

# A Post-Mortem Mall

A MICRO-CHAPBOOK BY GHIA VITALE



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## **A Post-Mortem Mall**

YOU CAN HAVE NOTHING OR HAVE IT ALL  
WHEN YOU WANDER THROUGH A DESOLATE MALL  
WHERE SHADOWS AND GHOSTS EXCEED THE LIVES  
AND MONEY UPON WHICH MALL BUSINESS THRIVES.

THE HOLLOWNESS OF A VACANT STORE  
HAUNTS THE LANGUID LENGTH OF EACH CORRIDOR.  
AS THE STOCK DWINDLED, CUSTOMERS LEFT  
SOMEONE'S HOPES AND DREAMS ALONE AND BEREFT.

ONE STORE SOLD RAINBOWS, ONE STORE SOLD SPIKES.  
ONE STORE SOLD BOTH WITH SICK BAND SHIRTS AND PIKES.  
OTHER STORES SOLD PERFUMES AND NAME BRANDS.  
NONE OF THEM SATISFIED THE MALL'S DEMANDS.

DISMEMBERED MANNEQUINS RESURRECT  
MEMORIES OF A WORLD THAT SEEMED PERFECT.  
NOW, YOU SEE WHAT HUMANITY DREAMS  
IN THE EYES OF SEVERED MANNEQUIN HEADS.

ORDER IN THE COLLAPSING FOOD COURT.  
CONSUME AN ABUNDANCE OF NO IMPORT.  
BEHIND WALLS BOUND WITH CONSTRUCTION TAPE -  
A VINTAGE FAST FOOD CHAIN IN PERFECT SHAPE.

IS THE MALL DEAD OR IS IT REBORN  
IN THE WAKE OF A SOCIETY TORN?  
WE'LL NEVER KNOW A MALL'S MOST PRIZED GEM  
UNTIL WE VISIT THAT MALL POST-MORTEM.

## The Galleria of Ghouls

PLATO WARNED US ABOUT THE SHIP OF FOOLS,  
BUT NEVER THE GALLERIA OF GHOULS,  
WHERE LIFE IS BUT A CHEAP COMMODITY  
AND TENDERNES, A TASTE AND ODDITY.

ONCE UPON A MALL THAT STANDS DERELICT,  
THERE WERE STORES AND BRANDS TO FILL EVERY VOID.  
THEIR VACANCY IS WHAT BANKERS INFLECT  
WHEN OUR CREDIT SCORES AND WORLDS GET DESTROYED.

ABOVE ABANDONED STOREFRONTS, THERE ARE SIGNS  
LOOMING LARGE LIKE CROOKED HALOS OF DEATH.  
EACH AISLE OF THE MALL SPANS AND ALIGNS  
WITH THE BLOODIEST CRUX OF NAZARETH.

MONSTERS LURK ABOUT THE MALL'S CORRIDORS,  
BUT THEY'RE NOT THE KIND FROM HORROR MOVIES.  
THEY'RE MONSTERS THAT PREY ON HUMANS IN STORES  
BY MAULING THEIR WALLETS AND SOULS WITH EASE.

THE SKELETONS POISED IN ADS AND DISPLAYS;  
VAMPIRES WHO GREET YOU WITH A FANGED SMILE;  
EACH ZOMBIE OF ABERCROMBIE DECAYS  
AS THEY WANDER LOST THROUGH EVERY AISLE.

FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER BECOMES INDIGNANT  
WHEN BOSSES AND LANDLORDS ARE MALIGNANT.  
THE FORMER NEVER WANTED TO CAUSE HARM.  
THE LATTER BREAKS YOUR BACK AND TWISTS YOUR ARM.

WHEN CANNIBALS GATHER AT THE FOOD COURT,  
THEY GO HUNTING HUMANS FOR FUN AND SPORT.  
WHEN GHOSTS APPEAR IN ECTOPLASMIC CLOUDS,  
THEY COVER THE COMPLEX WITH ORBS AND SHROUDS.

IT'S NO MYSTERY WHY THE GHOULS CONVENE  
AT THE MALL WHEN IT FALLS FAR FROM PRISTINE:  
IT'S BECAUSE THERE'S NO BETTER MALL AROUND  
FOR MORE MONSTERS TO FIND A COMMON GROUND.

