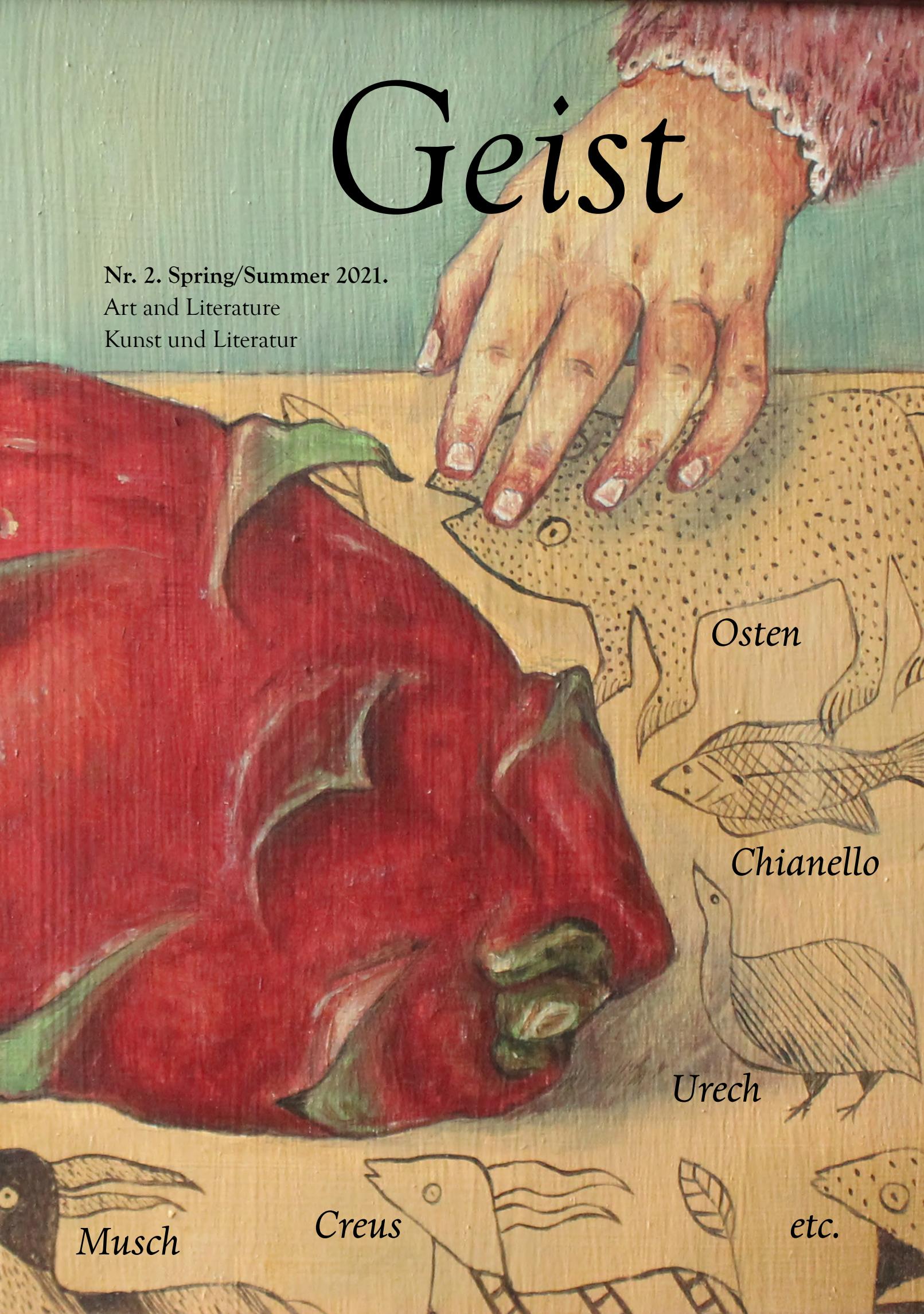


# Geist

Nr. 2. Spring/Summer 2021.

Art and Literature

Kunst und Literatur



Osten

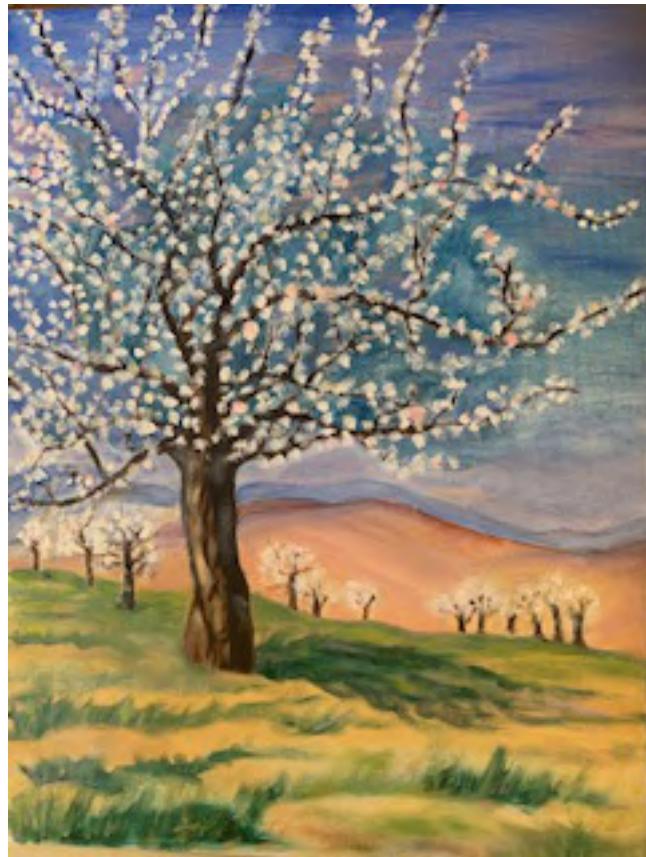
Chianello

Urech

Musch

Creus

etc.



## D'estate

Le cavallette sole  
sorridono in mezzo  
alla gramigna gialla.  
I moscerini danzano al sole  
tremo uno stelo  
sotto una farfalla.

**Summer**

The lonely grasshoppers  
smile among  
the yellowing grass.  
Midges dance in the sun.

A stem trembles  
under a butterfly.

*Giovanni Pascoli (1855-1912) was an important and still beloved Italian poet.*

*Roberta Juricic is a Serbian-American painter.*

# Foreword

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the second number of **Geist**.

**Geist** is an international magazine of Art and Culture, with a German title and texts in several languages (in this edition: English, Italian, German, French and Spanish), always with English translation (the new Latin, I suppose). Sounds a bit ambitious, but it isn't really. The idea is just to connect a group of artists and writers worldwide creating something new, and to offer a bit of beauty in this mostly ugly modern world. As Keats said, Beauty is Truth, and Truth, Beauty.

In this number we have a very nice collection of prose, poetry and art, ranging from the Americas all the way to the Balkans, not forgetting some local creations from the strange little town where I am currently staying. All texts and illustrations (excepting the short opening poem) are recent works by contemporary authors, and most, but not all, never published before.

If you are reading this, know that you are special: not that many people care for a magazine of art and literature these days, especially if it is independently created, with no other purpose than just to exist.

