The Third Testament

Peter Boisen

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses/787

Available by permission of the author. Reproduction or retransmission of this material in any form is prohibited without expressed written permission of the author.
The Third Testament

A novel manuscript, with a foreword, addressing the issues of self-guilt in Christianity’s struggle against Paganism

Saint John’s Universiy
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Distinction
an the Degree Bachelor of Arts
In the Department of English

by

Peter Boisen

December, 1996

Peter Boisen, Copyright 1996
Foreword

a) GENERAL LETTER
b) INTRODUCTION
c) SYNOPSIS
d) GRAPH

a) GENERAL LETTER:

I intend to clarify each SYNOPSIS of the novel’s ten chapter’s. Under the title EXTRA I’ll add things that I have changed and/or re-worked since my last revision with Scott Richardson, teacher in classical languages at SJU. I try to keep each synopsis as explicit as possible about what my intentions are, so that any misunderstandings can be cleared out. I feel very satisfied with what I have accomplished. I’m more than happy in answering questions about the story, but then bear in mind that I’m not telling one story, but I’m trying to paint a picture of what goes through a person’s mind when this person is lead astray by his own dreaming, so much that the dream itself becomes this person’s new world, with multiple characters, that all has their root in his own person. I’m telling a fairy tale.

b) INTRODUCTION:

This novel is taking place in the exhausted and irritated journalist Christian af Aedel’s head, from chapter 2 through 9, and most of chapter 10. In other words, the only chapter that takes place in reality is chapter 1. The two characters Bertil Askerville, Christian af Aedel’s Editor-In-Chief and Christian’s photographer Thor who are presented in chapter 1, are re-casted in Christian’s dreaming mind during the rest of the novel. I will notify all those name shifts that stems from Bertil Askerville’s name’s letters (b, e, r, t, I, a, s, k, e, r, v, I, I, l, e) after the best of my ability and absolutely foremost conscious effort in trying to explain the purpose of these name shifts, and what I try to achieve when I make up new names out of these letters, where in the novel, and why. This should maybe help to understand the syntax, of the novel’s second half, which very much isn’t a syntax at all because Christian’s mind is insane.

As an author I know that I shouldn’t deviate from the syntax of one’s own story but the reader must bear in mind that this is not a traditionally written manuscript. I think I’m similar to James Joyce in writing Ulysses, where he doesn’t ‘care’ about the reader. Well, (I DO CARE ABOUT MY READERS AS IF THEY WERE MY CHILDREN, MY BABIES, MY ONLY THINGS THAT GOD EVER GAVE ME.) That’s why I’m writing this explanatory packet to those who don’t understand, in fact I don’t think a reader would be able to read The Third Testament if he/she doesn’t read what I’m saying in this foreword.

I’m using three figure eight graphs, (designed by Thomas Sibley at the science building, math department) to give a mathematical/logical clarifying picture for how Christian’s mind becomes three minds in the novel, in his dreams, namely his anima, SANDRA, his ideal and
heroic personality, ALEXANDER, the guy he always dreamed of being, and CHRISTIAN, the person he is in his daily life, i.e., himself. Those interested in psychology might very well make assumptions that Freud’s id, ego, and super-ego, are represented by these three people if there are any similarities, great(!). I’m not going to stop any psychologist who wants to make parallels with C.G. Jung’s theorems about [anima and animus], and Freud’s [ego, super-ego and id]. These theorems have been in my conscience while writing but I have not tried on purpose to use their scientific material more than that of “psychological frame” to hold the story together, and to hold Christian together as one single person even though he becomes three different persons in the story.

This novel is mainly about the mental struggle Christian has to deal with. The problem for Christian, (which is what might make this story seem very complex and dense) is that Christian’s main enemy is himself. He is struggling with his own morals, his scruples, his honesty. Now, this is the simile, if any, with Christianity in our real life and how it has developed through the years, that I’ve really tried to focus on. Christian’s name symbolizes any living Christian, or any member of the religion Christianity, trying to show that these people’s struggle is really about finding life’s values, through the consent of one’s own soul, a harmony we often call faith, through the honesty of oneself, to oneself. The photographer’s name, Thor, represents paganism, and is a pole to Christian, a Christian name. When the story starts, Christian has a meeting with his boss, Bertil Askerville, whom both Christian and Thor hates. The last article that Christian and Thor wrote, was initiated by Thor, BUT, it is Christian who gets the good credits for this article. This is the main reason for all the struggle in Christian’s tormented mind throughout the rest of the novel. In each chapter his mind restates the question he constantly asks himself, “Should I give myself in, acknowledging the fact that I’m not as creative or inventive, or natural as Thor, and confess to my Editor-In-Chief who the real brain is, or shall I make Thor’s ideas and his way of thinking, my way of thinking, and pretend as if nothing has happened?” when he talks to his boss in chapter one. Well, Christian never asks this question straight out, but if he did, then there would be no story, I’m afraid. I’m trying to catch here, very much how a person’s mind can be seen as an argument for the theological question of fidelity to one’s own self, and faith in general. I think the root of this novel is how the non-Christianized mind of Christian works itself into oblivion and insanity, because it refuses to acknowledge that Thor was the true originator of the first article. Bertil Askerville is my way of describing God and Evil in one single person, (we humans don’t know exactly who or what God, or Evil is specifically and physically, but we do know that they are each others opposites, very much how a human is in his/her life both positive and negative) and how Christian’s frantic mind is overcome by his own fear of evil, (which is what drives him insane), because he knows in his heart, deep, deep down, that he wasn’t honest. He knows that Thor was the guy who had the idea, and not him. Christian through his dreaming becomes aware of that Christian, has fooled himself by taking Thor’s idea as his own. Many times during the last three years I’ve been thinking of the word “Eschatology” which I think is good central word that symbolizes this manuscript that I’ve written, because this is a fictive story about the Doom, taking place in one person’s mind, the Psychological Doom of the Christian human psyche. (I familiarized myself with the word “Eschatology” in my absolutely first class I ever took at St. John’s which was New Testament Theology for Angelo Haspert.) It is a conscious effort on my behalf to try and make a story out of the mind of a corrupt Christian’s mind if, this mind is lying to itself about its own purity. When I talked to Br. David Rothstein OSB., I mentioned that I very
much think that Christianity lack originality, and David gave me his consent.

I think I’ve tried to use Jung’s and Freud’s psychological doom-theory, saying that the future of the human psyche is dark because it’ll be a question of, the psyche, surviving itself, surviving its own existence. (I would like to include a discussion on narcissism here, but that would make this synopsis too deep.) This theory seems to me the only theory that these two psychologists had in common, and it also seems to match what God has said about the fate for the humanity, that there will be a Doomsday. I’ve tried to make a story out of this by putting all these ingredients to cook inside Christian’s boiling mind to see what could come out of it. Since I was first trained in the natural sciences in gymnasium, Stockholm, (biology, math, physics, chemistry) I have wanted to use the aesthetics of science in making a perfectly balanced plot of the degeneration of a person’s mind, so that there is a logical sense, a “Narrational Harmony” if you will, because the story has three dimensions because of its three main characters, yet only one real protagonist, Christian. When Bertil Askerville wakes Christian up in the morning, it is nevertheless God saving Christian from his doomed, unrealistic, ideal state, having reached his utopian stage - the climax in his dream, bringing him back to reality, making him safe again. An example of how Bertil Askerville reappears in a disguise is when he for example in ch. 7 “becomes” two persons, namely Tserbil and Evil Rake. Tserbil should really be read as “locked up freedom.” In French ‘Est Libre’ means ‘am free’ which is exactly what Tserbil isn’t. Begin with the letter e in the word (Tserbil) and read the name backwards, you will find it to be libresT. It ends on the same letter as it starts on, (e), and this should be read as a symbol for being “locked up” or ‘freedom locked up.’ In Norse mythology the goddess “Hel” was supposed to guard the nine countries (or ‘landscapes’ in which she stored the dead, and she was forced to do this, she could not leave her position, just like Tserbil, next to Evil Rake, who is nothing else than Evil itself. (Evil Rake was the most terrible I could come up with, out of the remaining letters of Bertil Askerville, from which b, e, r, t, l, and s was already taken to create “Tserbil.”


THESIS: If Christian has a choice to lie about himself, he does because of a lack of personal originality, even though it goes against his morals.

While Christianity hasn’t a choice whether its lies about itself, to itself should burden its morality, or not- a human being can choose, but if he questions himself ‘to be [honest=pure] or not to be [honest=pure],’ in making this choice, Christianity will eventually be his natural source, his natural answer because a Christian human being must exist as a pure human being. If Christianity makes ideas from other (pagan) religions their own, it marks a dependency, and a lack of originality, but if a human him/ herself is [honest=pure] in choosing Christianity as their religion, this will give Christianity originality.
A human is free to choose Christianity, but Christianity cannot chose him/her, because Christianity is freedom, and therefore must let the human come to it.
SYNOPSIS:

Ch. 1: 20 pages
Ch. 2: 21 pages
Ch. 3: 18 pages
Ch. 4: 40 pages
Ch. 5: 25 pages
Ch. 6: 9 pages
Ch. 7: 28 pages
Ch. 8: 10 pages
Ch. 9: 21 pages
Ch.10: 18 pages

--- These chapters are written in font 11, Times New Roman, 11pt, single spaced. The amount of pages each chapter has is used as coordinates in the figure eight graph, determining the length and intensity each ten phases of Christian’s dream. (Tenth is the epilogue with Alexander)

CHAPTER 1:
Christian walks home from a long day at work. The following morning he talks to Bertil, his boss. CRUCIAL POINT IN NOVEL (CHRISTIAN’S FLAW): He gets the ‘good’ credits from his boss about “his” and Thor’s latest article about the Church of Scientology, without refusing it, without realizing by not being honest to his boss when he has the chance, that he therefore is being dishonest to himself, and this will ultimately ruin his morals, because any truthful Christian is defenseless to his/her dishonesty to him/herself, and this will cause his self-guilt in his dream. On his way back he talks to Thor. At home he falls asleep, and the “real” story starts.

EXTRA:
I’ve inserted a dialogue between Thor and Christian, to establish the two ‘poles’ (Thor-paganism, Christian-Christianity) in the novel. Notice that the contents of their discussion is repeated in later chapters as Christian’s mind makes itself aware of that Thor exists, and that he is a threat to Christian. For example when Thor appears in the beginning of chapter 6 as the ghost of the good old warrior God Thor who Christian dreamed of, himself being Sandra in Ch. 2.

CHAPTER 2:
Christian enters his first phase in his dream, immediately becoming his anima Sandra. It is her last day of her vacation in Greece together with her friends Klara and Mia. Sandra in her morning fatigue from partying is hallucinating about her own being. (I tried to show that a male person, if this person all of a sudden is woman has to settle in, in his new person that is of a different gender than he is.) Sandra’s two friends arrive and get her from the beach. Now they have to hurry because they’re late for the flight that will take them home. On their way to the buss and the airport (not mentioned in the story), they pass through a village and encounter the farcical death of the donkey. This is the first symbol in Christian’s dreaming mind of that his next article [the donkey] will be a failure, and will [die]. As pot smoke is the cause of its death, the article will die for the same reason, i.e., Christian’s hallucinatory air, his non-realistic spirits, the breath of his non-creative impure mind that will distort and destroy whatever good ideas that
Thor might put into their next article. Christian probably lacks in self-confidence and self-esteem as a writer, which he is yet not aware of. Xankellides, the Greek fisherman, is Christian himself, a loser of his only source of income, [the donkey-article]. Xankellides can be compared to what in music is an “answer” motif to the first melody. Xankellides is here nothing else than a subcharacter, showing how Christian, is no longer in control of his life, but that he is subjugated under the fate, and whatever the present main character decides to do, and where to lead the dream. On the airplane, Sandra encounters Letkber Sevillari, Bertil Askerville in his first disguise in her dream about Alexander, her favorite guy, and Christian’s. (By making her dream about Alexander and what kind of person he is -- because of the party -- I’m presenting Alexander as an important figure for the intrigue, early in the novel, even though he is just a side character, as in music a second motif that not yet has come in full focus.) Notice that Letkber Sevillari is not yet an evil version of Bertil Askerville’s name, but that Christian, the journalist, progressively change Bertil Askerville into more and more scary versions (until he has become Mr. Terror himself, Tserbil and Evil Rake in chapter 7, which I have already mentioned earlier.) As Sandra’s dream leads into the fight between Thor and Loke, killing themselves, Christian understands that for now good and bad has evened out each other, and that the future lies in the hands of the humans without their gods. This can be seen as Christian’s first notification of his problematic situation and that he has to come up with a solution, i.e., how to see a continuation of his life, or just any kind of future for any kind of person. Sandra is awakened (for the second time-first time was at the beach) by her friends and the airplane lands. At home, Sandra eats dinner with her family and tells of her adventures in the Greek archipelago to them. On her way back she runs in to Christian. She laughs at Christian, left alone on the rainy street, because he looks ridiculous. This is Christian’s own laughing at himself because of his problems with his next article, which he won’t be able to write, of course, without Thor’s good ideas. Christian is very honest when he answers her that he just wants to get rid of the paper, i.e., symbol for the article, but as Sandra is throwing away the article she is doing something good for Christian, and for the whole plot itself. Because she throws away the paper she makes Christian think not of the paper, but of himself. She unburdens/helps Christian from his threat [the article] and focuses him to think only on himself.

EXTRA: Grammatical corrections.

CHAPTER 3.
Christian wakes up slightly from his dreaming, and this is the absolutely last time the novel hovers in reality. From now on the dream will just go on and become more and more nightmarish. As soon as Christian starts dreaming again he becomes Sandra. As she wakes up from her dream this is not going to help Christian to wake up from the real dream because he is too far away in his unconscious to do that. [Now, I focus on a follow thought of Sandra’s philosophizing on the beach.] She encounters her friends again at the university cafe and they start discuss who Alexander (notice that I introduce 3rd main character this way) really is. Her friends Lotta and Stina disagrees with Sandra’s positive points of view and leaves her. Sandra realizes that she has only 20 hours left to her last final exam. She calls Klara Nordquist and they get together. [Their talk takes place outside of the plot as well as Sandra taking the exam.] One week and 22 hours later, on the 28th of November, 1999, she graduates from the University with an M.A. in Astro-theoretical physics. On the day she gets her diploma, having listened to Lyle Anderson’s speech to all the examines, she goes home and takes a bath. Her grandfather calls
her and congratulates her on her achieved degree. The same evening she meets her friends at a restaurant called Kurt Ziller’s cafe. Mia asks Sandra about her boyfriend Michael, whose voicemail Sandra had ignored earlier in the novel, (chapter 2.). At home that night she learns from her mom that her grandmother has died. She comes to the hospital and goes to the funeral with her family. At the funeral she goes insane at the sorrow of losing her grandmother. She escapes from the funeral and runs to get catch a subway. Sandra’s leaving society “preparing” for something she doesn’t really know what it is, is my way of symbolizing Mother Mary preparing to give birth to Jesus, however because Christian’s dreaming mind from the middle of chapter 5 and on is more savage, primitive, too much deep down in his unconscious to be considered sane, but rather insane, this affects Sandra’s behavior to seek a way to avoid society, to be on her own, like a savage. On the subway Sandra hallucinates on the wagon in the dark tunnels. In Sandra’s shocked and frantic state of mind her attention is brought back to Lettber Sevillari and he forces her to say the word Jarwick. This is the place where Loke and Thor killed each other in their fight earlier. She leaves the subway on Zeta Square station and runs out on the street. Alexander who sits at a cafe contemplating the decay of the world environment, sees her running and starts chasing her. He loses contact with her and is hit by a truck. He is able to get himself to his old friend from school, Katja Parenius’s apartment. Well inside, he collapses in her bathroom and is brought to hospital by her. Alexander, the artist, is mentally tortured by having lost his physical freedom to go anywhere, and having to stick with sister Mary at the hospital and her nursery talk, that seems like nothing but gibberish to him.

EXTRA:
I’ve shortened down the dialogue in the beginning, as Scott Richardson suggested.
Grammatical corrections.

CHAPTER 4.
Alexander and Katja fall in love while he is staying at the hospital. Again Bertil Askerville appears as professor Liberti Evilalsker. All his talk about the operation on his head [Alexander’s] is a symbol for how Bertil Askerville tries to control Christian’s mind, by saying that he ‘knows’ what was wrong with Alexander and that Alexander should be happy because he saved his life. Alexander leaves the hospital and goes to school to continue his studies in Fine Arts. He talks to Marten and some other of his friends at the School of Arts. He has some trouble making a charcoal sketch but eventually he comes up with a great picture of a mysterious and giant castle. After the day is done with, he goes to a speech about the art of weavery. At this speech he sees the picture of the picture of the castle that he drew, earlier that day. Of course he is surprised and leaves the speaker. He goes to Katja’s place to have a dinner. They have a long discussion in which science and the arts are debated and to some extent meet each other through the characters of Katja and Alexander. This discussion symbolizes Christian’s own problematic love affair with his girlfriend Katja Parenius, and that he doesn’t want to hurt her feelings just because he doesn’t want her, but her body, but that she wants his person, his mind, to hold her together. Alexander realizes this after they sleep together and he awakens in the night from a nightmare. The nightmare symbolizes the original sin theme, with the snake chasing Alexander who runs up and up along the mountain of self-guilt. The antelopes signify the freedom of belonging to the animal kingdom, the freedom that Adam and Eve once had, but lost because of the lurking snake. Alexander falls from the highest cliff of this mountain and awakens. He reads the letter that had made Katja cry. He slowly begins to go insane because he doesn’t feel secure
in her presence, because she only wants him to sheer her up, because she is herself so depressed. Alexander runs off in the morning to get to the library to find out about the person that had died, which the letter told of. At the library he realizes that this person is an expert on Scottish castles and once again he sees the picture of the castle he made the picture of, and Alexander feels despair and anxiety because he understands that he is just running in circles, he realizes that all the freedom he felt he had is all gone, as if someone has him in a net he can’t get out of. All this can be seen as the result of the ‘operation’ that Liberti Evilulsker said he did on Alexander. This is all Christian’s mind realizing that even though in his disguise as Alexander, his ideal hero, his boss has the absolute power over Alexander, and because of the ‘operation’ all thoughts and creativity that exists in Alexander belongs to Liberti Evilulsker, as Christian af Aedel’s ideas belong to his boss Bertil Askerville in real life. Alexander is locked up in a situation of despair because he sees the decay of the world and starts to believe that Doomsday is very close. Along with these lines he is also saddened by the fact that the more he tries to learn about the picture he drew earlier, the word Jarwick that Sandra shouted to him, and the failed love-relationship he has with his girlfriend, this all stems from something dark uncertain that he can’t understand where it comes from, other than that it seems to lead him astray and away from the truth. Alexander is in a complex situation because he has realized that he cannot anymore be the ideal person that Christian wants him to be because Christian himself is lying to himself, he is being dishonest about the truth which destroys Alexander’s freedom. Alexander has understood that something is wrong with Christian, but he can’t communicate this to Sandra or to Christian because they are part of the evil that also tries to fight him. Alexander feels that he is trapped by Christian’s mistakes and that he has to take all the crap for it, to still love Christian and Sandra unconditionally even though it seems like Christian is about to ruin all that which Alexander struggled for. He has to accept that Christian is blind because his moral is closing its eyes.

EXTRA:
I’ve stabilized Alexander somewhat, making him slowly developing lunacy, as Scott Richardson suggested. I’ve changed nurse Margareta to nurse Mary, and professor “Hell O. Ween” to “Liberti Evilulsker” as hints to show that Alexander is a highly Christian character, and that he belongs to Christian and Sandra and that they are different facets of the Christian group of people, or, i.e., the Christian society as a whole for that matter. Sandra: Mother Mary, (who’s waiting to give birth to Alexander: Jesus, and Christian: Christianity (That struggles with itself). Grammatical corrections.

CHAPTER 5
Christian’s military experiment is pretty self-explanatory. It’s a nightmare caused by fear of the control that Christian senses that Bertil Askerville has over him, and that the only person he can trust is Sandra, (which positively enough(!) is a part of himself(!)) This chapter is also to be considered a transition from sanity to insanity in the dreamer, Christian. This means that his unconsciousness that normally control Christian’s all dreaming, whoever he is of the three main characters, now control its own world with its own characters using Christian’s head, mind, for its own purposes. The fate from now on steers Christian’s mind, and this fate is of course evil and dark. In other words, Christian’s dream has reached such an intense phase that it has an identity of its own, which is beyond Christian’s conscious AND unconscious control. The things that happen in the dream are steered by Bertil Askerville, the boss, and it focuses in on the boss, which means that Christian has reached the point of absolute disintegration of self, he hates
himself completely because of Bertil Askerville’s dark evilness, confessing his self-guilt, because his mind cannot but subjugate itself under the will of Bertil Askerville, a will which Christian of course has magnified to inhumane proportions.

EXTRA:
I have on the absolutely last page of the chapter repeated excerpts taken from earlier chapters, even chapter 1, to show that, in all dreaming that Christian is doing there’s a trait of systematic thinking, deep, deep down in Christian’s blurred and frantic mind. Because these phrases are repeated to more clearly guide the reader to understand that there are some key words that Christian cannot look away from, and that this shows that there is hope for Christian, and that he isn’t a complete liar to himself. For example, the phrase “It’s clean right...?” is repeated several times throughout the novel, first time as a comment about the dishes, and later signifying his own mind’s impurity and petrification.

CHAPTER 6
Christian wakes up from the military dream. He discovers a forgotten invitation to a New Year’s Eve party, but before that he encounters Thor as a ghost. The questions Thor asks Christian are all direct questions from Christian’s conscience about his dishonesty and disloyalty to his friend Thor. Christian wanders of in an incredible thought-exploration that leads to nowhere, exactly as Thor foretold him. There is a weak memory of him and Thor train luffing through Europe, discussing different philosophical explanations to God’s existence, and why God exists. This puts Christian on track. He starts Doom. This is my version of the ultimate self-destructive mechanism that Jung spoke about in his theorems about the human psyche’s self-destructive mechanism.

EXTRA:
In the earlier version of this chapter, Thor was called Robbie, and a totally different person. By changing the name and relating this chapter to Thor, I’ve tried to tie this chapter more tightly to the plot. Christian is simply a loser who finally has realized his own mind’s petrification and just wants to rid himself of himself. I have shortened the dialogue somewhat, to make it more realistic.

CHAPTER 7
Sandra talks to her friend Klara, but through their conversation it is evident that Sandra has left civilization, that she is becoming more animalistic and primitive in her thinking, because she is no longer a part of society. She leaves her as she wants to avoid publicity. Sandra then is wandering around since she shouted Jarwick to Alexander and lives in the subways trying to hide from reality. She encounters a drug-addict, who tries to rape her. She kills him and runs out of the tunnel. The steelwire around her head is a symbol for crucifixion and that, if that was her first physical crucifixion, the worst, the mental crucifixion by the worst version of Bertil Askerville, (Tserbil and Evil Rake), is yet to come. Also notice that it is a woman who is subjugated to the Evil, and not Christian himself, marking the cowardice Christian has, not even to stand up for his own misdeeds. Sandra who is Sandra, is of course just a victim without knowing why, like the women Evil Rake accounts before her tormented mind, Joan of Arc, a Russian poet, having to take the worst of evil because the man is too fearful of meeting him. Evil Rake flogs Sandra mentally and causes in her the utmost brainwash and self-hatred until she is mentally sterilized. The dinner that she eats with Tserbil and Evil Rake, before this happens is
my version of ‘the last supper.’ When Sandra finally is able to leave them it is only to follow the Doom that Christian has started by putting his living room on fire.

EXTRA:
I’ve followed Scott’s suggestions and have reversed Sandra’s unconditional love for Evil Rake, to a progressively increased ambivalence resulting in fear, for his evilness. I’ve cut down the food scenes a little bit. In earlier versions: Sandra’s self-hatred, that it is Evil Rake who is making her hate herself, and that it is exactly this that he wants to do, wasn’t clearly motivated, but now as it has been said above several times, Evil Rake and Tserbil are the last and worst version of the boss, The Editor-In-Chief Bertil Askerville, who appear as a final result of Christian’s scrutinizing his bad deed as a result of bad morals. Because Bertil controls Christian’s life in reality this control is left in Christian’s confused mind only as a source of fear, under which he cannot think his own thoughts because they’re all automatically understood by him as “property” of Bertil Askerville. [If Christian writes something for the paper his boss owns the article]. Sandra cannot find any logical connections to the nonsense Evil Rake gives her at the dinner table but she senses that something is wrong when he starts to talk about the Norse mythology’s story about Balder [Which is the story that missionary men used to Christianize Scandinavia, 1000 years ago], Joan of Arc as being a painting by Van Buren, and the Russian female poet having a love affair with the Russian Czar. These three topics that Evil Rake brings up are not really his topics in reality, but they are there in Christian’s mind reminding himself of the person who he sinned against, Thor. The topics are Thor’s ideas from chapter 1., in which Thor mentions one of these three topics, the Russian Czar-stuff to Christian in their discussion. Van Buren is a trait of Alexander, the artist, marking a tie between the three people Sandra, Christian and Alexander. Now, these ideas frighten Christian because they come from Evil Rake’s mouth, THIS IS: in reality it is Christian’s fear screaming to itself, repeating the facts of who has got the real ideas, (Thor), to himself. I also try to emphasize the bad morals with Christian by having not even himself taking all the crap for it, but his anima, showing Christian’s cowardice for his own misdeeds, letting a woman take the blame for his misdeeds. [Now, isn’t this a token for all feminists, I’ll be damned if not!] The interruption of the police is really just a pause in the dense action, to give the reader some ideas that Sandra still is on the run and that she has to move on if she doesn’t want to get caught. It’s a different angle of showing that a person who does something bad will be caught by the police. When Evil Rake mistakes her for Hel, from the Norse mythology’s death goddess it is supposed to show a connection with Thor and Loke’s fight, and that Sandra makes the discovery that Loke was another disguise of Bertil Askerville. To sum up: I’m just basically trying to show how Christian is panicked, because of what he did earlier, writing his article based on Thor’s ideas, and that he in desperation needs new ideas to get himself out this situation of course cannot come up with some of his own but is doomed to keep remembering ideas that he heard of Thor. I’m simply trying to do a discourse on how evil evilness can be, how terrible it can get, and how atrociously it can treat a human who is lost in the horrible situation of not knowing whether evil punishes for its own sake or if it’s a result of a person’s bad morals. Difference: A good Christian knows where the evil comes from, and that he/she deserves whatever punishment he/she is given, a bad Christian is confused whether the punishment is for evil’s own pleasure, or a result of his/her own
CHAPTER 8
One hour from New Year’s Day, or “Doomsday.” Alexander is back in his apartment from a dinner with some friends. This is to show a transition from Sandra to Alexander, and that Alexander clearly is a Jesus figure, having eaten his “last supper.” The chess game he sees on television is from Ingmar Bergman’s movie “The Seventh Seal” and this is a symbol for that Doom is just a chess game away, in time, to happen. Alexander philosophizes and laments in his apartment, all his actions are symbols for despair, and the realization of that his time is limited, and that he is subject for someone else’s ritual. He leaves his apartment [the apartment can be seen as a symbol for Christian’s mind] and runs out on the street because he sees smoke from a fire. [Christian’s apartment on fire][i.e. IRONY: Alexander leaves Christian’s mind-his apartment- because of another apartment that is one fire-also Christian’s mind] He runs into a little girl [Tserbil-showing that he and Sandra are really the same person.] and the dog Argoz Cerberus. The dog’s name is a little hybrid allusion to Homer’s Odyssey and Dante’s inferno. Alexander can be seen as Odysseus on his way home but that this home is turned into an inferno. In the chapter I switch to Sandra, to mark an increase in tempo and that things are near a conclusion. She steals a police car and survives the car crash she makes with this one on the bridge. This bridge is suppose to go over the big river Styx. Her lungs are punctured. The catastrophic fire in which Sandra, Christian and Alexander run into each other symbolizes the Doomsday, and the turn of one time to another. The very science-fictional fantasy-cloud that Alexander makes out of himself, to be inhaled by Sandra symbolizes that good wins over bad in case of a Doom. Alexander is Jesus who understands that he must not give rebirth to himself, but birth to a purified Christian.

EXTRA: Grammatical corrections.

CHAPTER 9
This takes place “right after” doom. Year 2000, at 1:00 a.m. Sandra and Christian are the new Adam and Eve, (this is just the finale of Christian’s dream of course). They find their way to the castle. The reason why it takes so long to get to it, is because it’s supposed to symbolize the difference between reality and unreality, or/and between the divine heaven and the human earth. They walk into a stable and lights up a lamp. They make up a fire and find a dead lamb which they grill over the fire. The stable is suppose to be Thor’s and the lamb is a sacrifice to Christianity, a physical symbol of that when they eat of the lamb, [similar to the apple] they eat themselves, their own flesh, their own lies, their own death [because the lamb is obviously dead], and that because it is a dead lamb they eat of their own religion’s sacrifice to worship God. [This is really more Judaism, and it relates more to Jewish traditions, but I’m just saying that if Eve and Adam were pretty bad eating the apple for wisdom, they absolutely disgusting eating something dead, and ridiculing a holy sacrament of Jewish tradition, they eat of God’s own flesh. Their discussion leads up to the Russian Czar. Now, here Christian just copies Thor’s words, because he has realized that Sandra likes him the more he copies every word, every manner of Thor. Their discussion is the absolute philosophical climax of Christian using his friend’s ideas, by simply imitating what Thor said to him in chapter 1., so that he can attract Sandra/Eve. More liar than this a person cannot be. Sandra walks out to the kitchen and makes a mess trying to get plates and cups. The noise is there to show that somewhere within Sandra knows that Christian
is unfaithful to her, and that he holds the real truth away from her. The wine she brings from the kitchen is an allusion to them drinking Jesus’ blood, i.e., they drink a symbolically pure beverage because it is brought from the room in which Sandra made a protest by her noises, as if by instinct she breaks with Christian in his lying, and the wine is the product of her disbelief in Christian. Her short visit in the kitchen can also be seen as the absolutely first time a good deed of faith, truth and honesty takes place since chapter 1, and Thor, telling Christian his most sincere and honest emotions and thoughts.

EXTRA:
An analogy to Christian’s problem: Think of the alcoholic who drinks and drinks even though he/she knows it’s the wrong way out of their problem with drinking. An alcoholic solves his problem with drinking, by exactly: drinking more! This is the nightmare for Christian who cannot think of a better way out of his lying about himself, to parts of himself (Sandra) by making up more lies about himself, that are really other people’s ideas, in this case, as we all know by now, Thor’s. That’s why he in his discussion with Sandra in this chapter, is making the facts that Thor told him about the Russian Czar, his “own knowledge” [symbol: Christianity making use of pagan ideas to create their own knowledge]. I’ve cut down the philosophy and have tried to make the dialogue to the point and direct, more concrete. In this way I make the philosophy come out of the their discussion and not the other way around. I just want to underline that the scene is the castle Jarwick which is that castle that Ghaerwyck built, the crazy Dutch Theatre director. This place is mentioned repeated times throughout the novel by different people, but the first person who showed Christian a picture of this castle, was Thor. When Thor showed up as a ghost in chapter 3., he is asking Christian to confess his immoral behavior toward his friend. Thus the story, that Thor asks/mocks Christian to make up, results in Christian’s scatterbrained reading of that book he finds on the floor, but only with some ridiculous info about Celtic mythology. The only thing that interests Christian is that mysterious castle and this sticks to his mind so much it appears in different shapes, and rediscovered by different people from different sources, Alexander at the library, having first drawn it himself, and later seen it at a speech, Sandra from hearing it on the subway. This castle is a common denominator between all three people, whom they have found out about themselves, but it is still firstly hinted at by Thor in the first chapter, to Christian without giving him any real reasons why it would be interesting. This castle is of course the epitome of Christian’s using another person’s ideas, it is the only remaining place he “imagines” he can escape to, to give himself some extra time not to confess to himself that the Jarwick castle is really a concept given to him by the guy, who’s ideas he shouldn’t use as his own. Grammatical corrections.

CHAPTER 10
They wake up by the door slamming against the doorpost. They walk outside the castle and realize its immense and divine ‘never-ending’ size and decide to get back in and walk toward the kitchen. This is a symbol for how Sandra, anima, woman has won with her purity over the putrefied man Christian, a liar, but that they choose to go to the room of purity, the mysterious kitchen. They pass through realizing that many people has passed through this strange room for ages. They run into some commedia dell’arte figures before they discover the door out onto the
stage. The whole scene with the Harlequin, them walking out on the stage, enunciating the lines from famous poems from the past is all the ‘nonsense-fabric’ of Christian’s dream having survived his own psyche’s suicide and walking out into a paradise that of course doesn’t exist but is just the result of the all the beautiful poetry that the two person are reading up to each other and is again other thinkers, writers’ and musicians’ ideas that Christian uses to create a world to live in. The whole ending of the dream Christian is, can be seen as the result of a drug-addicts hallucinatory state after he has intaken his/her drug, the effects of him/her using the drug. Of course Christian’s drug is Thor’s source of ideas. Since Thor’s pagan, he uses other Christian people’s ideas to be able to reach the Adam and Eve conclusion.

EXTRA:
Sandra is made to interact more in the discussion, by asking more questions. I’ve tried to cut down the philosophy, and given Sandra more “space.” Grammatical corrections.

d) GRAPH:
I will make the last touches on this graph during this week when Thomas Sibley has time. This graph has no real fundamental meaning for the story, but it is rather a way for me to apply some aesthetical thinking from the sciences that I studied, to support this, to some perhaps very thick-woven and dense psychic exploration in Christian’s mind, with a systematically defined pattern in the sequencing of Christian’s dreaming and how it can help to give a more definite and clear picture of how my logic has been in giving the shape to the story of this novel. This graph is basically three figure eights, each representing one of the three main characters, Sandra, Christian and Alexander, and how their interaction follows a mathematically defined pattern. The length of each chapter is used as a coordinates in a x-y graph, where they land is where two figure eights intersect, that is where one person mathematically ‘becomes’ another. The graphs are meant as an uprising of subconscious, and a lowering of conscious, which intersect in the middle of the novel (where the figure eight intersect with itself.) As I said, bear in mind that this is just a little thought-experiment on my behalf trying to tie the intrigue of the story to a mathematically defined scheme in which three persons alternates to be the immediate focus for the story.
The Third Testament
by Peter Boisen

Chapter 1.

The gutter was flat. Grey. Checkered. The rain slammed into it. He was thinking of the German umbrella at home. Its dysfunction in his vestibule. The eyes wandered down at a pair of wet leather shoes that swelled and hissed for each step they took. Above him the runnels of the roofs were concentrated into hysterical sprinkles through trembling vertical spouts. Like a restless law of nature he wanted to set into motion everything between street-stones and roaring torrents of raw water. His eyes were everywhere in the attack's composition that was created and re-created in the encounter between these two elements.

The bladder was about to explode.

He could hear how an old and torn Skoda chattered somewhere in the background. Soon, very soon Christian would come to a painful understanding of how irritated it would clatter by him. He hated the clatter of Skodas. The car sounded worse than Jimi Hendrix' engine imitations. "Just another block," the man said to himself hopefully. The scrap-heap finally reached Christian's edge of the gutter, tenaciously, cautiously and with a beautiful cascade of cold water. Very cold and wet in January. The street-stone swept by beneath the man's more and more rousing steps, like landscapes beneath the wings of an airplane. Christian saw at a distance how a drunkard was taking a piss in his gateway, straight out into the street.

The urination seemed completed about the time Christian had reached him. Incredibly enough, the man stayed put in the gateway and had some kind of sex with his zipper.

"How's it going!" the journalist called upon him beneath the slippery, ice-cold corpse of a coat.

"Eh...he...he...how's that?"

The seven cylinder lock-handle was unlocked by a hysterical righthand. Christian worked with seconds so that his urination was not going to be executed somewhere else than intended. A man's manhood was at stake and he could not understand that the tokens of virility now all of a sudden were gone. When Christian had done a burn-out with the hinges of the restroom's door so that the splinters had flown all the way out on to the balcony, a couple of obstacles did remain. With a quick screw to the right, the toilet ring was reeled away, simultaneously as the left hand unfastened the leatherbelt's little buckle of brass. "Heaooooohaoohehaooh..."

A couple of minutes later the thoughts slowly but past recall returned in the kitchen. Helplessly the bachelor looked himself around from the right to the left and towards other yet unseen corners. He discovered the fringe of the rug. Like a spider turned upside down it strived and pierced holes into the air with its legs at all possible and impossible angles. He realized the apartment's total lack of style.

Everything was a mess. Papers were thrown everywhere. Articles, handouts, pictures, photo copies were spread like acres of wisdom in a land of chaos. It was a perfect setting for the angora which could tear apart and rebound in its insatiable crave for destruction. After a couple of pitiless sweeps with his eyes, the holder of the apartment, in good spirits, and with some additional softening adverbs and various adjectives, gave himself a fair idea of how pure moral behind a codex of cleanliness would have made the apartment look like. How the apartment could have been swayed by the clinical and chemically dirt-annihilative moral of cleanliness. "Ok. It is a little bit dirty."

It was quiet.
"A little bit unpolished. Dusty. Quite dusty," he confirmed, soaked by the fact that certain insignias of his bachelor’s life were present indeed. He was thinking of his wardrobe, raped with laundry. With those dirty pairs of underwear that not even the devil would wear. Christian understood that neither Lucifer nor any other living refuse-heap would visit. Not this coffin without oxygen. A free man sooner or later had to face the realities of life, such as dish-washer liquid, scrub-powder and leaking rubber gloves. At last the comment was painfully admitted by the corroded heart of a journalist. “It’s clean...right?”

The window-frames, a lying half moon in double glass giving shape to the window’s Roman arch, were grey with broken cornices. It seemed as if the slightest puff could make the window burst into pieces. Christian looked towards that fridge in the kitchen from which sounds every night at exactly half past twelve o’clock sounded éconcerts in horrid minor. “Just simply empty” he said, “only air everywhere in between the rattling lattices.” A pat of margarine was smeared on its aluminum wrap and laid as a frightened fetus in the corner of the upper lefthand box. It pretended as if it for sure would not be fried. Christian’s starving wolf-eyes chased further on into the cool, electrically lighted box of desolation. Something dark purple, deep in the “remainder’s box,” swam around in something shimmering grey. It said “guaranteed better” on the label. The contents, cut up and bottled herrings, seemed very frightening to Christian. He was thinking of the label. It would be very hard to find something comparable with what that jar contained. Very hard. He looked at the label again and just shook his head. After a while the already exhausted retinas landed on the dish, which with its unequivocal impact completely massacred his tattered consciousness. Finally, the man had to stoop his eyes under the holy mother of chastity herself, mother Mary, to simply avoid looking at the shit. He confirmed how the snake-nest in an undeniably gruesome way appeared as if to be his one and only creation in life.

During the night he could not get rid of his compulsorily induced thoughts that simply just came to him, from nowhere. Terrible words of self-reliance. Clean! Dish! Wash! Scrub! Christian calmed down by recalling the existence a scraper, somewhere. His mind was caught up deeply between greased plates and used forks. It was dishmate. Felix jumped down from the radiator in the hallway. The locomotive schedule of that cat seemed as if programmed by an overalcoholic Russian rambler. The angora didn’t have a schedule. When it wanted to get somewhere it seemed as if it sort of rolled and bounced in different directions until it was situated approximately in the area it had had in mind from the beginning. This time it landed in a way that no normal mammal possibly could have survived. With the head bent backwards as if to simulate, in a very inspired manner, the concept of deadly neck bending, the cat attacked the floor with its obscurely stretched out black-furred body. When the angora had gotten up on its feet, beginning to rubbing up the lungs with fresh air, it discovered that someone had spoken to it specifically.

They studied each other.

“What?” Felix answered with an honest little look. The faithful angora could not in any long and winding way find his master. “Tonight you seem to be a little bit too much of a wanderer. Just a little bit TOO much,” It spunned on its way to the food bowl, as if it did not care.

“Say whatever you want, you bastard. I’m back from a tempest,” Christian answered.

“Actually, tonight you’re just too much!” the cat swore back. It loitered indolently back to the hall. Felix was just trying to be a buddy with that nausea. Half a minute passed in silence. The cat laid down on the radiator as usual. “It was okay,” Felix thought. “Okay. But only this time. Only once.” He was thinking of nailing that dude sometime. “Christian would get caught. Sometime.”

Christian stooped into the bed. A neat little publication of Dostoyevsky’s The idiot fell down on a chaotic bedside table. It slid out of his hand, however, which afterwards loosely hung in the air above the table. On the wall one could see the shadow of the sea-eagle which, with bowed head, seemed to look for some new promising spoil. The alarm clock? “It was only a question of time before the broad-winged, old battle-beak would attack again,” Christian groaned to himself thinking of his hand in the dark making weird figures on the wall. Once again he was forced to light the lamp and burn out his pupils, just like in
one of those fatal Auschwitzminutes, to set the alarmclock. The hand fell but it rustled in an alarmingly wrong part of the table, exactly that area in which it shouldn’t. Christian listened to the sound. The whimish, dry sound of economical rock’n roll.

“Shit.”

He hated this kind of surprise. He hated this rapid change from one situation to another. Christian felt how he, like a seaman, was doomed to the slow death of dehydration, locked up in a torpedoed and soon enough forgotten submarine. He did not want to, and he was not prepared to die on a bed of evil dollars. Christian immediately knew with that grey, trivial precision what he was forced to do and the thoughts shouted. The peace of the night slowly went to hell. The worst thing with this slip of paper, Christian knew, was with what subjugated irony it treated its reader. “A ridiculously thin rustle. As if to hold a roll of French toilet paper... from Marlerud Finance,” Christian fattiged. It was about a signature, “...for the taking possession of the authority for the allotting of provision to the fellow gentlemen Karl Cederlund, lawyer, Olle Green, economist and Carl V. Rose, assist. principal clerk,” Christian read furiously. He had a hard time with people that had to express themselves in a troublesome manner. Who asked for money for a job that had paid itself several times over.

“Respect!? Have you ever heard of respect!” he shouted.

Christian asked himself continuously why his grandfather had signed that “Total Contract.” Christian had no insight over his money. The amount was so big it had to be taken care of. The money was so important he had to pay people to take care of it. Christian wondered if something wasn’t wrong after all. He thought his situation resembled very much his nation’s. They were both rat-traps. He felt that together with his nation they were both victims of turbulent political climates. He considered the present government’s mismanaged financing of his nation nothing but a rendition of something even worse from earlier governments lackadaisical behaviour. Their new philosophy had been to let go of the governmental ownerships, domains and institutions. It was said to be a philosophy of liberation, but really the only thing that had been liberated was the government itself. Christian wondered who had the power. He wondered if anyone knew who had the power. He had seen a government that finally had discarded its last responsibility, the handicap care and the care of the old people. This was indeed the coalroll of Satan’s burnt eucharist dow of which the public had wished, least of everything, to eat from. This was the Boxing Day of the Doomsday. Christian suffered with his people. The times had definately changed. He remembered how his newspaper’s headlines had ceased to enlarge, but instead with increasingly sickening capital letters calibrated its aim at public suicide. Every morning small, thin and pale letters gave up basically, in a certain corner of the first page. He had noticed how a more and more decreasing group of curried economists and statesmen in the today’s situation hardly dared to glance at the papers’ leading articles, which delivered only the reports of what had happened, not what was going on. Christian had experienced all too many effects of the financial gastronomists, such as those of Marlerud that ate from others, with borrowed sets of instruments, and from a juridical back-street’s imaginary plate, goods of larceny belonging to Mr Abstraction and Mrs Imagination. The deal was not about being self-deceived. The matter was of a rotten community’s conscience. Just as disappointed with all those people who always, sooner or later were forced into the daylight with their final explanations of why nothing worked with those political constructions with which they had tried to steer the community, just as overworked was Christian by their faint national patriarch’s attitudes, being nothing but the feverish transcriptions of lost children in a political hurricane. Political child wonders. Sometimes the presidents of banks said sorry and nothing more. Not even with explanations, not even with an understanding of how money that had existed for how long as you may wish, instantly was gone, like dust up into a vacuum cleaner.