## De Rigueur Mortis

IT'S "IN" TO SHOW MORE BONES THAN SKIN,  
AND SO MANY HAVE DIED FOR THIS.  
WHEN THE WILL TO EXIST WEARS THIN,  
IT BECOMES *DE RIGUEUR* MORTIS.

FOR THOSE WITH BODIES BEAUTY STANDARDS DISOWN,  
SUFFERING IS A PART OF VANITY.  
NOTHING'S MORE *EN VOGUE* THAN THE BAREST OF BONE  
WHEN THINNESS DEFINES YOUR HUMANITY.

IN THE WORLDS OF FASHION AND ADVERTISEMENTS,  
THIN BODIES ARE ADORED AND IDEALIZED.  
WITH ALL OF THEIR FAT SHAMING AND CHASTISEMENTS,  
THE SPECTRUM OF BEAUTY IS NOT REALIZED.

WE EMBALM OURSELVES WITH TREATMENTS AND LOTIONS,  
PRESSED TO PRESERVE OUR YOUTH AT ANY COST.  
WE FIGHT THE ROT WITH POISON PILLS AND POTIONS,  
BUT A WAR AGAINST TIME IS ALWAYS LOST.

THE FREEDOM THAT ONE SEEKS IN BEING UNIQUE  
IS THE FREEDOM TO PURCHASE NAME BRAND CLOTHES.  
WHEN WE BECOME WEAK FROM MORE SKELETON CHIC,  
THE HUNGER FOR A REVOLUTION GROWS.

THE BODY IS NOT A TEMPLE OR A TOOL.  
THE BODY IS THE GREATEST MASTERPIECE.  
EVERY BODY IS ART; ONE TYPE WILL NOT RULE,  
BUT ALL WILL DECOMPOSE ONCE THEY DECEASE.

IF BEAUTY MEANT CONFORMITY,  
MASTERPIECES WOULD LOOK THE SAME.  
WHAT PEOPLE DEEM ABNORMITY  
IS BEAUTY BY ANOTHER NAME.

## Food Court Cannibals

A FOOD COURT SERVES SO MUCH MORE THAN MEAT.  
A FOOD COURT SERVES WHAT MOST ALLAYS.  
WHEN CANNIBALS NEED A MEAL TO EAT,  
THEY LURE US RIGHT ONTO THEIR TRAYS.

THEY TRAWL THROUGH THE MALL, ITS SHOPPERS, AND ALL,  
HUNTING MORE HUMANS TO PUT ON THEIR PLATES.  
THEIR CHARMING FACADE NEVER SEEMS TO FALL  
WHEN THEY ASK UNKNOWING PREY OUT ON DATES.

IF YOU DARE ACCEPT THEIR INVITATION,  
THEY LEAD YOU TO A DARK, BARREN FOOD COURT  
WHERE EMPTY SPACE FILLS EVERY FOOD STATION  
AND THERE ARE NO PEOPLE, LIGHTS, OR SUPPORT.

YOU SEE ALL THE EMPTY TABLES AND CHAIRS.  
YOU SEE LIGHT-UP SIGNS OUT OF COMMISSION.  
YOU FEEL THE RAW HEAT OF A THOUSAND STARES,  
AND THAT'S WHEN YOU QUESTION THEIR AMBITION.

IT'S NOT UNTIL YOU FEEL THEIR CANNINES  
SINK INTO YOU LIKE HONEY DEW.  
BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOUR BODY SUPINES  
AND ONCE AGAIN, THE MEAL IS YOU.

## The Mannequin Massacre

A MANNEQUIN MAY HAVE NO SOUL,  
NO ORGAN TISSUES OR HEART,  
BUT MANNEQUINS STILL REMAIN WHOLE  
ALTOGETHER OR TORN APART.

MANNEQUINS HAVE DETACHABLE LIMBS.  
THEIR HEADS ROLL OFF LIKE ROYALTY.  
THEIR FORM NEVER FATTENS OR SLIMS;  
THEIR FACES, FREEZED IN LOYALTY.