The Editor

**T. E. Creus**

Published by **Contrarium**

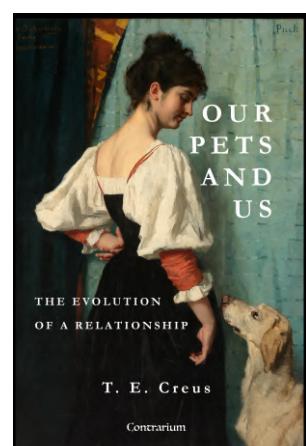
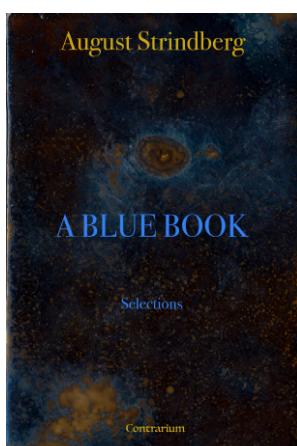
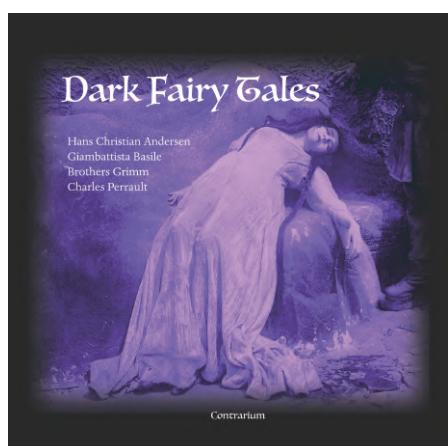
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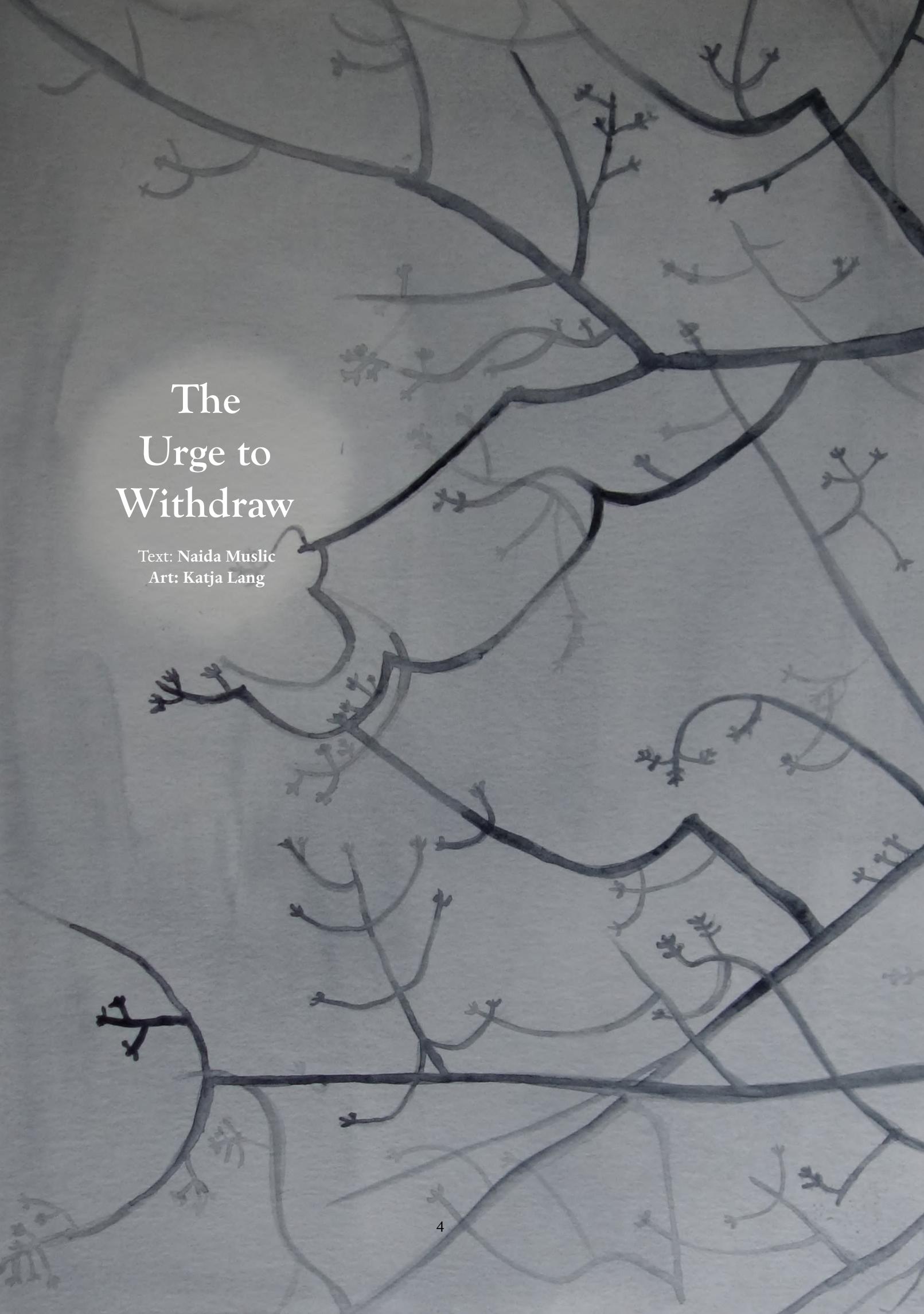
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	Beach in Croatia, 2020.

Creation, selection and design: T. E. Creus

**Geist** is a **Contrarium** publication.



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# The Urge to Withdraw

Text: Naida Muslic  
Art: Katja Lang

*"I was not made to live anywhere except in paradise.*

*Such, simply, was my genetic inadaptation.*

*Here on earth every prick of a rose-thorn changed into a wound.*

*Whenever the sun hid behind a cloud, I grieved.*

*I pretended to work like others from morning to evening,*

*but I was absent, dedicated to invisible countries*

*For solace I escaped to city parks, there to observe*

*and faithfully describe flowers and trees, but they changed,*

*under my hand, into the gardens of Paradise.*

*I have not loved a woman with my five senses.*

*I only wanted from her my sister, from before the banishment.*

*And I respected religion, for on this earth of pain*

*it was a funereal and a propitiatory song.*

— Czeslaw Milosz, “*Nonadaptation*”

**THERE'S A FILM** by Paweł Pawlikowski. A well-known one, called "*Ida*". I watched it a long time ago but one scene stood out, because it addressed a certain sentiment I carried as well. In the scene, a young woman who desires to become a nun, but is invited to "try life out" first, to see if she truly wants to die for the world, speaks to her lover after they had made love. He tells her of the many things they will do: buy a house, have children, have a dog, and to each, she responds with: "*Then what?*". She leaves him.

I loved the scene, because, I too, was, and in many ways, still am, Ida. The urge to withdraw has always been stronger in me than the urge to take part in the world in any way. People would often come, with what I deemed, vulgar and profane suggestions, that seemed not to address the core sentiment behind the urge to withdraw - and that is the sentiment that everything is vanity. Children, jobs, marriage, lovers — all a noise, a comfortable attachment to help one pass through existence. "*I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind*" - Ecclesiastes.

There was nothing to gain, nothing to have or strive for. It seemed that I was to be but an animal with verbal skills - animal who can only care for life if it has progeny or property, if it can see a trace of its own self somewhere in the world. It seemed that everything that exists or has existed, had to serve a certain end, and existence of nothing was enough. I thought, if existing or being alone is not enough, then existing or being is meaningless, and everything beyond that is simply a lie, a vanity that must be upheld to make the spectacle of life bearable.

The withdrawal from the world — into forests as a mad mystic who plays lute to birds and visits the towns only to scandalise and scare people who were too adapted to the world and its ways, seemed the only way to exit the wheel of samsara. I felt aged — like I've already seen it all, had hundreds of children and husbands and wives, like I've been a criminal, a priest, a queen, a prostitute, and there was nothing left for me to be anymore. All the roles seemed too familiar and already explored and lived. It wasn't nihilism that was behind the urge to withdraw — it was inability to see any evidence of my belief that there had to be more to life than dying with a stomach more full than you started with.

## The Unconditional Love

*“...what nobody seems to understand is that love can only be one-sided, that no other love exists, that in any other form it is not love. If it involves less than total giving, it is not love. It is impotent; for the moment it is nothing.”*

— Andrei Tarkovsky

I never had trouble considering that a Higher Reality exists, it was always very self-evident to me. However, I've had trouble believing that I exist. What, in the end, am I, but a result of multiple histories and interactions, and if only one link from that lineage was different and removed, I'd probably not exist. At least not with the ego-consciousness I have now. Yet in a certain way, I also do exist because others do notice me, they do recognize the separation, the difference that exists between them and me. So, I am in possession of individuality that was determined by the previous individualities.

I also haven't withdrawn. Rather, I have made a decision to make my thoughts public and available for everyone to see. A wretched traitor of her own principle! That's what the Judge inside of me would say.

At one point in life, I had seen the above quoted words of Andrei Tarkovsky. There was something in them that mirrored my own sentiment, yet, without meditating on the words, I could not pinpoint what it was. But then, one day, it came to me. There was, a degree of comfort in my withdrawal. I expected nothing of the world and the world expected nothing of me. We were free from each other. But for me, that state of being is comfortable. I've been at the point in life where I had very little, and if I were unininvolved with the world, I wouldn't need any of its garments or luxuries. I could walk the world in a way that I would not be perceivable and be comfortable living in the world's shadow. In the sacrifice of the self, is where I found the unconditional, one-sided love that Tarkovsky speaks of. I once said, that even if God doesn't exist as a Reality, it was good to invent a concept of God, because only a God can be loved with such a love.

There is still a little pain every time my desire for withdrawal is sacrificed for that love. Everything I write, every time I write, it feels like barring myself, and I do not like it. Often, I get an urge to delete everything, shut it down and be done with the world. But I don't do it.

God suffered in the loneliness of His Non-Manifestation, and from the Divine Compassion for His own Self, God let out a sorrowful sigh from which everything came. I let out a sorrowful sigh, every time I hit "publish". His sigh is my sigh, and my sigh is His sigh. When I sigh, I manifest the Name which is my Lord, and when the self-obsession and self-consciousness melts in the sigh, there's nothing but the Unity. I play no role, I exist and yet I don't — that was the only thing I have never been.

Perhaps, thinking obsessively about vanity is also vanity.

*Naida Muslic* is a writer and a Platonist metaphysician from Sarajevo. She blogs at [orphicinscendence.com](http://orphicinscendence.com).

*Katja Lang* is a German artist living in Berlin. Her site is [katja-lang.com](http://katja-lang.com)



# A Tale of Two Dolls

Text and pictures: T. E. Creus

Once upon a time  
There was a little doll  
She lived in a small house  
That had only three walls

The doll was quite content  
With her little doll life  
It was a quiet existence  
With no pain and no strife

She lived with a woman  
An artist, they said.  
Was this her Creator?  
Or had she been bought instead?

The doll watched the woman  
With increasing attraction  
She loved her calm beauty  
And her freedom of action

She thought of all the places  
Where the woman could go  
And slowly a strange feeling  
In her started to grow

How nice it would be,  
She thought and she prayed  
To be a real woman  
Just for one day.

The woman was quite content  
As a young woman can be  
She had a simple life  
And was very carefree.

But she also had moments  
Of loneliness and pain  
And often felt that in life  
There was more loss than gain.





Then she saw the doll  
So relaxed in her bed  
So unaware of suffering  
And everything that was sad.

She kept looking at the doll  
Who seemed almost to glow  
And slowly a strange feeling  
In her started to grow

How nice it would be  
She thought and she prayed  
If I could be a little doll  
Just for one day.

