sell religion in much the same way coca-cola sells its products religion once provided the populace with their values but we don't need it any more these days we've got television to do that job and television is the new god i think faith-based religion is a retarded outlook and those who truly believe such fairy stories should be classified as having learning difficulties and locked up

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in special care facilities the rest of the world got celebrities to
worship now

i must admit i find you both very eloquent i say sarcastically but
what's this proposition you've got for me? i watch curiously as
the midget pulls some pills from his pocket and presses one out of
the foil swallowing it down with a swig of his drink just a
prescription med to thin my blood he informs me when he sees
me looking don't worry he laughs and flaps the card of pills in the
air if they were anything any good i'd have offered you one

dickie slides forwards in the chair and rests his elbows on his
knees his wide flat feet in their sandals still don't manage to reach
the floor he leans towards me and says well okay then let's get
down to business the tip of his tongue darts out of his mouth like
a snake i'm gonna say one word to you now and that word is
he pauses for a long time brimming with excitement and then
snaps his fingers and hits me with it pantypissers with that he
throws himself gleefully back in the chair and waits expectantly
for my reaction arms folded across his chest disconcertingly
staring at me from behind his sunglasses
pantypissers?

yeah yeah man dickie montano goes you know old bastards who
like to sniff women's piss-stained knickers
dirty old bastards vince chimes in they sniff em while they're
releasing the badger
releasing the badger? what you talking about? what the fuck is

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releasing the badger? i ask

vince sticks his tongue out and goes cross-eyed and demonstrates a frantic masturbating motion with his hand and says yeah you know having a wank.

yeah having a wank dickie the midget echoes they sniff the knickers while they're pulling their pud they both look at me like i'm stupid and intone in unison you know? having a wank

yeah yeah i get what you mean i say so what's the deal we're talking about? we sell them piss-stained knickers is that it?

bingo! he's waking up! the midget says punching the air it's totally a money-spinner sean we buy in these cheap knickers from the wholesaler at i dunno say a quid or something and once soiled we sell them on for a tenner-a-pop plus postage *plus* postage

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