MANNEQUINS WEAR CLOTHES BETTER THAN US  
AND ALWAYS LOOK GOOD ON DISPLAY.  
THERE IS NO MANNEQUIN VENUS  
BECAUSE SHE CAN LOOK ANY WAY.

MANNEQUINS HAVE NO FEELINGS TO HURT.  
MANNEQUINS HAVE NO OBJECTIONS.  
MANNEQUINS HAVE NO SECRETS TO BLURT,  
ONLY STATIC AND PERFECTIONS.

POSITIONED AND POISED IN PUBLIC,  
MANNEQUINS STAND STILL AND COMPOSED,  
YET THEY BECOME UNSTABLE QUICK,  
THEN FALL PIECE BY PIECE AND REPOSE.

MASS GRAVES OF ARMS AND LEGS COMPOUND  
HIGHER IN THE BACK OF THE SHOPS.  
THE SEVERED HEADS UPON THE GROUND  
SMILE UNTIL YOUR STOMACH DROPS.

BUT WHEN YOU LOOK INTO THEIR EYES,  
YOU SEE THEIR GAZE, SOULLESS AND BLANK.  
AROUND THEIR STARE, THE BLOOD THAT DRIES  
WAS DRAINED FROM THE STOMACHS THEY SANK.

## The Frappe of Frankenstein

WE ORDER DRINKS LIKE FRANKENSTEIN  
MADE A MONSTER ON HIS OWN WHIM,  
BUT DRINKS CONSUME AND GRIND US FINE,  
JUST AS HIS MONSTER DETHRONED HIM.

A MOUNTAIN OF CREAM, WHIPPED AND WHITE,  
RESTS ON GREEN HUES OF HONEYDEW.  
HERE LIES THE CRUMBLING ICE DELIGHT  
WITH COFFEE CHILLED FAR OUT OF VIEW.

THE BLENDER BRINGS PROMETHEUS,  
A FORCE OF ELECTRICITY  
WHICH SPARKS LIFE THAT DOESN'T FREE US,  
BUT TRAPS US IN PLASTICITY.

OUR ORDERS ARE MONSTERS REBORN  
AS FRANKENSTEIN FRAPPES, SWEET WITH SCORN.

## The Vampire Video Arcade

THE VAMPIRE VIDEO ARCADE  
IS WHERE THE BLOOD FLOWS FREELY AND FRESH.  
FOR EVERY LEVEL AND HIGH SCORE PLAYED,  
ANOTHER BITE PIERCES YOUR NECK'S FLESH.

ETERNAL SCREAMS AND DRACULA DREAMS,  
EVERY CONSOLE IS A COFFIN BED,  
WHERE PLAYERS ENTER A GAME IN TEAMS  
BUT THERE, THEY REPOSE ALONE INSTEAD.

THE SCARLET SCREEN UPON EACH MACHINE  
LEADS YOU TO A WORLD BEYOND THE GRAVE,  
WHERE ALL OF THE SPRITES AND SPIRITS SEEN  
DELIVER RIVERS OF BLOOD YOU CRAVE.

ONCE YOU'VE SCORED HIGH ENOUGH TO SUCCEED,  
YOUR NAME WILL THEN JOIN A TOMBSTONE PLAQUE,  
BUT FOR ALL THE PLAYERS YOU MADE BLEED,  
IT'S GAME OVER. THERE'S NO COMING BACK.

YOUR NAME WILL REMAIN IMMORTAL HERE,  
ETCHED INTO THE BLOOD-SPLATTERED GRANITE,  
THEN YOU'LL GAIN THE FANGS YOU HOLD SO DEAR.  
YOU'LL BE ONE MORE BAT ON THIS PLANET.

WHOEVER SCORES THE HIGHEST OF ALL  
SHALL REAP THE PLEASURES OF THE GRAND PRIZE:  
BEING THE BEST BAT AT THE WHOLE MALL  
AND A PRESENCE NONE CAN EXORCIZE.

## Zombie Fashion Show

DRESSED IN TRENDS FROM TOE TO HEAD,  
MALL AISLES TEEMED WITH THE UNDEAD.  
NOW THAT MOST MALLS ARE UNKNOWN,  
ZOMBIES OF FASHION WALK ALONE.