The next day she woke up  
(The young woman, I mean)  
But something was different  
Something she'd never seen.

She had become a little doll  
Pale, cute and very small  
Without bills to pay or worries  
About anything at all.

It was so fun to be small,  
To live in a little hideout  
She spent the morning relaxing  
And the afternoon chilling out.

Then she organized a tea party  
Met many interesting friends  
There was music and much glee  
Without any envy or pretence.

And that same day she woke up  
(The little doll, I mean now)  
And she also found herself changed  
And didn't understand how.



She was now a real woman  
Made of flesh and of bones  
And her house was not cardboard  
But real mortar and stones!

She ran immediately outside  
To finally breath the air  
And to feel the warm sun  
And the wind in her hair.

She went for a stroll in the woods  
Among trees that seemed enchanted  
She was overjoyed with things  
That most people took for granted.

But the next day they woke up  
And happiness turned into fear:  
For they had not changed back  
And weeks passed, then months, then a year.

And one day the woman wondered  
As summer turned into fall:  
“Was there really a time  
When I was just a doll?”

And the doll also wondered  
As if silently agreeing:  
“Was there really a time  
When I was a human being?”

The years went by  
The novelty wore off  
They were no longer sure  
It had been a good trade-off.

And they looked at each other  
With quiet desperation  
And both had the same thought  
The same need for salvation.

How nice it would be  
They thought and they prayed  
To be again just a doll  
To be again a young maid.



xoxo

The next day they woke up  
And it was the end of the spell  
The doll turned once more doll  
And the woman as well.

The doll was quite happy  
To be herself again  
And she learned to value  
Her quiet life without pain.

And the young woman too  
She decided to prize  
The unevenness of life  
With its lows and its highs.

And she though to herself  
Are things just as they seem?  
Was this whole exchange real?  
Or was it only a dream?

But she covered the doll  
With a soft velvet mantle  
Lest the puppet felt cold  
And softly blew out her candle.

And went to bed too, alone.  
But always under the eyes  
Of the Great Puppeteer  
Up there, in the sky.



*T. E. Creus is a writer and filmmaker and the editor of Contrarium. More info at [contrarium.org](http://contrarium.org)*

# Farewell Knut

Verena Russell

Deine Art zu leben - außergewöhnlich.

Außenseiter? Selbst gewählt.

Kompromisslos, auf allen Ebenen. Auch mit Dir selbst.

Die besten Bücher habe ich von Dir geschenkt bekommen. Die besten Gespräche und die hitzigsten Diskussionen mit Dir geführt. Du warst immer hellwach, unbedingt interessiert. Meinungsstark. Starrköpfig.

Die Menschen, die sich darauf einlassen konnten, haben viel gewonnen. Nächtelange Debatten zu Politik, Philosophie und Kultur bleiben uns in Erinnerung, gemeinsame Konzerte, rotweingeschwängerte Projektplanereien.

"... And miles to go before I sleep ..."

Im letzten Jahr habe ich Dich begleitet, nah und doch weit entfernt. Das Funkeln deiner wachen Augen sagte mir: Du hast noch so viel vor. Trotz aller Müdigkeit.

"... And miles to go before I sleep ..."

Du hast Deinen Platz hier aufgegeben.

Unerwartet.

Viel zu früh.

Du fehlst mir.

Diese Stadt ist nicht derselbe Ort ohne dich.

"... The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep..."

Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1932)

Your way of life - extraordinary.

Outsider? Self chosen.

Uncompromising, on all levels. Even with yourself.

You gave me the best books as a gift. I had the best conversations and the most heated discussions with you. You were always wide awake, absolutely interested. Strong in opinion. Stubborn.

The people who could get involved have won a lot. Night-long debates on politics, philosophy and culture remain in our memories, joint concerts, project planning filled with red wine.

"... And miles to go before I sleep ..."

Last year I accompanied you, close and yet far away. The twinkle in your watchful eyes told me: You still have so much to do. Despite all the tiredness.

"... And miles to go before I sleep ..."

You have left your place here.

Unexpectedly.

Way too early.

I miss you.

This city is not the same place without you.

"... The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep ... "

Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1932)

**Verena Russell** is an artist living in Chemnitz.

**Knut Dietz** (1965-2021) was a relevant local cultural figure in Chemnitz and one of the founders of the Chemnitzer Filmwerkstatt. Image: Knut and Verena in a scene from the short movie "Ausgelutscht" (2018).





Sky

Excursion

Екскурсія

у небі

59

# La troisième marche est pour Lénine

## The third step is for Lenin

### Text and photos: Anne Urech

République Socialiste d'Ukraine, 1974, Galicie. Lvov ou peut-être ailleurs...

**DANS SON SUCRE GLACÉ**, l'hiver a cristallisé les habitants de cette ville. Il les a piégés dans son étoupe tel un brouillard givrant qui glacerait tout sur son passage. Impossible de s'en échapper. La pensée est figée. La neige a la vertu d'endormir telle une poudre de perlumpinpin plongeant les habitants de cette ville, un peu trop enhardis, curieux et en quête de savoirs dans une somnolence diurne.

C'est une ville aux vestiges baroques qui, de ses courbes et volutes, nous entourent de ses bras d'un geste ample. Des reliques d'un temps où l'on croyait encore en un Dieu et ses miracles. On l'adorait même. Le baroque, généreux et rassurant nous accueille avec ses formes rebondies, ses ovales sensuels, ses cintres, ses couleurs douces et paisibles et ses anges joufflus aux formes voluptueuses. Des arabesques aux formes féminines, prometteuses d'un bien être maternel, quasi foetal, d'une vie douce et célestielle, celle d'un paradis. Un monde où il serait inconcevable de transformer la cathédrale dominicaine ce palais digne représentant d'un style rococo suranné, en un temple dédié aux dieux des incroyants. La cathédrale de la Sainte Eucharistie, dont la devise « Soli Deo Honor et Gloria » avait imprégné l'esprit des habitants, fut rebaptisée ironiquement Musée de l'Athéisme et de la Religion. Une civilisation qui s'est tournée vers d'autres dieux et qui a remis son destin entre leurs divines mains, témoignages de leur dévotion et ferveur absolues.

Une ville Babéline où toutes les langues se parlaient, de l'ukrainien au polonais en passant par le yiddish, le russe, l'arménien, l'allemand, le grec ou encore le tatar. Une ville où toutes ces langues étaient et ne sont plus. Certains de ses locuteurs furent engloutis dans une contrée lointaine, plus loin, à l'est, terre d'exil pour insoumis, alors que d'autres furent tout simplement absorbés par les affres de l'Enfer.

Socialist Republic of Ukraine, 1974, Galicia. Lvov or maybe somewhere else ...

**WITH ITS ICED SUGAR**, winter has crystallized the inhabitants of this city. It trapped them, suffocating them like a glacial fog that would freeze everything in its path. Impossible to escape from it. Even thought is frozen. The snow has the virtue of lulling to sleep like a magic powder, plunging the inhabitants of this city, a little too emboldened, curious and in search of knowledge, in a daytime sleepiness.

It is a city with baroque vestiges which, with its curves and voluptuousness, surround us with its arms with a wide gesture. Relics from a time when we still believed in a God and His miracles. We even adored him. The baroque, generous and reassuring, welcomes us with its plump shapes, sensual ovals, arches, soft and peaceful colours and chubby angels with sensual shapes. Arabesques with feminine forms, promising a maternal, almost fetal well-being, a sweet and celestial life, that of Paradise. A world where it would be inconceivable to transform the Dominican Cathedral, this dignified palace representing an old-fashioned Rococo style, into a temple dedicated to the gods of unbelievers. The Cathedral of the Holy Eucharist, whose motto "Soli Deo Honor et Gloria" had permeated the minds of the inhabitants, was ironically renamed the Museum of Atheism and Religion. A civilization which has turned to other gods and which has placed its destiny in their divine hands, testimonies of their absolute devotion and fervour.

A Babelic city where all languages were spoken, from Ukrainian to Polish, including Yiddish, Russian, Armenian, German, Greek and even Tatar. A city where all these languages were and are no longer. Some of its speakers were swallowed up in a distant land, further east, a land of exile for rebels, while others were simply absorbed in the throes of Hell.

La neige habille les arbres et leur donne un aspect fantomatique. Un vent polaire traverse les rues, s'engouffrant dans tous les interstices possibles et profitant du vide pour le remplir, puis souffle après souffle, anime ces feuillus, souffle après souffle. Il leur donne vie dans un royaume inconnu, on ne sait plus très bien si c'est celui des morts ou celui des vivants. On croirait distinguer des êtres gesticulant dans les bourrasques, tels des spectres en détresse voulant attirer notre attention en effectuant de curieuses figures. Ils se meuvent de manière souple, dansent en s'inclinant d'abord en avant puis en arrière, esquissant d'étranges réverences venues d'un passé où l'élégance et la bonne éducation importaient tant. Le son d'une valse viennoise, souvenir à trois temps d'un Empire disparu, perdu dans le gouffre de l'inculture, des plans quinquennaux et de la bonne Parole. Un moment suspendu dans le temps, une particule de charme suranné.

Mais, personne n'entend ni ne voit ces formes étranges.

Brusquement, les ombres s'inclinent à droite, puis, font une rotation sur la gauche et elles recommencent. Elles esquissent une danse macabre dont la chorégraphie rappelle d'autres rituels. Chaque pas est exécuté avec une intensité sans pareille, comme s'il était l'ultime d'une longue série.

