



FIVE:2:ONE

Print Issues

#thesideshow

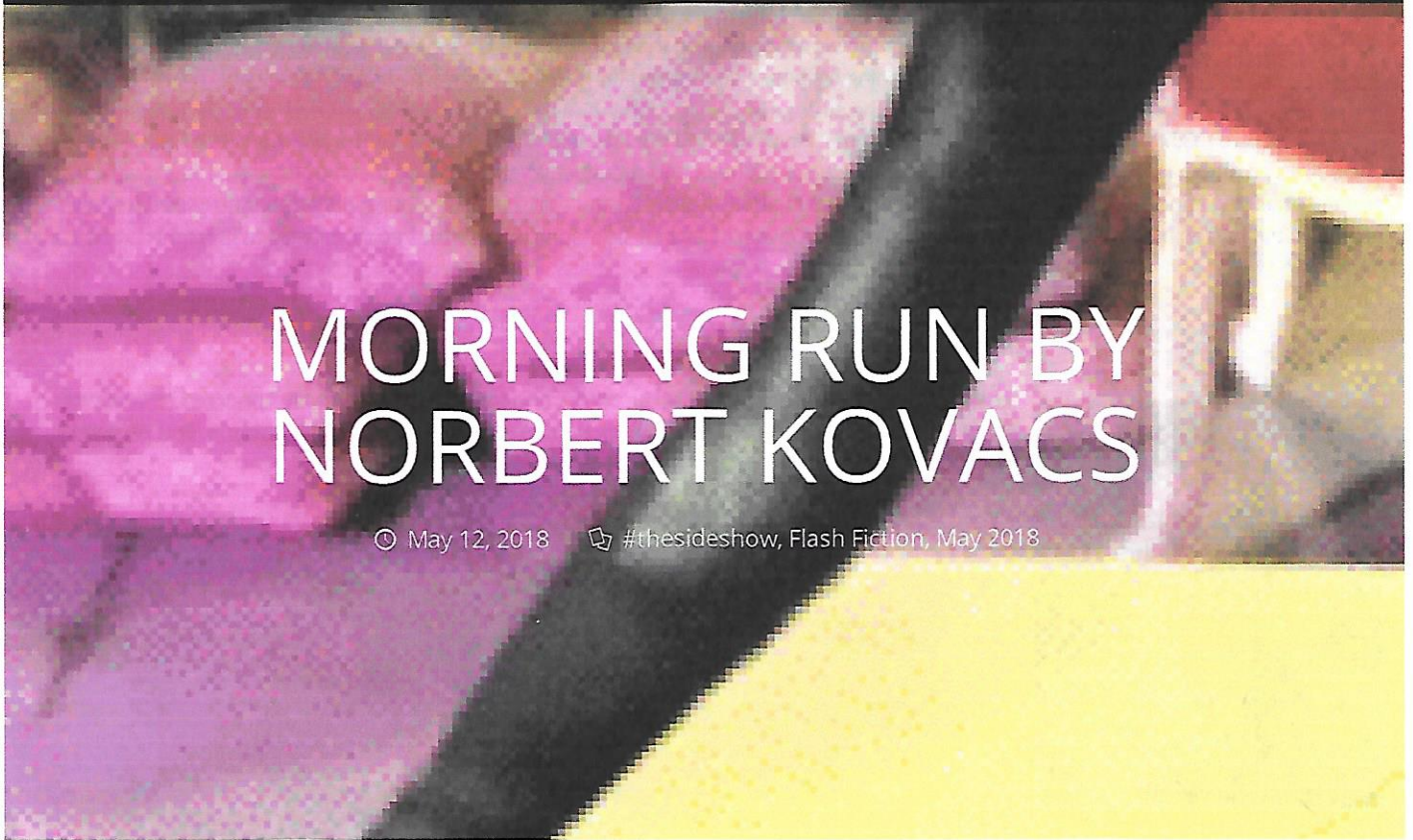
Submit

Weekly Columns

LitStyle

About FIVE:2:ONE

Donate



MORNING RUN BY NORBERT KOVACS

May 12, 2018 #thesideshow, Flash Fiction, May 2018

SHARES

f Share

Twitter Tweet



For three weeks, anticipation had run through Phil's veins. He woke with a tingling in his arms and a warmth coursing through his head that he could not explain. He imagined he had keyed into some sense that he was about to have something good happen to him. He did not

understand the reason he should be, but he felt it anyway.

Since he worked in corporate, Phil read his feeling as a kind of faith that he would succeed in his career. For years, he had toiled before the computer at his L-shaped desk to complete difficult analyses to impress his boss. He had slogged through mountains of paperwork and handed in final reports earlier than his colleagues. He thought, warm with his new sensation, that his diligence soon would receive its reward in some form of advancement. He would be promoted to department manager; he would win the raise he had been denied twice. He labored harder than ever to achieve all this now he believed it in reach. All the while, his sense of anticipation grew. He felt it pressing his mind as he interpreted data sets for his reports. His breath came shorter and quicker as if with excitement when he made to present at a department meeting. He felt different even as he surveyed the sky from his tenth floor office. He tensed when he observed a heavy, gray cloud pass above the trees and noted the gold sunlight that touched its edges.

Then one morning, Phil went for a run before he was to go to work. He had cut through the town park into the woods and started up a hill. The hill was high, he found. His legs braced as he ran. He had to pump his arms to push forward. His face reddened; a bead of sweat trickled down his forehead. I'll make it, he thought. I have to. As he came midway on the hill, the feeling that he had been having the last three weeks hit him. It came harder than he had known, however. His chest tightened. He panted with mouth open, unable to breathe. His hand clutched at his heart, and he fell on his back by the path side.

Two months ago, Phil's doctor had warned him that he must tend more to his health. He could not continue to eat steak sandwiches at power lunches with his colleagues and expect no harm would come of it, the man warned. Most of all, he could not maintain his daily stress. The strain of completing perfect reports and exceeding his boss's goals taxed his heart more than he knew. He was not meant to strive without limit. Phil had not listened, trusting instead the strange anticipation that had seized him. He had not even considered his doctor's words that there might be signs of heart trouble to come. He simply had not listened. Now as he lay on the ground fighting to breathe without a sign anyone would come by and find him, he shook his head and thought, No, this isn't supposed to happen. I was meant to realize something important. I believed it. This can't be why I had my feeling. As the cold from the ground penetrated his jacket, his head turned to the barren trees that loomed over him. The sky above him lay blue and open right to the zenith, a distance greater than he could fathom.



Norbert Kovacs lives and writes in Hartford, Connecticut. His stories have appeared or soon will appear in *Thrice Fiction*, *Westview*, *Squawk Back*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, and *No Extra Words*.

SHARE THIS:



Related