THE FASHION BRANDS THAT REIGNED SUPREME  
SUCCEEDED LIKE A FEVER DREAM:  
ONES THAT LASTED DECADES LONG  
UNTIL THEIR BUSINESS PLANS WENT WRONG.

THEY SOLD US "WHOLESOME" AND "PRETTY."  
THEY MADE US WALLOW IN PITY  
WHEN WE COULDN'T FIT IN CLOTHES  
MOSTLY MADE FOR SIZE ZEROES.

WE SEARCH FOR OUR SIZE IN EACH SHOP  
UNTIL WE FINALLY JUST STOP,  
YET SKELETONS IN THEIR ADS  
ARE CLAD IN THE LATEST FADS.

THEY SOLD US WHAT WE MOST WANTED,  
ONLY TO LEAVE US HAUNTED.  
NOW, WE'RE LEFT WITH WHAT REMAINS:  
BODIES PLAGUED BY GHOSTS AND PAINS.

UNDER SUCH PRESSURE, WE DECAY.  
WE STARVE UNTIL WE ROT AWAY,  
ALL TO FIT INTO CLOTHING  
PROFITING FROM SELF-LOATHING.

STORES THAT HIRED THE PRETTIEST  
TURNED OUT TO BE THE SHITTIEST,  
YET MODELS STILL GET SMALLER  
TO APPEASE THE GREAT DOLLAR.

THE REST OF US SHALL ROAM THE MALL  
IN UNDEAD FASHION 'TIL WE FALL  
IN LOVE WITH ANOTHER TIME  
WHERE FATNESS IS NOT A CRIME.

EVERY AISLE IS A RUNWAY  
WHEN ZOMBIES WANDER THEM BY DAY.  
WHEN THE MALL CLOSES AT NIGHT,  
THE ZOMBIES BREAK LOOSE AND FIGHT.

A ZOMBIE RUNWAY IS BEST  
TO FLAUNT THE FASHION OF THE REST:  
THOSE OF US WHO DON'T CONFORM  
TO ANY FASHION, TYPE, OR NORM.

WATCH THE ZOMBIES STRUT OUR STUFF  
AND LEAVE ONCE WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH.  
NO CHAINS WILL KEEP US FROM JOY,  
NO MATTER WHAT GHOULS THEY EMPLOY.

## The Monster Movie Theater

HERE LIES THE CORPSE OF A MOVIE THEATER  
UNDER THE SCRUTINY OF A REALTOR,  
WITH AN EMPTY SCREEN IN EVERY SECTION  
AND VISIONS FALLING FAR FROM PERFECTION.

THE EMPTY SEATS HOLD A GHOST AUDIENCE  
WATCHING ALL THE FILMS THAT MADE THE MOST CENTS.  
THE TITLES CHANGED, BUT ONE THING NEVER DID:  
THIS PLACE IS WHERE ALL MOVIE MONSTERS HID.

WHEN IT'S SHOWTIME AND THERE COMES A FULL MOON,  
YOU'LL HEAR A CREATURE FROM A BLACK LAGOON.  
AND WHEN THE SUN SETS, NONE SHALL FORGET  
DRACULA LURKING IN THE BALCONETTE.

BEWARE THE MUMMIES PATROLLING THE HALLS.  
DON'T MIND THE FADED POSTERS ON THE WALLS.  
JUST BREATHE IN ALL THE DECOMPOSITION.  
ACCEPT IT AS THE PRICE OF ADMISSION.

FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER PORTRAIT REMAINS FRAMED  
ABOVE ALL MONSTERS WHO DWELL THERE UNNAMED.  
GORGONS AND GOBLINS, VAMPIRES AND GHOSTS  
ARE JUST A FEW CREATURES THE THEATER HOSTS.

SO MANY HORRORS! SO MANY THRILLERS!  
SO MANY PLOT TWISTS AND UNVEILED KILLERS!  
YET WHEN THE MOVIES ARE FINALLY THROUGH,  
THE MOST MACABRE MONSTER THERE WILL BE YOU.