Ce blanc manteau étouffe tous les sons, ceux des cris et des gémissements des hommes en souffrance, ceux de la contestation, ceux des pas dans la neige. Le monde est devenu cotonneux. Une étoupe de coton insensible à la douleur de l'autre. La neige donne des allures féeriques aux éléments de la rue mais peut également engloutir, dans sa chape blanche, tout ce qu'elle recouvre jusqu'à nous en faire oublier leur existence.

Snow dresses the trees and gives them a ghostly appearance. A polar wind crosses the streets, rushing through all possible interstices and taking advantage of the void to fill it, then blow after blow, it animates the trees, blow after blow. It gives them life in an unknown kingdom, we no longer know very well whether it is that of the dead or that of the living. One would believe to distinguish beings gesticulating in the fog, like ghosts in distress wanting to attract our attention by performing curious movements. They move smoothly, dancing by bowing first forward and then backward, as if performing strange curtsies from a past where elegance and good education were so important. The sound of a Viennese waltz, a three-beat memory of a vanished Empire, lost in the abyss of ignorance, five-year plans and the Good Word. A moment suspended in time like a particle of past charm. But no one hears or sees these strange shapes. Suddenly the shadows tilt to the right, then rotate to the left and start again. They outline a macabre dance whose strange choreography recalls other rituals. Each step is executed with unparalleled intensity, as if it were the last in a long series.

This white coat stifles all sounds, those of the cries and moans of suffering men, those of protests, those of footsteps in the snow. The world has grown cottony. A cotton tow, insensitive to the pain of others. The snow gives a fairy-tale appearance to the elements of the street but can also swallow up, in its white scree, everything it covers until we forget their existence.



Oksana coiffe machinalement sa chapka d'astrakan, sa chevelure blonde s'en échappe, c'est le seul point de lumière qui irradie de cette femme tel un nimbe sur la tête d'un saint. Sa personne reste transparente, comme pour mieux se fondre dans la masse et épouser les formes que le quotidien peut prendre. Une sorte de malléabilité aux aléas de l'existence. Malgré son jeune âge, on peut noter que la vie ne l'a visiblement pas épargnée. Elle s'apprête à sortir de son immeuble, une belle et grande bâtie de style austro-hongrois qui a connu des jours meilleurs. Le bâtiment était cossu dans un autre temps, élégant même. Ce temps où la beauté était encore vénérée et présente dans tous les interstices du quotidien. L'immeuble a été transformé en une maison constituée de logements communautaires.

Il n'y a pas moins de 8 appartements habités par 3 familles chacun, ce qui fait un total de 24 ménages formés de 4 membres en moyenne, soit 96 personnes pour le seul immeuble sis au numéro 8 de la rue Oleksandr Novakiv'skoho.

96 âmes plus une Concierge.

Une bâtie aux multiples cours intérieures, certaines reliées entre elles par un système de passerelles, reliques d'un temps où communiquer était vital et pas si dangereux. Vaste labyrinthe resté inchangé dans ce royaume où la pensée est unique. Les passerelles apparaissent comme de fluettes et malhabiles tentatives de connexion entre les 96 êtres de ces lieux. Des ponts entre des appartements tels des tirets dans un texte reliant les mots les uns aux autres. Une fine dentelle, tissée par une araignée imaginaire et déterminée. Toile fragile et prête à se rompre à tout moment. Fil d'or reliant la créature au Créateur.

Au rez-de-chaussée, dans sa loge : la Concierge.

Elle est le pivot central d'une telle maison. Elle voit tout et entend tout. Elle anticipe, analyse, brode, conclut, rapporte, relate, dénonce, amplifie. Elle ferait avouer n'importe quoi à n'importe qui, d'ailleurs c'est son métier. Du reste, elle ne semble jamais dormir. 96 personnes à surveiller est une lourde responsabilité pour une seule âme. Ses dons d'observation et de mémorisation étaient transcendés par ses yeux, chaque battement de cils lui permettant de photographier une situation puis de la restituer avec une précision sans pareil. Son air suspicieux ferait avouer n'importe quoi à n'importe qui. Sa tête est flanquée d'un fichu, son corps est emballé dans un tablier blouse marron de lait, brun passe-muraille, un uniforme qu'elle porte avec fierté. C'est normal, sur le brun la saleté morale ou physique ne se voit pas.



Oksana mechanically adjusts her astrakhan hat, her blond hair escapes, it is the only point of light that radiates from this woman, like a halo on the head of a saint. Her person remains transparent, as if to blend better into the crowd and embrace the forms that everyday life can take. A kind of malleability to the vagaries of existence. Despite her young age, it can be noted that life has obviously not spared her. She is about to leave her apartment building, a large, beautiful Austro-Hungarian-style building that has seen better days. The building was opulent in another time, elegant even. A time when beauty was still revered and present in all the aspects of everyday life.

The building has been transformed into a house consisting of community housing. There are no less than 8 apartments inhabited by 3 families each, which makes a total of 24 households made up of 4 members on average, that is to say 96 people for the only building located at number 8 of Oleksandr Novakiv'skoho street.

96 souls plus a Concierge.

A building with internal multiple corridors, some connected by a system of gateways, relics of a time when communication was vital and not so dangerous. A vast labyrinth that has remained

unchanged in this realm where thoughts are kept individual. The bridges appear as slender and clumsy attempts at connection between the 96 human beings in this place. Bridges between apartments like dashes

in a text connecting words to each other. A complex web, woven by an imaginary and determined spider. A fragile web about to break at any time. A golden thread connecting the creature to the Creator.

On the ground floor, inside her apartment, sits the Concierge.

She is the central pivot of such a building. She sees everything and hears everything. She anticipates, analyzes, embroiders, concludes, reports, relates, denounces, amplifies. She would make anyone inform her of anything, and in fact that is her job. Besides, she never seems to sleep. 96 people to watch is a heavy responsibility for just one soul. Her gifts of observation and memorization transcend mere vision, each flick of the eyelash allows her to photograph a situation and then reproduce it with unparalleled precision. Her suspicious look would make anyone confess anything. Her head is flanked by a kerchief, her body is wrapped in a blouse apron, chestnut brown, a uniform she wears with pride. It is natural, as brown camouflages all dirt, moral or physical.

Un seul point de lumière sur cette mer de brun : un point rouge, une étoile en émail pourpre avec le profil de Lénine couleur laiton. L'émail capte la lumière, la piège et la rediffuse, quel rayonnement. Sinon, la concierge se confondrait avec les murs. Elle ne changerait sa profession pour rien au monde. Elle a une arme secrète, un immense trousseau de clefs, des passes qui lui donnent accès à tous les appartements. Ses poches recèlent des trésors d'informations : son calepin dans lequel elle note tout, les va-et-vient des uns et des autres, les horaires, le nombre de personnes, le pourquoi du comment, toutes les informations utiles pour ce pays situé derrière le rideau de fer. Le pouvoir que son travail lui confère chaque jour, l'assurance d'être un maillon fort d'un système encore plus important qu'elle, lui donne la certitude d'apporter une pierre à un édifice collectiviste qu'elle contribue à construire. Bâtir un monde meilleur où l'injustice serait éradiquée, la certitude absolue d'un avenir radieux pour tous : l'Union soviétique.

Oksana descend les marches de son immeuble. Il n'y a pour tout éclairage qu'une faible lueur vacillante, provenant du premier palier. Les ampoules disparaissent toutes, malgré ou plutôt grâce à la vigilance de la Concierge.

Heureusement qu'Oksana connaît par cœur les moindres aspérités et défauts des marches, les trous ou les inégalités du sol. Ces escaliers sont marqués du sceau de la vie, de destins difficiles. Elle pourrait les descendre les yeux fermés. Elles sont tatouées, estampillées ou poinçonnées, telle une carte de géographie lunaire, décrivant des contrées lointaines qui existent mais que l'on n'a jamais visitées. De nouveaux territoires oniriques qui vous téléportent à des années lumières. Des cavités, des cratères telles des pièces manquantes d'un marbre élégant.

La première est pour le plan quinquennal que l'on va atteindre sous peu.

A single point of light on this sea of brown: a red point, a star in purple enamel with the profile of Lenin in brass. The enamel captures the light, traps it and redistributes it, what radiance. Otherwise, the concierge would merge with the walls. She wouldn't change her profession for the world. She has a secret weapon, a huge bunch of keys, passes that give her access to all the apartments. Her pockets conceal treasures of information: her notebook in which she takes note of everything, the comings and goings of each person, their schedules, the number of people, the why and how, all the useful information for this country locked behind the Iron Curtain. The power that her work gives her every day, the assurance of being a strong link in a system even more important than herself, gives her the certainty of putting a brick in a collectivist edifice that she is helping to build. To build a better world where injustice will be eradicated, the absolute certainty of a bright future for all: the Soviet Union.

Oksana walks down the steps of her small apartment



building. There is no light but a small glimmer, coming from the first floor. The lamps are all turned off, despite or perhaps thanks to the vigilance of the Concierge.

Fortunately, Oksana knows by heart the slightest roughness and flaws in the steps, all the holes or unevenness in the ground. These stairs are marked with the seal of life, of difficult destinies. She could walk them down with her eyes closed. They are tattooed, stamped or punched, like a map of lunar geography, describing distant lands that exist but that we have never visited. New dreamlike territories that teleport you light years away. Cavities, craters like missing pieces of elegant marble.

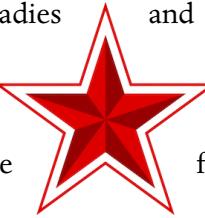
The first step is for the five-year plan that will be reached shortly.