Christian was lavishly tired of people’s inability to find the spot in their life when they would begin to appreciate themselves. All he could see was their awkward attempts at a spiritual life. During the last week’s political extremes he had understood how the character of a person was muted in the present world’s strangling creativity without a focus. People seemed fearful of fantasy. “It could choke! It is
unpredictable!” Christian felt that fewer and fewer dared to risk their mathematically balanced and perfected lifestyle between hausse and baisse, even for a day. The citizens of his nation had learnt that the creative intellect could unfocus the living thing in a human. To Christian fantasy was far away from that free landscape of happiness once initially intended, as he daily confronted all kinds of citizens. It seemed as if people more and more abided a community without the torch of Instinct or the compass of Fantasy. Christian recalled all of those men and women with personality-splinters. They were ordinary people. Anyone. No one had a real reason to let an outer force determine what was beautiful, what tasted magnificent, what was exhilarating music. But they did. Christian realized how people accepted because no one had taught them to think critically. He answered those thousands of thousands that listened to the microphone that all of a sudden broadcast live, from his own couch from Arrac.

“People! You are next to a world that will never be fully explored. The universe of imagination!” Christian sat vigilantly in front of the TV. He was too tired to get any sleep. “Sue, where the fuck are you...It’s me, Jack. I’m back. If you are nice you do what I tell you. I just want to cut you a little...,” he read from the cabled, lowbudget thriller. His brain was drifting.

“...Where is that artistry?”

The question was given posthumously to Felix who snored and snuffed on the radiator. Christian’s eyes searched back towards the screen, chased by his thinking of reality, which whizzed like an ironic whip around him. He wouldn’t take the healing-craps of the psychoanalysts’ wisdom any more.

“If neither they nor anyone else can teach anyone to create his or her very own emotional tools...,” he caressed the woolly fur of Felix’ back, “...how the hell is this Someone going to pursue the maintenance of worldly solutions, i.e. the future?” Christian’s mind was working hard on this one. “What values is the human in search of? Really?” He could not help laughing at his own quest for a clean kitchen. He knew that dirty dish were his vice. He knew how it was such a pain to dive down through that alien liquid to look for the brush. At the same time it was clear to him that if he had made up his mind, if he really had had that decision of doing it he would have just done it. If he wanted to, he could commit himself to something. It was a tool of his.

The night surrendered to dawn. Christian woke up in a snatch to rise from the couch from Arrac. He let go of his clothes and jumped into the shower. The driver of the morning bus was scared by the pale-grey running Christian, totally without style. He looked like one who was dying of a stroke. Six to six he stamped in at the office according to the agreement with the editor-in-chief, Bertil Askerville. He had wanted Christian there at that particular time to discuss with him his latest article. In the large entrance hall of Italian grey marble he recalled Bertil’s line of how “different Free Churches kept their followers on an incredibly profane leash, without even one lawyer’s reaction to the members’ strange loans,” from his Saturday’s editorial. Today’s paper lay in front of him like a mystery.

“Loaded!” was its single, invisibly indifferent thesis. “News are just like drugs,” Christian realized. “Like a victim you are pulled into the inexorable climate of the article...” Christian wondered if he had become intoxicated. He knew how reality consistently surpassed prose. He knew how impossible it was not to get intoxicated. He threw the manuscript in front of him. “A written pseudo which with burning rays of truth had captured the inner realities of the Scientology Church, in which no sanity, nor winds of hope prevailed. Christian had a hope for his material, just like any writer. His was a wish of a text’s cutting and carving into the soul. He had the expectation of an article that held its reader in a firm grip. He wanted to affect in a condition of stern sincerity as he had spent two and a half months on research. For each article he had read, he had discovered more and more of how unscrupulously the institutions had ruined their “disciples.” 145.000-165.000$ in tuition fees had been acquired from single persons in only six months’ time, according to the victims themselves. Christian, who in this article had emphasized his very distinction of being an objective writer, was still a little bit weary. The first week he had hated the task exclusively, Bertil had given him three months ago. Christian knew within himself, how he never
would act like a megaphone for any of his superiors. Many times during the last year he had noticed how
the editors simply had not given a damn about the reality, what was real in it and what was not. Christian’s
ambition was certainly not to revolt, but his eyes had perceived what indeed was flabbergasting
and what in the furthest possible degree was a withdrawal from the real work. Flabbergasting sold the
best. It was simply what people wanted.

“We are rolling like spiritually tilted spokes of the electrified media wheel...”

“I think you are getting dizzy from the spinning, Christian,” a voice said from behind.

“In the long run, the easiest must be sticking to the truth,” Christian pondered abstractedly to Thor, his
photographer he turned on the screen of the wordprocessor. He was a little bit nervous though his
writing had not been a sorcery of these institutions. He felt sorry for those “disciples” that had gotten
cought up in the money carousel. At the same time, Christian could not care the less. They had been
unstable emotionally.

“How wrong I may ever be, how falsely people may have ever treated me, how put off or ridiculed one
may have ever been. I can’t skip that deal of being a mediator of truth. The boss doesn’t understand why
we are making all these underground acquaintance does he? Do you understand why we have to,
Christian? Because we do have to. Just perfect victims for black mail. Christian you laughed several
times for yourself during the interviews.”

“Well, who wouldn’t? If it hadn’t been for the institution, someone else might just as well have
blackmailed them.”

“I discovered that at an early point in the discussions, too.”

It was this trade of emotions that had become the thesis of their article. In the public’s opinion the
Church of Scientology had been executing blackmail on emotionally disoriented persons. When talking to
the “disciples” Christian met something of that. He saw that they were all wanderers without spirits. In
their own point of view the Church of Scientology was a zone of freedom, a place to breathe, a place to be,
a saviour. Indeed he had concluded that its owners and victims both seemed equally indoctrinated by some
hallucinatory leader, but most of all he had recognized while working a public opinion that took care of
these adult persons’ feelings, without a distinction of who or what was right or wrong. Christian realized
that he had missed his soul’s train of thought. When he should have talked of a civilized community’s
inability to be open minded about its own incompleteness, he had become a part of it. The crime of the
blackmailed people within the Church of Scientology was something his society could not distinguish. He
wondered if it was because his society did want to or because of some sort of plastic incapability. “Were
they disciples? Were they victims?” he asked himself. Even if it would turn out that most of the followers
of the Church of Scientology were a bunch of deeply grooving freak-outs, he knew it was not the issue.

“His society could not accept people to pay thousands of dollars to a mysterious Free Church, just because
they wanted to hear that they were...good? Was that the issue? Or was it the faulty philosophy of blackmail
that the church had hidden along with its Christian message?” Christian asked himself. He could not see
where the debate started. There was none. “The society was incapable of handling its own
incompleteness.” he said silently. It was not ready to hear the reasons why some lost souls had gone as far
as to pay money for self-confidence. Instead it made a decision about them. It was a nonracial issue
without the oppression of any gender or economical status. Christian understood how fast the opinion of
his community had doomed those lost souls to become even more lost, when all they really wanted was a
bit of self-esteem, some individuality. Christian sat divided. He really thought it was a pain with this
blackmailing church. On the other hand he knew how the community should be curious about why some
people became failures in it. Not reject them, they were a part of it. The community should be curious in
order to learn about itself, and then there would not be any more Churches of Scientology.

“A piece of cake!” He laughed, but did not really forget the effective machinery of the public opinion,
a blindness. These crazy insane followers of the Scientology church, an incongruent people, “they were
the real individuals,” he laughed again. Fools or not fools, why would they pay those tremendous amounts
of money, if the society they lived in was already perfect”?

Christian wondered if the society neglected their actions* because it judged them like a machine forgeting about the flow of wordly minds, a society without the learner’s perception, a society ignoring Jung’s individuation process.” Christian was not happy at all. He felt used. He had deliberately made a flabbergaster out of something that was serious. He felt disgust. He had become a part of his boss’s blind news-machinery and now he began to realize why he did not like him. His boss never wanted Christian. He did not want the co-operation. He wanted a story.

“Shalom shakespeare! get your ass up at floor twelve, now.” It was a message from Bertil. He only misspelled words when he was really upset with something.

“What the he...!” Christian choked his roar, dismayed. It had turned out the way he had expected. A big, big mistake. He knew he had not been interested. The last month had pissed him off, by sitting with all of those eggheads, filled with so much bull. At once he felt tired of the whole job. He knew perfectly well how he had focused on the echo of empty Christian message in combination with blackmail, the trade of emotions. Now he kind of wished he hadn’t.

With a hand heavy as lead, he pushed the elevator’s unused twelve-button. “It was used at the most twice a day,” he assumed bitterly. “The second time after lunch.” The mood of Christian degraded as the elevator elevated. The buzz from the different departments, the photo lab machinery and printers resounded to die as the elevator quickly passed by. “Pling,” the elevator said. “Pling on you, you wirehanged plate abortion!” Christian told the elevator good-bye. He was partly dissatisfied and partly mad. He could feel the dissension burdening the whole of his mood, the complete character of his. “This is not going to be fun,” he promised himself as he stepped into the editor’s office. “This is going to be a butchery,” he thought insecurely.

“Howdy, big guy!” Bertil shined.

“Hi Bertil...” Christian said almost at his peak of distrust.

“Superb!” Bertil said with raised eyebrows and with an amused and enthusiastic expression on his face.

“What?” Christian lost himself, “you mean...?” He put his weight on the other leg and took a new fresh breath at the same time. “You mean that it was a step in the right direc...?”

“A step in the right direction!?” Bertil burst out if even more amused and surprised. He took a deep breath. “Distinction. To the point. Objectivism. Perfection,” he said slowly with a low yet very clear voice.

Christian could not quite believe it, but his execution was not about to happen this very day. He could feel a calm emballing his stomach. His boss seemed to have taken an overdose of something.

“Dear Christian!” he triumphed. “Finally an insubordinate article that does not give a damn about consequences. Black on white, the way things are. What pleases me the most is that of how completely down-chiseled they are, those damn Scientologists or whatever shit they call themselves. What is so good is that they cannot say anything. Your objectivism comes like a right jab under their belt!”

A silence followed.

“...eh...” The editor was searching in his head for words. “Bertil. It was not gossip for some ladies magazine that I was trying to write...” Christian did not have the chance to continue, as his boss showed him a seat in the sofa of leather that the newspaper had given him as a gift on his 50th anniversary. The boss continued with a firm voice. “The phone has been ringing and is still ringing institutions and associations that claim misunderstandings, misconceptions, libel and God knows what. But, almost always the conversations have ended abruptly by their hanging up when asked if there is anything in the article that proves not to be valid. Twenty three members of the Church of Scientology understood what the whole thing was about from reading the article. They resigned immediately. Many of them even cried in the in the telephone receiv...”

“Just what the heck are you talking about?!” Christian cried to his boss, the president of one of the
biggest papers in the country. “What have I done?” Christian almost whined in a straight pleading look.

“Well Christian, that I will tell you. In this article there is not one single compromise. That of which the people have not been able to find words for, that you have mastered. By an excellent clarity the naked truth about those bastards. What everyone has wanted to hear, but no one had known of how to formulate. Neither in speech nor in the written word. Bertil did not take a break. “What I want to tell you is of how I was frankly frightened by your dense, very dense, four-page documentation. You see, here is something supernatural about your text.” Bertil sank slowly into his sofa, with a little bit of a shiver on his lower lip. Christian could see how the pearls of sweat had increased in size and amount. The editor-in-chief continued in a somewhat more relaxed tempo. His surprise and suddenly arisen ambition were the peak of an ice-mountain. “It is just that it has been such a hullabaloo since yesterday morning’s paper in which your article was published. The question is not as much if these soul-explorative Free Churches, with their greedy greed for money, are going to be caught. The question is when, and how.

Their eyes met for the first time. Christian did not like what he saw. A mixture of something dead with something horny. “The debate has turned around,” Bertil said with a look of exhaustion. “Psychologists, priests, lawyers, advocates, doctors and even the police in its investigative work all agree on the proclamation, ‘A free spirit in a free body!’ which was thrown together by a doctor and two lawyers, to get everyone out of the economical, Free Church swamp of dependency. The police has given notice of a nationwide social warning. Bishop Oaklooner appeared in last night’s news where he spoke of them as, “a threat for the society.” A guy from the National Socialist Association called yesterday afternoon and asked if the author of the article could put up with signing a petition of signatures to get the principals banished. An anonymous official of the Foreign Ministry proposed in a letter, most likely written and mailed yesterday, a dinner with you and me at The Grand.” Bertil’s eyes were speechless. “What I’m trying to get at Christian is that all of this has happened within 24 hours, and it happened after the release of your article.” Christian discerned Bertil’s look of being chased. He still had not quite grasped the affects of his actions. He felt muted, almost paralyzed in front of his boss who now just sat, dazing out into the empty air. Christian’s eyes wandered around in the large, ethereally clean and light room. The desk was encumbered with newspaper cuttings, sheets of paper, laser prints, and what seemed to be his own handwritten manuscript. On the table’s upper left corner a big pile of the Guardian was stacked. The ashtray looked like a minefield arranged by a very generous commander. There was not one clean spot on the table. Christian liked the room’s interior design of glass and steel. The walls was covered with articles that in one way or another seemed important to the editor-in-chief.

The doors in massive oak were slowly opened by a young girl. In front of her she carried a tray. Christian saw a kettle of tea, cheese sandwiches and two buns. He really appreciated this. He had wanted buns for days. He looked at the girl’s rather neat appearance. She would have gazed with her eyes until they cracked at him if it had not been for Bertil’s rescue, a put off. “Thanks Betsy. What a neat little worker you are.” She gave proof of good respect and courtesy to her boss, but seemed a little bit out of bounds as soon as she had noticed who was sitting next to Bertil. It appeared as if she had met a person with great cultural authority. Finally Christian’s eyes came against Bertil’s at the moment the girl left the room.

“This was the least thing I could do,” Bertil said to him shortly. For a while they observed each other deeply into the soul, to sort of really find out how the other one was doing. Christian met a tired pair of eyes. The boss had too many balls in the air, he thought. Bertil’s eyes roved about just like an alcoholic’s, desperately struggling to attach them to something. “He must have been stressed by the public expectations and of the publicity he always had gotten as a boss,” Christian pondered as he realized the sudden exchange of all that with a calm journalist’s frank look. A moment later Bertil turned away from Christian. He seemed torn and ravaged, as if he had been under a threat of dying, for the last twelve hours or so. In an attempt to be polite Christian was thinking of suggesting a weekend of golfing, but he could not pursue his train of thought. He realized how he had started a war between a whole society and this
Scientology Church. His disgust was not so much because it was the least thing he had wanted, but more because it was exactly what Bertil had wanted.

"This is going to be your new task," Bertil said ironically. He handed Christian the latest issue of Life, page 44. The opening showed how a man and a woman held each other's hands. They were standing on some kind of rock and glanced out over a stormy ocean. Farthest away in the horizon Christian saw a giant board of pulsating fire, "either a sunset or a sunrise," he commented in silence. A smile of contentment came very easily at his first thoughts of "Sex and cohabitation in the year 2000," but he realized that it was not exactly what his boss had had in mind. This was one of Bertil's highlights at work, to present an idea for a youngster in the shape of a simple picture like this one, or a poem or something else. First he would amuse himself at the concentration and the complete devotion to the instantly presented in each "little seed" that denoted his journalists. As they finally figured something out, Bertil would make some sort of decision like an older brother. He always wanted to decide whether Christian was wrong or not wrong. This was such a situation and Christian recognized it so well. Now he was sitting here again, and he did not know what to think nor to believe. This was something special. Something different. A complete change with the material he had been working with currently. For a long time he just glanced at the picture as if everything could be deciphered from it. Christian was thinking of how the woman and the man held each other's hands. He avoided thinking of how they, in a traditional manner, should have stood on a soft sandbeach, but rather stood on the edge of a rock looking at the wild, exotic and incredibly beautiful twenty feet waves beneath their offset. Christian felt the impeccable excitement of the scene's composition. He perceived its heavy loading, something that had the resemblance of an important message. "Something to all people," he guessed within himself.

"Well? What are you thinking of?" He looked at Christian banteringly, who answered with one long look. He saw how the heading "Human Resources- Do they last?" provoked a message of catastrophe, pollution and general destruction of the nature. He recognized that common responsibility for its resources. It was a big twelve page article by the well known New Foundland writers Alex Hunter, Wilbur Atkinson and Rosa-Lee Kastansky. He remembered how Rosa-Lee had been one of the most energetic persons, always in the forefront of the Greenpeace movement in the eighties.

"No! No!" Bertil said with a couple of warning eyes. He opened up page 44 as Christian had began to turn over the leaves. "Look at the picture instead," Bertil cut him off. Page 44. He lashed with the point of his index finger at the surface of the paper so that it twanged loudly in the solitary study, which as always soared in a kind of devoted black silence. He could really hear how the words hang on through that echoing twang.

"There you have it, buddy!" A couple of seconds passed.

"The man and the Woman...the woman and the Man." Christian thought for a moment. There was something with this picture that was not quite right, something he could not quite grasp. He was thinking of the fragile man and woman in comparison with the solid masses and the violent wilderness and turbulence of the roaring ocean. "Indeed." A different part of Christian's brain took over. One that thought a little bit deeper, a little bit farther. "The human," he philosophized as Bertil, with his forehead in furrowed creases, put some press on him. "Maybe one should keep to that thought of the human, or?" Christian said to himself.

"What the hell is this? Really?" he caught himself saying. Christian was irritated at not being able to scotch the question of the article's contents. He made a last try. He put himself in the situation of the ocean. Then he exchanged to become a solid rock. He imagined how much he possibly could have seen from the view of the two persons. He visualized the picture from different angles, he imagined the splashes of water, the coldness, the wind. He lay in a transcendental seance of concentration and in a short moment a complete closing out of his surroundings. "That's it!" It flagged up Christian who threw up his scull. His idea was that it was a picture with a strong philosophical charge. He thought it was not a deal about sex or love or any other form of social intercourse. Christian had glanced at the enormous waves,
which, in the moment the picture was taken, was smashed against the rocks. The two persons watching this gigantic thrust of water, a struggle between two elements, were watching their heritage. The ocean. The mother of all living things. He thought of the wave splashing against that black, cool, unmerciful rock symbolizing pretty well the peoples future. While the environment, her backgrounds, were polluted, their pollution destroyed her future. "Will the human surrender herself?" Christian wrote with a black ballpoint pen, under the picture, above the original heading.


"Wow!" Christian answered affectedly respectful, yet not quite understanding. "Oh yeah! The Community! I get it!" He said impatiently.

"Cool it maan," Bertil said astonishingly calm, implying a fatherly but pretty shitty Burt Reynolds. "I want you to write about the presuppositions for the human in the third millennium starting with year 2000. Make an overview of how the man and the woman, together as well as independently, have developed the... society," he began gropingly.

"Sounds like an assignment for the senior high school student," Christian ironized.

"Ok." Bertil said. "Of course, include the environmental pollution, the vastly inventive scientifical odyssey, discern some of the ideals that always have been considered the true qualities of life. How has the human succeeded as a race?" Christian listened to what his boss had to say. He remembered how his first analysis of the social stuff turned out to have been a hot trace after all. "But let these only be the appendix. They are self-written ingredients in all articles of this kind. By the turn of the century people will write until the Doomsday about the environment, and of how the human race just destroy and destroy. About the decline of Tellus. About the human as being simply a threat." Bertil took a deep gulp of tea. "I like that! That debate is important and must be pushed always." He lowered the cup. "But," he said expressively. He stood by the window and glanced at the water, the bridge, the lighters at the quays. He made a rapid but nevertheless perfectly balanced turn toward Christian, who arose to face the look of stone from his boss. They regarded each other like that for a couple of seconds to sort of wait for the soul.

"A thousand of years is a long time," Bertil continued inflexibly. "What has man and woman really learned from the fourth of November 999?" They smiled at each other since they both knew that quite a lot, undeniably, had happened. "What I'm trying to get at is the development for its own sake. The Process. The Evolution. Has the human developed in a real sense?"

Christian was waiting for Bertil, who in turn waited for Christian. "Are there any scruples that we have been able to polish away?" Bertil asked out in the silence.

"You want me to document and give an answer to the meaning with life? Huh? Is that it?!" Christian asked a little bit dismantled, as if he had gone into a trap.

"Christian," Bertil began to nod in a familiar old way, "maybe that is exactly what I want."

"Listen up, fella!" Christian said in an adjusted tone. "My findings, my answer, or whatever you want to call them, they'll be just like the answers of anybody else, who has tried. Each person has got his very own personal comprehension of life. No one can expect something else. That is what to most is the meaning of life, as well as to me. The process of creation. The evolution?" He glanced for a while at the view of the town, shaking his head. He turned back to his editor-in-chief. "You live, thrive, eat, shit, work and die." He smiled at a slightly confused Bertil Askerville. Moment after moment came and left. "Life is a bitch and then you die!" he whispered. They stared at each other. Christian wondered why his boss always was silent at such weird points in their conversation, when one expected it the least. "Nothing is for sure... in life... it's a game..." his boss said. Christian did not know what to answer.

"Well, it does not have to be a riddle," he said.

"No, no. The discussion can be continued forever, but the last question remains. The single question to all answers." Bertil took a little pause before he spoke again. "Our discussion is not very specific, but
do you understand my picture?"

Dead silence. He explained.

"Do the woman and the man have some kind of inner common process yet to develop? Or have they remained locked in their own specific sex, in spite of the natural instinct to live together? Has each gender on its own or in its shared life with the opposite sex developed a hidden thought, a hidden feeling, a hidden way of acting, some kind of communication that has made the individual leave the old traditional animalistic human? Has he or she become an overhuman without knowing how, and is it this that explain all his or her crises in their relationships?"

"Well, Bertil, to tell you the truth, I don’t really get your point. I am full of respect for your ideas, I really am," Christian lied big time to his boss. He continued, "I think the message you are talking about is too large for a human to handle. We can live and that is about it. I agree on what you’re saying about the community. It is a machine. It rejects the indifferent spirits, like those of the Church of Scientology, and prefers to integrate one standard role model among the public. And that, Bertil, that is fucking lethal stuff for individuality." He took a breath and said, "That is my opinion," without understanding where he got all his words from. He understood just fine even though he answered with lies. It was just an instinct not to reveal his absolute inner thoughts. He was sick of the steel wheel of media. He knew how he, if he did not want to be in its absolute center, like Bertil, would be flattened like a piece of iron between two rollers, to become a part of the public wheel’s sexless periphery. Just a number. But he was not going to talk with the wrong guy about it.

Bertil was not burned out as Christian had thought from the beginning. The guy was from a different planet. He was a part of this machinery. He had sold his soul to it. Now he was getting after Christian’s. Bertil said something but because Christian was thinking so concentratedly, he only caught, "...you think?" Christian winged it.

"A sixth sense?" He smiled to smoothen it. Bertil’s look came at him, cold as ice.

"I said, don’t do what the murdered Russian Czar Nikolai II did, listening to his unconscious, penetrating the dynamics of an outer cosmos, the outer world in some kind of matrimonial love. That turns life’s values into invisible and abstract, how should I say...non-marketable values, don’t you think? It’s rather foolish to think that you’d survive being a Russian emperor right in front of Stalin, Lenin or Trotsky, or... HA HA...ME!! Don’t you think...? It would be rather foolish to dream up something in the middle of a revolution, in the face of reality wouldn’t it, don’t you think?"

"So, this is going to be rather free then?" Christian tried to end the discussion. At once Bertil shivered with impatience.

"Look around yourself! Look at the reactions of you article! How about if you decided to continue! Take the question of life, what the meaning with it really is, take it wherever you want, Christian!" Christian felt how something very dark within Bertil had crawled out and desperately craved for Christian’s soul. An evil.

"Give it a try!" said Bertil.

Christian thanked him for the tea and the buns, and explained how that was exactly what he had wanted for a week. The elevator opened its doors friendly and metallically. Christian walked cautiously back to his desk. Finally things started to appear to him, as he worriedly looked around himself. Everywhere he could see these cuttings, pictures and fax messages. Everything concerning the Church of Scientology, and how to get rid of it. Soon thereafter he realized how the cultural staff of 32 persons was gathered, all they did was look at him. They expected a speech. He climbed up on a stool next to him. Forced. "The best is just to get it over with," he thought.

"Ok...staff!" He started out a little bit rusty on speeches. "I am a little bit shocked." A roar of laughter followed. "It seems as if my article made some effect. All I can say is let us hope for the best. Whatever it may be." He wondered what he had to say further. For each second that ticked, he felt how people pushed a nasty glory up against his face, like robots. The situation had developed to such an extent that the word
Christian least wanted to use grotesquely lay in his mouth like a once swallowed, and now retuming puke. Masspsychosis. He was disgusted by the way people programmed themselves to become trivial and almost disintegrated in the shadow of his greatness. His personality. He was not a human to them anymore. He was metamorphosed into a cold and raw fact. “It is still me,” he said. “It is still Christian af Aedel that will show up every morning, nothing more remarkable. I just came back from Bertil’s office with a new task that I am going to dive into right now. That’s all. I am glad that the society has reacted.” He knew he had to say it as a leader. “As a cultural staff, we’ve done our job. All we can do know is to wait and see, and hope. I don’t think you have to watch me so much more. I am not a hero and I’m not going to try to be one. Just give me a chance to be Christian.” He stepped down from the stool. “Thanks.” A thick layer of applausees met him.

Mary and Thor met him with congratulations. She, whom he had been working with for several years, gave him a hug. When he finally landed into his chair to get some rest, the thoughts overwhelmed him. At once he was afraid. A powerful feeling of anxiety steamed up within. “What had Christian done?” he asked himself quietly with a clot in his throat. The fear developed along with his thoughts something humongous, something unseizable, something that was dangerous and fearful. He thought of himself standing at a clear and simply obvious fact, that at the same time was supernautural and not understandable. Christian reasoned back and forth. He pumped up excuses within himself, distorted the facts so that it would be easier to lie to himself. The words continued, however, to echo like roars in the wilderness, without response, without the slightest touch of solvency. He was surrounded by the daily raw reality. The words reached his lips as if they were unaware of his consciousness, but yet so natural, so self-written. I talk toward the east, but I walk toward the west. Slowly the curtain was rolled up and he had such a hard time to accept that screaming, exploding power he had of being able to spread a message. Christian was burnt in the sun we call the truth. Christian had no pride or need for superiority that needed to be fulfilled. Only the laboriously stubborn and overwhelming feeling of anxiety. “He had set a whole society into motion.” Christian sucked on the words. It was as if some superior force had taken over his ability to write. An invisible hand had steered him, dominated, and finally taken over. The schedule was not the usual one either. Christian read “Ten page report” from Bertil’s negligently written promemoria. “It is all about filling up ten pages, no factual search for truth” he muttered slightly irritated. “Evelyn and Eric edit as usual. Thor and Victor take pictures.” He realized that he for the first time in five years was not to cooperate with Mary. He did not like that. “When I for once, for the sake of the article, really need a female co-worker.” He continued puzzled. “Resources- Take whatever you think you need.” Christian read.

“What? What do you mean Mr Askerville, ‘take whatever you need’?” Christian muffled his roar. He had no need at all to write this article. The unspecific vague directions, that were not really directions but hints, irritated him. “He could have come up with a theme!” Christian felt as if he was instructed to paint with a pencil for the color blind. He could focus on whatever he wanted and the idea would still not make sense, it would not come through. “A poem. A point of view, a political background, some religious connection, an article, a cutting, a historical name, a slide, a photo. Something!”

Christian had this feeling of being the singer in “Morgan and the Morgans” that just had received an opportunity to play at the Hippodrome in London. “With a repertoire of three children’s songs and their totally own cover version of Bill Haley’s a Rock Around the Clock.” Now Christian is going to tell the happy news to the members of his band. Everyone will laugh. No one would take it seriously, since they had not done it even on the stage for the last 4 years. With an audience that more and more had turned out to be children.” Christian understood that he was not a philosopher, thinker or anything else academically checkered. When he did something, he wanted to do it as well as he could. A massive research, based upon knowledge that was valid through his own or others’ experience. No theory. There must not be any hesitations about what it was he wanted to say. “Bertil had spoken with a journalist about the society,” he thought indifferently. “But why had he talked to me like he was some kind of Father of the Nation? Like I was some kind of politician!” Christian smiled at himself alias “Christian af Aedel, the politician! The
debator of the Society! The Agitator!” The last thing he wanted to be was a politician. “How strangely well that Editor-in-Chief had me framed!” he remembered. “Of all those brains on this newspaper that wanted to and really were able to make up a story out of nothing, I am the chosen one. What do I know...about women?” He laughed. Some he knew, that he knew. “But the relation?? What about the relation between man and woman??” At first he hesitated but let it enter his head that it was not by chance. But he knew how fate had elected him. Christian reflected upon himself as the casual journalist that contributed with his stoning to the culture. His experience. His thought. His opinion. “It was all and yet nothing,” the reasoning fell upon him. “Or why the hell not just simply write: ‘Life Is a nightmare and then you Die.’?” he concluded. “Why not ‘Good luck!’ and have Thor add some pictures,” he said loudly to himself with the overtones of the revolutionist. “That would say more of the meaning of life,” he knew, than what his budding article of ten pages would. “To those poor bastards that would try to read it.” He laughed. “Four persons, and free bridles. Completely emancipated.” He was thinking. “Why not ‘The Fundamental one thousand year sexual relation -- what has happened?’” The words clinged hollowly through Christian’s head without ideas. “Set up at the latest, Dec. 30th, 10:45 p.m.!” the last line read to Christian. He recalled how Bertil had been talking about how perfectly well it would fit with the first issue of the new millennium. Sure enough Christian should feel just as honored as he had done only half an hour ago.

“Damn!” he exclaimed even more frustratedly, now almost furiously, as he had thought about it. “The man has got to be deranged” he concluded. “It is impossible to come up with ten pages of serious information in just about two months. It is not possible above other responsibilities and weekly articles that I’m cluttered with!” Christian began to feel slightly ill. “It was easy if one knew the answer.” He knew how a ninety-year-old that had been living with another ninety-year-old for perhaps seventy years eventually would dare himself to come up with a suggestion. He thought of how hard it had been to write only those four pages about the Free Churches, even though he had had that whole month. It was not for him. He always longed to write his Thursday’s chronicle. It was his privilege for eight months. “That stuff strengthened!” he pondered contentedly. He mastered that little division of new purely fresh rockbands that in a rapid flood continued to show up in Europe and in the rest of the world. He made a big deal out of theatrical ensembles, dance and ballet companies, important persons’ statements in the radio and the TV carousels. He loved to cater to the kitsch of rock. Christian was always as amused and most times irresponsibly satisfied with the attitudes he found in impossible arguments and political self-abnegations in TV shows and out in the streets. To pull the ganglia of the latest bands that had just released their first CD. The lethal seriousness that came across with bands like the Beat Bastards, Stringfingers, and the Rockjerkers, bands that should not be allowed but at the same time absolutely could not be stopped. Christian felt for some reason that he was losing it. His comic anecdotes were harmless, however with that silent tone of hatred so characteristic of Christian af Aedel. That hatred, his trademark, he had the feeling was not going to be fully accepted by the cultural establishments in his society. “Just damn unaccepted.” Christian tried to write for a young group of trustworthy and stable readers, which constantly gave approval to the avant-garde sickness in his Thursday documentary of the hard-boiled kind. They liked Christian. He knew how to kill. To the writing bone himself it was almost more important with a continuously growing exchange of readers than a homogeneous growing group of beggars for more and more...and more. Christian mastered the lyrical dance of rock’n roll. Writing from that perspective, Christian thought the opinion he created could never appear on faulty foundations. Each reader was always forced to commit his own decision. He wanted to force a freedom upon the reader to find their own truth, even though he knew the most of what he said was bull.

He concluded that he should let Thor and Victor each take five rolls of film on the rush hour down in the subway and at the bus stations and in the rolling buses. All he had to do was to fill out “the questionnaire” on its last page, “glimpses,” and just forget about the whole job. He imagined himself at Barbados for six weeks. Returning back home, tanned. Fresh. Rested up. He had a hard time handling
this sudden access to any journalistic authority at his hands, to discover how everything was perfect. He discovered how every obstacle, every problem was erased, how all assumptions simply were there. Christian understood how impossible it was for him to fail on this one, because everyone expected something almost divine from him. He was frightened at his last thoughts of that. No one had a real answer. No one could really tell. Christian, was expected to have answers in two months. It was the public opinion. They loved him. Bertil loved him.

"Here are a couple of pictures. They still puzzle me. Do you know the Romanov family?"

"Oh yes," Christian says, stunned.

"The Czar’s own pictures are fascinating. During the years of imprisonment and all the way up to the military execution he took pictures of his daughters, and his family. There you’ve got questions and answers at the same time."

"Oh well, Thor. What to say about them? Why, it isn’t until now, because of how history turns out, that these pictures have become... What shall I say... Dispensable.

"Dispensable?"

"I don’t think the pictures turn out to be the only remaining, most comprehensive documents of how the family had lived because you say so."

"But what makes the emperor choose specifically the camera, Christian? What are his instincts?"

Thor drinks from his cup of cofee and continues. "The family understood more and more how the plot of their empire would end, and what would happen to them if it really did. I read that the Czar and some of his members of the magistrate’s court couldn’t, or simply didn’t want to fight back, but only to bow and sign on the revolution. I’m wondering how involved the Czar was in the maintenance of his empire. It had become too big. It couldn’t be steered by one single emperor, who’s just interested in his family. Of course he’s overthrown, and of course the Czar takes pictures of his family, because he was bored to death by being imprisoned. His interests are really the opposite of Lenin’s, Trotsky’s and Stalin’s. Think of France in 1789. Think of the immense slavery of the Roman Empire. Class differences make people to revolutionize. They can sacrifice their own blood if it will give them their freedom back. You would Christian. I am. The Czar fascinates me. He enjoyed different kinds of athletics, especially canoeing. On the whole his favorite hobby was relaxation. I’ve briefed every staff member about the Russian revolutions, the last Czar-family’s tragic fate shortly before the outbreak of WW1."

"Thor, calm down for Christ’s sake. What’s wrong? Here," Christian says, handing Thor some photographs, "I received some pictures from Joe Daz. What do you think? I think you should have a look."

"What...is this?"

"It’s...Theresa of Avala, a nun."

"Oh."

"She lived in the 1280s. Always by herself. She was this Christian mystic, trying to create her own relationship with her God.

"Oh Aquinas. Trying to construct the logic with God. The logic behind the church. Is there any logic?"

"No."

"Well, I don’t know. I don’t know Christian. I don’t know how we’re going to fit in this...picture. I don’t like it. It’s not...I don’t think we need to get mystified right now, rather the opposite."

"I can’t believe you Thor. I just can’t. Do you know what you’re talking about?"

"I think you need to inhale, Christian. You need the breath of God. Pneuma. You should stuff your pot pipe with Pneuma."

"You’re insane Thor. You drive me crazy. It seems like you don’t care who’s who in our discussion. Are you my photographer or not?"

"Sure am. As long as you let me take care of the pictures. Ok!"
“Ok, so what’s next?”
“You tell me.”
“I think the Czar himself is made by his own time.”
“Yeah I agree. It is more than this that makes me imagine their destiny. Most of all I’m concentrated on the Czar himself and his stability to find an easy and buoyant way of living. Sure enough he doesn’t have any major reason to complain about his superior position, and the environment in which he lives. But he really takes care of it in a way that is indeed unique for rulers. He makes the jeweller Fabergé work his ass off to celebrate his marriage and his woman. The Czar likes his family a lot. That’s where he belongs. He does what he wants. He’s made of money. He is a Russian semi-god. He is the dream being alive. He is the ultimate truth for the Russian people, the ideal of the Empire’s glory, wealth and authority embodied. The family lives, however, in a society with extreme class differences, while the family in itself is nothing but a product of love.” Thor lits a cigarette and points at a couple of pictures that are lying on the café table of iron and marble.

“Look at those faces of his daughters, Christian! He Czar meditates love! His love is the identity of his authority to his people, even though some of them hate him and the Empire. The difference is that he identifies himself with the family, but not with his empire, not with the revolution! The Czar’s romantic love has to die because his empire dies.”

“So what’s power, real power?”
“My experience is that one uses the power one has to reach more power. Most of us can maintain what we already have. Others swallow their pride to maintain this status quo. Another group of people realize that the easiest thing to do is to decide whether one wants to gain or lose power. Winning is always the best formula. I use it all the time.”

“So what does all this lead up to?” Christian panicked.
“In Czar Nicolai’s time a vast amount of people within his nation are unable to make these choices that the modern man can because they’re members of the Czar’s empire, and this Christian, trust my words, this is why that revolution happens. Don’t those pictures tell you what power they possess?”
“What exactly do you mean Thor?”
“They are a very, very secluded group of people who really have all the power. It isn’t dirty, but it is of a different hierarchy than democracy. Their power just exists. Like an identity of its own. It has a different face, a face of glory, which the rebels’ aggressive minds don’t.”
“You’re not to the point. How are we going to use this material Thor? What’s your point?”
“I’m Mr Grotesque. It doesn’t sound right when I throw it right into your face. People make revolutions because they want to change things for the better. They believe in the bright side of life. They know they can fight and that they should fight because they know that they are being treated like ants. They know they won’t have a future if they don’t fight, wouldn’t you?”
“I don’t know.”
“It’s sad how an empire with an ideal Czar family doesn’t allow its members to reach down to the poor, the sick and all other in need. I’m saying that the Czar family died because there was no communication. There was just the aggression of the revolution.
“You’re bizarre Thor.” Christian smiles because he thinks Thor is being hastily ironical.
“Well, just what the heck shall I say to you Christian? To live life? To make love? A belief in living?”

The echo of Thor’s voice dies out in the noise from the conversations of other guests at Café Dolomite. It talks once again.
“A belief of living life in harmony, just like the priest says and hopefully does.” Thor smiles and adds ironically, “or Frey.”
“I’m sick of your mythological sidetracks Thor. Get real. We’ve got an article to finish.”
“You’re the one telling me. Man! Two minutes ago I was YOUR photographer! What do you want
“From me?”
“I’m sorry but...”
“You piss me off Christian.”
Silence.
“Ok Thor. Tell me about the Logos-thing you mentioned earlier.”

Thor lit another cigarette and looked for a long time out through the smeared and greasy window, and traffic outside. He drank some of his coffee and finally looked Christian in the eyes.

“Ok. Nikolai seems to focus subconsciously around the Logos-concept, and this is to be understood as structures. His goal of achievement was the interaction between the effort and the spontaneity, between the self’s little logos and the outer world’s cosmos, the big logos. His ambition in life appears to be to raise the condition of adventure in life, to drive the human species to a point where it lives the most. He wants to find the truth, the unity of these two logoi, when they are perfectly harmonized. What’s unique is that this unity never actually becomes until it’s energized by love and the energy of the good thought. Czar Nikolai represents a genuine love, thorough like the blood of Odin, a spontaneous and intuitive goodness, like Frey’s, an ability to see things in things, in things. This is what the Czar’s pictures show me. Few groups of people have been in the Czar family’s position, with a natural instinct to create harmony. I see right in front of me how an unconscious striving for unity of a self with that bigger cosmos is just happening. They are for good and for worse. A pure ideal of humanity.”

Christian laughs a dry laugh.

“Your boat is leaking Thor,” he says even though he is convinced of the opposite. Christian feels Thor’s instincts working with ideas and impressions. Christian is tormented because Thor is the ritual. In his Christian swallowed heart he knew Thor rocked. Thor was taking off like a pagan ritual that couldn’t be stopped.

“The Czar, decisively goes for the matrimonial love. He listens to his unconscious and penetrates the dynamics of an outer cosmos, the outer world! He turns life’s values, the invisible and abstract values into concrete action.

“Toward the end, his family was living under daily threats of being killed. A constant pressure of death.”

“I think my hobby of photography is an unconscious means of survival, because just like me, the czar searches for an enigmatic center where life plays and and lives the most, where it is found to be most eternal. To see this and to photograph it, to see how life’s virginity played in his daughters and in his wife’s eyes...”

“Who the hell do you think you are Thor? Some kind of God?”

“To exist there in one’s family for one’s wife, for one’s kids, still maintaining the harmony, and not to give up hope, if even for one minute. How do you get strength to that? In the midst of the revolution they live with each other without any hope of winning, right in front of Stalin, Lenin and Trotsky... right in front of them. They definitely had something.”

“Don’t they have anything to do with the revolution,” Christian asks.

“Look at the experience in itself, Christian. It’s an innovation. It has conclusions.”

“All of these revolutions happened more than eighty years ago. Don’t you think years of failures from the imperial headquarters to a certain extent push the political winds towards an inevitable direction?”

“To start a revolution, or several, it takes more than one person’s madness don’t you think?”

Thor’s words weren’t pressed out like an expensive juice from an expensive fruit anymore. The more Thor talked, Christian noticed, the more his thoughts just lay in front of him.

“The energy of our boss, Thor, is focused. If he makes us work with a purpose...”

“Christian, who knows for sure?”

“The readers see functions if the readers want to.”

“But the artist is needed. The artist is the one telling us how. The artist visualizes its direction.”
Thor is keeping the matter somewhat to himself, by the savage manhood only he was made of. Christian is sitting next to him without knowing what it is to be a man, perhaps not needing to. "Only then, when Bertil Askerville can’t any longer see what the purpose is with the article, then he has become the purpose himself," Thor says. They stare each other in the eyes.

"Our boss has made me realize how important the ability of exact communication is. He’s a man, however, who can only concentrate on either talking or listening.

"No, Christian! That’s you! You’ve become a template of your boss. You’ve swallowed your heart. You’re eating your tongue. You don’t talk to me anymore, Christian. You’re just like Hitler, or Trotsky, completely soaked up with what you’re doing technically, perfectly, stiffly, but without a soul. You hold the world in front of you like a little picture. Your life is nothing but an uneffective and monotonously ringing bell. Where’s your melody man?"

"Don’t tell me my life lacks music, Thor! You don’t know... What you’re talking about... You’re nothing but a photographer... A PHOTOGRAPHER! AND I’M THE WRITER! THE DIRECTOR!"

"You got to put yourself in the picture, Christian. When I take a picture I put myself in the midst of the perspective I’m photographing, to see what’s about to happen just before it happens. Now that’s composing if anything! Don’t listen to the staff Christian. They think they have something, but they’re just chasing the mothers of the disappeared. I hope you listen to this, Chris. It doesn’t work out.

"You’re exploding my psyche open.

"Bertil’s narration is false because the fantasy of his media world is false."

"So what’s your suggestion?"

"I don’t know Christian. I just try to create something for myself. My own experiences create my own life."

"I’m bound by my situation Thor. You can’t liberate me."

"Ok, fine with me. Sit there by your desk. Imprison yourself behind your stainless steel bars of thoughts and assumptions. Don’t scream for mercy because you lack the truths about life, your own experiences. Just make them on your own. Trust your ears. Trust your hands. Trust your eyes. Do things with them. Don’t think of what they can do. Make them do what you want to achieve."

"I have a purpose Thor."

"I can’t see you anymore. You treat me like a sack of rags."

"We were working on the Church of Scientology for a long time. Don’t let it eat you."

"Nothing eats me. What about yourself?"

"We’ve still got a new article to write."

"Ok. So what exactly is it about?"

"Relationships."

"Between who? Me and you?" Thor laughs.

"No, between man and woman. How has their relationship developed a sixth sense during the last millenium kind of stuff."

"That’s got to be the worst idea for an article an Editor-in-chief could ever come up with."

"I don’t think so. I kind of liked it."

"But, Christian... did you take him seriously...?"

"Were there any reasons why I shouldn’t?"

