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~~"Get up, AbbaZo and the Grampus Hissinger.  
"Get up, you asshole moron."  
The Grampus made no attempt to move from its  
slavishly stance. The fun was in its departure, leaving  
smoldering trails of its gate upon the desert sands of  
the arid environment. Thousands of granules of sand,  
all things to  
"Get up, or I'm going to kick you!"  
But Hissinger made no reply~~

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Working at K. Marx

from

"Number 77P" they call on the intercom. I listen to each soundwave, ~~and~~ every single syllable and consonant, the address of a number as a person, to think a person could be a number, a number is part of an equation, an equation formulates — how ~~can~~ can we formulate the unformulatable —

"Number 77P" they insisted.

I felt my name tag, "77." I felt my red shirt, my fingers grazing the emblematic symbols of labor and harvest, the hammer and the sickle, striking metal by Hephaestus' might, defying Uranus with the weapon of Cronus —

"Number 77P"

It was almost poetic, "Num-ber Sev-en-ty-Sev-en!" Trochee dactyl trochee trimeter. Beautiful. Simply beautiful. The Higher Council of K. Marx couldn't have been more beautifully simple —

I felt a hand grab my shoulder. One of the Witches of the Council had found me.

"Comrade, this is the last warning! Where is your sense of urgency? And what are you doing with this consumer?"

I then realized where I was; it was where I had been the whole entirety of my laboral existence. At the Returns of Dissatisfied Comrades desk. Holding the red-and-yellow

Jacket of a dissatisfied comrade, whose comments I obliviously ignored in my poetic stupor, which occurred all of the time.

"I was helping this consumer make a dissatisfied return," I vollied back to the witch. "I was performing my duty as a comrade-citizen —"

"Comrade-citizens don't ignore the pleas of other comrade-citizens!" the witch scolded. "If our Leader Karl Mao Zedong had ignored the pleas of the people, would K. Marx exist to serve the people with fair and balanced ~~new~~ goods?"

"Comrade witch —"

"Brother comrade, there is a glint of doubt in your eyes. I am your sister comrade witch, not your capitalist slave <sup>master.</sup> ~~man~~. If I were your greedy, lustful, egotistical Capitalist slavemaster, then would life be as great as it is?"

"comrade witch —" Com-rade witch. Amphimacer.

"we would not have K. Marx, ~~nor~~ our leader's glorious invention, and life would not be as brilliant as it is!"

"Comrade witch, I was helping a <sup>consumer</sup> ~~comrade~~ with her dissatisfied return of a Karl Mao Zedong state-issued jacket."

"were you?" the witch insisted in her drafty tone. She was much older than I was, bearing gray hair on the pallet of her skull. I, for one, was a ~~strapping~~ strapping young lad, with gló-ri-ous brown hair and phānt-tas-mā-gor-i-cāl hazel eyes. Brown and hazel. More brilliant colors than red and yellow.

"yes, I was." I smiled. "were you?"

The witch looked around. The consumer, to my satisfaction, was gone. ~~with the~~ There was a glint of anger in her eyes; and then frustration; and then something that appeared to be a re-withdrawal of emotion. Maybe some people really are numbers, losing ~~their~~ value when a formula says they should. But I'm not a number I'm 77, but definitely

not a number.

"It doesn't matter, comrade Number—" The witch looked at my name tag, "~~was~~ Seventy Seven. It doesn't matter. There will be a penalty to your food rations."

I bit my lip, and tried to smile. Tried to smile—  
"Why have you presented an *ergo* generous proposition, comrade Witch?" I forced my mouth to utter,

"If a dissatisfied consumer-comrade leaves without a state-issued jacket, they are to be reprimanded on sight of *devarna*—"

*Sight of devarna* — beautiful —

"— and by ignoring this consumer-comrade's plea for a return, you corrupt the consumer-comrade. Therefore, in *searance*, you are deserving of a most rational punishment accordingly, you deserve less life."

I then realized that the witch was smiling. Not *devarna*ly. Not megalomaniacally. Kindly. Like a mother.

"How much of a decrease?"