La deuxième est défoncée et s'incline, tout naturellement vers la gauche, désignant la direction d'un monde plus juste. Oksana le sait et, intuitivement, essaie de l'éviter, l'esquiver même, ainsi elle contourne le monde plus équitable en quelque sorte. Elle se déplace en essayant de ne pas faire de bruit, elle se faufile le long des murs aux peintures délavées, effacées. Elle finit presque par se fondre dans la tapisserie murale, tel un caméléon qui pour mieux survivre prend la couleur de son entourage. Le camouflage est vital. En frôlant les murs, elle contribue probablement à les délaver un peu plus et à faire perdre à ces peintures, révélatrices d'un monde d'antan, leurs couleurs chatoyantes par ces frottements qui finiront par effacer l'image initiale. On devine tout de même, ici des iris ou des fleurs de lis, là une femme incarnant le printemps. Ici, une beauté blonde, déesse des blés tenant une gerbe de ces précieuses céréales dans les bras. Là, une cueilleuse sous un marronnier récoltant ses fruits avant de les déposer délicatement dans un panier d'osier. Oksana ne voit même plus ces fresques. D'ailleurs, qui les remarque encore ? Sous peu, la coopérative des immeubles de la ville couvrira ces parois d'une teinte vert-pâle, une couleur clinique, enduit soigneusement de maladies potentielles qui a le don d'aseptiser et d'unifier le Monde. Les travaux sont déjà prévus par le dernier plan quinquennal et inscrits au budget pour l'année 1975. Le maire en a reçu l'ordre, directement de Moscou.

La troisième marche est pour Lénine, on boira plus tard à sa santé.

Les autres n'ont pas encore de signification, ça ne saurait tarder et de toute façon Oksana leur en trouvera une.

A son passage devant la loge de la Concierge, une ombre soulève le rideau de skaï noir. L'Ombre identifie Oksana et, comme chaque jour, marque d'une croix son registre, celui des habitants de la maison. La comptabilité est tenue avec soin, elle est relevée à la fin de chaque semaine par l'administration des logements de la ville et le Ministère de la Sécurité. Qui, quoi, comment, combien, avec qui, pourquoi, avec quoi, à quelle heure, transportant quoi et surtout, dans quel état d'esprit était chacun. Doutes, suspicions, hypothèses et plus encore. La tâche est importante, cruciale même. Sans cela, le Système ne pourrait pas fonctionner, il ne trouverait plus de quoi se nourrir. La Machine tournerait dans le vide et risquerait de rentrer en surchauffe, ce qui serait fatal au régime bien sûr et contrasterait avec la froideur de l'organisation. La différence de température en deviendrait funeste.



The second step is broken and tilts, quite naturally, to the left, indicating the direction of a fairer world. Oksana knows this and, intuitively, tries to avoid it, even dodge it, so she oversteps the more equitable world in a way. She moves around trying not to make noise, she slips along the walls decorated with faded, erased paintings. She almost ends up blending into the wall tapestry, like a chameleon who, in order to survive, takes on the colour of its surroundings. Camouflage is vital. By brushing against the walls, it probably helps to wash them out a little more and to make these paintings about a world of yesteryear lose their original shimmering colours; each rubbing erasing more and more the initial images. We can guess them all the same, here irises or fleur-de-lis, there a woman embodying spring. Here, a blonde beauty, goddess of wheat, holding a sheaf of these precious cereals in her arms. There, a picker under a chestnut tree harvesting its fruits before delicately placing them in a wicker basket. Oksana no longer even sees these frescoes. Besides, who still notices them? Soon, the city's building cooperative will cover these walls with a pale green hue, a clinical colour, a coating that heals potential diseases and has the gift of sanitizing and unifying the world. The work was already

predicted by the last five-year plan and included in the budget for the year 1975.

The mayor has received the order, directly from Moscow.

The third step is for Lenin, we'll drink later to his health.

The others have no meaning yet, but it won't be long and Oksana will find one for them.

As she passes in front of the Concierge's post, a shadow lifts the black curtain. The Shadow identifies Oksana and, like every day, marks with a cross her register with the list of the inhabitants of the house. The accounts are kept with care, they are recorded at the end of each week by the City's Housing Administration and the Ministry of Security. Who, what, how, how much, with whom, why, with what, at what time, carrying what and above all, in what state of mind was each person. Doubts, suspicions, hypotheses and more. The task is important, crucial even. Without this, the System would not be able to function, it would not find anything to feed on. The Machine would run in a vacuum and risk overheating, which would be fatal to the regime, of course, for it would contrast with the coldness of the organization. Such a change in temperature would be fatal.

Le manteau neigeux s'était finement déposé sur la ville. Le Créateur avait saupoudré les trottoirs de cette cité de micro-étoiles soviétiques, de particules de glace cristallisées en flocon. Ces petits astres endorment les âmes de cette ville : la rébellion était ainsi contenue. Le Système tiendra encore.

Sur le trottoir "blanc-inviolé", Oksana foule la neige d'un pas rapide. Elle laisse une quantité de traces tel un sceau qui scelle son destin, témoignage de son passage aujourd'hui sur ce chemin. L'empreinte de ses pas emboîte ceux d'autres personnes. Là, sur ce trottoir, hier encore, en d'autres temps, et en d'autres saisons. Ces stigmates vont jusqu'à se confondre avec ceux laissés par d'Autres, habitants fantomatiques d'un passé pas si lointain.

On pourrait même suivre son itinéraire, à la trace, tel celui marqué par un petit Poucet-pionnier déposant méthodiquement ses pierres. On pourrait même en déduire, sa taille, son poids, sa vitesse de déplacement, sa détermination à accomplir sa tâche.

Oksana se rend place de la Révolution, à l'entrepôt des trams, elle va commencer sa journée de travail. Elle est conductrice en charge de la ligne 13. La ligne de tous les possibles. Un fil tendu entre l'Imaginaire et le Réel. La ligne 13 est l'artère principale qui relie le cœur et les poumons de cette ville. Une ville ceinte entre le passé et le présent. Un pied dans chacun de ces mondes. Une ville qui existe seulement dans l'esprit de ceux qui savent la voir, une ville qui flotte dans la mémoire de ceux qui voudraient oublier.

C'est l'Aube, celle d'une journée nouvelle qui permettra à des milliers de travailleurs d'édifier un Monde Nouveau.

Oksana est pressée, elle marche de plus en plus vite. Sa toque de fourrure noire, celui de la souffrance, son manteau en feutre et ses bottes fourrées la protègent, d'un froid sibérien. Elle semble sortie d'une photo noir/blanc, une photo dont on aurait volé la couleur afin d'effacer le passé telles des fresques en décomposition afin d'unifier le Monde en le rendant le plus banal possible en un monochrome de couleur rouge.

Cet hiver-là, il fait moins 25 degrés. Elle ne remarque pas les passants qui la croisent, il faut dire qu'il y en a très peu à cette heure-là. Elle ne remarque pas non plus les empreintes de pas dans lesquels s'inscrivent les siens. Elle veut arriver à l'heure, elle le doit. Son tramway n'attendra pas.

Enfin, elle pénètre dans l'entrepôt de tramways. La ville dort mais le dépôt des trams bourdonne telle une ruche s'affolant au moment de l'essaimage.

The snow cover was finely deposited on the city. The Creator had sprinkled the sidewalks of this city with Soviet micro-stars, particles of ice crystallized in flakes. These little stars put the souls of this city to sleep: the rebellion was thus contained. The System will still hold up.

On the "virgin-white" sidewalk, Oksana treads the snow with a rapid step. She leaves a quantity of traces like a stamp that seals her destiny, testimony of her passage today on this path. Her footprints follow those of other people. There, on this sidewalk, yesterday again, in other times, and in other seasons. These stigmata go so far as to merge with those left by Others, ghostly inhabitants of a not so distant past.

We could even follow their route, tracking it, such as the one marked by a little pioneer methodically laying down his stones. One could even deduce from it, its size, its weight, its speed of movement or even its determination to accomplish its task.

Oksana goes to Revolution Square, to the tram warehouse, she is about to start her working day. She is the conductor in charge of line 13. The line of all possibilities. A wire stretched between imagination and reality. Line 13 is the main artery that connects the heart and lungs of this city. A city surrounded by the past and the present. One foot in each of these worlds. A city that only exists in the minds of those who know how to see it, a city that floats in the memory of those who would like to forget.

It is the Dawn of a new day which will allow thousands of workers to build a New World.

Oksana is in a hurry, she walks faster and faster. Her black fur hat, her felt coat and her furry boots protect her from a Siberian cold. She seems to have come out of a black and white picture, a photograph whose colours someone stole in order to erase the past, like in the decaying frescoes, in order to unify the World by making it as banal as possible in monochrome, red the only colour.

This winter day, it is minus 25 degrees. She does not notice the passers-by who cross her, but it must be said that there are very few at this time. Neither does she notice the previous footprints that she steps over. She wants to arrive on time, she has to. Her tram will not wait.

Finally, she enters the tram warehouse. The city sleeps but the tram depot buzzes like a beehive in panic at the moment of swarming.

Ces travailleurs de l'aube sont les premiers témoins d'une nouvelle journée qui s'annonce, probablement, pareille aux autres.