"I can’t believe this! He was making a fool of you, Christian. That’s not a real topic. That’s bull. Don’t tell me you left his office saying that you would write it?!!"

"I didn’t... I mean... I don’t want to write HIS bull, either Thor, but we’re in it together."

"Oh really. That’s you saying that."

"I don’t get you Thor."

"Who set up the interviews with the holy people at the Church of Scientology? Who came up with the idea to investigate how much these poor students had to pay just to hear someone tell them, “You’re
Ok. God likes you. We will open God's gates for you if you'll allow us to educate you, but it costs.”

“You.”

“My fear is naked for the Church of Scientology anf for you Christian.”

“What is it that I've done wrong? I hate Bertil Askerville just as much as you do.”

“But you don’t tell him that.”

“But Thor, is that wise?”

“If you're honest to people, they will be honest to you.”

“Right!”

“Just listen to yourself!”

“I don’t like Bertil, but at least I try to co-operate with him. I know he's not the most honest man in the world, but what can I do about it? He's my boss! Do you understand!!?”

“Ok forgive me Christian. When is this one due?”

“Tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow!!! You’re unreal. There's no way in hell we're gonna get it together by tomorrow! It's 9:46 a.m. right now. Not even Bertil could be this cruel. What do you want?”

“We've got ten pages to play with.”

“Christian, this is unreal. Are you playing some kind of game with me? I don’t think you're being honest to me.”

“Any ideas??”

“Well...” Thor was silent. “To be honest... The only thing I can think of is what other people already have written.”

“Oh no. Not plagiarism Thor.”

“Would you let me finish my sentence first, before you say something!”

“You mean someting like ‘He likes to be with her so he says does he like to be with her so he says...’”

“Right! Followed by Jim Morrison...”

“Oh God...”

“Why not? ‘There are things known and there are things unknown, inbetween are the Doors,’ right after that line!”

“What... do you mean Thor?”

“Dialogue Christian. Let's find sentences from well known authors, female as well as male and create a dialogue. There you would find some kind of (bermale voice and (berfemale voice)!” Thor looks Christian in the eyes.

“That's...excellent...Thor.”

Thor laughs, “I was just kidding,” but he's met by Christian's cold astonishment.

“You piss me off.”

“Why?”

“Because... You don’t take yourself seriously, but still you come up with these fantastic solutions, without thinking.”

“Knock it off. I wasn’t serious Christian!”

“I know you weren't, but still what you say has no alternative... Your words come so naturally they’re so excellent all the time.”

“It’s because I live my answers, Christian. I’ve already told you in our discussion, why.”

“I know Thor but you put me on the spot... You frighten me.”

“I'm not.”

“I don’t know what to say. I have nothing to say.”

“Why do you lock yourself up like some old book antiquarian Gregor Sylvian Whiddlebarn?”

“Who’s that??”

“I don’t know, I just made it up.”
"You're bizarre Thor," Thor laughs.
"Jesus Christ how can you expect to write good stories if you're not able to let yourself go?"
"I don't...lack inspiration."
"Well make up your mind if you're going to use it, 'cause right now we need it pretty bad.
"But Thor, you've already solved the article...by your guiltless theft...you've already talked. There's nothing I can do..."
"Am I sinful because I don't keep my mouth shut? Because I'm making a choice not to remain silent?"
"Am I sinner because of how the circumstances have developed in the way they have and because I cannot control them like a corrupt editor-in-chief but abides by them like a citizen, like a number?"
"I've never heard you talk like this before."
Christian liquidated himself with morality. He thought it was wrong to think that the original sin followed one's actions in a way that disabled oneself from doing anything about them. He wondered for a while how sin could lie on each man's shoulders like a conviction, an original sin monks knew they could never get rid of. Christian was out of hope.
"If this is the case the human race is fooled of her own future."
"What's wrong with you?"
"Just get out of this café."

Thor thought of all the HiFi-magazines he had read from which he gathered his technological knowledge, the stuff he thought Christian absolutely had to know as a journalist of popmusic. He knew well how many writers of rock'n' roll neglected the vast multitude of technology that built the music of the nineties and now had become its insignia. Thor knew Christian liked to reason like the musicians themselves, that music was about the thought, the feeling, a curiosity somewhere within. He knew how much Christian's reportage of a musician benefited from his knowing how they made the technology work for them. Other critics' interest in music was a solemn matter of listening, and commenting upon what they heard. Christian "understood" how a new link from the musician to the reader/listener had to be aligned by a so far undiscovered horizon-broadening perspective. Thor's thoughts had begun to emerge since the technology to him appeared as a trap for this creative artist to become a self-preserving addict. He thought how easy it was to get lost abiding by the true interests of rock, with a lifestyle where picks and nickels shared the space in the wallet. Where the morning milk was exchanged for 50 grams of a chalkwhite little powder or to some other fellas, four fingers of 12 year-old Seagram's. Christian had "realized" how critics to a larger and larger extent glorified the lifestyles of the different composers as being something more important and more loaded than the actual music. When the messages become larger than the musicians themselves the musicians became cases of "their own religion." Cases of their guiltless theft of humanity's need to tie together. The most important for the critics were the booze, the women, and the bucks. To hang on as much as they could. "So that the sludge in the end is impossible for the Christian rockstar himself to land in," Thor laughed for himself. Some star reporters worked like animals for a picture of how and when they had intercourse, where they bought their underwear and panties, or what perfume they used, he remembered Christian telling him. "Together" they had discovered how the music of the nineties had become a "torn rug of an entrance to high life," from once having been the beautiful and minutely handknit piece of art it truly was. Christian knew the feeling of constantly trying to unlock the door to that little rug. The social aspects of visiting Cafe Onyx, nightclubs like The Hangar or Le Petit Diable. Cocaine. Sex. Scandal. Those were the contents of the rockbag he knew of. The attributes were almost too good to be true. They were fully developed, kind of blooming. These myths, true or not true, were, when Christian "thought" about it, nothing but the horny piston of rock'n roll music. All to often he had ended up in its myth machinery trying to interview eccentric people on totally overcrowded nightclubs, while smiling cracks of honesty. He "knew" how that idealized, constantly blooming fruit of rock smelled,
and how divinely sexy it indeed was, not without a certain carving value. Most often “completely different than just different.” It scared him. He had seen people with personalities disappear in the landscapes of rock. It made them produced. He was scared of Christian, because Christian wasn’t scared of that technology, the literally one and only part of the whole of modern rock machinery. He thought that if he could get to know the technology, he’d be able to “sort out its artistic values” from what was “commercialized metal junk and bullshit,” even though Christian “wasn’t a rambler himself.” He had just become “cautious.” He’d seen too many people “getting burned in the steel wheel of rock.” He had gotten “really scared” the last weeks thinking about it. “It was just a machinery and everyone bought from it, bought like mad.” Everyone wanted to be in its center. Christian had been there. He had talked to those few, who on their way had become like no one else. Everything was twisted in there. People had no dreams anymore. Those were all “alive.” Imagination was “reality” in that world. Thor got afraid for the first time in his long existence as he saw how those people let technology take care of their imagination.

“You make me sad, Christian.”

“Just leave me. You disgust me.”

We have to concentrate on the picture the way it is. We’re not the camera or the photographer anymore. We are parts, the constituents of a sick constellation of new, completely grotesque parts of a philosophy that we’ve never seen put together before.”

“There are many reasons for us to look for answers as to why we are here now. Therefore our consciousness is forced to make a choice,” Christian answered.

Thor slowly shook his head and stood up.

“We’re still conscious. We can still make a choice.” He put a new John Silver without a filter between his lips of fury. “The unconscious is like water. It acts like a mirror reflecting upon whatever is before it, but it can’t be polluted. Any matter that falls into the pond of unconscious moves differently, it doesn’t get about like things are in reality.”

He put on his wolf fur-coat and took all the pictures that laid on the table and put them in his backpack. “What makes the emperor to choose specifically the camera? What are his instincts? Did he understand how the gigantic plot would end? I think the Czar’s hobby of photography is an unconscious means of survival. He searches for an enigmatic center where life plays and lives the most, where it’s found to be most eternal. To see how life’s virginity played in his daughters’ and his wife’s eyes... You boat is leaking, Christian.”

The whole café was silent as if death hang in the air.

“Well, my energy is focused. My work has got a purpose.

“Look at the experience itself. It’s an innovation. It has conclusions.”

“We cannot see what has become of us because we never paid attention to whom we are ourselves.”

“Who knows for sure? Money is the society. It is power, happiness, culture, inspiration, perspiration, dehydration, starvation, education, food, dreams, sex, drugs, that’s all. In some way Czar Nikolai pushes eternity a couple of steps when he mentally puts himself in the midst of the perspective he’s photographing. For each argument Bertil makes, he blinds himself, not seeing that his narration is false because the fantasy of his media world is false. It doesn’t say on a bill what, or whom has performed the work of its value. Today I’ll walk towards west while you talk towards east, but who knows for sure whose boat is leaking...”

He looked like some ancient warlord as he slowly walked away from Christian who just remained still at the table. Thor just shook his head, but Christian never saw the tear on his chin.

“Nooo woomamaaan nooo craaay, nooo woman no cry,” he heard Bob Marley singing from the busdriver’s fuzzy reggae channel.

“I need a woman,” he said to himself. “I’m crying because I’m lying.”

The day passed on slowly. He took the five o’clock home and talked to his girlfriend Katja Petrén on
the phone for a while. Their relationship was hanging on a thread. The last month had been kind of tough. He had had way too much stuff to do at the office. Katja seemed to have taken some kind of shit for it. Their two-hour conversation on the phone had been messy. Christian was seriously thinking of breaking up with this woman. He both liked her and hated her. He felt sorry. He always felt sorry when he hung up. It was a strange relationship, he thought. She had cried in the midst of what he thought was her fifth nervous breakdown in two weeks. He didn’t or couldn’t understand what it was that he was doing so wrong. She was complaining about some relatives in Scotland who had died, some host parent since her time in Ireland and England finishing up her doctorate. They were all mysterious inexplicable years, those which she had spent over there, studying all kinds of things which she never told him of. Christian wanted to have his relationship with this woman intact, but he felt fried just thinking of it and of her. She needed a shrink. Christian thought he had to make up his mind. To go over to her place. “To tell her...but what?” he asked. He didn’t know what to do with this woman, who was in a world of her own. During the day he had built up a wall of fear. He feared what his creative ability was doing with his mind. What it had done to others. There was something strange with the world, it told him. It thought the staff and his boss Bertil were false.

“Bertil has just transformed into a hungry shark who cared less and less about the community he was selling news to. He didn’t care about its people, he preferred telling them how they were killing each other.” The more Christian thought of it, he began to see something with his last month of work. He had never imagined how easy it was to change and manipulate people’s minds the way he had with his last article. He thought his boss was too hungry, but he knew how things were at the paper. What the truth is and what makes a story a sell out are two, as Bertil says “very separate things.” He had respect for his boss, but sometimes... he got scared of him... and his psyche.

Felix jumped up in his lap. Christian grabbed a beer and after a while he felt incredibly tired, sitting in front of the TV. He began to feel dizzy after the beer and all of a sudden he fell down in the couch like a knocked seal.
Chapter 2.

"Finally a break! Oh man! what break!"

Her impressions were diversified. They had given her many new insights into her environment. A warm Greek sun caressed her already deeply tanned body. Her look was profound and very creative. She was there at the beach for a contact. A challenge. Farthest out in the horizon’s union of oceanic water and azure blue sky she was looking for something. She didn’t know exactly what. She screwed up her eyes against the sun. She found a fantastic comfort lying there, gazing, searching, abiding to the horizon that was escaping from her like a mysterious mirage, way out of grasp.

She studied the coastlines with peculiar, philosophical eyes from her favorite chair down at the beach. The fishermen’s characteristic wooden barges acted as a floating foreground to that shimmer she discovered was at rest. It made her concentrate. Her brain processed the haze frenetically, it was like a sexual act. She was embalmed with it. Instead of a haze, the idea of a gigantic stretched-out hand came to her mind. It was as if it waited for people’s lives to shake it, but maybe just to feel it. It was a hand that wanted to caress itself but had not yet, or perhaps could not reach all the way through. Sandra enjoyed the tension of what was in between her and somewhere out there. Something was going on. Something was about to happen. The woman stumbled on the magic of automation with this mist. She was delighted. She smiled as her lips of joy could not any more be held back. The joy was there in her, so naturally, so deeply from within. She recognized the sun’s power of life, and how it grasped the ocean and breathed into the water’s organisms.

Sandra stayed in the sun. The beach was still empty, without any motion. This place was still a morning’s virgin. Faintly she could hear how the waves came to a rest on the soft shore. The scene was, Sandra perceived, a relaxed harmony of more than the two elements, sun and water. Sandra felt how she was a part of this scene. Her thoughts pulsed with each breath it took, she vibrated with concentration as if she was in charge of every problem in the world but did not know how to solve them. But she knew she had the power.

It had been a hectic morning, she thought. Up already at six a.m., warm and de carbonated beer, some chews of pistachio. Finished and done with her packing already at seven o’clock on this hot morning, so typical for Cyprus. This was the last of her mornings with the morning mists. “Nice to get back totally rested.”

Most of the tourists at her hotel had chased away their last drachmers on one hell of a last party night, and of course Sandra, Mia or Klara had not saved any of their Greek dow either. “Actually, why didn’t I stay in my room, just for the inexchangable scene of waking up in their 24 squareyards state-of-the-art chaos. She well knew how fun it was to wake up among one’s two best friends, only to realize how the the nuclear bomb indeed had detonated. “Only the result counted for...” she laughed in a whisper. Mia’s wig brutally had adopted its new role as a frustrated scrubbing-rag of the early sixties during the week. At the airport it suddenly had been pulled out from her suitcase, for a wild and naked streaming between their hands, and at last laughed at like a true ridicule. The wig, now totally stripped of its tufts, reached the final state of disintegration. At the check-in it had had a shape of something palepurple, lanky, hippie curly. At this point it resembled something very, very mutated. “Simply a Mitezombie!” Sandra laughed cynically in the sun. For some reason the girls thought that the wig’s talents for absorption were a World Champ’s, and therefore widely superior to the Greek vacuum-cleaners’ pre-ancient coughing. Already the first morning their theorem resulted in an application at the tube of the vacuum cleaner, with a bit of washing soap and some ointment under the shower’s psychodelically assymetrical sprays. After the execution it had been left to hang out there, outside the window-sill. Like a deadly wounded legend from 1964. The wig was probably the only thing that had become clean.

The clothes were thrown about like different constellations of stars, each from a different galaxy,
as Sandra left them, her friends and the room to find her own galaxy down at the beach. It was a new and fresh alternative to the strange spring system of their beds that no one quite had figured out. Conquered trophies during the weekly campaign she left as partly emptied, stray roaring documents as she had pattered the door to a closing. They were like different rough drafts of adventures none of the girls had had the power to finish up. Vat 69, Gin, Karloff’s Vodka, Martini and an opened bottle of Seagram’s whiskey indignantly carried the alcohol’s heavy role, unfortunately with an all too cracked grace. Mia and Klara would never forget this scene, being perhaps the most sincere souvenir of them all. A sculpture highly alive of the bohemian life. The pentry was convincing with its terrifying amount of dish, food leftovers, and unknown bottles with unknown contents. It was not the girls that had the hangover. Absolutely everything had been thrown at the little Greek pentry. She had done the right thing, going down to the beach early. At that time only the real people showed up, Sandra thought. “That was the time when a real atmosphere of homecoming was present,” Sandra thought as she glanced at the first returning fishermen and heard the gulls at a distance. She closed her eyes to escape the reality at the surface of the ocean that methodically and pitilessly held its taut harpoons of consequence, triggers unlocked, aimed at her. Sandra sweated in the whipping rays of the sun.

Her conscious unlocked itself. She was not day-dreaming or fainting, yet it was as if she had found the road of Hyparxis, giving her the push to the unknown. Each of her movements, each of her breaths was synchronized with her female self. That hand of the horizon was right next to her. When the wind lifted her hair, it touched her. Just like the screaming, sweating rock star that burned out all his mental capacity performing, it was the animus that confronted her. It wanted to rock. She knew something had to happen. She had to make up her mind. She took on the challenge of existentialism to integrate herself. Sandra was attracted to that sudden harmony that came from nowhere. Her walls of hatred and people burning fields of lies to her, her own misachievements like adored ironspits piercing her consciousness, all of it was part of the balanced female retribution. Sandra laughed at how all her oppression, how it was dependent on a woman’s giving up career and self-esteem. All she had to do was to dance with her own imagination and the exit would explode open. Her intelligence, Sandra realized, was the woman’s best friend. It accepted her situation, and it made her accept it on her own as well, wherever, whenever, whatever caused it. She knew how her intelligence was the creator of all life in her. It made her not to blind herself, to herself.

Sandra was at an instant terrified at her own mind-fucking. She had lost her sense of what was the most honest part of her. She knew that she was not more than a human. But she did know that she was on her way to something. She had just slid in to it. It did not matter to her that she did not know all about herself yet. It was a rendition of the fact that a new harmony within Sandra blinded her from seeing how everything had a function in her. She was not used to feeling perfect. What she naturally could not see was that she in her own being was an attraction of God. Sandra felt as if her mind was going to be torn apart if she continued her meditation. Something had rocked her into motion. She wanted to do something with it. It made her look for new expressions, in a way, in everything. Everything mattered to her. Sandra understood that it was possible to see new things in the things that already existed. She wanted to know how. She wanted to know what it was that no one had seen. “There was not a lack of creativity,” Sandra knew, ““fantasy existed in everyone.”” It was too late for her to change her mind and go back. All she could do was to proceed on this road that seemed without a beginning or an end. But she missed something, like the rain without its clouds, like the fire without its oxygen.

During the morning the mist shattered as it had done for millenia. This morning however, the scenery had been discerned in a way it never had before. Sandra did not want to leave. It was a cradle of logic and ideas. A beach and nothing more. The aged and fine sand, soft to the touch. The ocean, somewhat half dead with pollution, did still crawl up on the beach, time after another, like an old habit. An enigmatic wheel had perhaps begun to turn. An exodus had against the society’s commercialized and dehumanized odds perhaps been commenced. A woman’s thoughts danced with the winds of fate to
produce a crusade towards the nave of eternity, a center which everything circled around. This morning all of this had a rhythm that was caught by her who was in a universe, in a star system actually pretty much like any else.

“Sandra?” Mia glanced full of questions at Klara. “Sandra? Hey? Are’ya gonna wake up today?” Klara looked down at her unconscious mate.

“How long have I been lying here?” Sandra said sleep-drunkly, without being quite awake. Her reply was a little bit too sudden. A little bit too perfect. Mia could not quite follow her friend, whom she thought she should feel like the thief taken in the very act, like a person that at least for a minute had lost her mind. Mia’s look met the roaring laughter of Klara. When they looked at their friend, a timeless look met them. A clear look without that fear and insecurity that Sandra always had had. The eyes of a falcon that pierced Klara and Mia, were elevated from their descended position in the chair. Hypnotized, Klara and Mia did not first notice. The situation was intense.

“I needed some sun, this very last day.” Sandra answered. A booming silence appeared.

“How good of you to pack in advance!” Klara said cheerfully.

“I just did.” Sandra breathed.

“Oh my gosh! Can you believe how we laughed when we saw your prudent bags, in between bras, hair-dryers, empty winebottles, greasy glasses and all these darn bikini streamers all over the place.” Mia shook her head

“And the smell of Chanel no. 5 together with old pistachio,” Klara said very informed. The looks of the three met in a loud laughter.

“Do we have to leave immediately?”

“The airplane takes off in about two and a half hours,” Mia said.

“What happened to you, Sandra?” Klara giggled, with a thoughtful expression on her face. She looked herself around on the empty beach and found that it seemed totally forgotten. Now they both looked at her, searching in her eyes.

“Did Jose show up in his wooden boat and seduced you?!?” she tried again. At this point they all cracked up really bad.

The girls had stuck together since school and knew each other inside and out. They were a team. The security that sprang out from their being together was contagious to all of their encounters. They helped Sandra up on her legs. The three of them all thought that she was hit by a sunstroke. They helped each other to pick up her stuff and returned quickly to the hotel. They walked into the closed restaurant that was preparing for lunch. Klara ordered an ice-cold bottle of lemonwater, and afterwards said to Sandra, “Your bags are in the vestibule.” to Sandra.

“Thanks.” she replied. She looked at Klara and Mia. “Are you mad or what?” she asked.

Klara met Mia’s sight in astonishment.

“No...Why?”

“I thought that...”

“What?” Mia said.

“I don’t really know why I went down.” Sandra eyed them beadingly. “I just had too...”

“...as if...whatever!” Klara gaily ended Sandra’s train of thought.

Sandra was calm on her own behalf, but was worried by the fact that her two best friends were trying to hide their real mood from her. They remained looking at her in a kind of silent expectation. Sandra grabbed the decanter and began gulping straight from it.

“No... Sandra! Put it down!” Klara with a constrained look saw how her friend took an even more firm grip of the jar of clay and emptied the contents all over herself.

“I love water...” Sandra said. The older waiter just entered the dining hall. He saw how the female’s hair and face were totally soaked by the decanter’s lemonwater he had served them only a half
minute ago. Roaring and crazy like a storm on an ocean he pulled the decanter from her. The waiter, who by the way also was the owner of the hotel, continued roaring at Sandra. She calmly followed her friends out of the restaurant, closely followed by the crazy Cypriot. She could hear how the decanter was wrecked against the floor by the excited waiter, and who finally, chucked them out of the hotel. They passed through the old village with houses of stone for a last time, and now on to escape to a waiting airplane. There was not anything special about the houses' simple constructions, Sandra thought. Just an ancient agelessness. She thought of the crooked roads that wound themselves away and warped in between what seemed to be impulsively spread out and white-limed fronts. The natives followed the rough gravel paths stubbornly to different places in the village, like they always had. At this point of the day it was mostly old buffers and women that had sat down on their benches, and by doing so, the daily tradition for ages back was maintained for another afternoon. The happening was the discussion, the gesticulation. Just life.

Sandra had the opportunity to distinguish faces and their owners' carriages. They had an attitude and a mood, each one of them. With a power to live. The men wore their picturesquely torn blazers with the belonging pair of large, light and coolly wide trousers. "Probably darn dirty," Sandra concluded. Their clogs were worn out and their shirts mended with many patches and buttons. Some had leather aprons which, from their duty for the worker, doing his trade, had been metamorphosed into smaller pieces of armor. Stretched out and torn they had been rugged up on the bellies, whatever craft their master was executing. Shoemakers as well as watchmakers, tailors, fishnetmakers and the tough weathermen themselves of course, the fishermen. The morning alert bakers were the contrast. Completely covered with White wheat flour they mocked around between hungry natives and tourists and other co-workers in their shops, at the marketplace. Sandra noticed on her last walk through the village how each person had been marked by the tooth of time. Furrowed, tanned faces were closely connected to thick-setted bodies. The skulls were covered with a grey, by the sun or age, wholly chalkwhite hair. Some of the elders had big goldplugs that stuck out from the otherwise sound bonewhite in the teeth-line. She thought of how incredibly cheap and destitute they would have appeared at home in that part of the world where she lived. "What a hell for the social welfare offices...even they would not be able to make these people come to an understanding of\ what 'a minimum of existence' yielded." Sandra just shook her head as she stared down in the gutter. Something happened.

"HEY! LOOK OUT!...BEHIND YOU!...SANDRA!, SANDRA!," Mia and Klara shouted in unison ten yards behind her. But it did not matter any more. Klara and Mia pressed themselves in panic, together with the rest of the people on the street, up against the edgy walls of limestone. The laughs echoed lively along the gravel esplanade. Klara stood bent down, laughing hysterically. A stark-leaping and most likely crazy donkey jumped out from a corner, furthest down on the left-hand side of the street. With an uncompromising choice of path it held a cruelly straight course towards a lonely Sandra, standing in the middle of the street, now a little bit more aware. Higher forces had decided that this beast was to be led by the pure originality of its own whims. The donkey cut off in sharp ninety-degree turnabouts and dashed forward straight into the wall of the house, only for a return to its barbaric course towards Sandra, not without a certain interest in making piouettes. She saw something in its muzzle.

"I'll be damned," she slowly outburst as she saw the puffs. It was obvious that someone or some people had gotten this animal used to tobacco. It was smoking a pipe. All of a sudden two red-eyed Cypriots showed up behind the same corner, followed by a fat person, whom Sandra quickly perceived as an American. As she discovered three police officers with pouring sweat and tongues fluttering like aspenleafs in the winds of fall, she understood that the donkey had gotten grass into its lungs. She tried to sum up the whole thing methodically where she was standing, there in the middle of the street, petrified with horror. "It was...styling," she thought coldbloodedly, attempting a bit of grim humour. In the very middle of a solo of what only could be referred to as the animalistic answer to Kurdish tap-dance, the donkey held its head in zenith, and accompanying itself with sporadical superneighs it backed itself into a smaller bakery, right behind it. The dust came to a rest. A couple of
stalling seconds passed. When Sandra looked up, she could not believe her eyes. She could not believe that it was true. She thought of that little chance of life that indeed from nowhere had appeared. With her heart all the way up in the throat, she bursted up front to her mates, who pale as corpses still pressed themselves against the wall.

But she ran back as she discovered two persons were caught inside that inferno of what now could be regarded as a donkey’s very own, personal bakery. From inside of it, one could hear how the animal put every emotion it had into its neighing. Two elder bakers suddenly strutted out from the entrance. When they stiffly had reached the middle of the street, next to Sandra, they just stayed put in their Cypriot shock and began screaming. A bizarre silence of death unfolded itself shortly thereafter. It seemed as if time had come to a standstill. No person could even begin to believe in a continuation of life. The American, hardly at all. Detained by the three police officers, he did not seem quite sure if his Cypriot arrest was the worst thing to happen, or if it was the randomness of the situation that totally was in the hands of a greybrown donkey. As four youngsters, possibly ten years old, tried to impress with their courage, leaving the relatively safe positions among parents, to find out a little about what was going on in the bakery, they were soon followed by the whole familytree. Now everyone immediately wanted a glance from inside the bakery. Then the donkey came. Sandra thought a little bit ironically of the old album title “Achting Baby” at what seemed to be half the population of Cyprus’ once again abrupt upheaval, pressing themselves up against the walls. With the whole of its head and breast fantastically whitepowdered, the donkey staggered like a real drug addict out into the middle of the street. People were extincted of horror. The animal simply stood quiet in the middle of the street and looked about. With legs shaking like jelly, on an airplane flying through turbulent winds, the dead donkey sank down.

“Poor fellow,” Klara and Mia said in concord, shaking their heads.

An immediate sense of tragedy spread among the citizens of the village and the tourists. No one could have dreamt of the donkey’s death to become a finale to what had began like a thrilling and humourous circus-number. One by one the tourists left the white house walls and slowly gathered around the deceased animal. Sandra was amazed. Everyone approached it cautiously, as if it was still not over. But it was over. For the donkey it was over. The older people seemed to take the scene the hardest. They understood what struggle the animal had gone through. Younger people jog-trotted, somewhat perturbed, further on. Some kids that had been around all the time thought most of the stuff about this donkey seemed pretty cool. First it had jumped and jerked like hell. Now it had calmed down and laid itself to rest on the ground. Astonishingly respectful they walked up to watch the dead carcass. Very slowly did the reality, carefully explained by their parents, dawn on them. Klara was not really sure either of how to correspond in response to this morbid intermezzo. Sandra stooped around the head of the donkey. Next to her sat an old man, holding on to its neck. It lay slack and dead in his arms. As with most southerners’ tempers and warm way of expressing their feelings, this guy’s eyes shone of bitterness. With graygrizzled and distorted hair, shrunk-up under his repaired cap of leather, she could see the sorrow in this man’s body posture. His face that sometimes roared up against the masses, grinned venomously at the nipping sun. Sandra looked down from the tears in his eyes, like the valiance of two shields of copper, to find a pair of aged hands. They were rough. Tendonous and tanned, and with palms of leather, they gripped even harder around the cheekbone of this old, trustworthy friend.

Sandra was touched by the fatality of the situation, and at how she immediately, because of that, had become a part of it. His hands seemed coiled as if they were holding a bundle. For a moment, Sandra comprehended all of the grief that came through this man’s furious expressions. He had all the colors of life. She saw his hours of sweat and diligence. His coveted struggle for a life with enough to eat, enough to drink, enough to heat the house with when it was cold. And it was all there in his eyes. The humour, the joy, the values. It dawned upon Sandra how this man indeed had lost the only real source of income. Now he had no reliable way of nourishing his family. All she could do now was to curse death, just like
this old man himself, there in the dust, among tourists, natives and the three police officers. His senses were paralyzed.

"One of his experiences," Sandra thought, "has all of a sudden become one of mine." The children stood up and glanced at foreign faces that coldly, indifferently sucked up all the juicy stuff of the Cypriot family tragedy. It became too much for the man. He rose quickly from the ground and yelled at the audience as he pushed them away. Sandra grasped him in her sight, and she embraced his carving bitterness because she had seen how something very nasty tore and ravaged in him, something he couldn't hold back. Something that had overpowered him.

"Let's go." Klara was standing up. She wanted to leave the place. Mia was searching for Sandra's look. She managed to get a little glance of the mysterious, transcendentally irreproachable eyes of Sandra. At last she answered by turning around. She hesitated but after a while the three women marched on.

Slowly, as if in trance, he got up on shaky knees. He looked over the street.

"She's got to be up there...she's got to be somewhere," he inquired. "On the crest." Xankellides understood that the time had fallen out of control. The woman had passed the crest. Not until furthest away in the elongation of the street, where it edged the horizon, he saw something of a haze. Sandra was there, like a purple haze of wisdom, like a foxy lady of sliiness.

"As if..." Xankellides began. "As if she was a part of the crest...a joint between the sky and the earth," he ascertained to himself. Sandra's frock in white accepted successively the increasing breeze from the sea. At first he had not been able to distinguish anything, but as his eyes had gotten used to the direct counterlight, he caught sight of the three women. He saw the three fluttering skirts and their beautifully billowing swells of hair, in that breeze from the east. One of the women was standing a little bit in front of the others. Sideways. For some reason the leader. She turned around from having overlooked the ocean.

His thoughts pushed him through his years of living. The fisherman learned something essential. He had a common sense and he made use of it. It told him that he had met a wisdom. A wisdom one meets perhaps only once in life. "Thus life has its doubts, and charming roundabouts," the elder Xankellides concluded as he was walking back to the crowd and the donkey. He had learned more from his senses by sheer living than from what the traditional sources of education had offered him. His very own knowledge sensed an enormous closeness to that fluttering frock up on the hill he thought he had barely seen in a strange mist between earth and sky. The intimacy gave him power. It was not she that he longed for, but it was what happened when she waved to him. His speculations took off because of that timeless communication that sprang from her. He had fallen for something that was just happening, only between them, but played everywhere, he understood. Something of decay came across his mind as he detected the meaningless pseudo of his life. His mood changed. The memories were falling down on him. It was spring. The Bloody Marys and the urban vineyards were his favorite occupation. Experiences from his life flooded in his head to leave, head over heels, as mysteriously as they had appeared. "It...had not been in vain, had it?" he still asked his frenzied brain. At once he was satisfied with that piece of land and those bays with inked octopussy-columns that he had captured throughout his life. "A poor fisherman's life filled of monotony...repetitions...?" He discovered how each year, each hour and each second in his life was ticking like a metronome or like a spinning wheel of spokes, where each spoke was a year, tied to the hub, him. One minute ago the woman on the top of that barren hill had tried, in the mist between sky and earth, to set his sleeping wheel into motion. In each step back to the crowd, each of his mental spokes spoke spookily to him, each of were being hardened slowly, dignified and heavenly...completely unveiling. "Of course," it struck him, where he was standing, in the way he always had on the fields changing years of phenomenal harvests, as well as disastrous. He watched his donkey next to the two-wheeled cart, pulled up next to it. The crowd had almost dissolved. Eight numb pair of eyes looked archly at him. The hearse was just about to roll, and eight pairs of eyes waited around him. He was totally still, and he let fate dance its fatal dance...away...far away...with him. His willpower was mysterious. Powerless, out of courage, and depersonalized he succeeded in setting those spoky spokes into motion. He felt like the dust of the ground,
like a dirty old sheet of paper, flat, dry. He wanted to scream out “Please walk on me, someone, don’t make me cry, while feeling how the cart slowly rolled him by. Its very own wheels of death sparkled, thundered as if a new solitude pushed him forward, as if it made him advance, even though it didn’t, but for a cold, mental freeze. He did not know how that woman had placed him in that hub, in that spot which was the center of all motion. He couldn’t understand how she had made him see love where love couldn’t be seen. He felt an urge to go on with his life, when there was nothing to go on with. Some sense in this fisherman understood how he had been given time in a timeless time, enough for a person to catch up with its soul. It was his will to withstand without a regretful no on his lips. Like the tough wolf of toils he was, he commanded laboriously,

“One, two, and three!”

A fine powder of dust beneath the cart waved good-bye. Majestically, the cart wagged through the road’s twists and nooks. It reached the hill and disappeared. When the fisherman arrived at home, and had begun walking up the stairs to his house, he discovered that streak of hope that made him say “There’s a new sun on the sky, tomorrow!” He stepped inside the house. In, to a hungry family that did not know. Already, a new light was burning within.

According to Captain Flyer, they had reached an altitude of 6000 feet. Mia unbuckled. “In two hours I’m home again.” She closed her eyes. Klara had a windowseat. Carefully, she had followed the take-off, with a yet unpassed tickle in her belly. She had a fear of flying and it was so bad, she preferred not to talk about it. Maybe after fifteen minutes, or twenty, one could hear the deep and soaring snores from Klara, just like any snores at an altitude of 6000 feet above sea. The hours lingered on.

“Is Michael gonna show up?” Mia asked, all of a sudden very inquisitive.

“Michael who?” Sandra said uninterested.

“The one who showed up at Alexander’s house-warming party, the other weekend,...you know! Michael drove both me, you and Andreas home!”

“Why would Michael pick me up?” Sandra uttered even more astonished.

“Foxy Michael!” Klara laughed so that the whole row of passengers in front of them simply had to turn their heads. Everyone had to know who was talking about foxes.

“Well...” Sandra hesitated. “Fox would be what I could imagine him as,” she said with melancholy.

“Michael, isn’t he nice?” Mia continued.

“Que?”

“I know that you get horny by his voice. That, you told me during the whole night.”

“When did foxes begin to speak?” Sandra asked when Captain Flyer cut their discussion. He wanted to inform them that the air over Beyondburg, which they were about to pass through within three or four minutes, had large differences in temperature, which would cause some turbulence for a while. Mia and Sandra looked forward to a roller-caster ride for real. Klara just shook and leaned backwards to keep up with her snoring. When Sandra looked out through the little window she saw how white clouds fluttered by, resembling a pile with cotton, impossible to penetrate. She ended up psyching herself to sleep. She knew that she would never again fly with captain Flyer. He was not a big log-rammer on turbulence. She tried to calm herself down with the fact that she was above Beyondburg or...some...where. It was all a fuzz in her head.

Klara’s schoolmate Alexander Lugan had a soul governed by pure artistry. He was the man who dissolved his whole person into everything that he created, and from that perspective, he was maybe quite an odd figure. Klara, who was taking a two-year program at the School of Arts, had an excellent touch with oil, which they had been working with the last four months. She was thinking of a career in the retouch business that would disconnect her from that pure artistic chapters of the course, and from those
like Alexander who took art dead seriously. Alexander himself, however, thought that he was quite good at being a common-place person. He convinced himself every day that he was an extremely common-place person. It was hard, however, he confessed in the hallways, to keep oneself away from the school in the free time. Klara just did what she had to and this was probably the reason why she was amazed by that over-creative guy that one day had driven in a Skoda, all the way into the schoolyard. Next to this still rolling wreck, he put a box with spraying cans. Klara and her best friend Britt-Doris just had to get up to the man in charge, who by the way was dressed up in a paperbag. Next to the car a sign post said “ARE YOU AN ARTIST?” He had told them that the car needed new paint and as the Skoda had become the new volkswagen, it should accordingly be painted by the people. Klara had thought Alexander was too much, but in some way his peculiar charm fell through her cool heart of armor. They remained there with him the whole afternoon and saw how the car bit by bit was painted. Alexander, who had invited Sandra, Mia and Klara to his house-warming party, was properly the totally wrong person to organize a movement of masses, to be at a place during a certain amount of time. Some things he was just unable to do. Other things he mastered just as surely as water made boats float. Mr Lugens was the kind of guy that gave Artistic schools their very special insignia of mystery that they have, and probably always will have. For safety reasons Sandra regarded him as a mystic.

“This is the most expensive roller-caster ride I have ever experienced...it’s like nothing but sitting on Leif Eriksson bloody viking boat...heading for New England...” was to be heard at a distance. It was an extremely convincing version of a southern accent, professionally exercised by an older lady who was sitting a couple of rows further ahead. Klara thought that she was 87 years old and no one had any power to argue. The old bitch was just loaded with bullshit.

“Alex’ party was the grooviest thing I’ve ever experienced,” Klara exclaimed dazed. Mia first looked at Sandra and then at Klara. She then slowed down her chewing at her disgustingly oversized chewing gum. “When did you enter the discussion?” she wondered. Sandra just shook her head.


Sandra remembered how two of her classmates at the Institute of Technology had been scared to death by their very first experience of Alexander and the way he dressed. Sandra thought of how strong he was. “As soon as one dresses with symbolically loaded garments, that scares the shit out of people,” she proudly remembered him saying. Stina and Lotta were superstitious about their own appearance. Like a radar-team, they mastered the lectures, the teachers, the labs and the main part of the institute’s male elite.

“Alexander is not like others,” her two friends had understood wearily and hesitantly. Stina and Lotta always wore the right clothes. Thoroughly rested they were always among the first ones outside the lecture hall, before the exam. They loved strokes of the clock and different times, and enjoyed almost almost organically the world of deadlines and schedules. They did not really have anything to worry about. Everything was made for them. Sandra was particularly interested in their admirable methods of moving around the right people, the key personalities of society. There existed some certain people that one absolutely could not speak with. Then those existed whom Stina and Lotta thought of to be juggling with all their bragging and eloquence. Most of all it was for the purpose of practicing their skill in throwing bile. They followed rules. The unwritten paragraphs of Darwin’s theory ‘survival of the fittest.’ Sandra felt for Stina and Lotta, who lived according to a certain set of rules and order and were doing and reacting as expected. She saw their lives in front of herself as an intense, but perhaps altogether superficial VCR movie. With direction that sucked, a complete lacking of a story and totally zero characters. Like two dead and stiff cogs in wheels they preferred to be a monotonous part in the perfect machinery of a Rolls-Royce, not the driver, not the windshield, not any of the mirrors.

“Okay,” she reasoned. “It is great that they do what they’re good at doing. That could be it. Life becomes calm and cozy in that way. And predictable it is.” Now she wondered. “Lotta and Stina...degree
in two months...approximately unemployed for two months...advance in the company and meet their men. Stina in Nagasaki at a screw-nut conference and Lotta in a quarklaboratory as a trainee at project in the Research Village. They change jobs a couple of times and do well. One of them develops a totally own invention or product, or else it would be a scandal to the academy of Engineering. Perhaps they get themselves summercabin. They change cars every fourth year. If they’re going to have a dog it will for sure be one of those icky little brown cityloaves.” Sandra allowed herself to be a little bit ridiculous. She projected Stina’s and Lotta’s life before herself by forcing herself into one of the cracks in their cracked glass-bowl.

She murmured a little to herself about the unchanged differentiation and split between the natural sciences and the humanities, as if they would have never heard of each other’s existence. She remembered the scene all too well. Just the way things happened around the artist and how they were not happening around...Lotta and Stina. “Why am I acting like a six-year-old?” she kind of laughed in a murmur as if almost asleep. Sandra enjoyed everything that circled around her. She saw pleasures practically in everything. She understood how she had fallen into a harmony that Stina and Lotta never had seen the tail of. Sandra was controlled by her impulses. She was crazy.

At last her thoughts fell on the man that had showed up, the way he always had with that swaying and sweeping look, dressed up in a trashbag of chlorine free and unbleached paper at Cafe grEGOr in the middle of the city. He had slipped into his genuine pair of American armyboots. They had belonged to the very unknown Vietnam soldier Willy. Alexander had shown how his name was inscribed into one of the soles. “Willy Smith,” it said on one of the rubberheels. “He had faced a violent death,” Alexander told her as he pointed at the four yet unrepaired bullet holes with dried blood, in the stem of the left shoe. They showed how the bullets had pierced through the skinbone, which meant a lot of bonesplinters. A lot of pain. Alexander’s walking in these boots, he explained, because they had belonged to a soldier. Alexander considered himself being that wanderer or guardian. He said he was this peace-soldier with a sense for contrasts, or for perhaps the intuitive feeling of a balance. There was a contrast. His constant wearing of a perfectly polished and well maintained Ray-Ban stolearches. They rested on a straight nose, which on each of its sides a pair of quick eyes swiftd through the dark glasses. Alexander had put all of his partially blond hair to the right, exactly on that day, Sandra recalled. At some occasion, Sandra could not remember which, Alexander had told her about the Mojawee-tribe in Colombia, South America, which had taught him to lay one’s hair in the direction the wind blew on that particular day. The reason was to allow for the soul to be taken up by the motion of the universe. Sandra thought that, that was Alexander in a nut shell. He did not want to save the planet. This man wanted to save the universe. Alexander rated the paperbag as the best and most convincing symbol one could carry for the recycling of paper. At that point Sandra understood in her seat how these were the kind of ideas that Alexander had based his life upon. In the midst of an interesting discussion of the design of telephones, Stina and Lotta had showed up, almost scared to death by the look of Alexander. They had asked him who he was, and what he was doing.

“Alexander...and what I am doing?” He had been looking straight through Lotta and Stina as if they had been air. With a train of thought cold as ice and a concentrated eye he catchworded, “Create, eat, shit and sleep like most others...and you?” They had stared at him in silence. “Sooner or later you get a severe blow,” Sandra added cordially. She remembered Stina. All of a sudden she had looked at Lotta in desperation. Lotta had had some difficulties, “Eh...seems like Alexander’s mind is moving in very weird directions.”

“...yes...that’s right...towards the Neurotic Magazine, Stina had answered as if a methodical nerve of defense had begun to jerk however it pleased.”

“Ok. Howdy,” they said in unison, already with their eyes out through the doors. Now and then they had flung back to certify themselves that they in fact were on their way, away from the maniacal panther. But perhaps most of all, to ascertain who he really was.
“What about his focus, ladies? Can’t you see the twinkle in his eye! The joy! The adventure! Did you see that he really is the runner, or was he too fast for you?” Sandra noted that Klara and Mia practically had fainted. Sometimes her reasoning became something more than just a reality to her.

Sandra’s thoughts fell back in the original track. That peculiar house-warming party had etched itself into her memory since those couple of weeks back. Sandra remembers Alexander’s apartment at Orgasmstreet. Totally seduced by the shelter’s atmosphere of leather, rivets, an opera with Pavarotti screaming through the dying 3.5 w speaker of a Dutch radio in a bathroom and smell of men’s musks having sex with the steakfumes from the inner garden, Sandra wants to scream: “Oh yeah maan! Give me that staaff maan! This is The Cult!” The living room is wrapped up in a dull deep green illumination. First thing to happen when Sandra enters it, is to stumble on 20-25 polished automobile tires, spread out in a pile against a wall. The comfort is astonishing. On the walls fine pieces of art are hanging. Sandra remembers an etching by the yet unknown Gunder Greybranch. In the living room she recalls faintly having met Android Palmer and Vesper. They had stood like two pines in front of some tendrils in the wall paper, sort of waiting for something. Thor Aronsson, a photographer had showed up at the party with another journalist, later during the night. Alexander’s mom, a Bavarian, had for the sake of the party donated not less than eleven different beersausages that Alexander now is serving his guests with. It is a two room apartment with a large kitchen and a smaller bathroom. About 55-60 persons occupy the local. A majority of them are definitely not there to drink mineral water. Sandra and Klara had sat in the rubber couch, discerning the bohemian’s living room. Next to one of the windows, an elksdeer’s head is hanging on the wall. Very proud, he overlooked the room with large horns. “For sure a ten-point-crown if my dad was to be consulted,” Sandra positively says to Klara. But they wondered if the guy that had stuffed the elksdeer’s head, really had been happy with the way Alexander made use of it. Sandra is situated far away from the turbulence above Beyenburg.