"5% —"

"5%, how generous of you, comrade Witch!"

"Generous indeed, I come for another reason —"

"Comrade Witch 887!"

That voice was not my own. It was that of another comrade witch. Possibly 565.0 or 733. I always forgot,

the words  
"Oh, oh —" stumbled out of the mouth of comrade witch 887. "Oh, oh, oh, oh —"

"Conferring with a two-digit comrade?"

"I was only attempting to rebuke the son of a —"  
She stopped, the old woman stopped — "to rebuke Number 7? As he was ignoring the *plenas* —"

"If you have memorized every policy in the *K. Marx*



Therefore of morality - which leads to the undying effects that Capitalism has on the human spirit, according to our leader Karl Mao Zedong."

"yes."

"The State prescribes for us to say these words, but it is no trouble"

"yes -"

"No trouble, >>, because we are all a part of the state"

"yes -"

"A part of -"

a formula

"a greater cause than our individual selves. Can you see how beautifully simple it is to live as a comrade, on our leader's wonderful red and yellow planet -"

heard it all before

~~Myself!~~

"as a laborer at K. Marx!

"yes." Simply beautiful.

"Do you think of yourself as a laborer, with a hammer comrade witch 989 asked me what appeared to be curiosity, though I couldn't identify her motives," or as a farmer - like one of our own farmers in the Fields of Grandeur - with a sickle?"

I wanted to say so much to her question. This little cherub of red and yellow crystal laser beam arrows shooting at every one she judges, she irked me, irked me, irked me - I wanted to say a lot, about poetry, about mythology (the gods, parallels between tragic heroes and "leaders"), about ironies, about my dead parents (how did they die? they didn't even tell me how they died! how? how?) about the reconstruction of my life -

BUT I said this! "I am a laborer, for I ~~work~~ toil to hear the pleas of my fellow comrades. BUT I am also a farmer, for I harvest my toils and share them with my

fellow comrades."

I imagined that ~~then~~ Comrade Witch 988 would have loved if I said that. IF I had said that.

Instead; "Eomb trochee anapest pyrrhic foot amphimacer  
 Amphibrach spondee dactyl Stanzas Stanzas Stanzas  
 Quatrains ballads sagas alliteration metaphors similes  
 Spenserian terza rima Inferno Chaucer couplets heroic  
 enjambments poems poems poems meters of poems  
 meters and meters of poems and the lives of numbers  
 in men and women formulas together the conqueror worm  
 k. Marx the conqueror worm and things to dwell on and  
 as far like it and farming shows farming witches  
 farming gods like 'leader' and 'red and yellow' and  
 losing yourself to a puddle of blood a droplet in  
 a gory ocean blood bleed "I fall upon the thorns of  
 life! I bleed!"

I paused to breathe. And then I realized that I had  
 stood upon the table. In the middle of the meeting place  
 of the Higher Council of k. Marx.

I saw 887, who looked down, emotions withdrawn,  
 her wax teeth covered in dry, though still organic, lips.

I saw theater witches, staring at me, a two-digit  
 laborer. Then I saw Comrade Witch 989, glaring.

I blinked and she was smiling.

"~~With~~ If permission is granted by the Higher Council,  
 I would like to discuss private matters with 77."

There was no response. I wondered what they were thinking.  
 I was quite curious.

"If there is no objection," Comrade Witch 989 started  
 again —

But 887 shot me a glance. A horrified glance,  
 possibly laced with human compassion possibly  
 unassociated with ~~Karl~~ Karl Mao Zedong. Then she  
 looked down again.

"Good. 77, come with me."

Says they should. BUT I'm not a ...

I jumped off the table, and followed Comrade Witch 989 to a sterile office, filled with posters of red and yellow -

"I don't know how you know all of those things, 77," Comrade Witch 989 stammered, "Whether your capitalist parents had given you private instructions in the art's rests in the destruction of your apartment complex. However, I think the State would be interested in your talents -"

I bit my lip ~~to~~ to hold an angry laugh of confused emotion.

"I will refer you to the State's Department of Propaganda," 989 insisted.

I think I overdid it with the Shelley bit.