

FLASH FICTION

# Fever Dream

by Bianca Skrinyar



"XY XII" by Lena Baloch

I dream of a lake, my soul's lake,

I dream of an old man, a boatman.

He holds a ferryman's pole in his bony right hand, and ferries between two lands on the numbing water.

Sitting in our cabin, on the shore or a cliff? I hear the eternal metallic clink.

*He's coming for me.*

Clink.

I pull my baby's body closer to my heaving chest.

"Gyermekem," I whisper, "you don't have to worry."

*Clink. Clink.*

"Lányom, keep sleeping. Sleeping babies don't feel hunger."

*Clink. Clink.*

*Clink.*

"Kis lányom, Daddy's almost home, he has your milk. Keep sleeping."

*Clink.*

*Clink.*

The door opens. Shuts.

"Here," he mutters and slips a coin into my fist.

*Clink.*

I silently push it through her lips.

The boatman lays his icy eyes on me. I lift my daughter, give her to him. He hands back the coin.

I stagger in my bed, a coin in my hand and blood on my sheets.