Alexander opens the muzzle somewhat, enough to make room for an ashtray. Two cigars and five cigarettes are lying in the ashtray. It is funny to look at the way the fumes curl up through the throat and out through the nostrils, Sandra thinks. It reminds her of how hungry an elksdeer must be if it eats two lit cigars and five cigarettes simultaneously. The horns serve as cloth hangers, even though she thought they mostly resemble seaweed. A rather evocative situation is achieved by Alexander’s having put up on the opposite walls a quite well-produced repro of Mona Lisa. The well-known pair of eyes stare at the elksdeer. Sandra can hear the unwritten words from Mona Lisa to the the buddy in front of her: “Pardon my smile, but who the hell do you think you are?” In the kitchen that by this time is turned into a literal bar, somebody begins to screw on the Dutch radio. The horrid, parapsychological sounds of the detuning, very much like the sounds of a horse that all of a sudden knew how to talk with its ass in Cockeray-accent, changed from the Pavarotti program to a historic review of Swedish schlagermusic from the time period 1968-69. As she is walking around in the apartment sniffing, Sandra is tackled by an acrimonious mixture of odours from Alexander’s bottles of turpentine and beersausage. Then she discovers the stereo in one of the right corners. Two younger guys, suggesting the shape of teenager-hobbledehoys, have found the record collection, and are exalted. Deep Purple gives way to their fanatically well-nurtured relationship of eating vinyl through eargasm. Now, they are both doing interpretations of Richie Blackmore’s solo-positions and play of features. It is a “live-album” and both she and Klara can feel the incredible pull of the party. It doesn’t suck...? Does it?

Sandra suddenly sees that notorious cat that everybody had been talking about. The party has its small surprises. It was Alexander’s grandmother’s faithful old servant Fritz which Alexander had taken over the care of, with the whole realm of his artistic heart. That is to say, he had found a very special talent in the cat, the one requested for his experiment, “Arts Alive.” From the beginning Fritz had been totally black. Then white perfect spots had been sprayed onto it. The tail had been painted in neon-rosa as well as the ears. Two hippie influenced friends of animals now become totally furious with Alexander, as they
discover the cat, where he is, on the kitchen radiator, spinning. It is an old and pretty fat rascal. They take Fritz to the bathroom, trying to shampoo off the worst of the paint, but then Fritz spit the way cats do when they don’t want to be shampooed, and at that point the hippies take off. Evidently they are going to report to the police about Alexander’s lack of responsibility, in the maintenance and care of a cat. Fritz becomes a little bit down-hearted for a while, only to fetch his spirit back again. Beyond any hope of licking himself clean, Fritz begins, little by little, to like his new look. Three sculptist-extremists who by the way have studied the science of Forms at the Academy of Fine Arts in Raogelburg for one and a half years, think the whole concept of a lathered cat is awesome. A real “State of Art in itself,” as the colors smear together because of the lather. Fritz looks like a pretty stoned paraphrase to the rainbow, but it is a patient cat that does not really care. You could tell by just looking at him. He grabs a couple of beer-sausages and lies down on the radiator in the kitchen to dry up. In that kitchen there are a lot of people. A revelling debate is going on about the fate of Fritz. Some of the debaters are aspiring critics of fine Arts, while others in many ways are friends of animals. Two Dutch rappers seem less and less connected to the discussion, as if vaguely wanting to fly, however wondering why. For a long time they resist the real threat, the Deep Purple-loving teenager bastards, but only half a minute passes until they are predispositioned with them in wild verbal fight about Jimi Hendrix, whether he died because he was puking, or if he puked because he was dying. The Dutch know that their rap phrases weren’t standing a chance against the classical rockers bony and harsh wordings, but the worst thing was to be told of it by two immature and blotched teenagers, itched by the tickling fret-masturbator, Ritchie Blackmore, in their narrow.

There is another guy at this party. A person from Paraguay. A producer at a domestic TV-production company, Sandra learns that he has now been studying at a public university for half a year, the Theatrical program. None of the other party-participants talk to him during the whole night. Sandra understands that much from asking him from whom he got an invitation. It takes its time as he, with hands and lips, nevertheless is able to explain that it was from Lisclotte at TechnoTelevision whom he’d met at an arts exhibition a year ago. The problem is that he has only been living in the country for a couple of months, and he himself comes from a country where everyone speaks a lot, and rapidly. So far his basic spa has been Immigrant Town. His lingual mix, Sandra thinks, resembles nothing but a incomprehensible string of melodies. They are talking about TV-feuilletons in Paraguay, the country’s authors and poets. Out of politeness Sandra listens through all of what the man has to say. Never before has she been treated by such dignity and generosity, as she is by this vital and spiritual foreign man. At first she was thinking of how he most of all had sounded like a returning emigrant from USA, talking about his rubber hose firm in Oregon. Letkber Sevillari flickers with his eyes, and flaps with his arms. What strikes Sandra the most is his actual ability to talk so well, for the short amount of time he’s been in the country. The talk mingles into the culture. Letkber Sevillari is saying that he sees a mask on each face of Sandra’s people. He is talking about a people that has gotten used to coldness, that holds back its human warmth, the energy of the soul. But he changes his mind.

“The mask doesn’t exist,” he says. “But could easily be interpreted as if it does.”

Sandra sits in a corner in front of Letkber Sevillari. Between them they have an empty oil-barrel with a couple of candles on it. She is fascinated by the man’s ability to develop his philosophy in that vivid Southern manner of his. He talks without grammar but with energy. Sandra doesn’t know if she is hurting or amusing him. There is a misty and unclear message that he is trying to get across, to her. She is forced to beg for a continuation of the story. Sandra realizes that there is something that she is forced to learn from Letkber Sevillari before the evening is over. Her dream continues.

A gang of journalists from the Rambler and the Weekly journal shows up. In a way the party is budding with these professional professionals in their execution of the art of mingling at overcrowded nightclubs, which they master like a routine. They sort of slip through everyone, walk around them and come back. There are these two chicks from the Weekly Journal and this photographer Alexander knows, a staffmember of the Rambler. The party comes to an end by their entrance. Instead, it takes off in plastic
and alien directions at the verge of the Yuppie zodiac. Sandra is not indifferent to the change. No one she asks is really able to say anything about those different expressions coined during the eighties. She asks herself “What is it in a Yuppie that really exists? A symbiotic relationship with an image that isn’t theirs? An ego-contract...for oneself?” She knows it doesn’t make sense.

It matters to Sandra, convinced that most Yuppies are what they really want to be. They are stuck with a label of ideals for some secret reason. People talk about the Innovator and the Administrator, the Cultural Intellect, the Nerd. Her picture is shaped around a modern human who has completed the stylistics of his career. It is a new type of hero...

“...and...then what?” she wonders. “Go Mickey, Go Superman, Go...the Phantom. That’s people with image,” she knows as if she talks in darkness full of remembrance.

Sandra’s people talk of the decade as of a golden era. Yet no one knows how to make use of its zeal. Sandra wonders for a while if she isn’t perhaps looking for answers that never existed. Her thoughts hit her like a buzz. It dawns upon her how the joy and the rave of the world she’s grown up with seem to be a gimmick.

The party eases up for a while. The new visitors at once put an end to what has become a bogged down, subcultural mill of philosophical discussions. Previously laboured, now flying. Nothing of the gimmick seems to have gotten a hold in these new animals with new personalities. Most of them are about 28-30 years old. They say hi, socialize, give each other hugs and remember the music of Deep Purple. Some guys of the Yuppie gang quite rapidly find the two Deep Purple fanatics. Sandra understands that the myth of the eighties mostly has been dealing with quite boxlike parties. Gravediggers partying at Graveyard happenings. The sweetest thing is to see how people now just make use of the symbols. The Individual. The Ego. The $-sign. Like lipstick and mascara. For a night. Two of the most plastered girls are incredibly attracted to Sylvester Lombard, Czech Cambric artist that has been corresponding with Alexander for a couple of years. They are entranced by his story of the Czech Republic. Her senses tighten up.

“There is no elite here,” she discovers. “Only a people that exists.”

In a couple of minutes the atmosphere of the room changes. Letkber Sevillari pierces Sandra with his eyes. Her roving about confronting his, looking down and then up again. Finally the two pairs of eyes bounce into each other. “Soon you’ll have to start all over again, Letkber Sevillari,” Sandra thinks to herself. “They will want to know who you are and what you are doing.” She notices how the few yards between them, and two other people, is decreasing. Her body has a furious output of adrenalin. “Who is he?” she asks over the rattle and hum of various German beerbottles and the thick alarm of heavy, ponderous rock music. For each second that hammers by, the atmosphere of the party increases to reach perfection. Soon someone will put on “Can You See Me,” by Jimi Hendrix. Soon Alexander’s ’62 Gibson, a Les Paul Standard with original pick-ups and an original tremolo arm, will be plugged into his tube speaker, and raped by a Heavy Metal-hysteria of left hand fingers. Some people will begin to dance right where Sandra and Letkber Sevillari now are seated. Soon a photographer will activate himself with the report of Alexander’s extra vagantly furnished apartment, a perfect mine of symbols for the rock loving readers of the Rambler. The documentation is ideally made at these kind of parties. Zenga and Benny, two Africans Alexander’s brother plays with in a reggae band, now step inside the the entrance doors. They have bongos and congas. In a continuous and developmental flow of rhythms, an almost unrealistically carnal beat develops. After only a couple of moments they perform like a mysterious roaring jungle in Africa, with stunning precision and intuitive feel. For each move with the funkadelic paddle, the beat is shoveled into the dangers of the Amazon. They gamble with the destiny and carve on anybody’s nerves with the unchallenged humour of New York! The grandeur of Himalaya is all of a sudden as if captured into a cape, and finally the musicians reach that dynamically sweeping sound, the coda of codas. The increasingly strong sonorities add the merciless suck for rock to the party’s uncontrollable over-flow of absolute everything. Their musical distillate works. The contours of a party disappear. The only feeling
that exists is the Law of the Jungle. There isn’t anything that doesn’t party in this place, right now. Instead Alexander notices how humans, animals and beersausages, how basically everything has begun to move around with a speed of approximately 130 mph. What from the beginning has been a party, Alexander notices, has changed into a pageant ritual, furiously accompanied by Zenga and Benny through screaming speakers of a very soon exploding Guatemala PA-system. Everything that is needed exists. Want. Rawness. Force. Hate. Love. Everything on its way, soon, very soon, to be freed beyond control. Once again the rock will come alive. Her dream is unnoticeably leaving the reality. The party is hysterical. An inferno.

Lektber Sevillari is one of those disparate wanderers on the most fatal of paths. He uses a dull and heavy voice.

“But we all do, don’t we, more or less,” Sandra answers without having clearly heard what he said. Lektber Sevillari smiles like a father figure.

“Many watch, but who sees?” he responds with a suddenly perfect pronunciation. Sandra discovers that those two young studs have caught a sight of her. They are going to get up to her, no matter what. The devil cannot be mistaken upon their eyes, and how they hunger for the woman for probably eternal marches through ardent desire’s barren and suspended fields of sexual frustration. Without thinking of themselves as in any way pulling people’s attention, they methodically greet themselves through obstacle after obstacle. They chat for a while with each person, with a fake interest, only to intervene by the continous approach of Sandra’s sweeping looks. She is hoping for a group of art students to protect her for a while. She hopes that they will disintegrate the two men’s hunt for flesh, if even for only a minute, perhaps even for only a second. “Anything,” she thinks desperately. The conversation with Lektber Sevillari lose is short of words. The simplicity enthralls with its exotic, wise poetry.

“He is a challenge,” she thinks, and two pairs of eyes are suddenly united.

The wind and the fire of the party disappear. The persons around them all seem overdosed with chloroform as they talk, and the movements are slowed down, like a retarding phonograph record. Lektber Sevillari doesn’t let go of Sandra’s look. His dark and dull eyes are like two ironclaws she cannot twist herself through the grip of. They keep her in place. The faint evil light through his dark irises begins to refract into the eyes of Sandra. It grows to burst out like wild untamed steam to stream off and on, off and on. The whole color spectrum is passed through in the sky above her, as if it were exploding. Finally everything becomes dark. Being an earthling, Sandra cannot fully comprehend how the action of a scenario in more dimensions than three actually can happen. She is entering into something unexplored, something exceeding the human’s power of apprehension. She doesn’t any more wear her heavy leatherboots or her warm, red and black-checkered lumberjack shirt. She is naked. Sticking sulphuric steam almost chokes her, burning inside her throat. Her body disappears in a thick, but shortly thereafter, disintegrating dustcloud. A cold mixture of soil and clayed grass touches her naked, now chalkwhite feet. Out of anxiety she is breathing heavily, almost as if she is giving in. As she starts to look around, she sees at first only the contours of something big. She sees that it resembles large elevated boulders of stone. Sandra notices how coldness and wind slowly sweep over the area. After another couple of seconds she is convinced that the place is Stonehenge. Trying to say, “Where am I,” Sandra instead hears nothing but how her voice transforms into a completely abominable noise. She hears thunder, flashes, human laughter, roars, calls, singing, waves breaking up on a shoreline, gunfire, rolling wooden wheels, horse-neighs and perhaps even the groans of wolves. The voice is gone. Behind each of the largest surrounding stones, the neolites, a fire is burning raised spruces, that according to their length and width can only be of Scandinavian origin. Sandra stands close to one of the stones when she for a second timeshouts her deep roar out of a soul paralyzed by fear. Three of the stones she can tell are cleaved and displaced. The heat from the fires behind them is at once incredible. Sandra’s brain frenzy for a conclusion, a picture, anything that can resume what she experiences into one solid comprehension. But it is a total antithesis of
transcendence. A kind of the “dream’s trauma,” metamorphosed into a perplexed reality. Sandra experiences how nothing of what human thought or action can comprise or act against now all of a sudden exists around her like a faulty reality. The human figure of bodily limbs that resembles hers moves as if moved by an alien force forwards, backwards and round in ecstasy. The blackout of Sandra’s soul is nasty. Her subconscious follows the waves of the Jungian Ocean that rolls up like breakers to her inner self. A faint boom can be heard from far away in a distance. Sandra can make out how sixteen horses, on gravel and rocks she hears, are pulling an enormous two-wheeled cart in fury. Soon the landscape and the sky is filled with a black, suffocatingly sticky and disastrous smoke. The boom increases by volume. The sixteen horses are perfectly wine-red in front of the brass-encumbered chariot, that pushes paroxysmatically from side to side, behind. The wheels are set into a terrible motion. The chariot continues upwards on an invisible slope, and then down again, to be thrown to the side for a while as if there were a road in the air.

Already at an early moment she notices that the wagon is on its way towards her. Bit by bit the contours and ornaments slowly can be distinguished. Sandra discovers the escutcheons of brass, the nails of an unknown metal, the wheels’ tires of some kind of titanium alloy which can also be found in the naves. The front in bronze seems covered with gems. She sees how the harnesses of leather and silk shake and tighten as the horses are pulling it. The driver’s helmet sets forth a strong sadness. It seems to have been torn by just about everything. By the strikes and thrusts of fights, by the cuts of daggers, arrows, halberds and the points of lances. She can really see how its ornaments in silver and the bolts that held the helmet together once upon a time must have shone with an impeccably strong brilliance. It dawns upon Sandra how the whole vehicle is entailed by disintegration, the closer it gets to her. The bronze in the front is embossed and scratched, filled with dried blood, dirt, clay, and even seaweed remains from the ocean. Sandra sees more and more for each moment that the wagon thrusts itself towards her. On the obscure surfaces of the sides and the back some holes screamed emptily and speechless for some kind of jewel that used to sit in it, each obviously different from any other. The large wooden wheels lack bolts and the armor around the spokes is torn apart, but in most cases nonexisting. The wagon’s wooden construction appears to be cracked, as if millenia of battles, struggles, conquests, wars, invasions and campaigns have set it on a neverending fire, a fire that its even more cracked spokes now furiously try to roll themselves out of. Sandra sees how the sweatings of the horses are soaked with blood. Some of the animals’ joints are bleeding by the stones and thickets that constantly are in their way. Streamlined saliva lines up along their cheekbones like cirrus clouds in a blue sky, kicked around by a roaring wind of war. Deep, deep in the skull his eyes are situated. The vehicle seems to make its way, as if it is a matter of life.

Sandra tries to signal her existence into the General’s iccold look. His eyes are strong, stainless and stubborn like steel. The wagon seems to be a couple of hundred yards away from her. But, she already knows who he is, advancing in desperation on his last mission. Tears are falling down on her cheeks. She is filled with embittered passion for this soldier’s paralyzingly dynamical sight. She sees the complete impoverishment of this once probably very proud and certainly alive creature. The way in which the wagon moves transforms the fighter’s overview to a phenomenon of strength and will. Sandra notices a perfectly intact integrity without one moment of loss. She becomes silent before him, a real proof in flesh and blood of survival of the dreads of wars, the heat of pitched battles’ massacres. A survival of having been hunted infinitely as the complimentary game in Loki’s butchery raids. His eyes flash up like two flames, in a last, tremulous, couple of seconds. The woman sees how the hair that sticks out under his helmet is thin, torn and dirty. She sees the furrowed face, with scars, as she observes the opened mouth where blood oozes out between the wolflike, still chalkwhite teeth. Sandra sees how the poor fighting bull’s chest heaves itself in tired, as if powerless, but stubborn and panting breaths. The scars are revealed like rock-carvings on an ancient mountain, as Sandra sees the breast’s skin of leather under a weathered armour.
The chest has clearly been forced through slashes and beatings, where trees, stones, the human hand, fire, water and dust, how practically everything has tried to destroy it, to kill this lord of war. Never before has Sandra seen such a creature in her life, wrought in the toughest of flesh and the most sour of blood, and with the champ’s sprouting and most strong pair of eyes. She is standing still there on her spot. She is unable to act. This minute is too powerful for her, as if its sincerity frightens her as well as it is fascinating her, like an erupting volcano. He elevates his right arm to swing what it is holding. She hears a war cry, as if it is the last from a wasted battlefield, at a last critical moment. Desolated, she sees the smoke behind the wagon being chattered by a whole burning sky of fire. The smoky air in front of the chariot is forged at the sides as if obeying something of a superior purity and honesty, as if touched by the eyes of a virgin. Sandra wonders why she, in a state of hallucination, is trying to decide why the warrior’s Tandgnior and Tandgrisner are not in position. “Why are his two goats exchanged for a bunch of horses?” she asks herself.

Something matches very badly with what she had been told.

“Why sixteen red stallions?” says the woman who has not yet discovered what dwelled just next to her, behind her back. She turns around. Her immediately paralyzed senses transpose everything they possibly could comprehend into terror. Each process in her self is disintegrated by a horror, a completely depersonalizing horror of not understanding, while the consciousness forces itself to a maximum of perception. Caught like a stone statue in herself, and without finding a contrast in what she is seeing, Sandra finds herself in a sudden vacuum of time and space. It is all merely a matter of a single onedimensional image of horror, of something black, something evil. Thor’s thrust is yet for Sandra to discover, a compression of sounds. The roar from soldiers, horses and weapons throughout the history, everything in the noise of violence is needed. He needs the fighting peoples’ aggressions in this last devastating fight against the Great Malice. He is given only one chance, while waiting for the history of all times to return like an echo, Sandra understands. The weapon is constructed by a barbaric core of all those noises, the humans in the human race all the while have authorized themselves with an order to put out, drown and extinct. Sandra understands that what seems to have been their patient waiting patient Thor, now is a General filled with hatred, filled with a boiling wish for revenge, now, in an utmost and everlasting way, is paying back...as he sees that his weapon is built.

Thor’s emaciated and deadly tired war-claw lets go of the battle hammer, with a skilled focus of precision, that can not do anything else than destroy whatever lies in its way. Its inhumanly loud alarm whizzes like a fantastic spear over the vault we call the sky. It is a little moment from integrating with the hammer in a lethally obliterating point of attack. Shortly before that synchronically exact moment, Sandra’s eyes nail the visage that the sky behind her illuminates. It is really a face and nothing else. Letkber Sevillar’s. His mouth opens and assembles an opening that is big as the façade of a multistoried house. The question is repeated, “Everyone watches, but who sees, huh? Ha Ha!!” The words echo out over the barren, silent moor.

“I’m not forgetting Farbauti and Mother Laufey. I’m not forgetting Byleist and Helblinde, my brothers.” The voice makes a rattling pause to catch its breath. “Hel, I hope you remember your father. We have to talk a little... you and I.”

“Of course I recognize you, Loki!” she lies, not understanding from where her power came. The stench from Loki’s teeth is a concentrate of total disgust, scorn and putrefaction.

“Well, you see, I have been able to stay in the out-of-the-way corner so to speak. However, Lucifer wanted me to contact you. You mean so much for both of us!”

“Loki is Lucifer’s beloved, just the way the historian’s storytelling has told us,” Sandra suspects. “He really is the Devil’s best fool. His given task was to preserve his Sir with some stolen souls, those that happen to be simply Too Good, those that just Had to be tortured.”

“These creatures...that...breathe purity, freedom and development!” Loki snorts in a sweaty telepathic despise. His look is terrible, and it makes Sandra’s psyche disintegrate. She knows that he is
inside hers now. Is she conscious? Or maybe she is unconscious? Huh? What do you think? Remember...Letkber Sevillari is existing...she can’t escape him, because he’s...it’s...already in her system. She is afraid because she doesn’t understand what is happening. Letkber Sevillari’s face transforms into a moulder and dowy gathering of rough discrepancies, with some kind of different creases. Some of them give a vague contour of a mouth that is opened and closed, with charcoal black, bloodstained teeth inside, where foxy flames perpetually fondle the words like a slow, but steady stream of heat. A heat that burns flesh. Pus is constantly rinsing down the forehead. It mingles with the sweat that his pores now hysterically ejaculate. Sandra sees the creature’s two small pig’s eyes through the skin creases, bloodshot, dark and with that dull look that knew that she knew.

“You see, we’ve got a little problem.”

“Yes, what kind of problem?” Sandra stresses out from a self she is afraid she is losing.

“Well you see, Lucifer and...I...Something very important is about to happen. He believes in a breakthrough...very soon.”

“Oh Loki, such secretiveness of yours...” Sandra continues in desperation.

“At last the circle of evolution,” Sandra understands with bitter clarity, “is about to be closed, after all?” The woman does not yet, however, understand the full extent of the old Aesir God’s feat, which is about to be fully accomplished, in these very last couple of seconds. Thor knows how each battle and each fight has given and built upon that single settlement, The Verdict, a Gain, the Victory. He knows he’s been riding for a victorious, pivotal moment of time, a time in which the good reigns over the evil. He is chasing to create and re-create moments of judgement, to understand the functions of fate. Thor knows he is close. This is his last thrust of the hammer against the evil. For each controversy and victory Thor has won, for each blast he has struck for righteousness, for justice, he has known how these have been nothing but obstacles in his stubborn struggle for time, some moment to judge, for some time to think. What Thor in a real sense has thrown his hammer against he now sees is for the existence of the good in eternity. Sandra mutely observes the hammer’s path over the sky, realizing how the purpose of evolution, is to destroy itself, “...and Thor is about to complete...something that indeed was not, is not? Was not? Infinite...his hammer was...is about to advance the initial point of ignition in the process of creation, in its perhaps outermost periphery here on earth... He is going to do a backfire against fate...” Her thoughts were dancing samba. “...thus the meaning of life...was...in the end in spite of what anyone has said...to meet a diametrical and perpendicular opposite, a perfectly proportioned vacuum that brings death to all living things. Thor believes that there is an opposite to everything which evolution and creation yielded, and he knew it is going to happen!”

Sandra now understands, standing between the neolithic stones, what it is that dark future Thor tries to do something about. “He knows how his duty is not to close the circle but to open it. He does not even know who gave him the order anymore. He simply believes more in the human in herself. He believes in breaking this circle that is about to have turned one full round...”

A moment ago, Sandra now understands, Thor gave up his own existence for it not to happen. She understands that he has been trying to escape the fate as much as possible. “He is trying to get away from that point where all evil things have come to a balance with all good things, away from that instant moment where they delete each other...” Thor accepted the challenge, indeed.

“Then, just what the hell is the meaning of life?” Sandra thinks out loud.

“Oh well my fair lady, we’ve got a traitor. Something sees us, discerns us. If we could only get rid of him, her, or whatever it is, then the future is ours to be amused with as many sins we may wish!!!” Loki continues undisturbed. “Lucifer wants us to find out who, or what it is, this phenomenon, where it is hiding, and that you put it in the most poisoned and forgotten of your fields of death. Lucifer, he...well he has his ways...he was the one who told me: Everyone watches, but who sees?! Like a clue I believe. What do you think?” The pressure on Sandra peaks. She knows that for only those seconds the hammer has been flying, she alias Hel, has been talking with the Aesir devil Loki. Her memory concludes what
kindergarten and school has taught her about Norse mythology. She remembers that Loki always knows how he best can make use of a situation, since he is superior in intelligence. Apart from his child Hel, he also has the Midgardssnake and the Rarumwolf, sometimes called the Fanrir to take care of. Sandra is not sure. According to the mythology, Hel is thrown down in Nifelheim, with a power over nine worlds, and is always expected to have room for those who come to her. Hel is queen of the dusk kingdom of death. The name Hel means "the concealing," she recalls, "and that fits Sandra," Sandra admits. "But why?" she asks herself repeatedly. "How could Sandra be confused with Hel? By her own father!" But, she would never get the message that somewhere, sometime it had been decided that Loki's cunning and shrewdness would be discovered. It was a decision, made by neither Aesir gods or humans. From time immemorial no one has really been able to verify, much less understand, the strange being of Loki. Now this mean creature had lost its mysticism to her. Yet, she did not quite have the whole concept in her mind. "The situation is indeed critical," she felt how her heart screamed inside her. It wanted her to do something, but Sandra's...con...science told her differently. "So much is expected from this hammer Mjolnir, it carries on so much hope," and she was not sure if it would hit. She was not sure of Thor's force, if he had put her behind the lights. Sandra did not know anything anymore. She was left with the rage of not being able to handle the situation anymore, a rage that directed itself inwardly, that impinged suicidal tendencies in Sandra, a rage against her own self... She is afraid of being totally left out. The hammer whizzes by at a headlong speed, followed by a Herculean destructive roar of a thousand thunders next to it. At that point Sandra roars herself to align with Thor's attack.

"I'm gonna tell you, you disgusting son of a bitch, you rotting carcass, I am the one who sees, and what I see, is the meaning of life!"

The hammer once again proves to be worthy its long-lasting and renowned reputation. Sandra hears how the thunderbolt hits hard onto where it shall. Loki howls like a whipped dog because his head is just about to be cleaved in at least two pieces. Thor and his chariot dissolve into small silvery grains. As if they were following a funnel of glass, they are sucked up by an invisible force upwards. It resembles a snowfall, turned upside down. Most peculiar of all was how the whole of Loki's shape appears, a green slimy creature that in a diametrically exact, opposite direction snows down into the earth, after in a similar way having disintegrated into small constituents, tiny green- sooted grains. Sandra hears how a last rumble and howl echo out over the English countryside. The nauseating sooted smoke scatters and at once she discovers something falling down, head over heels from the sky. It ripples and scintillates as it plumps down in front of her. She sees immediately that it is one of Thor's horses' bridles in leather and silk that has been left over. But something has happened with it. The chariot's harness has been resewn and certain parts has been ripped off. The actual bridle is exchanged for a plate of some kind of metal. Sandra feels a lump of insecurity growing inside her. When she stoops to pick it up she sees that it is not a harness anymore. She flips the plate of metal that is completely new, completely clean, totally recreated, and seems to make a center of this little arrangement in silk and leather. A circle with a little cross attached beneath it has been beautifully woven into the plate. Falling silent she finds the metal to be of titanium. Sandra looks up and sees that Stonehenge has changed. Many stones are gone, some of them have cracked, others have tipped all the way down into the ground. The fires consist of coal-remainders that smouldered in a light wind from the east. She sees her chair in the middle of the stone-formation and walks up to sit.

Two bachelors have after a lot of toil finally reached her lonely place at the oil-barrel, where she is turned into the corner. For a long time they has wondered why she has been sitting like she has, staring down into the floor. One of them is Michael af Klintborn. Sandra twitches. She runs out to the kitchen. "Where is Letkber Sev?" She looks away. It is dark outside Alexander's window.

"Huh?" a pretty drunk Alexander answers her. Without any longer being able to keep his eyes
straight. As a matter of fact the whole of Alexander squints. She gets herself closer to Alexander and
tries again. Their eyes look deeply into each other. Alexander understands the seriousness, but not what
Sandra exactly has in mind. He is unable to answer her question where Letkber Sevillari Mendelez has
gone. Alexander does not know who the person is. Sandra stands up and steps into the bathroom. As she
faces her face in the dirty mirror she cries. The skin, pale as that of a corpse, is covered with a dark
unforgettably ugly green soot. She really does look gaunted. A string of dried blood finds its way around
her forehead, as if she has worn a crown of thorns. She tries to fix herself provisionally, and leaves the
bathroom. An inquisition follows. She asks everyone she encounters if they have heard of Letkber
Sevillari. She gives up after two or maybe three attempts. Letkber Sevillari never existed they tell her. It
strikes her that she is still wearing a harness, or medieval bra, or whatever it could be called. A piece of
metal is anchored to it, covering her navel. The looks of Sandra and Alexander meet.

“You do not exactly seem interested in dancing. Tied fists, dilated rows of teeth, dilated eyes. It
has a certain look to it...a funny one indeed...” he says. He is thinking. “You seemed to be talking to
someone in the corner.” He looks at her with an honest smile. “You are definitely the most odd one.”

“A lot of things are happening,” Sandra finishes the topic, with a couple of torn laughing scratches
in the corner of her mouth. It was not really a smile but a confirmation, a kind of reaction upon her own
words. Alexander notices that it is not possible to read something united out of those corners of her mouth.
The vicissitudes are fast, almost invisible to a human eye, yet full of timeless grace. His thoughts see how
it, just like the solitary branches of a dead tree stiffly bend for the wind, giving an impression of courage.
The toughness of a self. Alexander discovers her charisma. It is impossible to avoid her two cudgels of
steel, piercing into his eyes like a universal answer to any question. He is nailed by her look. Like the
artist he is, he struggles with the three questions, “He is the encroacher to her that suddenly doesn’t know
how to escape?” or “Is he being defeated by a supreme visionary?” or “Is he nothing but that crazy
designer that still thinks of perfecting this woman’s supernatural look?”

Sandra on her behalf, can not understand why the artist torments himself with the captivity of
himself. It is as if he constantly is to hold up his soul, as if to hold up his face for himself in a constant,
complete terror. To twist oneself inside out, in anxiety. She sees him next to one of his recently finished
sculptures in slatstone.

“It’s original.” Sandra, who thinks the work is genial, observes Alexander’s wanting to forget it.
“When a man has reached the top of his mountain of pride, why doesn’t he want to accept its fire? He did
not want to risk himself into the dangerous ocean of compliments... Was it because he felt he let go of his
personality? What’s the deal?”

Sandra was thinking in the heat of the dream.
“Alexander feared himself...but why?” She shouted, ?Jump, for God’s sake! Jump!” to him.

The sign had blinked for about two minutes. Sandra woke up as if she had been in a coma. Mia
and Klara had taken together the bags with candy and perfume. The initiative was Klara’s to ask her dazed
friend if it wouldn’t be nice with a Johnnie Walker after all. Klara saw that Sandra was totally in elevated
spirits, exhausted, sweaty. Sandra leaned forward to meet Klara’s sight with a unison, “8 cl, please!”

“You know...the time is not quite in yet to...” Klara watched worriedly at her friend.
“What?”

“The sign up there kindly asks you to buckle up and put out your cigarette. So whatever you do
Sandra...” Klara’s eyes discerned Sandra’s, very seriously. “...whatever you do Sandra, don’t jump.”
Klara turned her eyes away. Sandra nodded in approval, as she closed her eyes. For the first time Sandra
drank like a real alcoholic. Nakedly, thirstily, craveingly. She was a wreck.
With hair dishevelled and sweaty, and rings under her eyes she found herself surrounded by a group of
observers. Her face was pale. Its eyes imagined danger, something alien, something occult. They all
looked away, resigned, as soon they had encountered the wolf’s dry, sharp lower jaw and her two eyes of
steel.

Captain Flyer landed the airplane a couple of minutes passed three o’clock. As they passed the customs they discovered the greeting committee on the other side, all lined up waiting. Klara’s boyfriend Richard had showed up with both sets of parents. Mia’s mom was present with her new puppy Harald. Both of them were now doing macabre bounding leaps, unaware of their indeed very sophisticated appearance. Sandra’s family, Mum, Dad, Elin and Bjorn were all standing close together, waving and shouting. Her dad Rune waved patriotically to the whole committee as if the president had returned home again.

“What a reception!” Sandra thought as she let her family embrace her.

“Hi Schandra!!,” Bjorn said four years old. “It’s fun when you a’ here.”

“Hi darling, did you have a good time?” her dad said positive and heartily as usual.

“Way too good,” Sandra laughed.

“We should bake,” Elin decided. She sounded angry. Sandra remembered clearly what had happened, early that Friday morning two weeks ago. Elin had left her bed only to ask Sandra, “Why are you up eating this early?”

“But Elin, don’t you know that I’m taking off for Cyprus with Klara and Mia? Hasn’t anybody told you, my little lady?” Sandra recalled her lines. She remembered how Elin had prepared recipes, pans, saucepans and ingredients in a neat line on the kitchen table. Even two genuine white baker-hats she had borrowed from kindergarten, were part of her inventory. The sudden departure had shocked Elin into crying furiously. Sandra had been dejected all the way out to the airport.

“Of course, Elin!” Sandra said happily calm. The sisters fell into each others arms. Mom and Dad clucked deeply.

“That young little rascal!” Rune said. “She’s caused a little hell since you took off. Just baking. And kneading. And baking. And….” The whole family laughed. Mother Marianne said, “Our sweet little Rune the baker, he’s been doing fine, just fine, my little pony.”

“Oh yeah… New Scones and dough-nuts every day!” Bjorn said proudly. “Dad and Elin bake everything!” he wanted to impress upon Sandra. She smiled at him.

“I’m leaving,” Mia shouted to Sandra. The three girls took a quick farewell of each other.

“Let’s meet at Times Square…hm…at Eight sharp!” Klara said hopefully.


“No, I can’t. Mum and Dad invited me for dinner and everything.”

“Then show up later!” Mia said out of a reflex. “We’re probably there the whole night,” Klara said coughing but with the twinkle in the eye.

“No, it doesn’t work out. I’m exhausted.”

“Well…” Mia said a little bit wondrous, as she brought Klara’s attention. “We did wonder on the beach this morning. You’ve changed,” Klara said in a firm tone. “You were sitting tight in your chair, like a combat pilot in his fighter.” Klara was just getting ready to exclaim her conclusion when Mia said, “What really happened this morning?”

“When we found you there, you sweated just the way you did on this flight home,” Klara said with her eyes straight at Sandra. “Your head rolled around from side to side,” she continued in a dull and alarming tone. Mia could not carry her emotions any more. She burst into tears.

“We were forced to explain to the crew that you were not in any danger. We said that occasionally you suffered from very intense nervous breakdowns,” Klara explained in a straight monotone. These were the two human creatures Sandra trusted the most. Noone had made them swallow any lies about her, yet they were just about to confess something. Mia embraced Sandra.

“We’re worried,” she whispered with words wet with tears. Though the whole scene was worse than the worst of soap-operas, Sandra said hesitantly good-bye to her friends. She turned around to her family and smiled.
“Home, at last,” she thought.
“What was that about?” Rune said.
“What?...” Sandra said with a tired look, certain that she would have to explain some inexplicable things. “I wasn’t well on the airplane...”
“Was it a fast pilot...?” Bjorn asked.
“Fast and fast... His name was Captain Flyer...”

At home, in her apartment she unpacked her bags quickly and put back on her shelves her unused clothes. She went down to the cellar to sign her name for a free time on the laundry list. It was close to five and the dinner would for sure be ready at six p.m. Sandra always wanted to unpack, clean, fix and dig into order as soon as possible.

“Shit.” She had forgotten something but she couldn’t remember what. It did not take her many seconds in the kitchen to find out what. It was a matter of dishes. Quickly she washed up, done at quarter past. She continued with paperwork. The bill spoke a clear language of 10,766 units. She knew it would burn. Actually she laughed hysterically for a couple of seconds. “…all of those discussions with academies and technical institutes in the country east of west.” Sandra shook her head. She’d really wanted to get in this year, but “preferably she’d have to be a year older in order to bring her application into an actual state of actualization,” was one of all the answers she’d heard. She continued digging into the pile of mail. There were three letters, four bills and the latest issue of the inventor’s magazine Heureka. Sandra decided to work herself through the bills first of all, and then after that, she would read the letters. Ten minutes passed under complete silence. Methodically the letters were ripped open, followed by counting, controlling and finally bookkeeping. She looked at the clock and the numbers shone 5:32.

“Time to go,” she said as she rose up from the desk. She let the telephone answering machine take care of of the signal that rang in her telephone. Through the closed door to her apartment, she heard a man’s voice talking. Michael at Klintborn’s.

Sandra arrived at her parents residence at six o’clock p.m. The familiar scent of grilled meat tempted her already excited taste buds. A wave of hunger welled up in her throat. They sat. Marianne lit the candles on the table. Sandra felt that safe, warm good togetherness of the family she had missed for quite a while.

“Please help yourself to as much as you can eat, young lady!” Rune said with his characteristic Northern accent. Your mom has cooked well and plenty tonight.”

“Oh you’re the sweetest, all of you guys!” she replied. Her eyes twinkled. Everyone watched how Sandra filled her plate with food from the pots and cans.

“Tell me.” Elin said expectantly.

“Well... Where shall I begin?” Sandra hesitated.

“How was the hotel? Did you have a nice view and all that?” her mom asked as if already completely convinced that this had been half the profit of that trip. Within Sandra a subtle laugh came alive. The memories exposed themselves in a fastidious version. She laughed because she remembered especially well her last view of the hotelroom before she had taken off for that very special smell of the sea and the fishing boats. She had left to see how the marketplace woke up and the fumes from the bakeries down at the village.

“We had a view all right. Actually a perfect one,” she said secretly. She thought of the strip of the beach that disappeared into the east, next to the village that lay three quarters of a mile away. “We had all the sunrises, however no sunsets. In the night the village was transformed by all kinds of lights from the marina as we turned out ours. It was kind of magic.” First they had wanted to go to the actual coast of Greece, Sandra remembered. That is where they had wanted to go. Cyprus wasn’t all that exotic, they had thought at first. Then when they realized the tight political atmosphere, part Greekcyriot part Turkcyriot on an island in the middle of nowhere, it suddenly turned into an adventure. The feeling of going to a place in revolution was a true thrill on their excursions in all directions. The dinner passed in
silence except for Sandra's devout voice telling about the infinite facts of the adventure. She talked about excursions to caves by the shorelines. She had seen temples, and many natives had told her stories about them. Village after village they had travelled through, like soldiers, trying to see things they hadn't seen before.

"The nightlife?" Rune asked.

"...A lot of cabs...we only visited the discotheques occasionally. But it didn't matter. We enjoyed the calm, romantically deserted atmosphere that just existed," Sandra extrapolated. "The island is filled with treasures. Cyprus administrates an enormous cultural and historical inheritance. Late into the the night she sat telling and telling. The family was flabbergasted by the cultural odyssey Sandra and her two mates had made.

The family had coffee. After another hour Sandra thanked them for the dinner and said good-bye. On her way home she was filled with joy. Now all that was left in her was an extreme fatigue. She was satisfied. Her family had gazed at only a small portion of what had been Sandra's real adventure.

It began to rain. The idea of having her brand new off-white coat destroyed by this rain made Sandra run. She began to laugh at the contrast. For two weeks she had been in a fantastic sun, and now a wicked rain welcomed her home. Just as she was running over a street looking down to avoid puddles, a man did the same thing. They crashed into each other. He dropped a magazine he was carrying with him. Sandra picked it up, before the man even had reacted. The header said: "Church of Scientology." The man carried a file in his other hand, she noticed.

"This damn rain. Thank you...that was nice of you..." the man said as he'd gotten back his magazine. He looked at it with a grimace on his face. He was trying to squeeze out water from it. Sandra couldn't help laughing. The man looked up as he heard Sandra's laughter. He began to smile a little, "Actually I just want to get rid of the damn thing." Sandra saw that the man was in some troublesome thought as if he was asked to solve a gigantic math problem he didn't know if he could solve.

"Here," she said to him as she stretched out her arm towards him. The man stretched out his hand, thinking that she wanted to introduce herself. "No, no, the paper" Sandra said. He leaned down, picked it up and gave it to her. She made a ball of it and threw it along the street as far as she could. She didn't know why she did it. She didn't care how important it was to this man. She was wild by the night and the rain. He looked at her with the same smile on his face. She looked at him with full authority, as if she knew what she was doing. The man laughed a short dry laugh as he looked at her. She could tell that even though the pitch wasn't what he had wanted, she did what he wanted to do, but just couldn't.

"You're a pitcher aren't ya?"

"See ya," she laughed and took off. He continued on his way home.

Slowly she undressed in front of her mirror. She felt funny as she watched her tanned, very female body. The mirror reflected the contours of a silent, unknown. She stood in the same position convincing herself that the circular burn, that also wound around her shoulders with a divine perfection and harmonic balance, could not possibly be anything else than a nightmare, that had become real.
Chapter 3.

"You can spin, you cat-rascal, that's for sure," he thought in his illogical haze between dreaming and awakening. Christian realized how the events in his state of dreaming didn't exactly lack a logical sense. This dream was something. He wondered how long he'd been dreaming. The sweat lay like a tough and sticky layer of oil paint on some exhausted piece of art. Like an unknown creation, that an unknown artist didn't know quite how to finish. Christian was understanding less and less of that which colors presented before his mind, but enough to know that the dream wasn't a trick his fantasy tricked him with, as usual. Outside it had stopped raining but the air was still humid and cold. It was 1:16 a.m.. He wasn't afraid anymore. He had it all before him.

He saw that first-grader in school, a little bit weary, but also curious. Time advanced and he was already at the motorcycle accident this last spring. Then he went on, purchasing a coffee-brewer and... then the night of True Exams with Sofie, exploring all splinters of events in his life that for some reason he'd thought was incoherent, without logic, like a total act of randomness. Scenario after scenario suddenly made sense the way they flashed up. It was a life résumé. The cold sweat on his back reminded him of still being a human, a proof of existence. The dream revitalized events that either had had to do with hate or wild joy. It was a trial of his psyche, brain washed by, his senses Christian found to be in perfect balance. Their "perception totale" made Christian believe in the state of personal harmony the dream had put him in. There, in that meditative teamwork of all his senses, he was in a situation where reality and unreality were dependent on each other like man and woman, like the dance of harmony between yin and yang. The red thread of the dream tightened. Christian remembered only fragments of his former life, what constituted this reality.

The first thing he encountered was a severely maltreated Egyptian girl, staggering towards him, raising two meatslatters at him, the remains of her arms. She presented herself as Samserada, and asked for heat or possibly light. Christian was not been able to decide in those fractions of seconds he was confronted with her. He knew damn well who that Samserada was but he couldn't match dates and a place with her appearance. It made Christian upset. Next, he saw a skeleton covered with skin, the breast and shoulders of his buddy Anton. It was a quarter past three o'clock in the afternoon 1939. They were in Auschwitz. Anton had walked in the line in front of him. The guard had made a sign with the bayonet of his gun to Anton. Immediately he had turned around towards Christian.

