

## THE BEAR

The bear didn't fit quite well enough to be riding on the subway, and although he wore nice pants and a cardigan, there was a bulge to his stomach that wasn't quite natural.

It moved under his clothes, though he paid it no mind. The passengers unlucky enough to sit beside him on the full evening ride home leaned away toward their other neighbors, afraid to come into contact with the turbulent waves.

Wails and moans made their way through the sharp gurgles. The small belches he released every minute or so got increasingly disruptive and worrisome with each iteration. Until they echoed enough to be heard by the entire car in time with the rumbles of the rail below.

The lamb sitting beside me whispered about calling the police, but one hungry look from the bear shut him up.

As for me, I fixated on the squirming. The movement almost melodic. The ride wore on; the bulge smoothed over, until it became obvious whatever poor soul had been sucked inside was not for this world.

I fought the itch in my fingers to go and press down on the bear's gut, certain any such moves might fix my fate. Though, perhaps, it wouldn't have been so bad a way to die.

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