

Traveling Under Salary

Tanya wants to get out of the country. She's in a metaphysical cage of her own construction, and she can't take it anymore.

At her place of work, she folds herself into a postmarked box, tapes it shut from the inside, and waits for the postman to take her away. He does, and he ships her to Rome, as indicated on the label. But Tanya forgets to write the country, or forgets that there is a country, and twelve days later, she is plopped onto the less distant soil of Rome, Georgia, bleeding from her ankles, but in overall exceptional health.

A different variety of sunlight shines through the crevices of the carton—perhaps more striking a hue than any light she has ever encountered. She reflects on the splendors of Italy, before cinching her nail beneath the duct tape in anticipation of a new, boisterous life.

The only thing is the heat. It's very hot. Too hot, in fact—suffocating, even. The heat is truly unbearable, and Tanya is from Maine, after all. She can already tell from there inside the cardboard box: the humidity will kill her, and she is suddenly terribly afraid and full of dread. She removes her hand from the adhesive and rests it on her knee, which is where it (her hand) already is, due to the compact nature of her container.

She resolves to enjoy the marvels of Italy from here instead, and she spends the following days tumbling the box forward, twisting her spine here and there, and peering through the cracks, before she has had enough sightseeing, since she cannot find any landmarks for a variety of reasons unknown, and inconsequential to her.

Four days later, the postman returns and, finding the package in precisely the same spot he had left it, though mysteriously tattered, he returns it to the sender—Tanya—who, fifteen days later, receives a hefty package at her doorstep and opens it from the inside to find herself, of course, packed in, and lightly browned.

She removes herself, anxious for the jetlag to set in, and contemplates which dress will complement the new-fangled Tanya. Which color, material and panache will suit *Tanya*, paragon of culture, who now parts her hair to the left, instead of down the center? *One can live outside the box from inside it*, she thinks, marching to her cubicle in a daze of traveler's glory.