"No. No... there. No... to the right...! Christian! Christaaaan!!" Anton's roar was hysterical.

Christian travelled through the walls and roofs of reality. He sensed physical apparitions like smell, sensory, hearing and taste yet he was without an emotional compassion for the situation he was in. His psyche lacked the stipulated continuity. He liked his dream, but he also knew that he was loked by it. It made sense, of course. It was his own life... trapping him, turning him into a spectator, chaining him to its grotesque center. Anton's being passed through Christian, followed by a stream of spirits that like an infinite, however, ripped pearl-lace released all of its pears to whirl through him. During this sequence Christian reflected upon the feeling of a virgin laying her right hand on his. Her caressings, following each of her breaths, fell down on his rough human mind, like soft thoughts of love. When his senses received extended authority he thought his mind played a trick on him. Yet, he could not have done anything differently about his dreaming. In it, he was given out for another much stronger will than his own.

After the episode with Anton, he remembered that he indeed had lost all his self-control. In this moment his thinking had ceased to be bound by words. Everything happened solemnly through different combinations of colored lights. "A kind of visual game" had the earthbound, more human part of his brain
summoned. Christian understood how Mother Mary had been the organizer in his dream. Her function seemed to be to communicate a knowledge, a science of some kind. Something endless. Christian was caught up by the Virgin’s loveleash that pulled towards a certain area. He thought love was a part of this science. It was not Humanism’s lovegame of hide and seek, hints of here and there, puzzling minds puzzling each other with pleasing puzzles of pleasure. The strength of the leash was its pure sense of imagination.

Further on in the dream Christian discovered how his very own mother carefully held him in her arms. He had just been born. He reacted at how strong his need was to learn things, as soon as possible. He remembered his own birth with clarity. Something had immediately begun to tick. His only thought was about his liberation, to become totally released so that he eventually could change the things in the world he thought were wrong. Christian didn’t know if his thankfulness was aimed firstly to his own mother Claire, or to something more sociologically larger and more important. He was probably just thankful that his life finally would start, even though he did not know with what.

Gunsmoke reinvigorated him relatively fast. He had not believed it at first, standing on the courtly ground, watching with his very own eyes, he saw how Camille Desmoulins with force led the assault of the Bastille in Versailles. Not until now Christian subconsciously understood what the dream was about, what it was trying to tell him. The fantastic rumpus which Christian expected to see, it was not there. The dream seemed to be a lecture. Its train of thought exposed how any community always balanced itself between two opposites. The justice, it appeared to Christian, was made into a product rather than that of an infinite well, inexhaustible and permanent. No matter how the human tried to find an equilibrium, she was always drifting towards one of the poles from the other. Christian was thrown back and forth in the history of mankind by a force that threw him into its center, in which he was a most vulnerable observer. It was this charge through the evolution, that confrontation with poor and rich, suffering and enjoying, weak and strong that drove him crazy. There were vikings, two medieval knights from a place in east Scotland. One of them said he was the Thane of Cawdor. The hell he was.

“A metronome was what he was...” was Christian’s only thought. “A ticking dweller between virtues of gold and an ambition so cold, so cold.” Christian was resentful. He felt the viciousness exploding into his mind from this man. Three travellers of East India came to him. Slowly they presented their treasures from the East. Christian could not but reflect upon the strange bitterness he saw in their eyes. However, he had to go on. A gladiator caught somewhere within the Roman Empire turned around his head a couple of seconds before a charging lion for sure would decapitate him. Christian tried to give the soldier courage. He tried but he couldn’t smile at the victim of such a barbaric rite...he wanted to help, but he couldn’t because the cruelty was beyond comprehension. Then, in the following moment, a Chinese farmer saw his crop being destroyed by rain, and the legendary biblical David appeared. Christian closed his eyes, as if it was nothing but a contrafactum without music, and when he opened them, he could discern the eyes of the Swedish queen Kristina. She was talking with the mathematician Descartes. Finally a Russian daughter of a Czar approached him to meet his eyes. The little girl puzzled him for one reason. Either she was about to smile a cute little smile, or to cry out a horrible scream, a fearful cry of death. Christian wondered why she had made such an impression on him. She had the same look as Leonardo da Vinci’s Mona Lisa. Christian wondered if his memory of this Russian girl was at such a strength, because she wasn’t from his own time. She was dressed up like a royalty from the late 19th century or maybe the turn of the century. He did not know. He couldn’t tell. But she was beautiful. She was from another world. He felt her character. He took it to himself and she was truly the lovable of lovable. He found water and fire in her eyes. Yet, the feeling that remained in him was darkness. Her eyes talked true words, those the Revolution had stolen from her. There was no barrier of what she could communicate, she was really the nobility, a supreme eye. Christian was convinced that he’d met Joan of Arc, or Jeanne d’Arc, but really he’d been jammed of dark, “or...maybe J’ai AIMED by d’Ark?” his hallucinatory mind asked itself in a furious quest for at least one straight answer, not just uncertainty,
improbability, anxiety, mortality, carelessness, hate, war, blood, killing of living creatures without a reason... He knew he was confronting his own self-destructive mechanisms, and still he couldn’t decide, because it would decide.

Christian swept them by like an unaffected wind, as firm as fatal steel, as warm and reliable as the cat’s spinning. Then he heard some mysterious kind of sacral music, even better than a gregorian chant. He thought he had discerned some string instruments but it was hard to tell. It could have been anything. He heard sounds he had never heard before. He felt a harmony he had never before felt. It was there, so clear, everywhere. Christian’s presence at each scene either gave the humans he met an inspiration of strength or disarmed them of their true conscious. It was clear that each individual had to commit some sort of decision. Like the death-dealer of fate, Christian was the one who swung his fatal blade of decision. He fenced like a rebel for the human matters at every new situation and at every new event. In each face Christian saw the conclusive settlement, the selfagreement, being agreed upon. He was the procuror of their hybris, instead of as usual, the fate. The dream he imagined was over, he made an effort to wake and he thought he did, because he could see himself in the couch from Arrac, staring like a blind man out into darkness, out, out, until he bounced into his own ego. He thought there was some more thinking to be done.

He knew there must be an initial idea behind the evolution. An idea that started any other idea and then couldn’t be changed. Christian felt horrible like a devil without an age, yet so anciently alive like a wise law of the jungle. Fate weighed in his hands like a sword, ready to be alive, ready to be used for whatever Christian had in mind. He pierced the evolution and saw that it was a giant wheel, slowly turning its spokes, millenium by millenium. Christian understood that he couldn’t change that initial idea, he couldn’t stop the rolling. He was stuck in it. Christian was the navel of it.

“Something ought to happen...” he said to himself. Christian knew that he did not have to live in a personal epi-centrum to see his personal problems. He had been escaping life, he understood. He laughed at his life situation that he thought was safe. He laughed when he saw that no one was safe. He had been living the shit out of his plastic ego. He did not have a self. Just like everyone else he was tied up by synthetic ideals created by media. It was that discussion with his boss. “Everything in that media apparatus,” he thought, “from the color of one’s wastebasket to the looks and the smells of moviestars, everything...set up so that one would never found one’s own self. Only a blinded, deaf and dumb consumer, with an addiction to a Hollywood personality.” Christian found a half-ateen tuna sub that he forced down the throat. He struggled with every god damn law of inertia to get that sucker down.

“The community didn’t show the value of the self. No one had reacted because no one knew they could.” He swallowed thick, healthy gulps of milk from a new container he had bought last night coming home from work.

“Ideas as they knew it, the real ideas always come from someone else!” Christian said ironically. His mind ended up in this tormented parting of the ways for some reason. He remembered how that woman had just thrown that newspaper magazine as far as she could. He just loved it.

“She knew how to act,” he thought. “But did she have a self?” he replied as if he was trying to create a poem. Christian had been running away from his own for quite a while. “It did not fit. That’s why,” he said to himself astonished. “It didn’t fit.” He nodded to himself. “It was living in the past, in the future, it had its own will.” Christian was depraved by the way he had had a life, but hadn’t owned it. He had a personality that lived in him, that made choices like what kind of toiletroper he should buy, what color on his shirts he should pick or how many beers in the pub he should have. He knew that lifestyle didn’t push the evolution anywhere. In it there was nothing to hunt for, nothing to be afraid of, just the monotonous oiling of a career, with a fashion and eating machinery, that as if seeming to be a perpetuum mobile had no start, nor end, just changing its color and shape, or fabrics. He felt his society’s snare hanging above his mind and it made him completely frantic. In front of him stood Pete Batesman, dressed up in a Hugo Boss raincoat and an Yves-Saint Laurent tweed blazer. Like an executioner the medial psychopath slowly
lowered the snare over Christian’s head, and tightened it around Christian’s bare neck, making him cough in the polluted political air between Nixon’s world and Clinton’s Disney World. Christian’s life was narrated by media but it didn’t control him, it had lost the ability to entertain, it disgusted him, it was slowly killing him from inside, like a rat...eating itself into the body of a woman’s womb, eating what makes things grow.

The night was followed by day. The light slowly opened over the city. The concepts had lost their meaning to him. The man was thinking hard to find different, yet unseen concepts, new meanings to everything around him. He was thinking of new perspectives to replace the plastic ones of the media apparatus. He worked with his mind to find a promise, if any, for the humans to find a value in that self of their own, whoever they were, whatever they were doing, in whatever city or hole, in whatever timezone. Christian felt as if he was doing a choice of roads standing in the middle of life’s crossroad, but for a passing shadow on its stage. It had to be a true and fast one. He was aware that he had to drift away from his plastic earthbound life, to a situation that was nothing but a big mark of interrogation. He asked himself,

“What values in today’s world will provide the best future for the human?” He understood that his brain had boiled over. “What consequence is she forced to take in order to actualize her future existence?” he thought in a new attempt. “It has to be something that isn’t about her future. It has to be something that is about the future in a lump sum.” As Christian understood it, the main question wasn’t if he would be able to form a new idea of the values of life. “The question should be, ‘Is the human race worthy of solving its own problem or not?’ Or ‘Does her purity prove her worthiness?’” Christian was close to some stuff that could be tied up in some suggestions, but it was too late to call Thor, he laughed. “By the way, who cares? This is my own, personal idea. I wonder if there’s really anyone I can trust it with. It’s too personal. Too much for anyone to understand. On this one I have to trust myself.”

He knew the best thing was to go to sleep again, but not in the couch from Arrac. “That’s obvious. Very obvious.” He raised himself and crossed the living room floor of oak. He thought he had weathered something, even though he did not know exactly what. He turned off the lamp on the wall and fell asleep shortly thereafter.

The stress, always pressing Sandra’s consciousness, peaked sometimes and drove her out from the sarcophagus of sleeping and dreaming. It drove her in an annihilating route towards overexertion and hurry on her way to school, as if pulled out from a magical midsummer night’s dream. Dazed she looked around in the dark sleeping room. Sandra didn’t know what her thoughts were heading toward. She didn’t know how long her inner game of thoughts had been going on. After all, she understood less and less of that agonized society she was travelling through. The aging of her friends’ hollowed sights was ghostlike. Their eyes talked an ancient language from an ancient time Sandra already had departed from. Nothing was there to be found in their blind existence that threw idle looks around. There was simply nothing in the humans that she could understand or embark upon anymore. They had no will. She found mates in an almost ascetic existence without a religion, without smiles, sorrow or even a streak of rapture of life. Everybody sort of followed everybody else. It was “the motion.”

“Nothing wrong living in the city,” Sandra thought. “I guess it’s like a compressed compression for the one who cannot endure its tempo, like a center of demands, asking for fast decisions. To lost city survivors, disarmed of all the fantastic explorations of a wandering life, it all boils down to a bunch of choices. “If they at least were in charge of themselves,” Sandra thought. “If they could only realize what chances life brought with itself, but instead they preferred a lame acceptance of standing next to it, to see it stream by, by others’ conditions.”

Sandra knew she was thinking too much about life, but it hadn’t yet become a substitute for living it. She thought she knew so damn little about it. She hadn’t lived it yet. The hunger for the future was hidden by a depressive play of shadows Sandra knew was building up inside of her.
“From what am I escaping? Towards what goal?” Sandra thought, young and concentrated. “...this is...?” She paused. “...my way towards...chaos? This is leaving one for another one?”

The hysterical techno-opera gushed out from a mortally squawked Made-in-Hong-Kong-not-exactly-a-honky-tonk radio, in an otherwise peaceful morning kitchen. Nothing new could be read in the four-hour-old morning paper that, purely fresh, blackened from its wicked reports. The sandwich which she quickly had scratched together was pressed up against the palate by hungry jaws. Sandra confirmed the fact that the orange marmelade was fruity and very tasty. The tea rinsed, refreshing down through her dry morning throat, like a warm and definite source of wisdom. The act of drinking tea was the most important of Sandra’s mornin g rituals. The headlines changed into utter squeaking. Document by document created illusions of breathless vacant space between text and and pictures. Within she could hear how an echoing gap of starving fear surprised itself by the unreal news hallucinations. The publication punctually plumped down on the vestibule’s floor every morning, at exactly twenty five minutes to five without explanations, without answers. This Everything now lay in front of her on the table like a rebellious collection of unheard whispers and nauseating cries. In the plentitude and the innumerable of these proclamations, the individual was choked down and couldn’t be found anywhere between the lines anymore. From actualities or events nothing of unity, or clarity, was sung out. Except for a sort of blurry harmonization of the accidents’ and the sorrows’ “de facto.”

“This news is calling for a consciousness that can face it. There’s a demand for a will powerful enough to take a hold of the reality.”

“Who’s able even to breathe in this Worldship’s environment dangerous to life, a political heat? Where a person actually isn’t anything but a bit of diesel waiting to be compressed and burnt in some of the society’s gigantic pistons that heavily just keep striking time after time...after time.” She swallowed the last gulp of the sandwich. “A social machinery that paralyzed and consumed the human wherever this human was.” Sandra turned the sheets over, passing the editorial. The brittle pages cut out a message that took Sandra to a despotsically darkened reality. Each page being a defenseless papernur, all they could do was to helplessly scream out anxiety and the prayers of the world. They could but meditate between other’s accusations and threats, enter alleys of lies, and in continuously new, obscene directions be forced to throw the sick, political cheating-dice. Sandra continued turning pages. “Time after another the reader has to confront its own self with this. To risk oneself into a fruitless deadend of hopes and moral attempts, risk their very own person, stake out completely unsuspected points of view, and forcibly press down the news’ degeneration. Sandra grimly held the paper. “The human places itself into a situation where it’s erased, to be lost unnoticed in the alarm of the articles’ and placards’ hysterical contents.” Sandra couldn’t any longer master her train of thought, surrounded by a reality that choked her. “Finally, the human won’t find its way out,” Sandra breathed deeply and refreshing. “Like an article of a dozen, mixed up in the quantity of events, like a grain in a fruitless desert,” she thought on her way back into the kitchen. “We lie where we lie, just waiting for a boot to press us down...or...for a rain...to lift our lives.” Sandra stared out over the street from her kitchen window before putting stuff back after the breakfast. She saw how they were walking down there in the morning rush, without realizing how she had ceased to be a part of them, the public. She didn’t want to be a number. Her reactions against this world was pounding inside her bleeding heart.

“Thank God it’s Friday... A week and a half more to go.”

The days passed with an obscure tenacity in spite of the glorious future that lay before her. The two last days at the Technical Institute were almost exclusively a deal of saying good-bye. She had felt sorrow and melancholy welling inside. Then came that interesting chat she had with Lotta and Stina on the last day of school. At lunch they cleared all misconceptions about Alexander, once and for all.

“What do you mean...an Artist?” Stina sat with an insubordinate countenance, chewing on her crisp hard rye-bread sandwich.

“Hey Stina, you aren’t saying that Alexander should not be allowed to be an artist, are you?”
Sandra defended.

“No, I’m just wondering what on earth a man has got in his head...”

“...that walks around in cardboard.” Lotta filled in. They were both against Sandra. Her thesis was predestined to be destroyed no matter how true or valid her statements about Alexander were. Sandra slowly shook her head in the cafeteria.

“Do not try to interpret Alexander by some of your prejudiced observations.”

“Of course we think that he is a man... a very funny man,” Lotta said.

“And?” Stina sat thinking for a while. Lotta stared at Sandra and then at Stina.

“He isn’t that bad...” Stina looked at her friend as if she had betrayed her.

“What?” she said to Lotta, forsaken.

“What? Is that all you can say? Huh? You sound like to bitches.” Sandra had a murderess’ look.

“I can’t explain him,” Stina said.

“You don’t have to. You’re free to go,” Stina remained in her seat.

“What’re ya waitin’ for?”

“He seems...arrogant...” Stina finally said.

“Arrogant?” Sandra asked.

“He doesn’t care,” Lotta helped her friend. It was striking how a couple of quite intelligent creatures like these could sit and shovel around weak arguments about a young artist’s way of being. Probably it mattered to them because he was dangerous. He stripped people. It was something of this that Stina tried to inform her friends of.

“Why does he have to be such a cunning freak, when we aren’t...towards him,” Stina said.

“He’s a little bit cocky... kind of without any reasons...” Lotta said questioning.

“But hasn’t he accepted you?” Sandra nailed. “Isn’t that enough for a reason? He’s got hope in a world that is beyond hope...”

“Sandra” Stina shrugged her shoulders and glanced through the window. “Some people are and will be artists,” Stina continued as if trying to make Sandra understand her point.

“Uh huh, and ?” Sandra said.

“...because they don’t know better.”

The silence fell like a silent snowfall on a silent winter landscape. Sandra wanted these two stupid bitches out of her mind.

“No one wants to be an artist, no one wants to live like an artist...really.” Stina’s open question was smart. It intrigued Sandra’s thought. It was a contradiction to what almost anyone dreamt of becoming.

“Why?” Sandra asked, letting it be.

“The career... You don’t reach any goals. All you do is walking around poking in the palette, day after day. Alexander is drifting about. He’s stoning. Artists do not think things straight out. They don’t care if a thing works or not. They don’t give a shit about society. They’re living off it. The artist goes for a completely ego-centric world... to live in a buzz of oneself... and worst of all... They really do get high, doing it.” Sandra laughed so that everyone in the cafeteria really should hear what a good time they had. She looked Stina into the eyes. She hated her.

“I agree with you.” she lied. No one really knew who had the ball.

“Alexander lives off society, but he doesn’t give a shit about it. He’s trying to change things. He’s a member of Greenpeace, and did finally succeed in convincing me to become a member of Amnesty International.”

“Well, Sandra, but I’m also a member of Amnesty.” Lotta said.

“He believes a hell of a lot more about humanity than what many others do. Alexander doesn’t give up. He knows a whole lot about respectable morality. Much more than what industrial officers and bank managers are capable of, who snatch and pull in the nation’s sadly earned money. Those who’re financing... Alexander tries to embellish quarries and fallen apples. He’s the least harmful to society. He’s
the artist that holds up the creative candelabra to say abracadabra, making ugly men’s faces beautiful. The artist seeks the joy of things by taking a standpoint of what they look like. They do not try to control nature the way engineers want and hope to do, and sometimes think they manage damn well. Artists try to live with nature. That stuff impresses me. The humans who are considered losers in our society but who actually have a broader vision, who are betting their whole life and reputation for what they believe in.”

“You speak convincingly. However there’s a lot that can be straightened out in an infinite amount of time. I was hoping for natural science to meet the humanities, in some way.” Stina rose up from her chair looking at Lotta. “Well, well, I have to leave now, but thank you for the talk.” Lotta nodded good-bye and they took off. Sandra thought she’d opened their eyes a little bit. Then in the next moment she realized that there was 20 hours left before her absolutely last final. She ran out in the corridor towards the phonebooth.

“Klara Nordquist.”
“Hi. It’s me.”
“Oh well, hello Sandra! Just gettin’ ready?” Klara asked.
“Absolutely,” Sandra laughed knowing that it was impossible to study the night before an exam.
“Yes, you coming? Or what the hell... why the hell aren’t you coming over?”
“See you.”
“Yeah. Bye.”

Twenty two hours later, completely gaunted by three bottles of red Chardonnay de Portmonnai, she sits with a hangover, in lecture hall B, listening to the parting speech. She tries to surrender the words from Lyle Andersson, that seem to be coming out as if he was programmed by a computer. Sandra feels how the outer sheath of her head is extremely badly proportioned to match the real size of her inner skull. But, 23 minutes later, on the 28th of November, Sandra Nordiänder finally becomes civil engineer. One of the first ones with a M.A. in Astro-theoretical physics, a newly started program in the physics department. She didn’t think she had produced anything of importance after all. Not anything more than a technical and philosophical knowledge within what used to be a very narrow field of astrophysics, but today had become a giant of physics. Sandra had taken extra courses and remaining lab hours which enabled her to finish one whole semester earlier than expected. All of a sudden she’d reached the goal of her education since kindergarten. All of this dawned upon her as she was sitting there in the bench, listening to Lyle. She knew that there still was something missing, someone that spoke to her, that really told her what she should do with her life. She needed to hear a new language. She needed to communicate. As she listened to Lyle Andersson, she realized how lost science was if it didn’t know how to communicate its knowledge.

The fall developed differently from what she had thought it would. It was different from her so far very hectic existence of laborious studying intermingled with impossible party expeditions and versatile cult-philosophical wanderings in remarkably odd nightclubs. Sandra had had a good start this fall semester. The exams were nailed one by one, as if she produced A:s at an assembly line. A maturity more and more had gotten a grip on her senses. A fear came because of the burnmark that just had slipped on her. It controlled her. Sandra was tired not knowing what kind of struggle her subconscious had to deal with. All she knew was that it was there, somewhere within, like a constrained devil. It was a mental battle with her own self that Sandra felt she was losing. Since the arrival from Cyprus Sandra repeatedly had tried to make up her mind about what really happened on that Boeing 737. She wondered if the 3-dimensional world tied her not to understand exactly how and why she had dreamt that dream. Sandra continuously fell back in her mind about the hallucination that wasn’t any hallucination. She had simply accepted “the incident” without knowing better, disconnecting herself from her natural instinct to question.

The telephone rang furiously for Sandra. She had just laid herself down into the water. The ritual of a peaceful bathtub was the only finish she wished to have. It had been a pretty rough morning. Sandra remained lying down, leaning her head towards the cold white tile. Her eyes had closed and could not be opened. She was irresponsible like that until the phone quit ringing. Then she felt responsible. She
calmed down when she checked her e-mail. There were 11 job offers.

“When does my life actually begin? Has it started already? Or is it simply over already from the beginning?” Sandra puzzled her mind with the questions without giving a damn about the answers. As if her life was nothing but a poem anyways, and she thought she didn’t answer. It was relaxing with some distance to oneself. Sandra smiled genially at how everything seemed to arrange itself. Now all she had to do was to dial a number. One out of eleven. Sandra wished she had the craving to work. Now, all she lived for was that bath. To feel the calm after a storm. She got up and dried herself with a thick white towel. Then the telephone called again. It was grandpa who wanted to congratulate her on the M.A.

“How is my little dove doing at this particular moment?” he chuckled.

“It’s ok.” Sandra said while she was dripping and freezing on the entrance-hall’s floor.

Everything changed when she heard his warm, morose voice. He had not lost his style she thought. It was fun that he called, as always. It didn’t matter if she was lying in a bath, ate dinner or simply had a hangover, grandpa was the safe cornerstone of her existence. She dressed herself after the conversation. Cleaned up a little. Klara phoned her at a quarter past six and the concrete purple mushroom once again was the commissioned place of meeting. They went to Kurt Züller’s café to have an incredibly cheap and good schnitzel. Klara had ended up in the corner where the phonograph from ’52 was situated. She had received the nerve-racking mission of the evening’s disc-jockey. The locale’s arsenal of jazz-loving gastronomes thought that she was doing just fine. There was one hell of an atmosphere already at 9.30. Klara, Sandra and Mia spoke about everything.

“Has Michael called you?” Mia’s fervent pair of eyes asked her.

“I don’t know. My answering machine just died, two days ago.”

“Not one live talk with Michael since then?” Mia asked joyfully.

“Give me a break, Sandra. It’s Your guy. If he’s gonna call he’s gonna call you,” Klara said knowledgeably and trustworthy. She turned around harrowing into a collection of Fats Domino vinyls.

“Michael wasn’t anyone special,” Sandra thought. She knew him as a quite unimportant character a couple of parties ago. Probably that was what made him kind of interesting after all. None of the girls had figured out who he was particularly interested in. They laughed when they found that he didn’t seem to have figured it out himself.

“These are pictures we’ve been waiting for,” Klara said to the gang. Together they tried to explain why they had not during one single moment tried to start peace-negotiations with the hotelroom they had lived in. Life in the zodiacal sign of the nuclear bomb, they began to understand for each picture that showed up, it had had very little to do with their consciousness.

The girls wildly threw themselves back into the adventures of the wild vacation. Time after time they were struck by the camera’s total centering force that looped a little moment, frozen for an infinite amount of time. The picture was really the eternal memory. Their plates were emptied of food, and after a couple hours Sandra was on her way home again. She turned out the light at twenty to one.

“Why The Idiot?” she asked out loud in the room. “Why even think a thought of reading Dostoyevsky?” Booksales and booksales, and then some other booksales. She went here and there, until she’d visited them all. She turned around in the bed and tried to sleep. “An incisive scourge, indeed.”

After some slumbering, she woke up.

“But what the hell, you always learn something from visiting them.”

What was sick about Sandra’s awakening was that she lay in exactly the same position she had lain in when she had fallen asleep, or maybe this is to say, she had the same position leaving the world of realities for a fictional world in which Eyes Move Rapidly. The digits shone madly 3.42 a.m., like a disturbing foretoken of something. Sandra couldn’t tell herself to stop dreaming, the nightmare had a deadlock on her. She was caught, she couldn’t escape from it. There was still something that attracted her with this endless fear, the darkness which imprisoned her. She had to let go of her senses, as if her id and ego all of a sudden decided to change positions. Sandra thought she might learn something. Now it was too late to
change her mind anyway.

“Sandra, Sandra?”

“Mmm...”

“Hello?”

“I was actually lying down. What do you want?” she heard how her mum’s voice didn’t sound the way it used to. It had gotten a new sound. However, a new sound was the least problem with this call. Marianne talked with a dry, indifferent tone. It was as if a big shard had fallen from her. The syllables fell apart as her mother tore them out of her heart.

“Grandma is dead.”

Sandra’s brother of course couldn’t handle the situation well.

“Why?! Why?! Why?!” he cried with the hoarse voice of a seven-year-old that did not understand. Her brother’s two small hands spasmodically bracketed themselves around her belly. He grasped her like a soldier grasps his gun when he has reached the dead end of a street, with the enemies at his back. She suffered with him. The little brat wasn’t brave enough. He wanted to understand something that was impossible to understand, and Sandra felt within herself how hard life’s school taught him. It was strong of him even just to stand up, she thought. She didn’t even reflect upon her own situation. She should have taken the sour reality by its horns, to allow herself to be seized by a hateful seriousness.

The phone is ringing for the second time, somewhere...somewhere far away in her disoriented mind. She doesn’t know if it’s her phone or if it is churchbells or her alarmclock.

Time in the church seemed timeless. Sandra thinks it is important that everyone is caught up by the pastor’s service, everyone is as valuable as a musical note in a piece of music, each one of them a link in a chain of faith. The closeness is total. The mentality of Sandra’s grandmother hangs in the church like a fifth cardinal point, looming somewhere within each individual. The eyes of each person are staring at the coffin as if to raise an inner dialogue. No one wants to let go of her. The grandmother, so intensively unphysical at this very moment, is still present in Sandra’s mind like fire under a witch, burning her human flesh, at the evil and utterly pointless stake. The atmosphere pushes feelings up front. Silently Sandra’s grandmother slips through the hands of action and no one really want their hearts to beat time further on. More and more the grandmother is taken up by eternity and everyone can hear the devotion of love crying out from her, a timeless and shapeless tone, as if sung by a thousand cherubic voices. Its incomparable disharmonies stabbed cruel blows of abstraction into the living creatures’ souls of concretion. His sweaty right hand’s fist holds on to the bottom hem of Sandra’s black dress in silk. He observes the coffin for a long time. His young eye begin to wander. It looks for a sign. He wonders where his grandmother is. His wet eyes meet Sandra’s and he lets them be there.

The pastor makes his last entrance in front of the altar. He is concentrated. Sandra is burdened by a responsibility to do everything right, even though she is just a spectator, holding her brother’s hand, a brother, she knows, who has nothing to hold on to. The clergyman positions himself on a staircase and turns around. Calmly he clasps his hands, but not to pray. With a mysterious sacral decisiveness the pastor makes people’s minds aware. Sandra thinks it is genial the way he takes a firm grip of each person’s mentality, by greeting each sight with his own. As if crucifying himself in a momentary compassion, he asks people to open up the innermost part of their selves. He makes them understand that all they have to do is to say goodbye, but it has to come from their selves, from that which is each person’s real person, what they are able to hold open. He is satisfied with the the priest’s professionalism. He feels more calm. The assembly stands up as the priest raises his arms. The tones of the last psalm roars out in the church. Her eyes ends up looking at the blood of Jesus. The wood-carver and the painter had succeeded well with the sculptures’ proportions and the colors balancing it. His suffering no one could escape from.

“He couldn’t hang better than on a funeral.” Sandra contemplates. It was as if she could taste, smell and feel the death of Jesus, as if it were her own child dying.
The walnut coffin is carried out of the church by eight loving mourners. Sandra stands up with a headache that is abominable. He walks behind her. Sandra’s disappearance out of the society she has prevailed in so far, is a matter of predestination. Now, nothing disturbs or touches her anymore. Nothing changes her. She is an ideal of her own imagination. Her voice is deep, calm, cutting like metal. She thinks that if Bertil is the anticlimax of liBerti then, “how can Bertil be reversed to become liBerti?”

“I’m leaving you. Goodbye.” She turns around by instinct. To the pastor the situation is intolerable. They are turned to each other to see who is causing the most trouble. They remain staring at each other, not daring to look into the hole in the ground, or at the coffin or somewhere else. The pastor announces the next psalm even though they already have sung the last one inside the church. The funeral goes on. Sandra heads for the subway. She is chased by time that no longer exists. The train’s doors are suddenly slammed together.

People stand tightly together. She can’t change her position turned toward one of the doors. She is about to scream because of claustrophobia, she feels captured, as if she has no way out, as if there are millions of people around her, each one wanting to say “I am someone” but are unable to, because if they do, they know that they are going to be different from others, and no one wants to be different from someone else, and they wander, they search, they hunger for an identity, some human value, some integrity, some individuality, and it drives her...

Sandra stares into the glass of the door. She doesn’t see her own face, but a young man’s, maybe in his early thirties. It calms her. She recognizes the face, it looks extremely familiar to her, she has seen it before. It has the same string of blood on the forehead, she saw in her own forehead earlier. His lips are shaped like a smile, but she can’t see clearly, if he is really smiling or if he’s crying. She stares into his eyes. They give her energy, and when she thinks her life is about to quit, it does, as a matter of a fact, go on. The face disappears and she sees her own, pale and sweaty. She hears the monotonous donk-donk from the train’s steel wheels hitting the ties of the rails. She hears murmurs about someone planning to go to Jarwick. She feels yet even more hysterical in her distorted mood, but then she sees the sign of a sunset over Stonehenge. It’s an old man talking to, probably, his granddaughter. He tells her of the journey he once made to Stonehenge, and the little girl looks at the picture, seemingly hypnotized by the old man’s speaking. Sandra is calmed by the old man’s voice. It is soft and warm, like hot syrup rinsing down one’s throat. The man tells the daughter his next journey will be to Scotland, to see all the castles. He says he is on his way toward Jarwick. While the little girl asks what’s so special about Jarwick and why he chooses to go there, the whole wagon is silenced by the old man’s dark, but calm voice, as everyone is too tired to concentrate on anything else but to the slow rhythms of how the old and wise man thinks as he speaks, and everyone is caught by his tongue. No one understands how sly it is...

“...it puts people in a trance almost...” Sandra astonishes herself with. She is suddenly facing the old man as the young girl repeats her question.

“Why Jarwick, uncle Simon?” The old man, while staring full of hope and expectation, toward Sandra, she sees that it is Lethker Sevillari’s face again. He smiles at her.

“Hmm...!” it ironically replies to the girl’s question, as if Sandra was to answer it. The whole wagon of people now focus their attention at Sandra, smiling, hoping that she will be able to tell, because she must be a relative or something to the old man and his daughter. Sandra looks at Lethker Sevillari and everyone looks at her. Sandra cannot escape because the doors are still shut, even though the train has stopped at Zeta Square. People outside clog up around each of the train’s automatic doors, wanting to get in.

“Say it.” Lethker Sevillari says slowly towards Sandra as if she owed him a lot from some old, old debt, as old as original sin.

“...Jaar...” Sandra says with tears in her eyes.

“Huh??!! I can’t hear you??!! Louder!!”

“Jarwick. JARWICK!!” Sandra screams because she is afraid. She jumps out of the wagon and
behind her she hears the doors shutting after a while. Around her, everyone shouts,

“JARWICK!! JARWICK!! JARWICK!!!” And because she doesn’t want to be different from
everyone else she shouts Jarwick, again and again, and again because everyone else does it. But it is only
those telephone signals...again and again. In the speakers on the platform, she can hear her mum’s voice
shouting.

“Grandma is DEAD! Grandma is DEAD!!”

Sandra is soaked with sweat. Her sheets are soaked as well. She knows she has to get up, but
there is something in her experiences from earlier that stays with her, in her awakened present state, right
now, right here, next to the alarm clock which shouts out 11:17 a.m. Sandra knows that one of these days,
she will still... She will lose it. She would still be dreaming, even if she was awake. She wouldn’t be able
to change id for ego, back again. Some day, she knew, this would happen, and it scared her. She knew
this was the time to do something. She had to do something, something big, something real. She felt this
had to happen even though she didn’t know how. The reality she lived in, was not real to her anymore, she
felt like a goddess, like a rock star, she understood how she stood in the doorway to unreality, just because
there was no other alternative. She had already travelled so rapidly through the fields of reality, so fast that
she’d examined the whole meaning life in a couple of years. There were no hurdles left in the real world,
Sandra was aware of the unreality that pulled and tore in her. She knew the only way to remain sane, was
to explore it. She still lay down in her bed. It was 10:18 a.m. now. She thought she was going insane.
She looked at the alarm clock, which turned 10:19. Sandra thought there was something about her world...
Actually, there were a whole bunch of consequences she wanted to do something about. She got scared
because the more she thought of these consequences, the more aware she was of what the world considered
reality, it was nothing but a meaningless soup of tele-communications, filling out applications, CNN 24
hours a day, MTV that repeated techno music that in itself was computerized repetitive synthesizers,
sequenced to produce music... Sandra feels small.

She doesn’t know whether her brain or bladder will explode from all the junk each is filled with.
Sandra knows that some day she has to make up her mind about the...cacophony. She had to do
something.

Alexander sits calmly on one of the café’s chairs. In front of him he has a cup of herb tea half
emptied but still steaming. He hasn’t anything in particular going on this day so he just sit diverted, turning
over the pages of an application to White Army Resistance. Alexander thought of taking some
responsibility of his society, and not to be nationalistic on this specific matter. He detects seven
misspellings on the first page, and it makes him to look up and to discern the motion in the street. He let
his bitter face pass over the text a second time. The eyes instinctively lose power and once again he is
forced to drop the completely insane reading. His sight searches along the left façade and fall down on the
street. He thought he had seen an acquaintance but dispatched his thought, due to a concentration that
momentarily had consumed him. Inspired, he thinks of his situation. As for being one of the 10 national
finalists of the annual Mr Greenpeace competition, there was no obstacle left for Alexander. He thought
that his career was getting close to perfect. He picks up The Times and reads about the last 180,000 acres
of rainforest in the Amazon. Within a period of two years they would all be gone. Just simply erased. It
was much worse than what he and the rest of the still small number of environmental activists could have
suspected. The news, that he almost felt personally responsible for, he also felt had to become the one and
only topic for political discussion. A clamouring report he first had heard on the BBC World News three
hours earlier echoed in Alexander’s conscience that because that report contained so much more invaluable
information than it had three hours earlier. It bothered him that the world he was living in lacked a new
definition of the word communication. The world needed a completely new concept.

The article in The Times flashed through his mind very quickly. The enterprise conglomerate that
five years ago had received the “Total Responsibility-contract” for the survival of the rainforest instead
with double speed had devastated the last lively parts of the forest. Alexander remembered the Greenpeace demonstrations in Paris, the late summer of ‘95 and the Berlinblockade the following spring. The case finally had been brought up to United Nations. The South American company, Live Lliberti Akres, Inc., had said of itself to be a company that enriched and supervised subtropical climates. To their help they had been given UN troops from a major part France, Canada and Spain to keep the watch of the Amazon effective and impregnable. The world was now extremely tense about not knowing what was going on in the Amazon. A marketing institute in Cologne, Germany had worked with a drive about the “global responsibility of loyalty for Live Lliberti Akres,” “There was one forest but many voices,” Alexander had understood. The institute spoke in dogmatic German tone of how some of those voices would come from the dark. There would be companies that would do everything they could to prove that the forest belonged to everybody and because of this factor, there didn’t exist one single company that would run all... departments...of saving the trees of the Amazon jungle. Democratically, the project was a scandal. And sure enough the guard had been tough. The text had continued telling about how the world felt “so ashamed of how barbarically Live Lliberti Akres Inc. had treated the two British researchers Raileen and Charles Egan. These two had with alarming material of video tapes and photographs flipped the contemporary ruling world opinion upside down. No one had for a second dared to imagine a thought of the conglomerate’s brute methods fencing in and defending the forest from the illegal cutting of wood. As usual, the world had reacted too late. Western Europe with EU in the forefront had completely warneheartedly, in liaison with UN and the ten South American governments still existing, accepted the competence of Live Lliberti Akres, The documentation by the little Pennsylvanian TV-Station WQBC gave, however, a bizarre and stilted picture of what was the real truth. Two days ago the remains of the two researchers had been found in a ravine, in the county of Zalanga in the southeast part of the Amazon. A lot of the work that had been under South American supervision had undermined the organization of the guard. The TV-report showed one of the more obscure sides with national and, to some extent, international financial corruption. The management of Live Lliberti Akres had used their newly achieved power position to give the continent of South America the economical, forest, and political contour they wanted it to have. In this part of the world, each of its nations’ yearly inflations was oscillating between 30-52%. Even for those countries that still were able to maintain an autonomous economy, complete governments had been bought, to run whatever was left of its people and economy. Live Lliberti Akres had replaced two to three constitutional laws in each of the South American countries, out of a nation’s standing rule of four. It seemed as if the most sharp and potential brains also were those that felt the least of responsibility. The question that no one from the beginning had dared to ask was if it had at all been necessary to test the company’s aptitude for the mission. For the rest of the world the word competence was of such a precarious kind that it fell by its own grip. No one wanted to question what had to work with 150% reliability.

The Amazon was a cultural-historical and socio-geographical inheritance, considered to be one of the earth’s few remaining environmental treasures. No one had had any ambition to destroy those South American traditions of thousands of years. No one even dreamed about confronting those ethno-religious cultures that most likely would have created a practically intolerable situation toward South America as well as world-politically. It was their land, it was their rights, it was their culture, why would they give it up? Why would they accept the minds of the western civilization which literally wanted to cut down their world, tree by tree, specie by specie, or any of its living organisms, column by column? The attitude of the world was not to bother. It was to show respect. The UN took its knowledge and wisdom of not to challenge the destiny, for granted. They didn’t want to start a war that only destroyed exotic forest-dwelling human tribes. His psyche was completely absorbed by the article. For safety reasons, he applied, more UV lotion-factor 30 on his face. His action came as a routine reflex. He realized that Coronado was one real scandal.

"Those few who are still able to hold the less and less realistic but synthetically computerized
reality apart from the less and less comprehensible unreality of ozone depletion, nuclear explosions and
prostitutional massacres such as Pete Batesman’s, those who have the vision of all this...for example,
myself, we are the real oblates in this pagan world. Those who...manage to press themselves through the
lips of Mother Mary watching the world as if she is caught between seriousness and insincerity, we are
only getting a faint idea of what isn’t supposed to happen...but now does...like hell. I could have written it
myself. By gosh that’s how I would have written it!” He said out loud to three businessmen from
Marlerud finance that passed him by on the street. One of them answered him with a smile, “Why don’t
you?” Alexander knew that one more additional environmental problem, no matter what degree, and the
insuperable world disaster of nature would be completed. His eyes were blurred by the hysterical facts that
every page threw at him.

“The Amazon failure isn’t anymore a risk for humankind,” Alexander read, thinking, “except as a
a brick left over from the construction of the wall of civilization. Built by risk and chance to secure earth’s
continued existence. And this wall humanity has built without noting how it has finally surrounded her.”
His thoughts broke him apart. The ozone layer was, according to a broadcast earlier in the day, “0 down to
0% in partial global areas,” Alexander remembered. Only 76% of the earth’s surface would in two years
be able to offer possibilities of growth. Chances. Even if researchers would get a decree about the jungle
approved through the “LawDirect paragraph” concerning acute environmental threats, Alexander thought
it seemed like real ideas now slowly had begun to dry out. Even though the knowledge of what to do, and
how, the time was not within range. Alexander was beside himself with frustration. He felt powerless as
an individual. He had a will of his own, his one and only. For a moment Alexander forgot all about the Mr
Greenpeace roster. Before himself he couldn’t see anything else than that kind of catastrophe of nature that
no one wanted to hear about, but that everyone had helped to create. The contours of it had disappeared in
the throng of what politicians wanted, their abilities to pursue that will and a people that found themselves
trusting the wrong guy all the time. Alexander reflected in a fast manner of the ideologies and the
multitude of living systems of law by which people had lived for thousands of years without knowing if
they lived with nature, or off it. Alexander was thinking of what exactly was wrong, what had gone wrong,
but realized that he was trying to lift water with a sieve.

“If one looks for a fault one spends one’s time in the wrong direction. In a time when no one
anymore knew how long it would last.”

Alexander knew that the human never would be capable of imagining to itself the complete
answer. “The human would never realize the importance of this, or even less, the extent of the infinity-
perspective. She was too much of an animal for that. He pondered for a while which of the creatures,
human versus elephant, had the best infinity-perspective of life.

“Is it better to run as fast as one can to the well, to be able to say I found it therefore it’s mine?
Their rage over the prairies corroding the ground, and burning the trees in the forest that kept them away
from the water, this is the human model? Was it worse to walk slowly on the paths that one’s ancestors
had used taking a break whenever they had felt like it. Accepting the fact that a tree grew where it grew
and couldn’t move, knowing that one could move around it, and finally reach to the well that came with
water that everyone drank, but no one owned?” Alexander sipped from his cup of herbal brew. “Who
had the real power to live? The human or the elephant?”

A renewed light shone from his eyes. ”Sandra..! Coming from the middle of nowhere..?!” he
delighted himself as he raised himself. His eyes were glued to the woman that charged over the gutter
towards him. All of a sudden she gave the businessmen from Marleruds Finance a wild, but unconscious
tackle... She had nailed Alexander already from 100 yards distance. The color of her face was red and her
hair streamed in the cold wind that cracked up the bone marrow of anyone who dared to run against it.
Alexander became clearly worried.

“Something is damn wrong with her,” he said as he saw how an older lady lost her balance as
Sandra passed her by, making her falling headlong into the streetstone. Sandra began the last few yards up
to Alexander’s little depot as he ran to meet her on the street, just in front of the entrance. “What’s going on...?” Alexander cried out to her.