Cette ruche, une immense structure d'acier trônant sur la place de la Révolution, l'incarnation même de cette ère prérévolutionnaire. Une ossature solide et immuable qui résiste et résistera aux secousses sismiques du socialisme. Les plafonds en sont si hauts qu'ils touchent presque au divin, une cathédrale des temps modernes. Sa structure aérienne est constituée de dentelles d'acier qui tiennent ensemble par le miracle de la technique. Des courbes, des volutes, des arabesques de métal qui soutiennent un toit de verre qui lui-même est habillé d'un délicat manteau de neige et de glace. Houppelande hivernale qui brille de mille feux tel des diamants mais qui cristallise la parole et gèle la pensée des travailleurs qu'elle abrite en son sein.

Un lieu où l'écho est roi. Il est gonflé de résonances constituées de sons graves mélangés et envahis par des sonorités suraiguës, ce sont ceux des trams, qui dans un ballet frénétique, se préparent à sortir. Il faut être beau pour affronter la ville et incarner le Progrès. Des bruits de métal, de crissements d'aiguillages, de portes qui se ferment, des pas qui montent et qui descendent inlassablement les marches du véhicule.

These dawn workers are the first witnesses of a new day that is shaping up, probably similar to all others.

This beehive, a huge steel structure enthroned on Revolution Square, is the very embodiment of this pre-revolutionary era. A solid and unchanging framework that resists and will withstand the earthquakes of socialism. The ceilings are so high that they almost touch the divine, a cathedral of modern times. Its aerial structure is made of steel laces that are held together by the miracle of technique. Curves, volutes, metal arabesques that support a glass roof which itself is dressed in a delicate coat of snow and ice. A winter coat which shines with a thousand lights like diamonds but which crystallizes the word and freezes the thoughts of the workers that it shelters within it.

A place where echo is king. It is filled with resonances made up of low-pitched sounds mixed together and invaded by high-pitched sounds, these are the sounds of the trams, which in a frenetic ballet, are preparing to go out.

You have to be beautiful to face the city and embody Progress. The sounds of metal, the screeching of switches, doors closing, footsteps that tirelessly ascend and descend the steps of the vehicle.



La mission est importante, il faut construire un Monde Nouveau : transporter ses travailleurs à bon port. Une véritable symphonie de l'air industrielle au rythme furieusement contrapuntique.

Les trams rentrent et sortent de cette ruche hivernale. La Reine des abeilles veille, des hommes et des femmes s'affairent. Des voix donnant des ordres se font entendre. C'est un ballet venu d'un autre temps, le progrès, la technologie du 19ème siècle, celle inventée par les Barons du métal et mise sur pied par les Princes de l'acier, tous formant l'aristocratie d'un monde révolu, celle de la noblesse de l'ère industrielle.

Sur une arche de fer qui forme des arabesques sans fin comme dessinée par une pieuvre homochromé exécutant une étrange danse ; une affichette. Oksana s'approche et la lit.

« Réunion des camarades de la coopérative des trams, aujourd'hui à 19h00, salle 13, discussion des tournus et des horaires de travail ». C'est déjà la 3ème réunion de la semaine.

Oksana Bogdanivna Pamiatnik y sera, même si l'horaire ne lui convient pas. C'est l'heure où son mari rentre du travail et celle où ses enfants font leurs devoirs.

Elle doit leur préparer à souper. Elle est déléguée syndicale, représentante des travailleurs de la coopérative des tramways, pionnière méritante, membre du parti communiste ukrainien et médaillée d'honneur « Pour valeur au travail », épouse de Serguei Aleksandrovitch Pamiatnik employé de l'administration grade 2 et, finalement, mère de famille de deux enfants.

Ce tram 13, aujourd'hui, elle le conduira. Oksana monte dans son tramway, comme happée par un tunnel blanc, elle émerge de son entrepôt, passant de l'ombre à la lumière. Elle entre en scène, celle de la Comédie Humaine. Le rideau se lève.

The mission is important, we must build a New World: to transport its workers to their destination. A veritable symphony of industrial air with a furiously contrapuntal rhythm.

The trams come in and out of this winter hive. The Queen Bee is watching, men and women are busy. Voices giving orders are heard. It is a ballet from another time, progress, the technology of the 19th century, invented by the Barons of metal and set up by the Princes of steel, all forming the aristocracy of a bygone world, the nobility of the industrial era.

On an iron arch which forms endless arabesques as if drawn by a monochrome octopus performing a

strange dance, there's a poster. Oksana walks up and reads it: "Meeting of the comrades of the tram cooperative, today at 7:00 pm, room 13, discussion of shifts and working hours". It's already the 3rd meeting of the week.

Oksana Bogdanivna Pamiatnik will be there, although the schedule does not suit her. It is the time when her husband comes home from work and when her children do their homework. She must cook them supper. She is a union delegate, a representative of the tramway cooperative workers, a deserving pioneer, a member of the Ukrainian Communist Party and medal of honour for "courage at work", the wife of Serguei

Aleksandrovich Pamiatnik, an administrative employee grade 2 and, finally, the mother of two children.

Today, she will drive the Tram 13. Oksana gets on her tram, as if caught in a white tunnel, emerging from the warehouse, passing from shadow to light. She enters the stage — the stage of Human Comedy. The curtain rises.



*Anne Urech is a Swiss writer, photographer and filmmaker. This is a chapter for an upcoming book. Her email is annecamille.urech@gmail.com.*

# Veranos de Infancia en Argentina

## Childhood Summers in Argentina

Text:  
T. E. Creus

Art:  
Sarah Göckeritz



**CUANDO LLEGABA LA NOCHE** era el tiempo de los mosquitos y las luciérnagas, que llamábamos más simplemente de bichitos de la luz. Los mosquitos no me gustaban y había que espantarlos con la mano o con el espiral encendido, o sino pasándose el Off por el cuerpo, aunque ningún método funcionaba del todo y siempre alguno nos picaba, pero a los bichitos de la luz yo los quería, y como volaban despacito a veces era posible tomar a uno en la mano y cerrarla con cuidado y después abrirla un poco y ver allí adentro una luz que se prendía y se apagaba como las luces del árbol de Navidad.

Todo en aquel entonces tenía más color y causaba mayores sensaciones, el césped mojado en los pies, el calor del sol fuerte en la cara, el frío después de salir de la pileta que nos hacía castañetear los dientes: entonces el frío era más frío, el calor más caliente, y los mosquitos y las abejas y las hormigas rojas mordían fuerte como nunca más volvieron a morder.

No sabíamos que éramos, también nosotros, quizá un poco como esos bichitos de la luz, encendidos en un momento, apagados en otro, durando lo que dura un instante, aunque para nosotros todo parecía tener un tiempo mucho más largo, y cuando me contaron que algunas mariposas no vivían más que un día, me puse triste porque me pareció tan poco tiempo, aunque para nosotros los días de verano en realidad podían ser muy largos porque pasaban tantas cosas, y un año era algo larguísimamente que parecía que no terminaba más.

**WHEN NIGHT CAME**, it was the time for mosquitoes and fireflies, which we more simply called light bugs. I didn't like mosquitoes, you had to scare them away with your hand or with the "spiral" lit, or else by passing Off repellent all over the skin, although no method worked completely and at least one of them always bit us; but I loved the light bugs, and since they flew slowly it was sometimes possible to catch one in the hand, close it carefully and then open it a little and see inside there a light that turned on and off like the lights of the Christmas tree.

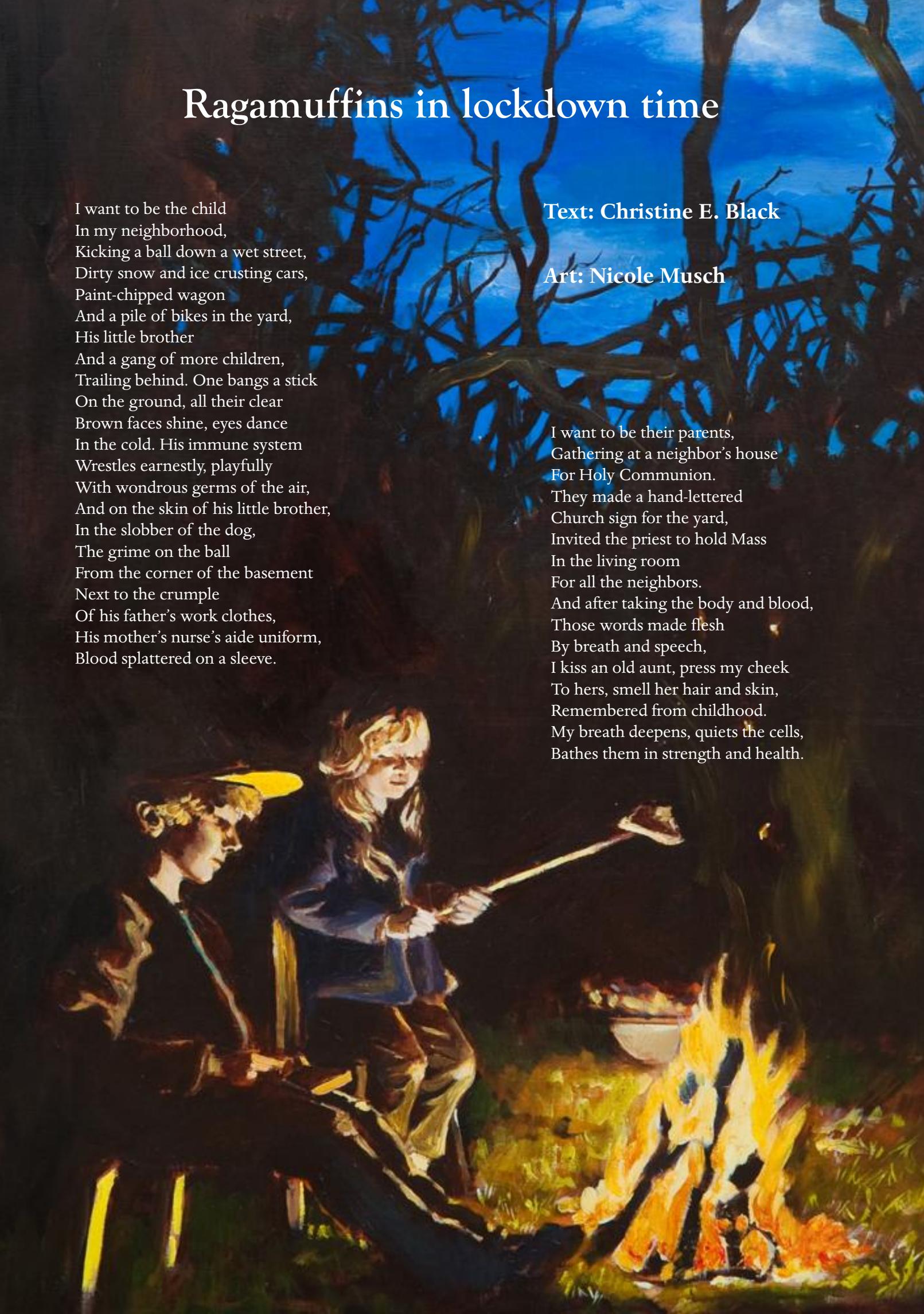
Everything back then had more colour and caused greater sensations, the wet grass on our feet, the heat of the strong sun on our faces, the cold after leaving the pool that made our teeth chatter: then the cold was colder, the heat hotter, and the mosquitoes and the bees and the fire ants bit harder than they would ever bite again.

