**When Hanni Met (Buffalo) Billy**

by Anne Booty

He waited patiently. A butterfly, singular and beatific, lay thumping in his belly. He sighed. Hannibal was late. Texted to say he was picking up a Chianti. Bill had replied with a thumbs up despite knowing he wouldn’t find one at this hour.

Although they’d spent time together online, this would be their first meeting.

In the flesh.

The table was laid with a single layer of translucent skin so as to not hide the poetry of knife marks underneath. Too many and it’s like peering through mud! When his date arrived, empty handed, Bill was struck by his strange mask until he remembered there was a Pandemic Out There. How kind of him to be so respectful, he thought. They were shy with each other at first, until Hannibal was given a tour and allowed to peer into the pit. The girl shuddered as she looked up at them, pleading, something in her hands perhaps meat, perhaps her own broken fingernails. I’ll have what she’s having, Hannibal joked. The words were lost, smothered by mask. Bill smiled awkwardly and led him to the dinner table; his date walking close behind, licking his chops.

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