

**thrice great hermes**

#12

by stanley lieber

well, he had seen better mornings.

vidya counted the steps between his front door and the street. he filed the useless information in the filing cabinet in the back room and continued on foot to his destination. at the library he claimed his usual table. unzipped his bag and found his book. carefully, he slid his finger to the bookmark, which he deftly removed, and picked up where he had left off the night before.

the librarian startled him. this is not a library, she seemed to be saying. he was confused at first but gradually he realized that she objected to him bringing in his own book from outside the library. he stuffed the contraband volume back into his bag and nodded agreement. the basis of her complaint was not at all clear, but, satisfied, she disappeared back to wherever it was she had surveilled his infraction.

vidya's head hurt. he wandered the isles for several minutes in search of an approved diversion before surrendering the charade. there was nothing left in this place that he hadn't already read.

he was pretty sure.