We did not know that we were, ourselves, perhaps a bit like those little light bugs, on at one point, off at another, lasting what lasts an instant, although for us everything seemed to take a much longer time, and when they told me that some butterflies did not live for more than one day, I was sad because it seemed such a short time, although for us summer days could actually be very long because so many things happened, and a year was so long that it seemed it would never end.

T. E. Creus, excerpt from: "Primero a ver la colmena", ("First to See the Beehive"). His site: [contrarium.org](http://contrarium.org)

Sarah Göckeritz is a painter and musician living in the Erzgebirge. Her site: [instagram.com/octopus.projekt16/](https://instagram.com/octopus.projekt16/)

# Ragamuffins in lockdown time



I want to be the child  
In my neighborhood,  
Kicking a ball down a wet street,  
Dirty snow and ice crusting cars,  
Paint-chipped wagon  
And a pile of bikes in the yard,  
His little brother  
And a gang of more children,  
Trailing behind. One bangs a stick  
On the ground, all their clear  
Brown faces shine, eyes dance  
In the cold. His immune system  
Wrestles earnestly, playfully  
With wondrous germs of the air,  
And on the skin of his little brother,  
In the slobber of the dog,  
The grime on the ball  
From the corner of the basement  
Next to the crumple  
Of his father's work clothes,  
His mother's nurse's aide uniform,  
Blood splattered on a sleeve.

**Text: Christine E. Black**

**Art: Nicole Musch**

I want to be their parents,  
Gathering at a neighbor's house  
For Holy Communion.  
They made a hand-lettered  
Church sign for the yard,  
Invited the priest to hold Mass  
In the living room  
For all the neighbors.  
And after taking the body and blood,  
Those words made flesh  
By breath and speech,  
I kiss an old aunt, press my cheek  
To hers, smell her hair and skin,  
Remembered from childhood.  
My breath deepens, quiets the cells,  
Bathes them in strength and health.



I want to be one of the Boys and Girls Club children, still driven  
To the closed school  
Because her mother has to go work  
At the chicken factory each day.  
The mask they make the girl wear  
Drags her chin while she plays  
With twenty or so other children  
In the abandoned school gym  
Or outside behind the vacant building.  
She sits in the grass across from a friend,  
Clapping patterns, telling stories,  
Their caretaker, reading her phone.

I want to be one of the children,  
Following behind their father,  
Who can't have them inside  
One more day this winter, playing  
Video games, watching TV.  
They head into the trampoline park,  
Dark for months, but now somehow  
Open, a few cars in the lot.  
Inside, high school and college students,  
Who have to have the job  
Are face-masked seven or eight hours,  
Like all the others, delivering Dominoes  
Or Grub Hub, waiting tables  
In half-capacity restaurants,  
Stocking Walmart shelves, scanning,  
Bagging at grocery stores, their glasses  
Fogging, acne worsening, minds dulled  
From low oxygen, wondering what  
In the world may happen next.

I want to be a child piled in the family car,  
Driving narrow, steep West Virginia roads  
To a mountain cabin, where they'll meet  
Maybe a dozen or more family and friends.  
Some will forage for mushrooms  
Or bow hunt, they'll tell stories,  
Wade in cold streams, build a fire  
To cook meat at dusk. I want to be  
One of their parents in a sleeping bag  
With my husband, by the fire  
After everyone else has gone to bed.

**Christine E. Black** is an American poet. Her poetry has been published in *American Journal of Poetry*, *New Millennium Writings*, *Nimrod International*, *Red Rock Review*, *The Virginia Journal of Education*, *Friends Journal*, *The Veteran*, *Sojourners Magazine*, *Iris Magazine*, *English Journal*, *Amethyst Review*, *St. Katherine Review*, and other publications.

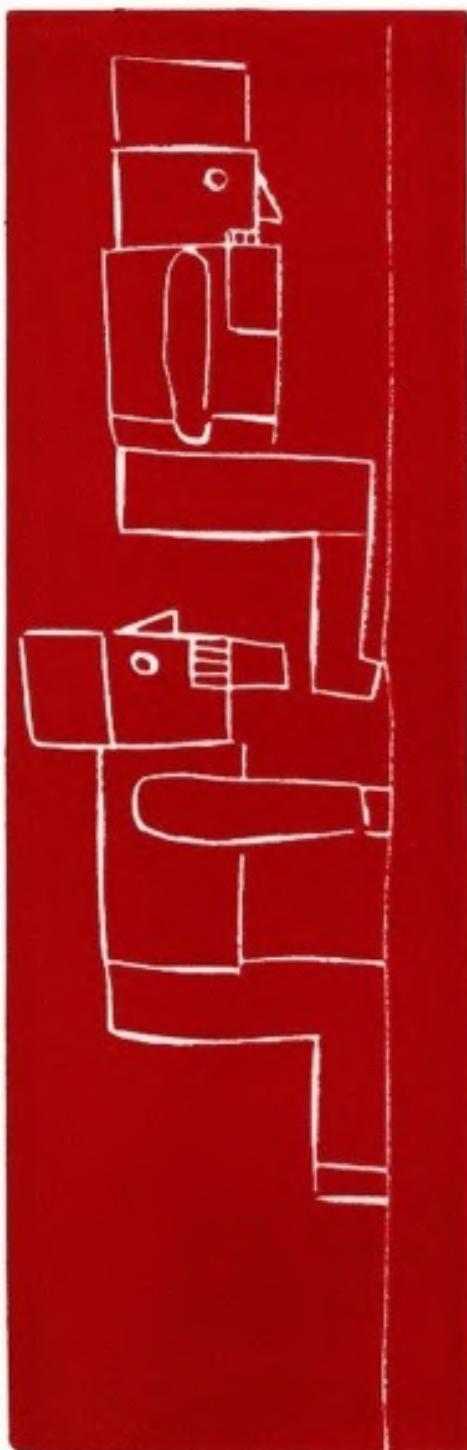
**Nicole Musch** is an artist and farmer living in Krumhermersdorf, Saxony. Her website is [galerie-krumhermersdorf.de](http://galerie-krumhermersdorf.de)

# Odysseus am Strand

Text: Wolfram Ette

Art: Osmar Osten

**ODYSSEUS SITZT HEULEND** am Ufer. Hinter ihm, schmal und bedrohlich, ein dunkel sich wölbendes Inneres: die Nymphe, die sich die letzte Ewigkeit gelangweilt hat und ihn für die nächste zum Spielgefährten haben will. Dafür verspricht sie ihm ewige Jugend, ewig unversehrtes Dasein auf der kleinen Insel. Für das, was sie mit ihm vorhat, wird er sie brauchen, die ewige Jugend. So sitzt er da, vor sich das glatte Meer, und sehnt sich zurück in die Endlichkeit des Menschenlebens, nach Penelope und den Schweinen Ithakas. Von seiner Frau hat er kein klares Bild mehr vor Augen. Ob es der Krieg, die Abenteuer der Heimreise oder das zähe Glück in den Armen Calypsos getilgt haben, ist nicht zu sagen. Der Realität würde es nach 20 Jahren sowieso nicht entsprechen. Sie ist eine alte Frau geworden, er ein alter Mann im Grunde, auch wenn manchmal die seltsame Göttin, seine Freundin Athene, in ihm Platz nimmt und ihm den Anschein der Verjüngung gibt. Aber er weiß, was er ist. Er weiß, welche Überspannung Calypsos Unsterblichkeit mit sich bringen würde. Die Hülle bliebe intakt, darunter, aeonenlang, die Schwärze fortschreitender Fäulnis. Um das verschwommene und unzutreffende Bild seiner Frau herum sah er sie tätig: er spürte gestikulierende Hände, scharfe Befehle, die umtriebige Rede der Diplomatie, auf die sie sich so gut verstand wie er; nein, eigentlich besser. Er sah den Hof, die Wirtschaftsgebäude, die vielleicht renoviert werden mussten; er ermaß die Handelsfahrten im Frühjahr und Herbst, die seine kleine Insel mit ihren Nachbarinnen verband; er erinnerte sich an den staubigen, von einer hüfthohen Feldsteinmauer



umgebenen Friedhof, auf dem die Angehörigen des Hauses begraben waren (Laertes nun auch?); er sah sich essen und trinken und in immer neuen Abwandlungen, die von Penelope mit ironischer Nachsicht, von seinen Zuhörern mit kennerhaftem Behagen aufgenommen wurden, seine Geschichten erzählen. Und er sah seinen Sohn, das heißt, er nahm an, dass er ihn, der nun 20 war, sehen würde.

