

Flash Fiction

Fever Dream

by Bianca Skrinayar

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.

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