The Periphery

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translated by Eleanor Goodman and Wang Ao

Like a tomato hiding at the edge of the steelyard, he was always lying down. Something flashes, a warning or a swallow, but he doesn't move, keeping watch over little things. The second hand moves to ten o'clock, the alarm fades far away, a cigarette goes too, carrying along a few pairs of distorted blue handcuffs. His eyes, clouds, German locks. In short, what wasn't there was gone.

Empty, expanding. He was far removed, but always on some periphery: a gear's edge, the water's edge, his own edge. He looks time and again to the sky, his index finger pointing up, practicing sickly, wild calligraphy: “Come back!”

As expected, all those deformed things returned to their original shape: the windows in the new development are full of evening wind, the moon brews a big barrel of golden beer

The steelyard, tilting violently, there, infinite, like a calmed lion crouching beside a tomato.