

# **Fluids**

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Twilight of a hot day. A red sun is slowly coming down in a brown and yellow sky. Through a window at her apartment, located in the third floor of an old building, a pregnant woman observes how a city prepares to rest in a muggy night. For her, there is no rest, her husband is a policeman, 'an honest person', over those rowdy streets somebody could kill him. A few hours before, she was visiting the office of a doctor where she got some frightening news. From the fluids inside her body a new life is taking shape. She and her husband are poor people. They will have to find a way to raise the new child. 'Yes, it can be done' mentioned her mother in a phone conversation. The pregnant woman has difficulties seeing how. The regular salary of a police officer is low. Her husband will have to earn some extra money. How? Anxiety is not good for the development of a fetus. The pregnant woman searches for a distraction. In front of her, beyond the glass of the window, she observes a small plaza where a solitary man is sitting on a bench eating a sandwich. 'A brave person ... He doesn't care about the hazards in our crappy neighborhood ... Is he an alien?' Flip, flop, the soft sound of two solid objects moving up and down within boiling water. In the kitchen of the apartment, two eggs are fully cooked and ready for consumption. Quietly the pregnant woman moves away from the window.

Under the dim light of the sunset, the man sitting on a bench in the plaza marbles with the taste of the sandwich in his hands. He bought it in a small restaurant located near a corner of the plaza. The sandwich is made with special bread, assorted vegetables, and a creamy sauce which gives to food an amazing flavor. The man has been busy the whole day walking through the city for long periods of time. His body welcomes the food and enjoys the rest provided by the bench. The "alien" knows quite well that he is in the poor side of town, in a truly dangerous neighborhood. A semi-automatic pistol hidden in his waist gives him some confidence but his best asset is his attitude. 'Few people dare to bother a King Cobra when the snake is resting on a road or a field.' The man has come to the plaza to eat, do serious thinking, and see a poster for an old picture. Besides good food, he loves philosophy. His mind analyzes the content of a book recently borrowed from a public library. 'Late or liquid modernity ... Humans live in a world which evolves constantly ... Good and bad changes hit us ... Like fluids we do not keep our shape for long ... A continuous metamorphosis of the body and soul.' The man eats his sandwich

slowly, there is no rush, in the dark shadows which will come after the sunset, he will be in his element. The gaze of the man shifts from a cigarette butt lying on the plaza floor to a magnificent poster advertising a movie from the 1950s. 'She is back ... Well, truly speaking, a tantalizing siren flowing through an infinite dream never goes away.' The poster shows a beautiful blond woman, wearing a white dress, standing on the grate of a subway train. The face of the woman in the poster shines with joy while feeling a breeze which elevates from the subway grate lifting her skirt and caressing her sensual body. 'An iconic moment in movie history ... Fluids shaped by desire ... The atoms in the breeze move up touching her skin in mysterious ways ... She waits for that magic atom which could bring infinite happiness ... Some of us want to be that atom ... Others just want to possess and destroy her.' History books say that it took fourteen takes to finalize the scene of the flying skirt in *The Seven Year Itch*. A big crowd of people watched the filming of the movie fascinated by the body of the blond actress and the flying skirt. 'Millions of viewers have wondered about the meaning of this image ... Its meaning keeps evolving ... Liquid modernity.' The man takes a bite of his sandwich.

In an obscure side of the plaza, there is noise. A hustler walks from a street holding a child beggar with his left hand. The child cries and tries to get free. The hustler yells at him: 'Don't fight motherfucker! ... Just give me the money and I'll release you.' Walking behind them appears a second child beggar. The two children are friends. They "work" the streets together. Today they got lucky collecting a small amount of money. The hustler saw them and decided to steal their 'filthy cash.' By mistake he grabbed the wrong beggar. The free child has the money in a pocket of his pants. He wants to help his friend but does not know what to do. Tears of helplessness. The hustler senses their fear. With his right hand he hits the head of the child held by his left hand. The battered child feels the pain and sends a clear message to his friend: 'Don't give away our money!' The hustler laughs. He knows that the free child is ready to crack. 'One more blow and I'll get my cash ... Yeah, a good night with the whores at Dollies is coming to Teddy!' He examines his target. 'Blood running down from his sissy nose should do the job ... Ugly ... The other kid will release the cash.' His free hand gains momentum but all his plans fall apart in a few seconds. Out of the dark, the hustler hears a gun shot, feels a sharp pain in the bottom of his right ear, and with surprise watches how a stream of his own blood

drops through his body towards the plaza floor. ‘Jeesus ... Whaat the fuck?’ Half of his right ear is gone! His eyes detect a man who sits on a bench and points a pistol to his head. ‘That dude was busy eating a sandwich!’ The man with the gun is observing his actions. The first shot was a warning, the next one will kill him. By instinct the hustler releases the trapped child. The beggar and his companion run away searching for protection in a bus station. The cannon of a pistol tells the hustler to move in the opposite direction. The wounded man obeys the order, his feet move fast, while his hands try to stop the blood dripping from his head to the plaza floor. One more wild night in the neighborhood. ‘Some things never change.’ The sound of the gun shot brings back the pregnant woman to a window in her apartment. She is worried about her husband. A shot like that could kill a police officer. ‘Oh my God, help us! ... We barely survive.’ The pregnant woman observes nothing strange on the plaza. From the window in her apartment, she only sees a simple man sitting on a bench, slowly eating a sandwich, and watching a poster for an old movie. She is not able to see the traces of human blood on the plaza floor, a red stream which flows into the unknown.