“Jarwick... Jarwick! Jarwick!” Sandra was screaming in hysteria. It sounded as if a big wolf was only a couple of yards behind her, hunting for the dainty morsel. Alexander made a calm confession to himself that Sandra had succeeded with a convincing entrance, original in style, perfectly performed.

“This girl you’d have to take seriously” Alexander said to himself. But he didn’t get any further. She had moved 15 yards before he had gotten a clear picture of the situation, and he as a matter of a fact was behind her. One hundred yards of running was demanded of him, before he had managed to come up with something that matched her tempo, similar to a running zebra’s. He discovered that he had forgotten his book at the cafe, L’ile by Kvart Silber. Two years he had spent hunting it, until he had come across that rather scruffy copy in Turja’s Little Bookstore in Tallinn, Estonia, in ’98. Alexander realized that people now probably were looking more at his paperclothes and bullet-pierced boots than those modest, escaping waves of hair he was hunting in front of himself. He realized how unimportant the book was from that perspective, especially as an EvilraskRebtilo-L-guard perhaps 30-40 yards behind, began to yell at a policear one block away.

“Sandra!!...” Alexander called out. When he looked at his left side passing a street, a truck was at one yard’s distance from him, heading at him. He didn’t get far and as he was pushed out into the street corner from a 45° angle, a motorcycle was passing it. For some reason it turned to the right as Alexander rolled to the left, both avoiding a fatal kiss with Mrs Death. He rose and felt the pains from his hip. The truckdriver was just about to grasp what was happening, when he heard the cries from the EvilraskRebtilo-L-guard. The clock approached ummercifully 4.54 p.m. Alexander saw her in front of him, running far away in the horizontal crown of the street. He swore to himself, stood up, and hung on bleeding. After two hundred yards further, he was only five yards behind her.

“Jarwick...?” he called out, panting like a leaking bellow. The taste of blood spread like wildfire in his mouth. He couldn’t any more spit the malignant saliva out of it. For each rattling breath he began to cough up small portions of blood. Alexander knew that he would do anything for the sake of art, but the stuff that he was doing right now... “With sweat, anxiety and the taste of blood.?” He yelled a last time. This time seriously.

“Jarwick... ok. But why? WHY??? Dee...aargh Sandrarh hrrmpf...” he coughed up a big chunk of blood.

All of a sudden Sandra stopped running and turned around.

“You of anybody should know. You should know!” She was a little bit out of breath, yet calm and surprisingly controlled. “Alexander, you damn brat, don’t let me down!” She continued along Main Street in the same roaring tempo and continued up to the left after another block.

He stepped behind a couple of bushes and vomited. The discovery of having found himself staggering in a completely different part of the town, one or several hours later, made him notably nervous. It seemed to be in the middle of the night. He was barefoot. Two young boys crossed the street, obliquely out of sheer fear of the most torn apart person they had ever met. The hip nearly killed him with pain. Looking down on his foot, he saw how streams of blood had poured on the leg. Only his underwear and the shirt by Oscar Legain had remained intact on his body. After another couple of yards he reached an intersection. He turned the eyes up towards the corner of the house wall to see in what street corner he was situated. When his sight had registered the name and number of the street, it flipped in Alexander, as of an Original power, free of sins. He returned to his former position he had had, only a couple of seconds earlier. He remembered how someone had called out, “Taxi!” but nothing else.

Alexander realized that he recognized the place because he’d been lying there for a while. He didn’t know for how long though. He rose up and staggered back to the corner of the street. Each step became as of one single painful walk over sharp and burning bits of coal. They all fried the flesh surrounding his hip until all of his thinking clogged up, subdued by the obedience of an evil that wanted
nothing but pain in his system. His eyes registered the number on the Gothic arch of the entrance and
combined it with an old distant memory that dug around in the part of his skull that seemed the most
diseased. He saw that the glass was breakable, and he understood how brutally determined he was to force
himself to break the window in order to open the door. He gave up, not wanting to try some tricks like a
subprofessional robber, trying his nonexistent creditcards on the lock, that did not exist in his even more
unexisting wallet.

Damn it, this man was pissed. You should have seen him. Just miserable. He slammed his fist
through the glass and added a hope at what he remembered as an old, and very distant, but now, not at all
familiar address. Alexander felt as if he was ready to give in. He pressed himself into the elevator. The
less and less functioning eyegloves tried desperately to position the button before Alexander, down on his
floor. He took a chance with his painful left index finger. The elevator speeded up, upwards. It blackened
before his eyes.

Alexander saw the door he thought was the right one. He wondered how he had ended up where
he had, out in the street, now that he was in this entrance. He forgot the reason why he entered.

"The fuzzy contours...of the name do have that P... does have the P... in the beginning and...it had
that length to it...it must be...?" Alexander collapsed just next to the door and stretched his hand towards
the bell. It worked. He couldn’t see what was happening. Someone tried to sort of shovel him away by
pushing a door at him.

"How’re ya doin’?" Katja looked at Alexander and saw that he was unconscious. She helped him
on his legs. They limped into the toilet. He bled copiously from the hip and a cut in the leg that two hours
later would be found severely infected. Katja didn’t want to put her hand through his hair, yet she wanted
to feel how the hair of a soldier felt, wet from rain, smelling sweat...stained by blood. His two garments
under the nonexistent paperbag were totally soaked by the same liquids. Alexander pointed out that the
left side of the hip hurt with a cutting force straight into the actual bone of it. He stood in front of the
bathroom-mirror, his jeans were plastered along his legs like stubborn and torn rags that didn’t want to
leave him. The jeans had been sliced and torn off by the upper legs. His right elbow was scraped wide
open, and Alexander felt that his left index finger must have been torn off the thumb. Even though he saw
the finger through the mirror, he thought it was his mind fooling him. His face was pale as if its owner
wasn’t alive, as if it was sick of life in general. As he stood in front of the toilet seat, he felt how the shock
grabbed his emotions.

"Well. Sorry for not visiting that oft..."

"What the hell is going on?" Katja said. "Can’t you understand that I’m concerned about you? It’s
called care. You have been through some serious shit!! What is going on with you?!” She was that
straightforward kind of girl. Really down to earth. Her eyes pierced Alexander as if he had to explain.
Alexander felt how it hurt even to cry. He was too groggy to handle Katja’s angry signals.

"See, Katja..." he looked into her eyes, through the mirror. Katja seemed completely ruined, or
shocked, as if she had hired someone to kill Alexander who had failed. She was surprised by his
appearance. Really surprised.

"See...” he prolonged the words, accompanied by that manly gush down the toilet.

"I hunted a girl, down at Main Street.” He shrugged his shoulders, very much like an offended
teenager that was working on an excuse that would fail to work. He continued his speech. "Sandra... You
know her. She consequently, the chic... She was completeeeehirkh...” he hitched up and it sounded
supersick. “ Completely incredible...” It echoed from the bathtub. A thump was heard. Alexander fell with
his head first, hitting the faucet. He bled from a new wound.

Two days later their eyes met again. He was repaired with four stitches in the back lobe. His
broken indexfnger, the sprained thumb and, last but not least important, the severe scratch wounds on both
ebows, Alexander found to have become completely bandaged. His hip would keep him stalemated for at
least two weeks. It would function relatively soon, but he was forced to keep himself still for at least four
months. His infection in the thigh was healed in only ten days, thanks to his tetanus shot. Not until 1:30 in the afternoon, did he begin to believe in this new and odd environment of the hospital. A pearl of sweat was fevered out by Alexander’s lame and fall-grey face. Unfortunately he belonged to that sound category of humans who weren’t held down by any longer rehabs. He would survive with half a litre of blood in his body for a month or so. He hated it. He hated his survival talents and the feeling of not being a normal human creature. His senses supplied as usual, with an almost subtle clarity, everything that constituted the reality around him. He hadn’t set up a date with anyone...that day. As a matter of fact Alexander didn’t have the faintest idea of where Sandra had been the last couple of weeks. Alexander got an uncomfortable feeling of being split. "I wasn’t supposed to meet Sandra at that time, yet I sat there, as if waiting for her. Why?" The questions bounced between the four bare, lightyellow walls of the hospital’s room #sixsixsix.

A nurse entered his room.

"Has anyone by the name Sandra Nordlander been looking for me?"

"Nope. But Katja Parenius!" answered the short and very correct nurse Mary. "She gave you a telephone number."

"Uh huh?..." Alexander was a little insecure. He wondered about his own control of the situation. He wondered if he really had pictured himself in his situation. He wondered if he had control of his life. He closed his eyes and fell asleep. Two hours passed.

"Telephone." nurse Mary said.

"Uh..." Alexander made an attempt to raise himself but fell back in the bed.

"...hello...anyone there?..." The voice sounded distant but distinct.

"Hmm...Katja?" Alexander lay with the phone in the bed. Nurse Mary seemed completely incredibly curious about the conversation. She walked around in absurd circles, cleaning, picking up stuff, checking the flowers, checking the drip. Alexander simply wanted this white-dressed monkey to go and shell a banana.

"Why couldn’t she get enough out of a 23hr attendance per day anyway?" he asked himself.

"Alexander?"

"...Yeeaaaaah!!! What the fuck do you want?!?" he let the aggression aggravate. He didn’t even try to pretend that he had control of his nerves.

"How are you doing?" Katja said impersonally with a voice that sounded in a way Alexander had not earlier been able to imagine it could. His answer took a long time. It struck him how his mood had been bleached together with nurse Mary. Even if she was a competent nurse of intensive care and couldn’t be bothered for having done any harm, he still couldn’t concentrate. It was that clicking and squeezing of her wet feet against her carcinogenic clogs. He was perplexed and angry because he couldn’t understand how such small feet could make such a roaring sound. There was no space left for Alexander the artist. He thought he was losing it, at the sound of her hissing clogs. He hated to admit that he was nothing but a couple of pounds of flesh, skeleton and veins. There was nothing he could do about his situation. He was a wreck.

"I’m sorry." Alexander said.

"It’s OK." Katja said. Alexander took the initiative and continued.

"Long time, no see."

"You think so? Two days? And who the hell is Margie?" He couldn’t understand how she made him sound that sarcastic. She just did. He only said what came to his mind. "But I’m not irresponsible." Alexander thought.

"I cleaned for two hours where you had been, in my apartment. It was just a mess." She didn’t sound mad, however, but indifferent. Katja talked as if she knew she could say exactly what she wanted.

"Katja, I’m not in shape. I might not even be able to explain myself in a sensible way, if you’re asking me questions." He lost his train of thought. She hung up.

"Damn!" Alexander cried out loud, trying to be self-ironical. He swept around with his
preposterous sight in his hall with yellow walls, irritated at not being able to hear the birds, but only to watch them somewhat. It was mostly house-sparrows so he wasn’t too irritated.

The room seemed furnished by a Mallorcan hotellower. Initially Alexander didn’t have anything against the touristcenter Mallorca. Then all cracks and scratches grew in Alexander’s brain until they had become virtual clearings. He could see cement. Concrete. The curtains of cotton, with ironed edges that sliced his retinas, chattered in the wind rather than letting it billow in to the room in small puffing spirits. His left wall lacked a table to match the two quite new steeltube chairs that were startled along the inner front. There was an urge or a will of some kind, trying to give the room some life, with a couple of paintings. He didn’t look at them. They were a mystery to him. In one of them, something grey-green-reddish coalesced with something else grey-green-reddish. It had no harmony or warmth. Just an artistic vomit. Real palette-clearers. Alexander’s aesthetic sense was suffering from a hard psychological maltreatment. It was all a matter of how Alexander, the artist, the painter, was or wasn’t capable of separating his soul’s aesthetic nonstop process from his other senses. He never watched art, he never discerned Cezanne or Monet or any other French favorites, like Renoir. He ate them. All too strong sensations dragged him away. It was not his intention, just what happened. Being an artist he combusted his self, always, for a graphical clarification of whatever the annihilation was. This self-interrogation did trash his psyche a little bit, and of course the guy wondered if his life had lost its utility value, parked in this garage hospital like some piece of rusty junk, just to rust. Sometimes he was the grey and oxidized silver frame circling around some photograph, perhaps behind a shade, perhaps forgotten, perhaps unseen because people only wanted to see the photograph. Very seldom did Alexander enter into the spotlight, catching attention like the mind with a thousand eyes he knew he was, setting an image to anything, with the artistic vigour he knew he had. He knew perfectly well how the artist was dependent on nothing but the diamonds of life’s extremes. If he could only twist himself like a diamond, with its cognizant facets, he had immediately a whole new set of refractions and ideas about life. His eyes now landed on the window sill. He observed the vase of steel. It was heart-breaking. That emulated bent thing held up the triumphant ten roses from Katja, the only naturally living thing in his sterile hospital hall. He had forgotten them when Katja called. Alexander now searched in himself for excuses and was embarrassed. He laughed. Never before had he been cynical. Maybe not a giant gorilla, however, unpleasing. Their relationship was nothing but one big misunderstanding, he thought. Katja obviously had helped him in a radiant manner, no questions asked. It was certainly an irony how seriously Katja took his situation, much more than himself. He felt like a comedian who had acted out his one-man-show, kissing death a little. His situation was comical. He had followed one woman, which almost cost him his life, and now another woman was dying of anger because he couldn’t get serious about his own situation. He laughed when he thought of women. They were a funny kind of people, he thought.

“If you try too hard, they’ll kick back.” He realized at the sigh of his physical wounds that Katja must have had a terrible time. So much destruction of a human body, with so little of an explanation. Deepest within himself he could only see a child, thinking of love only. A child who rejoiced at her opposition, their battle.

The more he thought of what he was going to say to Katja, the less he dared to say, and the more he fell in love. He had always been in a passion for things, but not like this, because of one person’s anger and concern for him! He felt like a comedian because his world clashed so much with hers. He felt sorry for her because he had no answers to her questions, whatever kind. He couldn’t adapt himself to reality and he didn’t know if he even wanted to. He could only see himself doing what he’d been doing so far, seek the unseen, to wander, to lean on colors and edges, to create optical illusions, to make these three matters co-operate. He wondered if he was able to make her love happen the way she wanted it to. His head was full of ideas, full of wishes, it was formulating itself. He saw red, warm red in front of him. He wanted to reach out and touch Katja’s love. He wanted to grasp and hold her roses, even though he had to
hold where there were thorns, like any human should, like any man would. He felt like a comedian. It
would be rude to ask her to accept him the way he was. He was worried because if he hung on to their
love, she would never see how.
Chapter 4.

Alexander was freezing. He remained lying down without moving. From the east came an icy wind he couldn’t stop thinking of. He was able to sort out a window somewhere in the background, even though his vision was blurred.

“Oh yeah...that’s where I am...the Institute,” he said with a tramp’s bitter feel in his fuzzy voice. “A person?” he thought at random. “A shadow?” He saw how a blurry, whitened person was doing something he couldn’t discern. His eyelids wouldn’t open. He lay in his bed screwing up his eyes. No one would take a notice of it, “not even himself,” he said to himself. Alexander was high on the hospital drugs. Everything got dark.

“But hey! Wait...” he thought. “This is something that I absolutely don’t recognize,” The window to the right was darkened by something that lay like a giant horsetail in front of it, like a curtain. He felt a musky breath welling up over his arctically frozen face. It caressed him like hot licking fire. Then the dusk and heat changed. In an even more tight darkness he felt how his mouth was pressed down by another. The lips were thin and sleek, but their message of love came about, simply through that contact. It metamorphosed him and he felt as if thousands of things were coming about only by that squeezing force in his lips meeting hers. Alexander opened his eyes and saw into Katja’s.

“Hi,” she said.

“You’ve...cut your hair?” Alexander said surprisingly. Her jetblack mane was still the same waving mane, but slightly trimmed. Alexander realized she had changed. “A maturity,” he thought. “A personality ennoblment,” he wondered still dizzy.

“You’ve been lying here for just about two weeks,” she said slowly like a mother. Alexander could see how her tear still lay on her lid, still fettered by some kind of secret.

“It’s a confirmation,” he understood. He could see it from the fatigue in her face he hadn’t been able to distinguish until now. For each moment that passed through their wires the contour of Katja became more clear to Alexander. His trained eye of an artist became sharp like a razorblade. Her face expressed sorrow. He could see the stones in her heart, the cracks of her being. She was poetry to him. Her all the while young and undestroyed looks had a more distinguished, more naked melancholy than earlier. A fear it was. Alexander heaved himself up on his elbows, concentrating. His slack half-lying on the elbows that he could have done on a summer’s beach, or any deserted Greek islet, just any, made Katja relaxed. When he had found a comfortable position, an aesthetical pose kind of, he reluctantly began to notice how human she had been. At once a new part of Alexander was awakened. Not only did he feel more alive by Katja’s sheer attendance, but he felt how the objective world round round round like a record round, round, around him suddenly was filled with this woman’s enchanting charms. The fact that this world appeared so irrevocably before him, so quickly filling his life with passion, transformed the passion into something of an intellectual overdrive. They inhaled and exhaled each other’s breaths irresistibly, hungrily. He let her charisma grip his heart. He felt how she ate, and ate, and ate from its flesh.

Her coat slid off her shoulders and down onto the foot end of the bed. She sat down right next to him. They looked deeply into each other’s eyes. If he’d seen what a pale loser he was, he probably wouldn’t have smiled. He looked afflicted where he lay, full of bandages. Alexander’s physiological standards alas had decimated him during the two weeks, 26 psychologically convincing pounds, to something flat and feeble. His hair had been left lank and greasy. None of the nurses had thought of an electrical shaver, or didn’t even dare try. He’d been left there in the bed to lie, fallow like a bloody acre, like a self-rehabilitating wild bird, like a lost eagle. In full grace, the poor bird now just lay there on its back, with its helpless wings spread out, and one single feeling of guilt locked inside. He wasn’t quite yet going to put together his consciousness. “Not today. Perhaps tomorrow,” he said. He seemed unsurprised
by the fact that he had survived. Katja was at his side, and in his system like a neurotic oracle in the midst of his neurological miracle.

She didn't ask any questions. Her smile was tearing and thrusting like a spinnaker pulling... a winner? Her hands lay in her lap like The Two platonically chaste Oblates of the Holy Communion bowl. They were neither clasped nor totally without contact. They just lay in her lap like two sacraments extended for the sake of... Alexander? They were like two lighthouses mediating life and love to a sailor that almost had lost it all. Alexander perceived every signal from her carriage. In his mind he was already painting her. In the foreground he put her hands, her hair, forgetting about the window with the seven or eight bullfinches outside. Alexander sank back into the bed and closed his eyes. It was his soul reacting. It felt like a clown tripping out on the absolutely last foot-bridge of life, to have some fun with the rebound and then, after all, decided to walk back. Alexander slowly opened his apertures. He had found the perfect position between all the pillows.

"What has happened at the School of Arts?" a rough western hero said.

"...yes...eh?" Katja murmured as if interrupted in a moment of concentration. She looked at him. The question was a little bit unexpected. Their gazes questioned each other.

"But," she said. Katja saw the flick in his eyes while he was asking about what had been going on at the school. Her hidden mother's instinct constantly pounded inside her. She smiled thoughtfully before answering.

"You know, Alexander..." she began, her sight shining with such a joy one doesn't want to release until one has said what one wants to say.

She was a magnificently intelligent woman. A character just like Alexander. Katja was glancing at her kiddo, who didn't even know he'd been dead for seven seconds. She tried to concentrate.

"So, let's see, where to begin...?" Quickly she looked down at her shoes. Her eyes then moved towards her hands. Alexander's charm paralyzed her. It wasn't fun at all to break the situation with something serious.

"I am unable to say... to say anything further... sort of." Katja thought intensely of what to say as she put her right wolf paw on his eagle-claw. "Alexander..." she tried again with two deeply dark and mysterious eyes. Their contact was intense, almost as if a quarrel was about to start. Then their concentration kind of faded. It changed into that casual and relaxed tempo of a summer's evening, the tempo in which they once upon a time had met. Like two lovers after the dinner and a bottle of Bordeaux, sitting next to an ocean, at a beach perhaps, or maybe the Italian ice-cream bar, simply to compose some timeless pages of history. This was the situation right now, in a sterile hospital room, with nurse Mary wandering around them like a sick duck, and a wide open window with a cold winter outside.

"At the beach, that nurse would probably have been some ridiculous little dog running after a ball that some master had thrown away, a long time ago. Or, a forgotten wind that in some kind of viscous, endless way eels itself over the situation's watery mirror blank plate of marble. At the bar, Mary would not even have been allowed entrance..." Alexander's concentration faded out for a while.

"What's the matter, Katja?" Alexander asked to the point, and loudly like a man, so that the team of doctors that just entered the room at once sharpened their concentration. All attention was brought by the colleagues toward Alexander.

"Are you fuckin' pregnant or what?" Alexander asked. He was impatient. He wanted her to tell him what she thought of their relationship. He knew that asking for kids was to ask for a damn riot, which was exactly what he wanted. His instinct was to use the more accusing register of its voice of interrogation.

"Everything is possible." was his single thought. Alexander had no idea about Katja's personal life. Everything likely to happen, could have possibly happened. He was ready for anything. Next to him he had an audience that roared as if a touchdown had been made by some American football team. Another bunch of neurologists had joined the four main doctors and a couple of nurses all roaring like a crazy. Even Katja herself was astonished and jumped up.
“I see, I see! A family tragedy!” professor Liberti Evilalsker said, as if he was the boss of the tax department, boringly dogmatic, and as if one had plugged a microphone straight out from his brain, straight out from the activity of the grey cells. The professor turned out to have, however, one particle, well something that seemed related to humour.

“We have... positive news... as well,” he said in a well meaning tone towards Katja. He wanted to sit where she sat, on the edge of the bed. She stood up.

“Alexander,” she said exhausted like a Marathon runner. “So...” She was about to say something but as the professor had rounded the corners of the bed almost lurkingly, she changed her mind and grabbed her coat. “I just can't take this! Have a good time Alex. Good-bye.” She was already outside the door post before Alexander had had time to react.

“Damn!” he swore to himself. “Katja! Get over here... come back!” He rose up with his upperbody leaning towards the doorpost.

“How could she just walk away like that?” he asked nurse Mary accusingly, almost as if it was her fault.

“Aleander Lugh?” the professor continued encouragingly. “We’ve probably got a lot to take into consideration concerning our females’ probabilities here on earth,” he said in that unbribable, dry voice that elder men get from decades of responsibility. It made Alexander hysterical.

“Oh yes,” he said, “I bet you could take every word for granted, can’t you?”

The professor just looked at him. Alexander talked like a prisoner to his janitor “You wonder of what the possible renditions would be if the probability of me being the father had been so damn probable that they probably had probed all goddamn probability, probably to hell, for the hell of it, and probably making the probability of me being the father, even more than probably just the probability probability... probably? Don’t you? Is this probability an approachable matter to you, medicine man, who at least are in your seventies?” It was an intelligent man, nevertheless, so Christian decided to listen.

“You haven't got any pain in your backlobe?” the professor asked. Alexander shook his head and all of a sudden felt a headache that bit. He exclaimed an,

“Ooahh...”

Liberti Evilalsker was smiling. He looked concentratedly at the journal over Alexander's physiological data. He seemed to show a diagram to med students standing next to him. After some thinking they approved with nods and silent yeses.

“How are you feeling in the hip?” he said walking up to Alexander’s right side, feeling with his hands on well selected places. “Tell me if it hurts when I push,” he said shortly. Alexander was happily surprised by not feeling anything at all. Therefore he looked at the other doctors who looked at him and then at the professor, who gave Christian an asking, but courteous sight towards Alexander. “No thrills or as if knives cut inwards?” He squeezed with some more power.

“Nothing that presses or pushes?” he said.

“Nothing at all,” Alexander confessed.

“...well then I'll have to ask nurse Mary to give the patient Lucrosal until Thursday, 40 milliliters morning and evening,” he said quickly almost as if overlooking both her and his students. The professor seemed more relaxed, more relieved. He sat on the edge of the bed a little bit closer to Alexander meanwhile asking his five students to study the last six days’ journal of Alexander, the Patient.

“Your dad and mom have been close to you all the time, especially last week when it was really critical,” professor Liberti Evilalsker said in a sympathetic pitch.

“Now you’ll have to tell me all,” Alexander said. He was awake and interested.

“Oh well. Enough of that. Probably it was luck and not skill that determined the success of the operation for, when was it...? Eleven days ago. He overviewed the hall and the pupils lyrically, to coax the truth out of his almost repressed consciousness, from a part of it that badly enough was connected with horror, stress and responsibility, aware that a man’s life had lain in his hands of knowledge for several
hours. He took a firm grip on Alexander's sight.

"My colleague Nikodemus Primus Nostradamus from Upper General Communal hospital helped me for over five and a half hours. Your concussion of the brain was what threatened your life the most. The shape in which we received you was mostly neurological rags." He smiled a strange little smile. There was a certain dark, aristocratic spirit with Libertì Evilalsker that he seemed to want to explain to Alexander that he also had. The professor looked for a while on the wall to gather his thoughts. "The fracture is very simple and straight. What hit your skull did it with full force, straight into it. This precipitated an operation in the depth of your back lobe, a depth that we prefer not to operate in. It is a fracture that in its initial events isn't a danger for life, but with time worsened rapidly due to your inner bleeding inside the skull. The vessels just blew up, to put it short." He stretched out his upper body to reach something in his right coatpocket and again sat as he had reached what he had been looking for. An apple came up from his pocket and he continued. "The precarious part of your situation was that the coagulation value was too low for an operation. All we could do was to stagnantly let go of those seconds to leave you into the hands of upper forces. Congrats, big guy. You're alive." He took a firm chew of the apple. For a while the Professor's energetic and purposeful chewing was all that was heard. He seemed almost more relieved than Alexander. "...and then that hip... Well, in conclusion it was a couple of scratches and severe cuts. After some X-ray plates we have confirmed a little crack, but it isn't anything to worry about. It looked nasty but it's all taken care of. The arms should be pretty much healed. Your index finger wasn't broken but strained, however, with two minor cracks. It'll be a week in a band. To get back to your operation, we don't feel we have 100% control of your state. You're not stable yet...so that's why we're keeping ya," he said smiling. "Oh, and secondly. Absolutely no physical activity whatsoever for six months after you get out of here."

"What do you mean no physical activity?"

"Don't work with stressful things that can cause frustrations and tensions on your mind."

Alexander noticed that his headache was gone.

"I believe you but I'm thinking that I have been lying still for over eleven days and I haven't been awake once. I haven't moved for eleven days! How can you let me go? Just like that?" Alexander asked insecure, as if the truth was unbelievable.

"Well we chose to keep you in the sleeping state to make it easier for the body. In some situations, for example yours, the body prefers to rehabilitate while sleeping, it can easier maintain its chemical harmonies to put it short! Then we were dealing with an occlusoidal corporal brain surgery." Professor Libertì Evilalsker checked that Alexander wasn't over-working things in his mind. "I can inform you that you're at the neurology department," he said, smiling his healthy aristocratic smile again. "Here we always keep our patients sleeping since it makes it easier for us to act upon critical situations, if there any. In conclusion, you wouldn't have wanted to be awake, it would just have been eleven days of extreme headaches, no real consciousness."

"Thanks." Alexander said. Libertì Evilalsker took a last chew from his apple and folded the remains in a paper napkin.

"Well Alexander, see you tomorrow at," he looked absent mindedly on his wristwatch, "noon."

"Bye. Thanks." Alexander said, relieved. The professor bowed invisibly and followed it up by a nearly military turn, and walked out to his colleagues that stood outside the hall.

Alexander sank into a deep daze that lasted until nine o'clock the same evening. He ate a smaller repast. The next morning the sun shone outside the window and that hurt badly in his eyes as Mary entered the room to open up the windows for some air.

"You've got a visit today Alexander," she said. She seemed tired by the last weeks of working over-time. Alexander answered silently with only his sight. They knew each other.

"Oh yeah. Who?" He screwed his eyes a little bit cockily up towards the sun. He wished he was one of those sparrows or chaffinches that could evaporate to the Square or any other cool place whenever
they felt for it.

“Katja.” Nurse Mary said stiffly as if to prepare for a punch or something else brutal.

“Uh huh...Katja...” Alexander said thoughtfully, still screwing up his eyes through the window. He saw that a larger bunch of bullfinches took off and flew up into the sky. “Katja...!” he said as his last glimpse of the birds’ departure came to an end and he was forced to aim his sight back onto Mary. She was busy moving a chair out from the room. Their eyes met in the sunlight and she smiled a little bit insecurely, but immediately became much calmer as Alexander again smilingly, and casually, but with a sort of slow and searching voice, again repeated, “...Katja...” As their sights met again, the nurse blinded hers into the floor, chastely embarrassed, almost shy. She put the chair in its place in front of the window. Before she left the room she threw a last glance towards Alexander. She smiled, a little bit more serious. She believed in his relationship with Katja, they could live happily for 94 years or something like that, she thought.

“Now there is just that period of agitation before a child is going to be born, and then Alexander's accident on top of all...! No wonder there are some troubles,” nurse Mary analyzed. Nurse Mary was a caring and understanding nurse. She didn't want to interfere too much. She understood Alexander. Later on during the day, she thought, “...perhaps things will be much easier if I’m asking like a mother, with a smile of sympathy, what the little one was going to be called. Huh? Yes. That is simply got to be it.”

Alexander scarfed down the last slurp of coffee into the stomach and saw when he looked over the cup that it was three o'clock. After some reading of the room's single novel by the Finnish university lecturer Elberki Ygner's “The Manager's Calculations” he became a little bit dizzy and laid his head backwards to rest it for a while. As he rose it up again, he saw how Katja moved furthest away in the hallway towards his room.

“It was as if seeing a Concorde land,” he mused silently to himself. Fast, heavy, massive and roaringly dynamic in the whole of her carriage she advanced as gracefully as an English-French steelbird possibly was able to, over a hospital's recently waxed polyvinylchloride floor. Each step was walked as if being some extra rounds of joy in the jet turbines. Both legs were moving in their stylistic majesty of perfection like billowing veils of womanhood for Alexander's wind of desire. Veils which just as noiseless, shortly before they caressed the ground, already were at a new leap forwards. Alexander had a hard time figuring out just exactly how she did it. Then, all of a sudden she was in front of him. He saw the leather jacket. She hadn't needed make-up.

“Undoubtedly a Concorde. Completely undoubtedly a true Concorde.” he explained to himself. He was just about speechless.

“Are you...angry?” he said after a moment’s silence, when the turbines had silenced and she stood right in front of him, at only one yard’s distance. When he looked at her he was a little bit insecure if he perhaps should have let her take the initiative.

“No, dearest Alexander, not angry,” she smiled sensuously. Alexander's artistic and and somewhat whimsical fantasy imagined how this moment “really is the moment of truth for someone who is going to get...to get...” Once again he felt like a victim for being imprisoned at this hospital. His mind was contemplating the idea that he was a martyr. His psyche was bogged down by all the drugs he'd taken by Liberti Evilalsker’s monotonous voice and Katja’s anger so much that he was struck by the idea that he was going to be murdered and...or else...?” He was thinking intensely.

“What...?” he cried out loud to answer his own thoughts, as if trying to trick the, soon to be, murderess. He had it all clear to himself. “Soon she'll say slowly as she closes the door and next, to stand one foot from his head saying, 'no dearest Alexander, not angry. Just bizarrely tired,' and then she would laugh and pull out a Smith & Wesson, to just let go of the trigger to destroy his creative mind six times over because neither she, nor anyone else had the hope or the faith...”

“A Alexander. We've got something to talk about.”

“Wow! She doesn't want to murder. She wants to talk,” he said ironically for himself.
“How the hell are you really doing?” Her tears came as if bursting out from opened sluice gates. Her whole body shook. Alexander became alert. Again he realized with aversion what hellish situation he’d put her in, the last couple of weeks. Now he really understood, as he sat up in the bed.

“I’ll be discharged in about five or six days Liberl Evilalsker, the neurological professor, said.”

“I know,” she sighed deeply, with two nods. Katja lifted her hand to wipe her tears but he grabbed it. With the other he reached for a tissue and slowly began to dry her white skin.

“I’m alive,” he said, “I’m alive.” He understood she had waited eleven days to hear that. “I’m alive Katja,” he said with a dry and sharp smile. She fell into his arms and he hugged her.

“...alah...alive?” she said while a new drench of tears and hulks thrust out from her gut and eyes. Something that had controlled wasn’t any longer clenching its fists around her head. Practically the whole of Katja seemed for each second that passed by more and more out of bounce. Totally out of balance. The first cry attacks exploded out of her. “Don’t you understand...” she said hulkingly, “...don’t you understand how fucking afraid I’ve been...?” she sighed and broke down, right now, here in his lap.

“How I...have thought...of you, how I have adored you for every minute...!” She caught her breath, but felt that it was too late to stop her flood of feelings. How everything was one big delay. For natural reasons Alexander was tumbled and knew neither here nor there. He understood that he and his life must have been something that she absolutely hadn’t been prepared for. His simple being exaggerated the anxiety she’d carried with her from her previous relationship with a guy called Christian, a long time ago, it seemed like. He didn’t understand his problem with guilt, because it made her feel that he didn’t want her, that she should feel guilt for whom she was. It disgusted Alexander.

He tried to focus on her problems. She refused. Katja knew how destroyed her make up must be. She knew she looked awful and struggled in Alexander’s firm arms, and she became a tool without a will of its own. Her fantasy didn’t exist in her any more. The fragile shell of her self felt nothing but a massive directness in what was going on right now...right now in her life. In the arms of Alexander she experienced how her lust to live was on trial. She felt how womanhood for a modest woman like her finally had become a deal of her pride. She felt how her ideals didn’t work anymore. She had fallen in love and it ripped her apart. Finally she couldn’t resist it anymore and she let herself twist around there, in the hospital bed, to be gazed at by the one she loved most of all, in a situation in her life when she thought she couldn’t look more ugly. Her face expressed guilt of some kind. It was red from all the tears. She could hardly look out through her retinas because of her tears, but she searched into Alexander’s eyes anyways.

“I think you are beautiful,” he said. Katja stared towards that direction from which the voice came.

“...beautiful?” she said muted. Her crying didn’t have the same intensity it had had a couple of minutes ago. “Thanks,” she said within herself and it echoed for long time there, inside of her.

“The storm is gone,” she said and rose up from her collapsed position in front of Alexander. The two creatures looked out through the window and the sun that met them, furiously bolting of shining wild joy, was instantley choked by controlling dark clouds. Katja fixed her blouse and put her hair in order behind the back. It had the fragrance of mysterious pineforest. Such a forest in which the rain just after a couple of minutes enables odours to dance with each other in a kind of seemingly eternal, psychotic movement. Exactly such a hypnotic scent that allures and seduces, that creates a paralysis. Alexander stretched his hand towards the side of Katja’s head where the hair fell, and kept falling like a waterfall onto her almost naked thigh. He brought her hair to his face to intoxicate himself, to allure himself into the uttermost mysterious and seductive part of the forest, and inhaled.

Katja rose up so that her back came into a dead straight pose, as if someone all of a sudden had driven up a board under her sweater. Even if she stood up, the hair was long enough for Alexander to hold it. Her character seemed to grow by his holding her hair in a male stubborn grip, and in some kind of way as if it made it easier for her to know where she had Alexander. They both closed their eyes but not as if they had gone to bed at three o’clock in the morning, to be devilishly more tired than when they had gone
to bed. Those who think they know love’s game would not have missed the big bangs that pounded between Alexander and Katja as soon as their eyes were closed. Alexander thought of how this is the situation when two hearts should start to beat as one. They unnoticeably demanded more and more of love’s oxygen, in return for an even more revolving thirst of life and spiritual hunger, the addiction of passion. Love had no rules. It was more than a game, it was supposedly more than life, Alexander knew. It was like a big fantasy people pressed up in each other’s systems, like a furious insane beast of feelings, like a savage without an ego or a superego because it was all pure id. Alexander couldn’t understand how a woman like Katja, with all her emotional pains he thought he must have given her, still was capable of loving. It was as if she made sure she had someone to love so that she could avoid herself. Her self-destructive mechanism scared him, even though it wasn’t that present. At the same time he wanted, he really wanted to make her the woman he thought she was, somewhere...somewhere in her systems. He already felt the effervescent strength of their love, it was stronger than his own wish to live.

“This is fast.” she said. Sometimes it was only a matter of being. Without rules. Not for anyone in the future, Alexander would be able to explain how he felt in this particular moment. It was just the work of her senses. Perhaps it was in one of those sentences, when she simply said her point the way it was, her expressions. At this point the romance was one hell of a fact.

Alexander was discharged from the hospital. His healing had followed the plans. Now he was to catch up with two and a half weeks of missing scholastic work at the School of Arts.

“It’s cake for the most often pretty...slack! No!...meditatively exploring artist Alexander Lugh,” he thought in his prime morning exuberance, walking from the train station to the school building and when he entered the classroom, he sat down at his drawing desk. There were some handouts to go through, he clearly understood by looking at the pile that had been handed out during the two weeks. “How to make Cambri!” one of them said. It sort of slipped out of his hands and straight into the wastebasket. On another sheet of paper it said, “Schedule for the seminary week” and according to it the previous week had been the preparatory week for the actual seminars. Alexander was thinking of how to line up his day.

“Work like a nuclear plant already from start or to take it a little bit soft. After all it's Wednesday. The week is almost over...” he said. He rapidly eyed, merrily, the schedule for the week. “Something I could use?” he asked himself. Not anything fetched his interest. He remembered Hedvig’s wise words, “there wasn’t a whole lot for oilers at Cambri seminars.” That was more something for graphics and designers. He read about a guest-lecturer from Lyons that would talk a little about European Art of weaving from the end of the 18th century up until today’s modern industrial productions. “There was undoubtedly something interesting about foreigners,” Alexander thought. “There was always something in each individual from a totally different culture and social environment from his own,” Alexander knew. “If the speech was totally liberated of any idea, you could always concentrate on that accent of a probably quite chaste female French talking English. Without doubt it had the potential of becoming the evening’s main attraction. “Some belly buster laughs,” Alexander smiled.

“You're two weeks behind with the charcoal sketches of “Micro-environment.” Pehr Lakeslope said shortly. He left Alexander as quickly as he had approached him. Alexander took off to get a cup of coffee and ran into Agneta and Marten.

“Well hello, Alexander!” Agneta said as usual in a mood that could only be confirmed to be a side effect of all too frequent use of naphtha or some other highly flammable and carcinogenic fluid. The fact that Agneta was high really had an influence on the others.

“Hi Agneta!” Alexander said charmingly quiet and timid.

“How are you? How’s the body?” the ever serious Marten from Evening Village said. Alexander realized that when you got a question like that then it was necessary to come back with a really good answer. This was the given chance to express one’s real self-respect.

“Relatively fine. I’m alive. That's a plus.” Alexander glanced at Agneta, who smiled and shook her head and then at Marten, who also chucklingly shook his head.
“Come on to my table,” Marten said and looked at Agneta and Alexander.

“You have to tell us what really happened!” Agneta said frustratedly after they had sat down with a cup in their hands and gathered around Alexander’s detonated neutron bomb, the drawing-desk.

“Agneta! I’ve got so much to tell...” where Agneta... can you tell me where... where in the whole of hell shall I begin?” Alexander took a deep sip of coffee and watched the rain outside, and at his place at the window where the window’s glass was covered with breezes of raindrops that fell slowly but steadily downwards. The little assembly let him stare like that for a while and then he turned his head slowly.

“A woman, a friend that I hadn’t at all made an appointment with came and met me where I had sat down in a café to drink tea.” He waited for some sort of confirmation. “You know that book that I was so happy to have found, in Tallinn, ‘L’ile!’” Alexander asked with a heavy look.

“You lost the...” Marten said with all his concentration on Alexander.

“...The Book?...” Alexander said lame, “Yes sir.”

He leaned himself back into the chair. “Consequently, can you believe that this woman comes to meet me without my having to set up a time or a date with her, but rather to sit down like anybody would have...” Again he looked around lurkingly, then at Agneta, who seemed stoned with terror.

“What?!” she said shortly.

“...She just passed me and yelled something three times. After all these anaesthetics and narcosis-procedures I’m having a hard time remembering exactly what it was that she called out. For each time I think back at those rapid movements it feels as if my memory of it happening is being erased, like a fading REM sleep.” Alexander shook his head and sighed. He seemed to be all of a sudden in a different world as he glanced through the window.

“But...hello?” Agneta said somewhat puzzled. As Alexander was done looking and turned around to see Agneta’s eyes looking into his, he woke up again.

“Oh well.” He sat thinking like an old man.

“Yes?...then...what happened...then?!” Marten asked. Alexander was still in his pose. Agneta and Marten stared at him as if he meant fear to them, as if he was dangerous like an alarming portent.

“I remember that I was running and how I ended up in front of a truck that hit me in the hip. From the time I had fallen into the road I don’t quite understand how I got into the next situation. A motorcycle was going to drive over me and I rolled away as fast as I could. Then I remember that I puked in a park. Then... I don’t know.” He looked with concentration at them. They asked him about Sandra and what it was she had said, but Alexander couldn’t but repeat what he already had said. They chattered around and just about everything that had happened during the time he’d been gone for another twenty minutes and then they split.

Alexander thought of how time had just slipped through his hands. “Already half an hour is gone,” he said, “a half an hour I’ll never get back.” Alexander thought of his girl friend for a while. This morning he had left the hospital and said farewell to nurse Mary and all the others to get back to his School of Arts. “No time to be wasted!” he’d said. Alexander thought of all the stuff he had to do. Yet he sat calmly, leaning back in his chair, just enjoying life. Katja thought he should come for a visit at her place already tonight. He remembered that she wanted to talk with him about something really important. Katja had really recovered well from her nervous breakdown, earlier in the week. Full of life she had told him of how his clearly unusual appearance had put a sparkle to her and her friends’ dinner party two weeks ago. The fall at the Biomolecular Institute had given her such an incredible energy. She said that it had given her a certain self-confidence. It had been a struggle for her finally to get in as a reserve on that program. As Alexander had talked about the career and the future she’d made her voice a little bit more serious and deep. Katja’s first line had been You’ve got to educate yourself, and then You can’t just look at how the labor market is, in their last discussion. He thought of his friend Reynold, who had left his attendance at the School of Art’s designer program for an internship at a well renowned advertising office in the city. He had had to struggle until he dropped dead the first year, but meanwhile learnt the necessary tricks for
survival in the branch. Reynold had bragged of how he'd learnt a whole branch in only fourteen months. Reynold could talk, Alexander knew. His wallet had gotten thicker and thicker for each month that had passed by. He could afford things.

"It’s attitude," Alexander thought. Reynold had learnt that the world was hard and he thought he was really doing it. Alexander just loved the guy. He hadn’t done anything else than just listen to him. He said his life was even better than the real thing. Then they hadn’t talked so much any more. The job was important to him, Alexander hadn’t been more stupid than that. In the hospital when he had time to reconcile about things in his life he realized he hadn’t been in contact with Reynold for over a year. He had tried not to think about it, where he was, tormented at a hospital. He knew he was on drugs. Meanwhile he couldn’t remember what it would have been that he’d said or done to Reynold. He knew Reynold had changed his life radically, but was scared. Alexander was scared because he couldn’t see exactly how. He just couldn’t see any reasons for a man to be afraid who was everything a boss or woman could ever want. Reynold was only interested in things that were better than the real things. In his discussion with Katja, Alexander of course mentioned Reynold. He told her everything he knew about jobs and guys he’d heard had gotten fantastic occupations. Katja’s mood changed like a tide when she heard of Reynold. Everything that Reynold had done had turned her on Alexander remembered. She had wanted that job really bad but even though she had got it, Alexander felt sorry for her. The accident had made him weary in some way or another.

"Make sure you’re following the timetable," he said as if it was secret no one knew of. He wondered if he would lose her like he had lost Reynold. He wondered if it was possible to make blind people able to see.