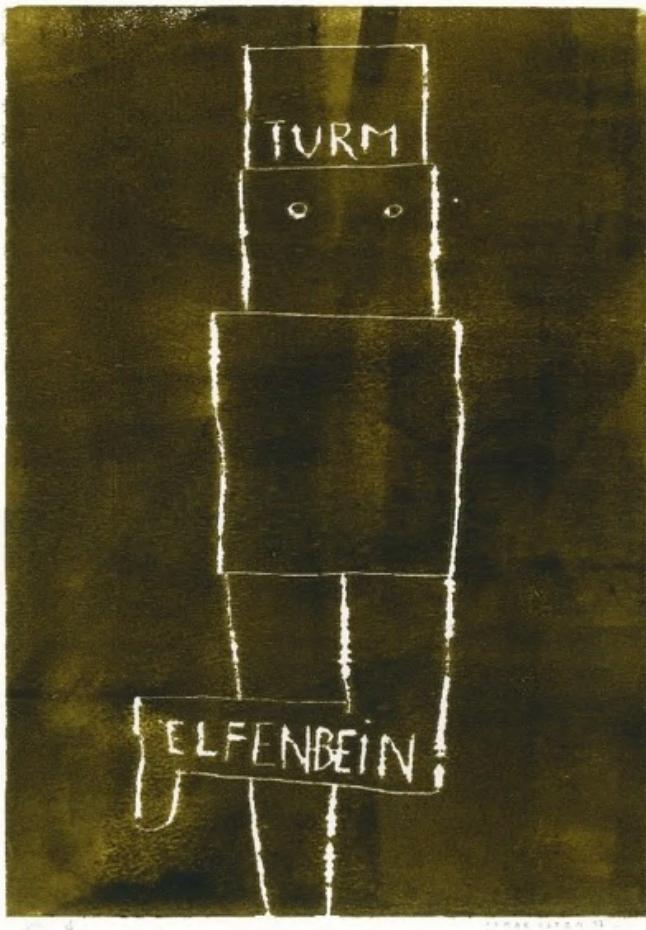
Sein Entschluss stand fest. Das Leben besteht aus Kompromissen, Butter auf beiden Seiten vom Brot gibt es nicht. Er würde jetzt, nach diesen Jahren, alles versuchen, um Calypso und Ogygia (Namen, in denen das verschlingende Insichkreisen des Lebens erklang, das ihn erwarten würde) zu entkommen und nach Hause zu gelangen.

Was Odysseus nicht wusste: Hätte die Nymphe ihren Willen bekommen, wäre er der Betrogene gewesen. Zweifellos hätte sie ihn mit ewiger Virilität gesegnet. Aber er wäre auf jenem Eiland in seiner für sie täglichen Rastlosigkeit von allen vergessen worden. Unsterblich würde nur der werden, der der Unsterblichkeit abschwor und sich zu Alter und Tod bekannte. Nur der würde, knapp überlebend, von den Phäaken aufgenommen werden, an deren Hof sich der kriegsblinde Krüppel befand, der vorhatte, Dichter zu werden. Nur der würde von der Gemeinschaft der Menschen aufgenommen werden, die verbunden durch Arbeit, Streit, Liebe und Rede, das einzige Gefäß irdischer Unsterblichkeit darstellt. Die Götter wussten es selbst nicht. Es war Athenes List, mit der sie ihren Liebling vor der falschen Unsterblichkeit retten wollte, von der ihr klar war, dass sie selbst sie nicht überleben würde.

# Odysseus on the Beach

**ODYSSEUS SITS HOWLING** on the shore. Behind him, narrow and threatening, a darkly arching interior: the nymph who has been bored for the last eternity and wants him to be a playmate for the next. In return, she promises him eternal youth, eternal undamaged existence on the small island. For what she plans to do with him, he will need it, eternal youth. So he sits there with the smooth sea in front of him, longing to return to the finiteness of human life, to Penelope and the pigs of Ithaca. He no longer has a clear picture of his wife in his mind. Whether the war, the adventures of the journey home or the tenacious luck in the arms of Calypso have wiped it out, it cannot be said. After 20 years it would not correspond to reality anyway. She has become an old woman, he's basically an old man even if the strange goddess, his friend Athena, took pity on him and gave him the appearance of youth. But he knows what he is. He knows what a surge of excitement Calypso would bring to immortality. The shell would remain intact, underneath, aeon-long, the blackness of progressive rot.

He saw her active around the vague and inaccurate image of his wife: he felt hands gesticulating, sharp commands, the bustling speech of diplomacy, which she understood as well as he did; no, actually better. He saw the courtyard, the farm buildings that might need renovation; he measured the spring and autumn trade trips that connected his little island with its neighbors; he remembered the dusty cemetery, surrounded by a waist-high stone wall, where the members of the house were buried (Laertes, too?); he saw himself eating and drinking and telling his stories in ever new variations, which Penelope received with ironic indulgence and his listeners with knowledgeable ease. And he saw his son, that is, how he assumed he would look now, at age 20.



His decision was made. Life consists of compromises, there is no butter on both sides of the bread. Now, after these years, he would do everything possible to escape Calypso and Ogygia (names that echoed hollowly in the devouring introspection of life that awaited him) and get home.

What Odysseus did not know: if the nymph had got her way, he would have been the one who had been deceived. No doubt she would have given him eternal virility. But he would have been forgotten

by everyone on that island even if he had restlessly worked for them. Only those who renounced immortality and accepted old age and death would become immortal. Only like this, barely surviving, would he be accepted by the Phaeacians, at whose court lived the war-blind cripple who intended to become a poet. Only that would be accepted by the community of people, which, connected by work, quarrel, love and speech, represents the only vessel of earthly immortality. The gods didn't know it

themselves. It was Athena's ruse, with which she wanted to save her darling from the false immortality that she knew he would not survive, that rescued him.

**Wolfram Ette** is a professor and writer. His last book published is "Der Ausnahmezustand ist der Normalzustand: Texte zu Corona". He blogs at [wolframettetexte.wordpress.com](http://wolframettetexte.wordpress.com)

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# Modelando vigilia

Forging wakefulness

Text: Graciela Quinteros

Art: Mariella Cusumano

Modelando vigilia a fuego lento,  
aromando una vida sin rencor.

Remontando de tanto desamor,  
a contraluz de un caro sentimiento.

Naufragando en un mar de soledades,  
hago de un corazón triste y sin dueño,  
una gigante nube de bondades,  
rebosante de historias y de sueños.

Voy de sitio ilusorio a firmamento,  
sabiduría que dan noches vacías.  
Un mundo imaginario que yo invento,  
contradiciendo, audaz, las profecías.

Deslumbrada por un amor tardío,  
que ilumina mi alma por momentos,  
Se va borrando el aroma del hastío,  
si evoco notas que traen esos vientos.

Esa música.. ¡sublime mensajera!  
que sepulta tristeza y desazón,  
se va engarzando en mi mundo de quimera,  
como gema en mi impaciente corazón.

...con la delicadeza de una joya,  
sin lastimarla...sólo encendiéndolo.



Forging wakefulness over low heat,  
creating a life without resentment.  
Returning from so much heartbreak,  
against the light of a dear feeling.

Shipwrecked in a sea of loneliness,  
I turn a sad and stray heart  
into a giant cloud of goodness,  
brimming with stories and with dreams.

I move from illusory place to firm foundation,  
with the wisdom that only empty nights give.

An imaginary world that I invent myself,  
contradicting with boldness all the prophecies.

Dazzled by a late love affair  
that fires my soul at certain moments,  
the smell of boredom fades fast,  
as I evoke the notes that such winds bring.

That music... O, sublime messenger!  
that buries all sadness and unease,  
enshrined into my fantasy world,  
as a gem in my impatient heart.

... with the delicacy of a jewel,  
without hurting it... just turning it on.

*Graciela Quinteros is a poet and singer from Rosario, Argentina.*

*Mariella Cusumano is an artist and illustrator from Palermo. Her website is [mariellacusumano.wixsite.com/illustrazione](http://mariellacusumano.wixsite.com/illustrazione)*

Konsequentes  
Ende  
Consistent End  
Jan Oechsner



Lavinia Chianello, "L'attacco dei giganti", collage, 2021.

In den Horizont:

Du ein fleck  
Du ein Punkt  
Du dann weg

Leere Strassen  
Kalte Brisen  
Leere Wiesen

In the horizon:

You a stain  
You a point  
You disappear

Empty streets  
Cold breezes  
Empty meadows

*Jan Oechsner is a poet and filmmaker. His website is [janoechsner.de](http://janoechsner.de)*

*Lavinia Chianello is an artist from Palermo. Her website is [studioelementare.com](http://studioelementare.com)*