Alexander once again watched the pile of sketches. Quickly he noticed that the seminar-tasks were pretty much the only important thing that had been going on the last weeks. He took a closer look at what Pehr Lakeslope had had in mind. As he’d read the text material he just couldn’t sit. It was as if his accident never had happened. His creative machines once again began to cough into motion, like sudden spasms in an old supertanker that just had discovered that it actually was a ship and had not at all lost its capability of floating and travelling away, just because it had been in the dry dock for a couple of weeks. He found that everything was as usual. When Alexander pulled out the middle box of charcoal everything was really as usual. He got pound of charcoal over his new purple shirt. Those that didn’t roll inside rolled all the way down his legs.

"Satan’s damn it!" he said really too loud. The voice’s volume had raised so the satan’s could hardly be heard, but the it had been roared out from some yet forgotten predatory nerve. From nowhere Doris popped up and giggled her typical southern giggle. Such, that the comments phonetically sound as if she herself was in pain.

"Haur’ya dou’in ovur there’a?" Alexander looked up at her alert squirrel eyes that observed him from their position two tables behind him. She felt that his head was heavy with an instant frustration that fifty minutes had passed without his pulling even one line over the pad.

"You’ll soon realize, Doris, that I’m doing just fine." he said without the faintest touch of humour. Doris watched him as he stood up and she still watched him as he came back from the sink and began to wash up the floor with a couple of wet papertowels. After a while she was there helping him up on his legs. When he had gotten up he saw rotating stars in the whole room. It flickered before his eyes as he thanked her for her help. He had problems finding his desk. Professor Liberti Evilalsker’s advice of six months nonathletic activity appeared at once sensible. Doris came back into the room after having left it for a short while. In her hands she held a glass of water, which she put on his table. She stood up with her back straight and looked big in spite of her smallness, with a cute and noble little face.

"Thank you Doris. I don't know if it was exactly water I needed. But I am probably thirsty. That I am." He surprisingly drank the whole glass in one supergulp. "Thanks," he said. He sat down and burped a little. Doris smiled from her place in the other end of the classroom. They were the only people there.
“She didn’t say a whole lot, that girl.” Alexander thought. “It seems as if she hides all the time in some corner, always lurking out the perspectives of a situation, before anyone else has.” He yawned and went back to his sketches to find some clues. The inspiration tiptoed into his system, easy, carefully. Alexander had an immensely hard time to get into the groove. He didn’t want to take off if the idea didn’t convince him 100%. He wanted a quality in his work. He knew how “easy” it was to determine true genuine artistic quality. Alexander had a terrible time just trying to define when true artistic light had appeared, or as most often was the case, of course, didn’t. Then Alexander realized how his civilian thoughts, as always, were destroyed by one instant stroke of the pencil that sort of made him see things around it. And then by his following lines he had been able to twist their multitude into unity. This is how it always was shortly before it just flickered in some parts of the white naked surfaces of nothing. Lakesloke, his teacher, wanted the “ties between urban and rural environment” to create something of a society that didn’t exist.

Alexander was fond of the idea with one perspective that actually was a compromise of two societies, the big town and the countryside. Alexander got inspired, not without an element of Dali, as he immediately imagined how to make a cubistically active farm, putting it in a modern tenement house. He thought of what it would look like with high swaying grass on the roof, which the cows, via an elevator, would graze on in the day. Then they would go down to the fifth or fourth floor to get outflow and then they would return to their nocturnal box. “On the third floor one could have a green house with an electric light or it would be just as fine with a chicken compartment. In the second floor perhaps the butcher shop and on the ground floor the actual dairy shop. Can it possibly be carried through?” he kind of laughed reading the text of the handout. “It is undoubtedly my very male thought. Without doubt it is one that gives the farming debate some maturity.” Alexander thought the idea of a cubic farm entertaining. “It’s a solution,” he nodded to himself, “A humorously odd challenge.”

His back itched so he bent down his arm, but he was unable to reach the whole scratching zones in one single scratch. It itched so much that he had to stand up and go up to the wall and a hook that stuck out. He felt how the hook scratched the itch until it disappeared. He went back to his desk and sat down. Alexander thought he should place a cow or horse or why not a pig in some well-known part of the city.

“The rural symbol in an urban environment,” he thought art critically.

All of a sudden he saw how the contour of an old façade had began to grow under a blunt charcoal that his right hand spasmodically was struggling with. The hand seemed to move with an inherently single-minded force. The force of Alexander’s imagination knew where the hand was all the time and immediately where the hand would go. The sketch grew to become something that resembled a large landed estate. The interesting part to this was that the house couldn’t be dated, through some revealing artwork in plaster, or kind of porticos beneath the pins of the roof. It was a tenement house, perhaps. Or a royal country estate. Behind it far away in the horizon he saw what he thought must be the ocean. Maybe the house was the last to go before the approaching freeway or just one of those hundreds of factory buildings in the gigantic but now closed-down industrial districts. Perhaps it was an institute for mentally retarded, or a little hospital for those like Felix or Fritz. Perhaps the house that Alexander, with each line with an incredible control in feel, forced out from the charcoal, was nothing but a secret. “...hallucination?” Alexander asked as he critically observed details that appeared through his lines. He saw that it was some sort of separation of a dark side, the castle, and a light side, that ocean behind. Alexander calmed down as his motif took shape. Mostly because the critical observer of a craftsman had taken over from someone, whom no one had planned to bear, and was making some kind of ejaculations with some kind of oar dipped in tar, on some kind of stretched out canvas. Alexander’s concentration lost the apprehension of time only to follow the creative mind on its way up to the artistic offset next to its Helicon. It was in this creative tide he felt he belonged the most, out of which he really brought something to his world. To Alexander it had never been a matter of how or if his artistic talents would last. To him artistic life was trial and error, trial and error. It was a profession 100%.

His life was either all or nothing, philosophically, practically and spiritually. He raced through all
his channels fueled by raw creativity. Sometimes he had the feeling of being some sort of a telephone exchange between two diametrically opposite cosmoses, communicating to each other. Oddly enough there were never any breakdowns, coupling failures or some other nerve embroilment with Alexander. He always had that knack with things, which to some was nothing but the slack and lazy attitude of a hobbedehoy, a man who came and left as it suited him. To him the art depended on his balance of the five senses, however, paying regards to an opposite cosmos, his creative anima. What no one had told him was that he was like a witch’s boiling pot in the brain, like a musing wind and the blue dreaming sky in his eyes or that he was like a rhyming rhythm with a jangledrum moving feet, any kind, any color, to dance together. He was just a sailor trying to set sails with two staining rainbows, five fingers on each. He was just an artist who had lost a nation without winning a generation, just a lonely freezing heart that felt as if it was surfin’ with an alien trying to get through the purgatory of creating.

To Alexander the creative state was nothing but a journey to see, an envisioning of Eden without touching it, with a scornful eye but with a life-giving and lasting imago. Alexander was prepared to leave his own personality for this. His mind carved tracks into a continuous, almighty, much larger way of creation for people to follow with their very own concrete senses.

“To leave one’s own self for the sake of art, that is the artist’s real task... The only way for the artist to be successful, whatever the artist takes into its creative system. Only there, on the other side where the lath is a couple of ideas higher, only there is their evolution to be found,” Alexander knew. “Exactly in that moment in which the artist burns himself for the sake of beauty he really creates meaning, but he loses life, and that, that is the meaning of life.”

His charcoal sketch was finished. A remarkably large part of the background was taken up by the sky and one single cloud or haze that lurked over there like a promise of evil and danger. “Is the cloud moving towards the house?” he asked himself. “Is it gliding away, into the future? Is it slowly sweeping over the dry fields of wheat and oat? Or is it simply vaporizing out and up through the atmosphere?” The thoughts were always there with Alexander. “The spiritual thoughts... they were there. They existed.” He laughed. Alexander felt happy about his sketch. It seemed fully grown. He couldn’t add anything, and it was time to quit. He put away the charcoal after another minute’s working on a corner of the house that he had seen was unfinished. He leaned back into his chair. It was quarter past two.

“That’s all for that lunch,” he thought hungrily. The seminar would begin at half past four. Alexander thought of discussing with Pehr how he had planned the remainder of the spring term. After some contemplation he saw that a clean up of his desk was probably the best plan for him right now. Agneta and Sara entered the room and walked up to him.

“Hi Alex. Agneta told me about you. I have to feel...” Curiously she stretched out her hand towards his skull. Things were happening way too fast, Alexander thought.

“What the hell are you doing? What do you think I am? A mannequin?” he fizzed back. Sara got quiet. No one made any attempts to try to continue the conversation. Agneta was silent. She anticipated Alexander. Her discussion with her friend had gone wild and finally reached its reversal. Sara resumed, by walking up to confirm the violence of the world, to feel how it felt where Alexander’s head had been operated upon. It was one of those things like seeing what one looks like after one has died, or how it feels after falling from the Eiffel Tower. It was such a feeling, never experienced, the mystery that Sarah wanted to touch with her own fingers. It didn’t matter to her that it was going to hurt him, as she put both her fingers on his head. Their discussion had polished away the morality of human dignity.

“I’m so incredibly...happy...for your sake,” Sara broke the silence as an excuse for their little intermezzo. Alexander relaxed, smiling. “For your sake Alex,” she said vigorously. “Where’s your...?” Sara said looking at Agneta as if begging for help, but after a while, when Agneta still hadn’t understood her, she smiled. “Where’s your paper bag? Isn’t that what you used to wear?”

They laughed and looked at him smiling in earnest. Alexander smiled back.

“It fell apart.”
“What do you mean fell apart?” Agneta said in an astonished but curious voice. 

“Well you know. If you’re run over by a truck, then it’s kinda’ likely, you know, that your paper bag falls apart.” He screwed his eyes towards the ceiling system, wondering when the girls were about to change the topic.

“But hey, Alexander,” Sara began like the worst P.I. one could have ever imagined. 

“All your talk...about the environment?” She looked hesitantly at Agneta, who didn’t seem to care too much about her looking at her. 

“I can be a friend of nature even though I am not walking about in an unbleached recycled paper bag all the time, can’t I?” Alexander said almost arrogantly. 

“But that was your thing, wasn’t it?” Agneta questioned.

“Yeah, I know. It used to. Sometimes there’s a time to quit, to begin something else, something completely different. Capis?” he said.

“Some sort of delayed teenage maturity?” Sara asked. 

“Not to keep something alive, just for the sake of discovery? The idea?” Agneta said.

“Yep. Something like that. To save the earth... that’s one helluva idea, really worthwhile. Not by me though. Not anymore... after this accident and everything,” he said a little bit more relaxed.

“But what kind of attitude is that? Then it isn’t an attitude at all!” Sara peeped surprised.

“Of course it’s an attitude. But I’m not using it anymore. I changed there in that hospital, I don’t regret a second of all those hallucinatory fancies of mine. They’re guidance. I realized exactly how much life is worth there on the hospital’s bed, I saw values, I saw its values, the values that, in a youngster’s problem-free college world, are never even pondered on. I saw all this, as I lay there in a world between life and death. I saw because I couldn't control the situation myself anymore. My situation that hangs on a tense thread held by the hands of a team of surgeons. I thought I had made my point in life. I was getting ready for it. When I was ready to die, my life continued. I had never earlier thought of the option of being able to choose your life. To reshape it. But it was there... like a choice...” Alexander looked out through the window. The two girls saw how the profile was thinking. “You get it?” he said with a tilted but charming smile. Sara and Agneta didn’t understand. They didn’t want to disturb. He was a cool dude just listening to him, but trying to understand the guy, those last couple of sentences, his finale. They stared like daughters at their father, when they’re seven or eight years old and he’s their first idol in life.

“With what I had I could go on with. That philosophy, those trains of thoughts... they weren’t just there for the sake of their own being. They became levers instead of glistening like one golden goal.” He took a deep breath and sighed.

“Well said,” Doris stated behind her gigantic square goggles, hiding in the corner, listening. Her squirrel eyes blinked at the three of them and they laughed. Then there was silence.

“Anyone going to the French lecturer?” Agneta asked.

“When is it?” Sara asked her. Agneta seemed to look out through the window, meanwhile fishing up the schedule out of her bag.

“Half past four.” Doris said. They turned around in astonishment towards Doris, who took out her watch from her pocket. “Which is to say, in sixteen minutes,” she shone up from her watchcase.

“Thanks, Doris.” Alexander said.

“Oh shoot,” Sara said.

“See ya there,” Agneta said and they left the room hastily. Alexander ran away towards his desk and began to pick up the rubbish after the clean up and emptied the pile into the... out in the hallway. He laid the remaining handouts that he was to work with the next day in the top drawer. He put on his parkas and gripped his handbag. Alexander pulled out the top drawer again. He was looking for the handout about the lecture and folded it after a first hasty glance at the introduction. He pushed the drawer shut while tucking the folded sheet into his tight rear pocket. He ran through the room and turned out the lights.

“But...but I’m still here!” he heard Doris scream while he was halfway through the hallway.
"Sorry, Doris," he yelled back at her, with an odd wicked laugh on his face, before disappearing out into the staircse.

He strutted out into the slush and away towards the train station. The train was delayed for four minutes which delayed him for three. It took some time changing paths during the short but intense run towards the lecture hall. He puffed and blew as he entered a jetblack and deadsilent seminar landscape containing about four hundred interested in art. He didn't know if Agneta or Sara was in the hall and it was pretty ridiculous even to think about trying to see where they were. He saw a free seat in one row but tried to find a row further up. Alexander saw none and exactly at that point there came a voice to him through the speakersystem with that close massive soundvolume, as if the person sat next to him and talked straight into his ear, with that relaxed casual dialect from the French Riviera.

"Excusez-moi monsieur? Qu'est-ce que tu veux? Est-ce que tu veux me déranger?"

"Non, pour Le Dieu, pardon, pardon!" Alexander said and fell headlong into the row. A stupid polyvinylsalicyltechnonaphtachlorate handbag had been in the way of his right foot. He spent seventeen desperate seconds between legs, pop cans, and shoes. Now the hall began to react with some nasty laughs. Finally he heaved himself up and watched towards where the French female stood. She giggled and held her hand before her mouth, as she looked at some people behind the podium, in the dark.

"Damn!" Alexander thought as he saw who he really didn't want to see, Pehr Lakeslope. When he stood on his legs and had gotten eye contact with her, or when he at least thought he had, he said:

"Pardon Madame! Pardon Madame!"

"J'ai vingt et un ans," she answered. Some laughs could clearly be heard.

"Pardon moi," Alexander said red in his face like a pioneer. "Finally the bitch continues," he thought as she bows herself over the slide projector with malicious laughter. When Alexander had caught his breath sitting down in his seat he didn't think it was that bad of an atmosphere after all. In a last sweep of nightmarish thoughts he realized how shitty it really had been if he'd worn his paperbag.

Maria Jobuime, L'Academie d'Art, Institute de Jeanne d'Arc, Lyons, it said in the uppermost corner of the illuminated white background. Her English was almost fluent and her interest in the topic of weaving seemed genuine from beginning to end. It gave her performance a sting of drama Alexander never earlier thought that the mysteries of weaving history could have had. He wasn't prepared for the complexity of her science. She began to speak about Gallia and how Gauls known for their metallurgical craft also were known to be extremely skilled in weaving. Her technique of interchanging the slide-projector with the overhead was interesting. Alexander saw a map that she laid out over Europe and then she put a checkered sheet of transparent plastic that clearly marked out how certain historical districts and areas of blooming weavers had disappeared. Alexander realized that Maria Jobuime was one of those tough ones that didn't accept small errors. He hadn't missed so much of this lecture as he saw that the pictures were numbered. So far slide three was up. Her reasoning was circling, preoccupied with whens and wheres. Perhaps it was a good thing. Lectures always forced him to restrictions, while he wanted the totality, everything about everything. Immediately. During the fifth picture it struck him how the lecture almost excruciatingly had become an orgy in facts, stuffed into people's minds like stuffed sausages. Possessed by her technique of presentation, however, he understood there was no other way to learn facts. The picture showed a Roman spinning module that he didn't find very spectacular.

"Probably that's what all spinning modules looked like in the Roman Empire at that time," he asserted to himself. After a while he just sat waiting for new riffs to come. The next picture was a surprising step up to Ireland and the Faeroe Islands. But he understood her logic, with the passage over to Scotland and the kilts. He followed her fast summary. The Celts in Ireland had been one of the first people to develop the coloring of yarn. Apparently they were pretty cunning in most things that had to do with life. They made war, they made love, they were craftsmen, bought and sold what they made and made up all kinds of stories of what was worth remembering.

"...and?" he thought. He wanted a thesis pretty quick. Jobuime spoke of how the different colors
were achieved and the symbolism that was connected to them. How the origins of the different plants and ingredients had really originated. Her engaging tone seemed endless, with the joy for stories. Alexander heard a lot of new things but he wasn’t sure if he could remember it all. He wondered for a while at how incredibly smart those brains must have been that invented the techniques behind the coloring processes and the weaver’s complicated procedures. She went on talking of how the first experiments with the patterns had developed from the feuds between family clans and tribes, where a discrete cloth pattern was a practical, functional, and beautiful solution all at the same time. Alexander knew that one day a man hadn’t sat down on a cooled down lava-stream and by the end of the day stood up and explained to his wife and everybody else how to do it. Alexander looked at the thin line furthest down on the pictures. The time axis marked out how the centuries of the weaving industry had passed by like unseen clouds over the diversified and historical epochs in which so much else also had happened. His senses slowly began to devour the information and he approached some of that perspective he had hoped for. “It’s a good thing when crafts, culture, society and the arts could coalesce into one discrete symbol, a piece of cloth. That’s brains.” He pulled his right fist through the hair that was still on his head. His face was rubbed in his hands until the blood circulation had increased and he felt more alert.

His hands left his face, and the next picture was registered with an immediate, almost unintentional feeling. Alexander was paralyzed as if standing in front of a death-threatening beast. His mental capacity of independently breaking himself out of a shock process, to handle a danger, his stipulating powers to summon the seriousness of the battle within, it all was savagely smashed with perplexing doubts. He sat on his simple seat, completely bewitched by the dark but very familiar contours glued onto his retinas. He couldn’t choose, he just had to lie down in a psychological fetus-position just to take the strike as it hit. There was nothing he could do, but sit there on his chair to see his sketch, photographed and transformed into a slide that now filled a whole white wall in front of him. Alexander was puzzled at his own train of thought. Ideas and ambitions fell out of him like water from a glass turned upside down. He was sublimated. In front of him the slide projector illuminated his dark grey sky, his distinct composing of the joy of lines forming a unity, his castle. For each detail he could discern he also realized that there wasn’t a borderline between abstraction and concretion, but for their walk hand in hand like one helluva strange strangeness. Ears and eyes followed Jobuine’s speech second by second, completely still, without sweating or breathing. The motif was the last example of how some districts’ clans had grown big and numerous, but how time’s tooth in the clasping wings of history had made them disintegrate. She told of how only houses, walls, and gravestones were the last remnants from a Scottish age deeply rooted into the art of checkered fabrics. Today many of the houses were torn down, Alexander heard Jobuine say, proving the overall Celtic struggle against oblivion and decay. Alexander’s body felt lifeless. It was a corpse that still was alive, he thought. There was no name for the house and not even a description of the district to which it belonged. A person asked from which book she had gotten the picture, and what library. Maria Jobuine explained that her photo illustrations were only to imply the rounding of one of the lecture’s seventeen points. The otherwise dashing French young lady seemed at once Frenchly intolerant.

“This picture and the two previous pictures the author simply says are from a source unknown,” she finished off the questioner. Alexander looked at the person and saw that it was a 50-year-old man who seemed to be something of an engineer or probably an architect. As he got out of his trance and the next picture was up on the wall, everything seemed to move in slow motion. Basically the rest of the whole remaining part went on in slow motion. Alexander’s head was heavy but not without courage.

“He’s supernatural too..?” Alexander asked Alexander the artist. He had to stand up in order to let those people next to him pass. He was a part of the masses and didn’t have a chance to ask any more questions about the picture. When he had gotten out into the fresh and brisk evening air and had drunk of its sparkling caprice, he left his ego. After all he had Katja that he could go home to. So he did.

The train rolled to a standstill, next to the platform. Alexander got on the train and walked up to an unoccupied seat and sat down. It was already warmed up and he hated warmed seats so he changed to
another one.

“A cool seat for a cool rear,” he said quickly and racy to a girl that sat to the left in front of him. She resumed her reading about softwares for the, in the computer world, predator-old Pascal system. Alexander thought, from the eventual half second of attention she had answered him with, of a strong resemblance to Pac Man. She had a gigantic mouth that appeared to steal half the face space on that Neanderthal head of hers. Her two eyes were like two small dots. He realized that it was darn lucky she hadn’t opened her mouth, revealing her double rows of teeth and braces and something like three tongues. Alexander blurred on his joyride in front of this computer freak, who was reading a vacuous sofware magazine from the eighties. Alexander tried to convince himself that reading vacuous software magazines from the eighties was something you just did not do, but it didn’t work. He was stuck with this Pac Man woman. The stations ground by slimy coffee beans. They were never ground, just sort of pulped by like clay. Aban’s drugstore was open so he went in and got some Coca Cola. He got a good prize for two gallons, so he burnt some walletleather. Before he left the cashier he caught sight of a broom with some red and white in it.

“It's a rose and lily bouquet,” he explained to himself while paying for it. On his way up through the staircase to where she lived again he saw some red roses in that bouquet he had bought, but the white flowers were some incredibly small weed that he thought that he'd probably never get to know the species of.

He rang the doorbell he by now knew too well was dead. It was a ritual. For the next half minute he stood and hammered the bell button. Just as he was going to let go of it, the door opened with a snatch. Katja was beautiful in her long jetblack hair and a jungle of perfumes that made him feel almost sinful standing next to her. She had washed her hands and they weren't quite dry yet. The guy and the girl stood like this at one yard's distance, just gazing at each other. They experienced how their contact in only a couple of seconds began to pulsate and vibrate until the romance flooded over in an intoxicating psychosis of love. Yet neither of them had disclosed a word. The atmosphere of agreement lay like a shining gleam between them. He was supposed to show up at her stroke of the clock and he had done it. They let things happen with them and to meld into one being. They let it all happen without retreats, without safety wires, without even holding on to the gumwale. They gravitated with their passion to let an emotional centripetal force spin and center them to an absolute navel, where a hypothetical heart, the actual axiom for the concept of love was set free to beat even harder and harder. There in their eyes made love with each other.

“Flowers!” Katja smiled perpetually. Alexander looked at them. He felt a shameful pressure of not knowing the name of those white ones. As he entered the hall he put his parka on a hook and tucked his gloves in his right pocket. He walked into the bathroom, washed his hands and arranged his almost inexistent bangs. As he had gotten out again he checked that his glasses were still in the innerpocket of his parkas. They were there.

“Couldn’t we check the name of those white flowers?” Alexander said, a little bit stressed as if they were the last to be checked off from Noah's inventory list. Why, he couldn't give away something and not know what it was. Katja laughed.

“But...it...why...? It is...” she said as if it was a pure reflex to know. “Buttercup...” she said like some magical superfluous continuation. “Calla pallistris... in Latin,” she said to be sure.

“That’s cool. You knew,” Alexander said smiling. He took it for granted that his very own little glimpse in the flora would be to risk their undoubtful love. It’d be to sell man to the devil, he thought.

“How did you... know that?” he said.

“I just did,” she said with a cheerful and winning tone. Alexander must have bought the totally right flowers, he was convinced of that. She walked out into the kitchen and opened the fridge she asked what he wanted to drink.

“I’ll have...” Alexander was thinking.

“What?” Katja yelled.
“What've you got?” He rose up and walked out to the kitchen. Katja held a beerbottle in her hand and stretched out her arm for the bottle opener. “I'll have one of those,” he said as he caressed her breasts from behind. She laughed a very quiet laugh.

“They're in the fridge,” she said. Alexander the Humorist opened the fridge and saw what Irish label she had bought. Lovebeer. She opened her own bottle. Then they switched positions, so that Alexander opened his bottle and Katja stood gulping while watching his profile. Her twinkle in the eye sneaked out as she slowly approached Alexander and hugged him from behind. When she was going to kiss he turned around with such an effect that the lipstick on her lips was smeared out in a single red line from the cheek bone to the mouth. Her mouth still had a taste of beer that appealed to Alexander more spiritually than he first had imagined. Her eyes got closer and the whole of her being seemed like one single thick fog to Alexander.

“Girl scouts know every flower,” she said smiling before their lips met. Alexander pulled Katja tighter to him.

Her apartment was decorated. There was a real scent of Christmas by the scent of burnt and spiced brandy, mandarines and gingerbreads. Alexander looked around in the kitchen. It was well-organized. He thought of how fun it probably was to cook in this kitchen.

“Let's go into the living room...” Katja said in an almost demanding voice. They looked at each other and she walked up to her cupboard. “A little gingerbread maybe?” Her laughter sang pretty comically in contrast with what mostly sounded like a rumbling yes from Alexander. He stretched out his hand and she lay a stack with seven or eight in it.

“I hope you don't mind my little Joe?” she said and Alexander got a sudden feeling that he'd ended up as a serial killer and now was going to set her psychopath in the wardrobe free. Alexander's adrenalin began to pump in him.

“Should I simply leave her? Just run away...just leave this woman behind? Perhaps it is like Bob Marley says, No Woman, No Cry?”

"Helloo?!” Katja said as astonished as if Alexander had rambled into her place after another accident.

"Joe who...?” Alexander got out of himself.

“But what the heck is wrong with you?” Katja said as if the whole night was destroyed. "Joe Cocker. Who else?” She leaned back into her leather couch, and a seductive subtle pose that applied a more intense, suggestive gaze into Alexander's worried look. He looked into her eyes but took away his sight time after another looking at some of her sculptures or at a playing of silhouettes that seemed interesting.

"SOMETHING CLASSICAL!” he stared at those eyes he knew just wanted well.

“You seem,” Katja started out, but then dropped her eyes into the glasstable. She was gathering her thoughts. “You seem to be in a quite shitty situation. What's wrong?” Her demanding eyes looked angrily towards Alexander. His only exit was to talk.

“I've experienced the strangest thing in the world.” He gulped from his cold beer that stood untouched on the stripped glasstable. “Ever,” he finished looking out the window to collect himself. Katja coldly looked at him, as if what he was to talk about was more supernatural than untrue reality. He drank a deeper gulp out of the bottle and put it down on its little pad in front of him.

“Today was the first day back at the school,” he said. Katja looked with interest at how his eyes moved and danced as his brain was working out sharp formulations. Her smile stayed within. She observed him with more and more affection for how each of his sentences was developed to become something mysteriously discrete on its own, a wisdom. She was amazed by the ways his speech could create an almost ghostlike atmosphere, a monologue that confronted her with a scenario of events it was impossible to maneuver away from. Unreality was twisted into cold facts by Alexander's stubborn words. He spoke nonstop but for the short intermissions of Katja's questions. Her aristocratic esteem and dignity gave both a
certain feeling that something big, or perhaps even gigantic but inexplicable was about to happen at her place right now. Alexander hadn't yet reached the core of what happened at the lecture hall. He hadn't even reached any depth of his words he thought, still working on the background, yet telling things as fast as he could. Exactly this Katja thought of while she burned with desire.

She knew that in front of her sat an extraordinary man. Through his talk, however, she began to hear how a new man was growing. A man that right now was creating his own platform, a profile of virility she hadn't believed existed. She was blinded by an illusion of Alexander that he was fighting for his life which was about to smash into pieces. She listened. He talked. It was enough for her to stare at how he held his head, how his eyes never stayed rigid on something. The woman adored the ego that exploded in the man's charismatic eagerness and urge to tell. It was a man who spoke out from his heart. To Katja Alexander was the man whose brain worked synchronically with his heart, and this co-operation made him not make one mistake. Katja imagined Alexander's two eyes as being two rotating diamonds which in one single moment gave hundreds of reflections of absolute truths. She couldn't move. His telling proved to her how comfortable it was for her to lean back into the strong and igniting words from a man. It was reason enough. She thought that he took her into the future. She felt how he was the man who had saved her from a sea without a bottom or a shoreline. Katja let go of herself because she trusted Alexander completely. He developed her into something new, into something she had never achieved as a lonesome woman. She had been a woman but right now, in this very moment, when everything seemed so simple and joyful, she experienced how Alexander made her grow. She felt as if for the first time in her life she was doing the first tentative attempts with the woman inside. Katja discovered how Katja fit with all of what this magician spoke about. Small shards of failures inside of her, small stumps and yawning of anxiety, her fear and hate were all molded into one female ideal, an ideal woman, she just knew. Then Katja couldn't anymore hold her concentration. All of a sudden there was so much illustrative air under her dreaming wings that she was orgiastically lost in all the man's speaking lips touched.

"When one makes the other think" was Katja's blind philosophy, her quality label of their relation. She took the chance to just happen with Alexander. The integrative wall of her personality had rather locked her up to become some kind of mindbeast. That she realized now. She had ended up in that cave because she was trying to manage a life by some others ideals. She realized how years of struggle with her own self, to live by that ideal, only had meant a bunch of sacrifices for someone she wasn't. She had hunted for the man and at the same time her own self. Katja realized that the romance had given her a man and the result was what was happening to her right now. She was devoted to finding her personal tracks. So far she knew she had been still like an immovable Totem Pole. Katja was hesitating. She couldn't make up her mind. Now she was in balance. She had survived chaos. There was a center of her personality in which Katja now prevailed, in which actions happened without doubt or hesitation. Choice and decision clutched like necessary cog-wheels in an enormous personal machinery. Katja didn't know how. She didn't ask herself why. But she wanted to live for that automatism of life's rhythm. Nor would all her doubtful decisions pop out naturally and accurately. That she knew.

"I disappeared out from the train station and towards the lecture hall at the University. I just had one thing in mind. To show up on time. When I got there I finally found a seat after some tumult I can talk about another time." Katja lifted her eyebrows like an astonished professor. Alexander should have told her about it, but simply continued flat out where he was in his story. "At the end, that picture was all of a sudden just there." Katja looked straight at Alexander. This was one of those intermissions where their faces had run into a suggestive and breathless standstill. No one wanted to disturb each other’s partner, their ideal. "I saw my sketch." Alexander said coldly and sharply.

"Your... Sketch...?" Katja said surprised. "You mean the one that you...?" She hesitated stumbling over the absolutely last and decisive word. Alexander seemed like a sorcerer the way his words could affect her.

"That sketch I made earlier today. And I wasn't even there on time!" Alexander said as he
stretched out his hand to grasp the last big gulp of beer.

“But that’s a sensation. You simply have to go to a seer oracle,” Katja said in a tone that, if it wasn’t because of their friendship, would’ve sounded like it was said by an idiot that understood even less of what it didn’t understand at all.

Katja was really flabbergasted by Alexander’s story. He was still surprised after all the hours that had passed. His sight wandered in the room.

“OK. You make a picture of a... is it a house...? What were you thinking by the way?” Katja said to Alexander, rapidly reasoning.


“Then this is the house you see in one of Maria Jobuine’s slides? Is that it?”

“That’s it.” Alexander approved almost as if he had given up a hope about something. It was silent.

“That’s the way it is,” he said even more emptily and agape.

“Have you told anyone else about this?”

“No, Katja. How would I have had time for that?” he said after putting back his empty beerbottle on the glassstable. It clanged like an unconscious stamp of his statement. They knew each other pretty well now after Alexander’s long convalescence at the hospital, and now this. They both felt a kind of emptiness, the vacuum of fate.


“Well at least four or five of those things,” Katja said in a slightly more silent tone, “OK. I must be both deaf and dumb. Tell me about that lecture. Why did she show that picture at all? In what ways did it look like your sketch... or... how did your sketch match the slide, maybe is the safest to say. Tell me all you’ve got to say Alexander! Was the perspective and the tone in perfect accordance with that of your sketch?” She stood up to go out in the kitchen for another two beers. She checked the salmon soup that was getting ready. “Five minutes,” Katja said gastronomically. She thought that “if he isn’t gonna calm down with that soup, then oh man... Then!” Her mind found itself, however, and she sped into the living room fixing Alexander with her eyes. “I mean, couldn’t there be a certain possibility for a person to draw a house that looks like that one in a slide. It was in black and white for Christ’s sake! A blurry and unfocused charcoal sketch, at decades’ distance from any retouch,” Katja said critically.

“This is how it is,” Alexander began. “Last time we saw each other, I guess it was a week ago or so, I was still kind of groggy. Then our relation just sped up my rehab supersonically.” Alexander smiled and Katja of course had to laugh. He stretched for the beerbottle, laughing hard himself. As he had taken a good gulp of beer it almost flew out through his nose as they began to laugh hysterically. Probably they just had to confirm the joy that they less than three weeks ago did not even know what the other one was doing... or even if she or he was doing at all. They were old schoolmates. “As I got out of the hospital this morning, I was like a new human. I can’t say that I’m particularly sad or happy because of that. Just the fact that I was a new human being. I knew so well how I thought of you the whole trip from the hospital to the School of Arts, and how much you’re a part of my metamorphosis. I pondered at how close I had been to becoming mentally ill, after those weeks with however friendly Mary and all the others I got in touch with at the hospital. I think you saved me from their smashing the last bit of personality I had.

“Hey, you, Alexander. This is what I exactly do appreciate about you. All that! Your character! Your originality! To me the least thing you are is a box of anxiety. But getting close to be...!?” The last thing she said was a warning. She was in the kitchen. “The dinner’s ready!” she screamed coldly.

“But what the hell is the matter with you?” Alexander yelled back at her. “If there’s anyone who
has got problems, it has got to be you!” he swaggered. “I’m just talking the talk,” he said with a red face that launched a madly sincere sight towards Katja who instead of listening, pulled out the oven-boiled soup. She stood obstinately in front of the bowl and as she was going to throw away some bones, stooping to open the cupboard then she got burnt on it and lost her mask.

“What’s going on?” Alexander said as he almost by instinct turned on the cold water faucet, with his sight firmly looking at Katja’s. “Can you tell me how you really are doing?” he said understandingly.

“It’s so much work with you Alex.” She talked with closed eyes straight into the cupboard above her head. “It’s so much work with you, because you’re always telling the truth, Alexander,” she continued without changing her position in the sofa. “One can not escape from you, one can not entangle from your words, one can not untwist the crystal-clarity of your manhood. I’m not used to it. I’m not saying this is something bizarre or sinful to a woman. I’m used to be on my own. Too used to commit my own decisions without having to pay any attention to anyone. From that perspective I live a rather manly life. Now I’m standing behind, next to, and in the midst of that manhood, my earlier self. Now I’m standing here only to realize that someone else can run my self, my personality better than what I ever could have done myself. I’m standing here, next to you Alexander, and I’m becoming afraid because I don’t know how it is to be a woman.”

Alexander’s short analysis of the situation gave him a tainted idea of who Katja was. Her honesty couldn’t be bent or twisted. It was solid. “It’s honesty because it nourishes her soul,” Alexander guessed. “She lets her words flood the convulsive mind,” Alexander decided and he found that this must be good. She took away her finger from the faucet and dried it on the towel on the wall.

“I realized that I felt good in that manly life. It was so...” Now she avoided Alexander’s frank eyes of desire. There were no words neither one of them could use. “So...simple and unaffected. It suited me. I can see how my future lies somewhere else now.”

“You aren’t...” Alexander hesitated, “...depressed? I mean, maybe it’s not the best thing to start a relation when you’re out of touch. I mean...” He wondered who of them were out of touch. “One makes one’s own life...follow one’s own will...sort of. Don’t you?”

They ate in silence of the salmon soup. Katja’s gastronomical vision had been reflected by the Gods of Food somewhere in their galaxy of gluttony. She cheated with sour cream, but with her truthfully original spicing she had almost omitted something of a Greek ate with those gods. The soup’s charming bits of coal and bones could easily delete any God’s divinity. He took a great ration, almost half the bowl at once. Katja brought out the flourescent salald from the fridge. That one didn’t last much longer either. Something was starting them all over again, as if they had never existed. If this was psychologically positive or not no one could tell.

“I understand you Katja.” Alexander said between his chews. “I can understand this debate that you want to start, that you’re trying to live out. The individual. The self. That the man in you has the strongest will, the ruler,” Alexander said as if he wondered if the difference between psychologist and psychopath hadn’t been erased with that last expression. He had taken a risk by leaving his own mental springboard, and was now hanging in the hot air of their debate. He knew he had to be perfect before he hit the water inside of him...or her.

“That’s a pretty rough one,” Katja said as if she had been prepared for an opening where he tried to get an advantage as soon as possible. She expected his viril and brutally primitive approach of discussion, his way of stabbing himself into it. “The problem Alexander, is that I’m not a man but a woman. I don’t know for sure what you had in mind, but I’m definitly stronger today. I know who I am and how I look like inside as well as on my outside. Now, no one, not even you can give me a divine faith that tells a woman that it’s wrong for her to be woman.” Katja took some more of the soup which soon was fully consumed. Their discussion had imperceptibly glided away from Alexander’s slide experience, into some sort of awaiting. The natural thing for them was to ride out their storm of arguments. It was impossible to verbalize their relation because it was an invisible gender, an untouchable third individual without a
face, without arms, legs or even a heart, but for one demented psyche, that controlled their thoughts. To talk or think would be as if to ignore one's own individuality, one's own sex. Yet they needed each other so bad to become what they wanted to become. It was getting dangerous. Katja had her guard of instincts raised at Alexander who discussed with a crazy charisma of distancing himself. They were themselves. Just because their talk with each other were in those tracks they crawled into each others' unconscious gaps of fear. They didn't want to lose what they had together. How forceful Alexander's originality, or Katja's instantly captured maturity may have ever been, they were blocked by some sort of individual catch. Their trepid relationship was eating the truth they had built together.

They took off the dishes from the table to let go of the winebottle, and the wineglasses that remained on the side. Alexander felt as if trying to walk on the keel of a boat turned upside down. So far they had been totally honest towards each other and forcefully marched along the firm back of it. No one of them had in time realized how hard it was to walk only the slightest inch next to the middle of this boat, turned upside down. He noticed how they, with worrying acceleration, glided down the stem and out into the unknown. Alexander felt the threat of not knowing whether they were ending up on the same side of that keel. Katja wanted Alexander. She knew he wanted her. "This night's psychic skirmish doesn't really matter," Alexander thought. Once again it struck him how Katja looked upon her relation with him as a "magical spice," or "a little seed that would grow with time." Alexander didn't feel the presence of Amor and he knew he would never give Amor time to shoot for a love between two maniacs.

"I'm pretty much for principles," Katja said in melancholy, as if to heal the wounds of her femininity.

"What principles?" Alexander said. He didn't know what to believe anymore.

"So far I've never needed the moral slip to push me forward. I've done as I've been told. My father lived by his principles. I've discovered how little conspiracy there is in living his lifestyle. I've been immune making myself as nonfemale as possible. I've closed out disintegrating thoughts and anything negative whatsoever. This gave me the rational thinking I wanted, and needed, to surpass life. In that respect I've been able to concentrate towards a goal. I've felt moments of success. I didn't search for my individuality, it was inside of me like a girder."

"Those are definitely interesting words. I feel the same. I think you're turning me into a feminist... is that possible, by the way?" He leaned back onto the couch. "I've always felt that this has been my case, however, for ages." His sight sustained in her. Katja felt its ponderous virility massaging her train of thought. It was as if to be embalmed by joy and creation.

"But...? Are you dumb?" she said confused, as if she had to raise up from her own ashes. "Men can't be feminists. What case? Are you a... case?"

Since the last couple of minutes Alexander had a much harder time following Katja's reasoning. It didn't seem to create something, or to ruin something he thought. "Her speech is connected to her heart, but it disconnects mine," he said as if he was Hamlet, alone on the Elizabethan stage, making one of his most honest and pure soliloquies. "The woman's concept" Alexander discovered, "is to talk with her emotions." He wasn't clearly understanding how the discussion for the woman was nothing but the discussion, and the discussion, unaware of his unconscious thought, "To discussion, or not to discussion, is that the goal of my being, or someone else's?"

"If it is her goal," he thought secretly "The man uses it like a vehicle to get somewhere. But how? And why? Am I questioning my own being, by the way? What's going on with me? What the hell is this..."

Now, this vehicle, he used without looking at the whereabouts as he traveled...losing the whole perception of the journey..."

He was free and untied. Like a bullet from a rifle he just shot straight at his goal. Is motherhood an instinct, yet a cadet with burnt powder that bores, and who the hell is aiming?" Alexander's chaotic mind screamed to itself. "The man cannot step back emotionally. He's thinking less about shitty old news to
let the spirit wing him ahead. That's probably how it is if you're not supposed to become pregnant. I'm born with spirit. I lack motherhood's physiologically inherent apparition. I'm not a ghost, am I? I'm born, am I not...what's going on? I AM this man...who doesn't instinctively by himself understand what the mother's courage, diplomacy, responsibility and intuition really means, am I not? Through life he slowly understands the meaning of motherhood, while never being a part of motherhood itself, but I'm a part of Katja, she controls me... What's wrong...?" Alexander was out of bounce.

"You and me, we're talking..." He paused to only observe Katja. He knew that he needed a good sense of rhythm to balance in his point appropriately. A proper position.

"The woman and the man are speaking different languages," he thought, as he said it with no feeling at all. He didn't know what was happening to him anymore. Only a couple of seconds ago he'd been convinced of his last words' self-evidence. Alexander's already indiscernible catchwords were transformed by Katja's hungry thought processes to something that resembled a really bad slogan of love, from the sixties. Never before had Alexander mistrusted his instincts as much as he did now.

"Isn't that pretty obvious...?" her sexy voice said.

"How obvious?" Alexander said who wanted talk in simple terms.

"Well...isn't it? Your body temperature, your food and fluid intake is differently regulated than mine is."

"Of course," Alexander said as he bent down to pull up one of his socks. "Who is thinking in our relationship?" he asked like a victim of his own psyche.

"Your thought doesn't belong to any of us," Katja said with an indifferent smile, "Our thoughts belong to the romance, which makes us poor humans never to understand what we should have understood a long time ago." Her voice trembled of love.

"Thought and thought. Understood and understood. What are you trying to say? If one has thought then one must understand. If you understand then you must have thought!" Alexander was getting desperate.

"It's in our Hypothalamus," Katja saved him. "Neurophysiologically there's a male and a female hypothalamus," she instructed.

"Hypothalamus?" Alexander said, totally not understanding.

"Yes..." Katja cheered.

She didn't know if Alexander would understand her. She thought of how words built an intellect and knowledge just by themselves, the whole scope of what she wanted to tell about. She wanted to give it all to him.

"The word intellectual excludes some signals that perhaps are ignited by the word knowledgeable." She smiled towards her fetus. Alexander sat silent, just staring at her. "Have you heard of Raymond Popper?" she said mysteriously.

"Popper and Popper. He didn't invent popcorn, did he?" Alexander said rising hastily from the couch to head for the kitchen and another beer. As he was two yards from the fridge he asked if he could take a beer. Without any answer he got back with two bottles.

"Does this discussion mean anything to you?" Katja asked him.

"Of course it does!" Alexander said and took a deep gulp out of the bottle.

"Listen. I'm trying to tell you about something that is interesting for the two of us."

"Katja!" Alexander said loudly. "Excuse me for interrupting your monologue," he said with a voice reminiscent of how it sounded when someone was drunk, or in a state of hallucination or...madness. He drove the hands through his muddled hair. "Where Katja... Where am I to begin? I got out to get a beer. I brought one for me and one for you 'cause I kinda felt they'd be handy. Beers are helpful, aren't they?" He quit laughing his flat, dry laugh and just stared at the bottle as if he had never seen it before.

"What's wrong with you?" Katja asked with a wondrous sight.

"There we go!" Alexander said, feeling much more comfortable. "Continue. The philosopher
“You knew...about him!” Katja said in a silent surprise. She almost got her mental cylinders on fire out of pure, schizophrenic exaltation. Her glow within her chest was lunatically alive and almost erotically exhibitional. “Popper says that what’s so unique with the human is that he can speak. He can communicate. Animals signal discrete things like hunt, food, sleep, danger. To some species, like our own, a communicating system has developed from once having been merely those primitive utterings. All animals, except the human, communicate by pictures, through mental visions they transact to each other telepathically,” Katja realized her sudden side step and tried to repair. “The human doesn’t... Have this. Popper means that the human has descriptive and arguing functions.” She took a gulp of beer. The silence was broken up by the fridge’s patter. Alexander sat intensely quiet, knowing that it was half past twelve o’clock, not knowing what to do, or how to react in any way. “But the real originality appears in the foetus stadium,” Katja said without knowing if what she was talking about had a red thread or not. Katja had an idea about instincts. “Every human starts out like a woman, irrespective of the male XY-chromosome or the woman’s XX. After about seven weeks a testosterone shower is sprayed over the foetus’ brain.”

“But only the men’s.” Alexander decided.

“Consequently?” she asked rhetorically and continued. “You’re right. Some parts of the brain are burnt off. Broca’s and Wernicke’s areas are the parts of the brainstem mostly affected, but also Corpus Callosum in a male brain is extensively decreased. These areas in the brain are, to put it short, deformed.”

Katja talked as if her words would never end.

“Areas? What areas? Where in the brain?” Alexander asked her. “What is it that men lose?” he said fearful that his artistic intellect wasn’t anything but a lazy brain flake. He had an immediate sense of being a gimmick.

“Nothing,” Katja said after having swallowed.

“I’m lost. Let’s talk about Napoleon. It’s hot in here. I want to play... with clay. Isn’t hot? It’s hot isn’t it?” Alexander said.

“You lose Broca’s and Wernicke’s areas in the left half of the brain... What?” She laughed at the mysterious gentleman who seemed so natural in his humor. “Anyways, this is compensated by your development in the right. This is why there are more mathematically skilled men than women,” she summoned up, but not indifferent. Alexander felt pretty cool.

“It takes something extra to become a man,” he said informatively to Katja. He laughed. He thought it was scary when someone like Katja told him something with that stubborn but live tonality. Alexander knew how he on his own behalf always had one thousand questions that appeared in the heat of any discussion, but that he was forced always to forget at least ninehundred and ninety nine of them. Alexander thought one was always restricted to a certain track where numerous interesting details forever would be lost.

Alexander had never talked about the actual physiological differences between the two sexes. Even if he himself didn’t reflect upon the fact that it was a woman he discussed with, his unconscious would.

“What function does the brain have?” Alexander continued.

“It’s multi-functional. It regulates the motor movements of the body.” Alexander felt like a seven-year-old eager to learn, when she spoke to him. She made her point short and tactful as if it would have been a lesson in biology. Alexander couldn’t do much else than to shut up, to sit still and to listen. Occasionally he had noticeable difficulties in doing so, but for each sentence he realized how much of what he wanted to get at all lay in her scientific sentences. They were mysteriously straight to the point. Without being particularly serious themselves, the situation became increasingly serious. There was something very central with their discussion but he couldn’t point it out. It sort of didn’t matter any more.

Their conversation was pushed forward by a conscious that existed somewhere inbetween them,
throwing the discourse here and there to finally land right here right now, yet somewhere invisible. The exchange of words went on as if it really existed all by itself, yet in the future, leaving them both behind.

“What?” Alexander asked himself. He wished the two consciousnesses communicated with each other through this ‘invisible mediator,’ but it didn’t. He thought meeting Katja was just a big booby-trap. As Alexander bumped into this darkness in the nest of love, he began to understand where he had really ended up. “Love blinds,” he heard like an echo inside of him. He looked Katja straight into her eyes.

“Continue,” he said.

“Broca’s area is specifically the center for speaking. Another area that also suffer from the testosterone is the capability to stay in health. The fact that there is a genetic connection between the testosterone-production and the immune-system perhaps underlines the increased amount of boys that get asthma and allergies. Also, more men than women have dysphasia, dyslexias and infantile autism. Disruption of speech. Disruptions of writing.” She looked at Alexander if he had any questions.

“What happens if the testosterone shower fails to appear?”

“Well, in any case, the foetus emotionally develops in a female direction.”

“But what about...?” Alexander showed her with a pointing and wondering sight.

“With your little bird?” Katja laughed as if she had fooled him.

“Oh yes. This is where all the transvestites show up,” she said looking at Alexander.

“Well I never! This night I learnt how a transvestite comes about.” He was really out of himself.

He stood up, stretched his legs and went to the bathroom. He didn’t care about the lesbians.

Well, back into the living room he saw how the beerbottles were taken away and in their place stood two teacups. On the table Katja also had put out a maybe leavened, yet for sure baked loaf of bread on the table. Next to it there was Gouda-cheese, butter, milk, and two Englishly darkgreen table napkins next to each plate in white porcelain.

“Cute,” Alexander thought. He went out to the kitchen and met Katja carrying out the teapot on a cork pad.

“What a pot! Is it a two-gallon one?” he said positively surprised.

“One and a half,” she sang smiling back to him. “Get spoons,” she said over her shoulder.

“In a box, huh?” he asked quickly. Immediately Alexander transformed into a hysterical spoon-researcher. He didn’t care what size they were as long as they were spoons. Without knowing how he’d become as stressed as a slaughter-threatened pig, he was convinced that he’d have such a screwed up curl in his rear, that probably only Pablo Picasso would have seen what it really looked like. He felt as if he was just buffing around in her kitchen like an intruding pig, with his mind shaped like one of Picasso’s numerous multi-angular characters, talking east, walking west, thinking north, but actually drifting toward the south.

“Sorta’ the upper drawer,” she replied rapidly. Forty-five seconds later he was out in the living room with two soup ladles. He gave Katja one of them and sat down moving around with it in his already filled cup.

“Milk?” she asked.

“Please.” Alexander had thought of taking care of that pot, but her hand moved straight towards his cup so he couldn’t do anything.

“Honey?” Katja said as she hastily glanced at the kitchen. She bounced off and some seconds later Alexander saw how a jar in the same way bounced back.

“All right. Do you want some?” Katja said while she gently replaced the soup ladle in his cup with a teaspoon.

Alexander took a pat of honey and stirred it down in the tea-drink.

“You like the taste?” she said as soon as she saw that his lips approached the cup.

“Yeah. This taste I recognize...” Alexander said and lapped up for a couple of seconds.

“It’s nothing special. It’s just the ordinary camomile tea. My standard tea,” she said as if she’d
gotten a sudden energy kick the last minute.

"Standard and standard. I used to drink Earl Grey as a standard. But camomile isn't that pretty unusual?" he said as he noticed that he was drinking more and more of that tea. "It's good," he added after some silence. He had had in mind to ask where she had gotten it from, but for some reason he just remained silent in front of her. Katja also sat silent, thinking about Alexander. She had been talking for a while. That, she knew. Now she wondered what really had happened with Alexander. Their eyes kissed each other.

"She's totally in that world," Alexander thought. He convinced himself that this was Katja's exotic inclination. He pondered what mental wealth that person must have who could afford to live in her own world. Perhaps he felt related to her in that respect. Alexander wondered if he himself had that wealth to continue his work in their relationship. He knew the relation wasn't going to be a hard choice. He just made a procedure, making a stop. He needed to reflect upon his situation.

"I've got some other details," Katja said.

"What...details," Alexander said full of inspiration, but without reflection.

"What I wanted to get at was the actual brain. The actual brainstem, neo-cortex. The last stage in the focius' brain development is pursued by an addition of the brainstem, consequently Neo-cortex. It is interesting that it is the eventual evolution that happened there, and then, in the focius finishing stadium that determines the brain's, and consequently the human's factual development of intelligence. Katja knew that it was a complicated sentence and waited for an extended silence followed by a flash reaction. Alexander's rapid thinking didn't take more than a couple of seconds. He asked about what was unclear.

"You're saying that it is there that the future human is born?" he said.

"What's a future human?" she added shortly before she was going to talk. She thought about what he had said. "Well, future human, yes. It's quite an accurate vision. I'm just trying to retell the scientist's description that it is there in Neo-cortex that the intellect has its center, consequently where the actual intelligence is in the human." Katja made herself a sandwich. "It sounds trivial talking about it like this, flat out...but something is true about the fact that a smart soldier survives a less smart soldier.

"If we drag Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest into this, it is quite extraordinary then that science proves that the man is right."

"Well, I haven't gotten that far perhaps. There are several questions to take into consideration," she informed him. She thought for while if she ever before had thought analytically in that sense. She knew it from her previous education. The knowledge had become a life elixir in her daily life. To dribble with any problem whatsoever just for the fun to declassify out its nucleus. Katja was capable of handling and converting her knowledge in a constructive manner.

At this very moment, right there in front of Alexander, she realized that she'd been half blind. She discovered that her critical thinking was being leveled by her own time, while Alexander wanted her to believe in future criticism, that didn't exist, except for in his own mind. Her analytical thinking hadn't sojourned into the medical and biological area. "The real vision must be to connect unreality with reality, or?" Katja contemplated. One thing she had understood for a couple of weeks. Alexander had that clarity of vision, but on his own terms. She just couldn't see how it functioned. "The fantasy just exists somewhere in him. His talents work somewhere in a borderland between chaos and logic, and out come ideas. That's how it's got to be!" she decided in an hallucinatory vision. "That's why he lives half his life in chaos and the other half in order." Katja reasoned however always with self-irony. She enjoyed putting labels on things and matters. It made them more conceivable, more accessible. She laughed at how Alexander tore away titles and labels just to drink out of life's chalice. Katja then suddenly thought he was some kind of divinity, that he had a subconscious goal in all that he did. "He was unique just because of that force. Just the fact that he continuously connected things with each other, making those artistic expressions." Katja was convinced that Alexander really was all of this. It was so obvious to her. "A pathfinder. The Real Artist." Katja herself belonged to the natural scientific problem-solvers who united eventually would
solve humanity's all practical and biological problems. Even if that task wasn't directly finished and would keep the human occupied forever, the biotechnological riddles of a completely different galaxy from Alexander's galaxies. To her the artist worked in an outgoing and more suggestively vegetating environment than any other professional category she knew of. Alexander was the guy who put a perspective on things. He was the person who brought out the red in a red skirt, or spiked the taste of the fruits in a fruit still-life. It was he who could wring out life in a smile. It was people like him who in a totally different way from scientists and politicians spoke to people about what was right and wrong. The most important difference was that Alexander gave the human an experience of what he wanted to say. Katja realized that her function, however intelligent and creative it might ever become, forever was earthbound. It would forever be a flat and primitive plane. "The artist Alexander's function was holistic," Katja said to herself. "No matter how many scientists or archaeologists who could verify whether Jesus existed or not, it was only an artist that independently could make the individual realize, feel and experience the pains Jesus carried during his crucifixion. Things that the scientists couldn't describe except for a yes or no." Katja's thoughts came one after the other. She continued their conversation.

"What is intelligence? What is survival instinct? What's Darwin's *survival of the fittest* all about?"

The words clanged out in the dead silent living room. She thought that knowledge was a slag product out of the concept intelligence. That when a person remembered something the intelligence had fulfilled its purpose. "The real definition of intelligence must lie somewhere in those roundabouts," she said to herself. "It works to bore, to constantly renew itself, to burn out motes and other rigmaroles from the total chaos of unknowingness to see where the logic perpetuated. To see if it started things or if it closed out things."

Katja at time after time tried to reclaim those words. Words that never wanted to come. She came across a horror that had blinded her for a long time to eventually see and face the question. The oxygen pumped in her speech muscles.

"The deal is ...to create...?" she asked herself. Katja sat up and faced Alexander. "Let's continue," Katja tried in an informative tone. "To be more specific about what has happened in the brain's other hardcore synthesizing areas, septum and lateral amygdala for ex..."

"Katja I don't know if I have told you this but I am studying at the School of Arts. I don't know anything of autonomic stenciles or gluteral amalgamaniacs. Let's speed down... just a little bit?" Alexander said. As a matter of fact he was hypnotized by Katja's stubborn, cold voice. It was in the contrast of who she really was and how it didn't at all suit with her outer attributes. Very warm, very hearty, very caring but with a military bearing. Her face was clean, smooth, and with firm symmetrical contours. It was a stoneface with aristocratic beauty, harmonized by the now renowned, long, waving and very black mane. Alexander realized how hard it was not to not feel sinful looking at her chaste and always piously smiling face. He discovered bit by bit the intimate relationship her outer attributes weaved with her similarly developed sensual personality. There was a pride in her way of moving, talking and listening that he hadn't discovered until now. Katja's stable and solid impressions vibrated inside of Alexander. What he hadn't thought of so far was how he was dissolved past recall in her extraordinary forceful charisma.

"Yeah, well I'm not talking without a reason. Earlier, only 20 years ago there was no research about what I'm trying to tell you. I don't know the whole case by heart but I can give you an outline. The word differentiation is central to the phylogenetic development of the brain's limbic systems as well as for its outer areas. Different areas have developed in different amounts. The area that you called gluteral amalgames or something, these areas have developed more than those called mediala amygdala." Her sight held him in a firm grip which he confirmed with an honest sight, in large slow nods. "Septum and lateral amygdala are the areas for feelings of lust and mediala amygdala the one for feelings of discomfort. This independently of gender. Apart from the human's archetype being female in the beginning of the foetus' growth, the masculinization, i.e., the testosterone shower, depends on a change of these thrusting hormones. If they don't they'll be useless to the brain. The hormone testosterone is transformed into estradiol, a relative to the most feminine hormone there is, estrogen. Consequently the whole procedure of
making a man is steered by a female sex-hormone.” Katja had talked in a controlled tone that wanted to express surprise.

“What am I to say about it? It seems as if you want to say that all men are some kinda’ small errand boys to the women, prolonged arms. If it is, let me then inform you that I am never ever going to be some little errand boy to you or any other skirtcloth. Check out the Bible. In the beginning it speaks of how the woman was created out of a male rib. Wo- man. Out of the man.” The stoneface ceased to be a stoneface by the time Alexander had finished. Not excited like any woman would be, but simply surprised.

“What’s wrong with you? I’m sitting here telling you a lot of stuff and all you give me is shit?” Katja smiled encouragingly. She smiled because she’d trapped Alexander’s psyche. She was happy that her words had an effect upon Alexander. She was amazed at how seriously he took it. “Now he would get some totally new ideas,” she hoped. “Probably he’ll create something out of it,” she thought, still smiling at him. “One of these days.” she thought.

Alexander looked around the living room. It was as if the devil had been loose, he thought. At once he felt he wanted to catch him.

“I don’t know if you need to feel such an anxiety for exactly this...”

“Katja, I’m not anxious. You’ve told me some of what’s going on in the brain-research business right now. Don’t think I’m panicked just because the result isn’t to our advantage.”

“Alexander. You’re the guy who’s made some conclusions here. I can’t see what you’re trying to get at? The only thing I’ve told you is what some researchers know of. Even if the Bible says what it says, do you have to give me that? And errand boys? You seem to be in a pretty shitty balance yourself,” Katja said, to the point, but also as if it was important to cheer Alexander up and to get him on better thoughts. “Who are you really? You’re not the same.”

“Well Katja, I don’t really know why we’re talking and talking. Some hour ago you were the one who cried in the kitchen. Then I gave you solace. I don’t need any. I’m not going to cry.” Alexander poured up some tea in his cup. It was almost hot. “My questions were...impulses, by listening to that...” He was darn close to say babbling, but why, it was the opposite.

“Babbling?” Katja said smiling.

They laughed.

“That’s all of my rhetoric for today.” Alexander said. Just as he had finished the sentence he put himself in a more ardent pose. The man thought intensely and heavily how he was to proceed with what he really wanted to say. “This...is...so humongous, Katja!”

He emanated such a seriousness, Katja had never seen anything like it. In his eyes she saw billions of brilliants moving and twisting while he was thinking. Not only in his head but in his whole body. Alexander crouched down for the multi-faceted, disintegrative mental execution. Katja again felt a wave of admiration welling up inside. Just to watch Alexander in his formidable mind processes. She recalled her father sitting with the family’s old bills. How he tore his hair, looked around, counted. She remembered those evenings in the falls. The family had been sitting still by, devout. Daddy counted and it was dead silent in the whole apartment. It was as if waiting for a verdict. Katja glanced back at those moments, the only moments when her dad didn’t smile. He took responsibility for the whole of the family. She had watched him for a long time until the moment came when she stepped up to hug his thick and firm leg. Same responsibility, same kind of worried care emanated from Alexander’s concerned expression. Not for one moment did he let go of the burden of responsibility to resolve all that he had heard, all that he’d seen, all that he’d touched. Then, he lifted his hyperactive sight, full of verdict towards Katja’s yes of love.

“OK. I pondered for a while on the survival of the fittest. If it is like you say that the center of pleasures is developed more extensively than the center of discomfort, what is there to say about it, really? There doesn’t have to be something extraordinary about it. What’s interesting is Darwin’s wording. No science or person knows who or what will become “fittest.” Neither does anyone know if that’s what’s going to happen. Or has happened. The wording does seem to be said with a certain openness for the future.
No matter what the human will look like in it, the human will fit with the term *fittest.*” Katja didn’t understand. It seemed as if Alexander was talking into a corner so that no one could hear or care.

“However, I think it is interesting that the human’s artistic talents have been with us since the time we did cave-paintings. See, I was just thinking of the origin of the arts. They must have been sitting on watch for hours, probably for days until they see the animal, their only warrant for staying alive. That’s how art was originated, I believe. In that condemned moment filled with hatred, when fate played the game out of their hands. Exactly in that terror of being given out without being able to do anything about it. That’s where the first mental calibrations must have happened, the first grinding of intelligence, the first concentration in the ability to see.”

Alexander drank the last ice-cold slurp of tea. He put back the cup on the saucer. He looked on a spot on the wall and put his clasped hands on the knee that rested on his other. He leaned back. Katja waited for a continuation. It seemed as if Alexander had said it all. He wasn’t going to open his mouth for a while.

“And?” Katja said hoarsely.

“What?” Alexander said. “What is there to add? Then the evolution has just rolled on from that, by itself. The more complex societies we’re living in, the more segregated art will be. It seems as if the “Fittest-human” is the artist, the creative creator, the one who produces something out of empty air. The first cave human or the first litter of human-resembling creatures, their development of intelligence firstly must have been artistic thought before the other more practical bits could be applied. Creativity, that’s the point of the human’s evolutionary spear. The artistry, that’s poison on it.

“Uh huh. It sounds fine. Where’s the logic? What’s the deal, Alexander?”

“None. That’s the way it is...maybe,” Alexander said, meanwhile shrugging his shoulders, almost out of idleness.

“You drive me crazy, Alexander. Everyone has the right...meaning of life. You take yours. I’ve got mine. Of course, that’s how it’s got to be for Alexander. He’s an artist. Well, I am a Laboratory Doctor. If this is it, then this is it.” Katja was pissed but shrug her shoulders.

“I love you,” she said. She opened her senses as they had said all and talked about all. It was too late. She just had to say it.

“That’s pretty straight to the point,” Alexander said somewhat clumsily. “I liked what you said. It was nice of you. Thanks. I might be brutal but I want to proceed with our discussion. Our debate. The last month has just been a terror of events not only for me. It seems like every human wants to live faster and more intensely than the speed of light. Our discussion has lost what happened some hours ago in the lecture hall. Our discussion is more important than that unreality I came home with to you, that night. We have, Katja, so much to deal with.”

She noticed once again how Alexander’s senses never lost the grip of each other, but worked like a team for one single thing. Behind his prattling attitudes, somewhere there was a diamond that cut straight through, that never detained the seriousness, that never lost the theme after all. It was the artist’s rights to use his five senses to make a sixth that carved out yet unseen truths.

“I am thinking simply of this. You represent the natural sciences. I represent the humanities.” He swallowed. “Pretty many skills and knowledges are demanded from a scientist today. The scientist has got to be a talent in what has tonight’s hot topic, intelligence. To be that future human. I’m thinking of how...” Alexander became extremely irritated. As he had gotten to his punchline, with just one big void in his head.

“Of how...” Katja said to give him time to think more carefully.

“Far we’ve gotten. How little do we actually know. There’s so impeccably much scientific knowledge that lies in the hands of the humans... I’m thinking of what research and what invaluable results produced have built society. Today the scientific ambition is a threat to its own society. People don’t have the same respect for it. They’re too afraid. I understand them. It’s all leading to the Big Brother syndrome.
But where is the brake? Then...I'm thinking of my own situation. My life is built with everything in it, except for scientific perspectives. My existence is based upon a non-knowledge, things that no one can prove is neither right nor wrong. I'm living for an ideal odd asymmetry instead of being an imperfection in the mathematically symmetrical world of logic. My conception of life is a big finger to the world you're living in. To me there are two worlds. Yours and mine. Like an artist I could see these two brutally different stallions thrusting over one unidentifiable landscape. It has mountains, sometimes clayey moorlands destroyed by rainfalls, sometimes mysterious woodlands, but right now they're running into a wordly fog. Something that isn't for sure, and they're running even faster, these horses. I can't see their profiles anymore. It used to be every man's pride to know their different manes waved and streamed like proud streamers of the kingdom every human belonged to. These horses aren't around anymore. No one knows of culture or science anymore. No one has time for it. Yet everyone has grown up with the hysterical patter of culture's and science's furious hooves, but no one knows of the two stallions' beauty. No one knows if they are running west or are neighing east. No one knows if they're running from each other or towards each other.

"You sound upset," Katja said.

"I'm not upset, but I am talking about the truth for an artist." Katja looked for a long time at Alexander's sight, as if to assure herself. He continued.

"I'm sitting here next to your words. Your magic wand is cold facts. That stuff it's impossible to cheat with or blind oneself in front of. I'm listening to your ability to make the hard stuff easy. I listen to Katja's lines, words, and commas, but not at the doctor's pointer. There is none. I grew, I developed something by listening to you. You made me see how these two worlds, how these two fairly different conceptions of life have squamoused each other. But we communicated. We did convert the absolute knowledge with absolute fantasy. I'm sitting here thinking of how these horses...

Their sights didn't dare kiss each other in the forbidden manners they had, so far, during the night. They scented each other's breaths and let them intermingle. It gave them something more than the primitive animalistic kiss.

"What do you want me to answer?" Katja said as if she felt a sudden coercion to match Alexander's talk. She felt inadequate. She was caught unaware not of anger or hatred or anything else evil, but of Alexander's eloquence. His pure and clear focus of his love to, "...me?" Katja asked herself. She didn't dare say yes to the woman she was, even if Katja so far had felt perfect in her being together with him, as if he had created her. She thought she lacked something being on her own, as he was the creator of her perfection. This thinking of herself took her away from just being herself. For some reason she didn't have his desire for her womanhood. Alexander thought of exactly this.

"For each step, for each second of love that has brought us together, she knows more and more of where she's wandering, or wasn't..." He stopped breathing.

"I just want to give you a piece of my heart," Alexander said. He had reached a dead end. It seemed as if his sheer appearance made her insecure. However Alexander searched into her sight to find and gently caress her two deepblue, he didn't show any signs of insecurity. His senses had always been curious and he reacted at how an impossible insecurity had transformed from an intuitive and natural curiosity to a desperate analyzing in just a couple of minutes.

"I don't know what you shall say, Katja. I can just tell you that if something is going to be said, it's bound to be said by you. If that's the case, that you are going to say something...just say it." Alexander asked himself what the heck he'd said.

"Oh man, you're quick talking before you even have opened your mouth," Katja said out of love, shaking her head out of frustration. She smiled at love's thick and impervious web. She just smiled at him. She smiled at how that man really had made her. She didn't like the vibrations throughout her body. Her heart was beating like a jaguar was running. She didn't know what it was.

"Katja tells me she loves me. What the heck did she actually mean? Is this love?" Alexander
thought, as if love had become a mystery. "It's up to her. I can't do anything. Katja can develop that phrase however she may want. She could fill it with some living spirit, flesh, blood if she wanted. He stared hollow at the last of five dying candles in the stake of brass on the glass table. The streak of hope for love had burned out.

Katja couldn't for some reason understand Alexander. He demanded disciplined silence, living in a buzz of his own self, she thought as she struggled with her passion. She stood up and sat down next to him in the leathercouch. He was staring at the smoke of the last candle and to where in the ceiling it disappeared. She put her arm around his shoulders. He'd been sitting there and it seemed as if nothing more could happen. Alexander's concentration reached a climax. He woke up from his evil dream and somewhere in his blurred eyes he discerned Katja's empty armchair. He had to stand up. He had to give up something he tried to forget he'd experienced. He told himself he'd just been there. He'd discussed and thought about it with her and that's it, he tried to convince himself. So far he'd only reacted to her words and so much to Katja. He was obsessed with her thinking in totally new terms. He felt her thirst for knowledge. Katja gave him the raw materials. She gave him purity. Yet it didn't make sense to him. As he had reached the word purity a hot and wet breath laid itself over his neck. Alexander felt her arm mingled over his shoulders and as he turned his head towards her, she said,

"Do you remember that I said I love you?" with a sigh that couldn't be misinterpreted.

"Yes," Alexander said in disintegration. Her lips were pressed on his and Alexander wanted to understand. His thoughts tumbled through their relationship. He wondered at what she'd said about the man and the woman talking different languages. It was paranoid even to think why it would help their relationship. "We aren't perceiving each other," Alexander thought. "We wouldn't be able to tell each other who we are...not 100%." Alexander wanted to express some of love's edge of affection. There was a man's way of communicating, and a woman's. "But did they repel or attract one another?" He was irresolute by his lack of connection to Sandra. She didn't repel him. She didn't attract him. "Why does our relationship still happen as it is so dysfunctional?" he said to himself as if he was going to escape from a jail, being tied inside a bag.

"The issue is about the artist and the medicine woman," the words just ran out of him. He tried to hold the crystal of absolute truth in his hands. The more he thought about her, he realized she made him go crazy. He accepted her security, as if she had a harmony or a balance. Katja seemed capable of fast decisions. Alexander was just trying to complete the puzzle. He just couldn't grasp where she got her unrestrained liberty from. He wasn't thirsty for her love. He didn't want his feelings to dance with her tears of life. But he couldn't blind himself. Every statement, every syllable was connected like a stripped nerve in an oozying bleeding wound. Her wounds. His pain. Everything they said tore them apart while they were trying to make love. Alexander was scared of how she abandoned the comrade within her because she experienced love. "Why is she pretending that the machine of love is happening, when it flashes 'game over' in her face?" Alexander tried to dream her dreams and walk her heart. He didn't know what love was. Yet he was thrilled by her passion. He really knew how everything in war and love could happen and he saw it all happen in this woman in front of him. He knew that no one knows for sure what happens in love until the fruit of Passion is eaten.

They were lying together tightly, tightly under the blanket in her bed. Her frenzy and aggression really killed him. Alexander fell apart inside not knowing what. It was her intercourse and he didn't want to disturb it. It was fragile, to be there, with her. He couldn't destroy it. He just couldn't. It was awful.

Katja had called him a malechauvinist. He wasn't. It was his self-irony she couldn't cope with. He had a wordy palette. He wanted to be that virtuoso of verbal drill. He knew that only in the equilibrium between content, atmosphere and consequence a consensus was found. It was a business card. It was his character. He knew that being oneself wasn't enough. He knew he had to talk a language while he had patented his own isolation. He lay there in the bed thinking about that privilege. It had given him the closest essence of earth, wind, fire, and water. He hadn't known about that manhood. A woman wanted it
from him. Alexander was still a wanderer on his creative journey. Her love was too complete, too ready to go. Their love was that painting he'd searched so long. He was confused. Alexander found love to be like a landscape without roads that led into it, or from. He was in it, left without clues. There was no reason. No logic. All Alexander knew was that he was in this landscape, and he was desperately searching for a way out.

“We own each other. We sweat. We eat. We make love,” Katja said out loud. Her thoughts rolled up on her back like cold thrils of unbelievable joy. Katja was amazed at how she'd been conquered. Her ego pumped inside of her. It told her how she was the earth and he the sun, the fertilizer of water. Her body twisted and stretched in a carnal ricochet. She felt his soul, his love just being in her. She felt for the first time in her life all her bodyparts working together like a furious symphony charging through earth, wind and fire. Alexander roared out his light into her vagina like a burning torch of love. Finally she'd become a woman for real. Now was the time to be the woman she was. The music was over and she fell into his arms. She knew life's enamel had been cracked by her alcoholic bishop of a father and his damned marriage. All of a sudden her memories fell onto her head like a silent soft rain of chaos. In her senior year she'd cut herself deeply in her wrists. She hadn't told Alexander. Not yet. Only now could she in truth believe in a solution of these problems because how she had a partner whom she could trust all her problems with. She enjoyed his sheer being next to her. He didn't hold her in any grip. He'd just let her be, the way she was. His talents would help her. His loyalty, his common sense she'd respect like her own chaste morality. She could just feel it. She let herself fall into the well of love. She was still falling and she didn't care. She was next to Alexander.

They had been talking about natural borders between man and woman, as if it all had been a matter of explaining away their very own imperfections. They had discussed how the research had given the human practical information about her growth as a species. By accepting each others proclaimed guidelines for the man and the woman, they lost some of their own individuality. In Katja's and Alexander's subconscious, each of them had walked against their own sex. They really had wanted their relation. After a while Katja woke up. Alexander had fallen asleep.

“How is he able to make science so... alive, without knowing a bit of it?” Alexander had really opened Katja's eyes. “Or just anything.” She realized how everything she had learnt, her pure knowledge had become slow and rigid to reach. Like a book in a growing library. Now, in Alexander's arms she felt how science, absolute facts were being re-created.

She was reading a letter. It was a quarter to three in the night. After a couple of minutes he turned around because of her angry lightbulb that shone straight into his face,

“What are you... doing?” he said sleepily as if awakened from the dead.

“I'm reading a letter.” She pierced her voice through her crying. It was quiet for a while. “Sorry if I woke you up.” She tried to read but couldn't continue. She leaned towards Alexander. “Alexander?” she said while she saw that he had fallen asleep again. “Alexander, I'm sorry,” she whispered awkwardly with lips soaked with tears. She kissed him to see her tears on his lips. Alexander lay on his back and didn't seem to have one problem in the world. She slid back to her side of the bed. The letter fell down on the floor. She was too exhausted to read. She simply turned out the lamp and pushed herself next to Alexander. Katja was dreaming of how she was about to paint a green house green again. Instead of using brush and roller she had to use a different method. There were no brushes for her to use, but the house was close to a paint factory. It made only yellow and blue colors. The painting was to be executed through someone's throwing buckets of yellow paint at the instant moment someone else threw blue. It was really a sick way of painting a house. No one was interested in helping her out, however much she tried. Once again, she was back in the dream's trance of anxiety.

* Epilogue *
Alexander ran upwards along a mountain. He was chased by two antelope and a rattlesnake. They used all their abilities to climb and dodge their way through to arrange the right ambush. Alexander knew that the three hadn’t yet decided whether he was going to be killed or just spoken to. The animals were going to wait on their verdict until Alexander had answered some of their questions. Alexander kept on running upwards, continuously upwards, always following his hope. His idea was to keep moving, then they wouldn’t have time to create an ambush. He wasn’t afraid of them in the way you’d be of anyone seeking a murder, having picked you out. The important thing was not to lose speed. Alexander had respect for the ones who chased him. He knew that if he kept on looking happy and tough, he’d have so much greater chance to answer their questions. He was wondering how to charm the antelope to make them realize that he was actually a darn nice guy, who knew by instinct how dangerous it was to tell them how primitive they were. It was a threat to his life to tell them they were forced to listen to him because he was trying to make them understand how to become the fittest. He just wanted the intellectual interchange. He knew that as soon as he showed the least sign of desperation they would attack according the Law of Nature. When Alexander stretched out to see the top of the mountain, the two antelope were standing there already. He couldn’t understand for his life how they had managed to get there before him. There was only one way to get up to that top. He had had a perfect watch over them and over the snake, turning his head over his shoulder for each third step he took. Now his steps were slowing down rapidly. His body felt heavy like lead because of the lack of oxygen. As he was perhaps only forty or fifty yards away from the edge of the top, he realized there was a precipice beneath it of at least one mile’s depth. As he turned around he saw that the adder had grown two, if not three times its original size. Its skin was nasty. As Alexander once again saw the antelope, he saw that they were tired and all of a sudden extremely harmless, not dangerous anymore. Yet he didn’t know if they were his enemies or friends. At the next occasion they lay down on the ground almost out of nonchalance, ignoring his desperate refuge against the snake. Alexander understood that they were interested and very curious about him, but they couldn’t do much, tied as they were. As Alexander finally came to a stop at the precipice, looking down, he saw the bottom deep, deep and blurry down there. As he turned around, the snake’s head had gotten as large as a fullgrown African elephant’s. Its body seemed to wind down into the inland, like one big killing lance. Alexander felt how one of its bottom front teeth didn’t pierce him because of their size, but nevertheless threw him out far away over the landscape. He felt calm though as he took off. The ground slowly came closer and closer to him. He landed in some kind of meadow and hit a couple of branches. As he touched down on the ground something hard pressed into his back.

As he looked up he saw the edge of the bed to his right side above him. He raised up on elbows. He was sweaty. A deep winter darkness prevailed outside. Without seeing he heard Katja’s deep snoring. She was clearly sleeping deeply. Alexander remembered the magnificent antelope, and his sight of the snake’s body that twisted through the whole landscape leading up to him. He didn’t like the dream. It had been unpleasant. As he turned his head to the right he saw a strangely tilted contour stand out in the naked moonlight. He stretched his hand towards it to feel what it was. He stretched his hand and the whole of his body under the bed. As he tipped his index and middle finger to pull it away he heard a rustle.

“A paper?” he wondered. He crawled back and stood up, put the paper on the bed and rubbed his eyes. Katja was still asleep he thought. It was 3:34 a.m. He looked down at the floor where his back had been pretty well maltreated. “A paper perforator?” he said. He knew he’d have a big bruise on his back in a couple of hours. He stared around in Katja’s dark room with his arms on his chest. He sat down on the chair next to him. The sleepy thunder from Katja’s throat made his pulse beat somewhat intensely, but smoothly. He studied the paper for a long time. From looking at its size and shape he saw that it was covered in the shadow from his body covering the moonlight. He held it against the moon’s cold nightblue rays. Dear Katja, it said with a very ceremonious, smooth handwriting. “Katja’s letter!” Alexander remembered shocked. “How come she just threw it... on the floor?” he said but understood it must have
slipped down in some way or another. He thought it was rather scary that he after his nightmare found a letter that she thought she should read in the middle of the night. “Do you read a letter to fall asleep?” he wondered, while beginning to read it. The pressure of the ink varied. It seemed almost as if written with a feather-plume. After two lines the text had kind of floated out into the paper. He couldn’t read at all what it said. “Tears?” Alexander wondered. He looked at Katja and saw the two dark lines on her cheek. He had a vague memory of her talking about reading a letter. “And she didn’t want me to hear her cry or see her tears..? Is that it?” The letter was written in an old English dialect, almost a Middle English he for sure never earlier had seen or heard of. An excerpt said, *meanwhile, Arthur went to sleep in the night and we couldn’t do anything. We are all so sad Katja. Arthur really loved you, just like his own daughter. Arthur never told you. Our daughter. Our Grand Daughter.*”

He put it back on the bedside table next to him. He saw a napkin of silk lace lying next to it on her bedside table. He shook his head. “What a letter” he said as he looked at Katja. “You’re just like Jim Morrison. There really are things known and things unknown. You’re there Katja, somewhere in between...” He stared at her as if she was some kind of prostitute and he said to her even though she was asleep.

“Bye...bitch!” He looked at her and even though he had roared at her she was still sleeping. He picked up his clothes and left the bedroom. He didn’t know if he was up or down or upside down, but he knew he had to get around. He looked at the living room table but nothing was left to be brought out to the kitchen. He found half a bottle of red wine in the fridge, and a plastic bag with mushrooms. His trousers were inside out. He reversed the legs and dressed with the perverted speed of a marine. He was fast, coordinated, correct, silent. A minute later Alexander flew out into an ice-cold but awakening dawn. After a while he found himself gulping Val de Carmain in the middle of Ribelius road, eating raw, earth-soiled mushrooms. His sight was somnolently dead-straight, aimed at the last parting of ways before the train station. He felt much better just by watching the trees. Their stripped wood skeletons strove against the windy weather. It wasn’t as horribly grey and ugly as one might think. The sun drew out a smile from both those branches as well as from Alexander. He took another gulp of ice-cold wine. He actually gulped down the whole bottle, rinsing down the hastily eaten mushrooms. He tore out the wallet from his back pocket and dug around in it for a while. His steps were now aiming straight for the station. Down at the platform next to some few Saturday earlybirds he began to cry in a slow cold rigid way. He just stared perpendicularly at the tracks in front of him. He felt that he was slowly going insane. He knew that his mind was being crucified in a society that had less hope than he had. He knew he couldn’t hold up his heart and let its wings fly away with his love, any more. His soul was being extincted and scattered because people believed more in control over others through the power of money and less in the hope and liberty of art and creativity.

“Why didn’t I write?” he reproached his self. He was the main spectacle of the platform next to the sleepy dead, brain-washed humans waiting for a movement of their body from a point A to a point B. “Why didn’t I tell her I loved her?” He threw the bottle that slant played head or tails down onto the tracks. Crash, it said. The train was coming. His rescue. It rolled in but no people came out of it when the doors opened. He stepped up and sat down on a seat along the direction of the train’s forward movement. He didn’t know about love anymore. He wasn’t sure. It wasn’t solid. It was a torment. “There are no winners in love,” he said to himself. “Some end up swimming among piranhas and crocodiles in their swamps. Some others lie resting in meadow they’ve found. Some try to hold on to each other’s dry skeletons through its desertlands. But they’re all lost in love’s invisible country as if they don’t know how to see because they’ve always been blind...” Alexander looked out from his window onto the dusk and the awakening of the millenium’s last cold, very cold and wintry day. In front of him lay a newspaper from someone. It was today’s paper. He picked it up.

“It just can’t be the truth!” he said conversing with the paper. An article told him of how the last Indian elephant Hutu had passed away, completing the extinction of one of the earth’s two remaining
elephant races. “Simply destroyed,” he said silently to himself. “No more patting an Indian elephant,” he sighed tired. He read some of the articles. Otherwise there was nothing new. Then he came into the section “national briefs.” The police had answered questions in an article called “Where’s Sandra?” Alexander froze. He didn’t even feel the cold breezes along his back. They marched straight through his soul. “No one understands why Sandra, in a very odd way, took off at her grandmother’s funeral, the renowned queen of contemporary dance, Juliana, “Julie” Callas, born Nordlinger. An older man testified that he had seen a woman of Sandra’s description three weeks ago at the subway station at Zeta square. ““Three weeks ago?” he reproached himself. Alexander confirmed to himself. “Witnesses are asked to contact...” was the article’s last words, and an overdrive for him. He looked out through the window. It was his station. By a reflex he threw back the paper on the seat and ran at the doors that closed. Alexander pierced himself in between and finally got through the compressing claws. “What the hell was it she screamed?” he asked himself. “Wick something.” He looked where to go. “Wick...wick.” He was clear about the fact that nothing had been the same since she had run by him those three weeks ago. “You’re wick...ed? Is that it? What is this...?” he contemplated. “This is life,” he said to himself. “This is life without choices. This is action.” He was wide awake to realize that in the way things happened to him now, he had to act in order to stay alive. He remembered that she’d been in some kind of frustration. “OK. Now...let’s see. This is the deal. She screamed towards me as if I was supposed to help her.” Alexander had entered the street staring down into the gutter’s flat, grey-checkered pattern. “Let’s try to remember her words. You’re a witness, Alexander.” He swallowed. “You’re a forgotten main witness,” a nasty, completely different voice exclaimed. “You if anyone should know!” he remembered. “Yeah, that’s what she said!” he lamented. “But why did she say creep?” Alexander wondered. He tore open the library door and walked in. It was chock-full in there, even though it was a Saturday. “Good. I can disappear,” said Alexander alias Sherlock Holmes, as he remembered from a relatively modern Italian cinematographical interpretation. It was hard to get any suggestion to search by. “Wait,” he said to himself. “Now, why did I choose to go to the library?” The large massive door of solid oak to the history department opened. “Yes,” he remembered, thinking of Katja’s letter. He was tricked by it. He was sure that he had seen Arthur Whiddlebarn’s name somewhere else. At the end of a bookshelf he dragged down a book, negligently thrown on a desk close to him. As he had gotten down on his haunches he picked up the heavy volume. “Jarwick...aaha,” he said all of a sudden with normal voice. The registrar sat at the desk writing something in some large ledger. Her face was turned towards Alexander’s.

“Excuse me?”

“I’m...ehrm,” Alexander said.

“Are you...here...or... what... did you say?”

“I had this book falling down on the floor. Sorry. I beg your pardon.” Alexander exhaled and then he inhaled. “I folded you so!” Alexander said to himself loud as he discerned the book.

“I beg your pardon, Sir?” the malicious registrar said convinced that she’d heard him saying that he was here. Alexander walked away with the book and sat down in one of the hall’s posterior tables. “Strathclyde and other forgotten kingdoms,” Alexander read. He had found exactly what he’d been looking for. “This is luck. Real luck.”

He flipped pages for a while. A chapter about the Whiddlebarn clan captured him completely. Alexander checked on the torn back of the book and indeed that was indeed the name of the author. The book had been published in 1963 by some company in Perth, in the north of Great Britain. Accordingly the author had included the paragraphs about his own clan, even though he himself was far from being straight blood.

Alexander sat for forty-five minutes fascinated by the clan’s growth out of Celtic traditions, having left Ireland for Scotland. Ever since the 12th century some tracks were erased about its descendants due to wars and religious conflicts. Whiddlebarn had, however, remained Scottish, that much the author knew. Alexander read hungrily for more interesting knowledge that seemed to sparkle off, just by the way
Whiddlebarn wrote. Alexander conjectured that this was the track. Whiddlebarn knew a whole lot about Celtic mythology. His words talked about the women quite on a par with the men, which he pointed out wasn't so evident through the Celtic texts or in their main craft: forgery. After two hundred and three pages Alexander flipped to the two hundred and fourth. He was numbed by Whiddlebarn's ability to tell. The author used a cold, straight language. Alexander believed him. Whiddlebarn told that his colleague and he had shared a secret they didn't quite know how to deal with. The reading seemed undecided. The colleague's name was Arthur Koppersfielder. "What's that supposed to mean?" Alexander laughed. He knew darn well he'd read a letter earlier this morning signed by a sorrowing Mrs Koppersfielder. As he continued he didn't know for sure why he was continuing. Even less about what was happening with him and around him. He had a slight feeling that coincidences weren't coincidences any more. As more unreality showed up the more it caught. His subconscious creative mind he had learned to listen to and abide by. It told him he was on to something. After another three hours he was through with the book. Not one word had been said about Jarwick. "But what did I expect? Whiddlebarn could not know everything."

Alexander thought he had learnt some after all. For example that there were a countless number of old ruins left on the British islands, that each had its own history and times of glory. Many of the castles had architecturally very interesting designs that weren't to be found anywhere else in Europe, and probably not even in the rest of the world for that matter. Many had been built in the 11th century's simple and solid style of stone constructions. According to Whiddlebarn, it seemed as if each commissioner had had in mind a construction that was supposed to be one single expression of their unique and insurmountable personality. Each monument was supposed to have a soul, a design that implied this. It was supposed to be an extra facial expression for what each king wanted to make clear he represented, if it was shrewdness, power or maybe humor. Whiddlebarn acclaimed this as the reason for the poetical expression, "An Englishman's home is his castle." Alexander noted the directness of kings' quick change of powers. In his own 21st-century community international corporations governed the power. Alexander saw a thick work on the conducting of buildings at that time. The building was architectural design coming alive and so forth probing the arts. The building gave a genuine, physical sense of who had power. The self-introspection of the leader. It was all there in massive stone in front of everyone. "Power was visible and very firm in that age," Alexander said. "Any king or ruler in that time had a face, a relief, a purity in the glorification of power as something desirable." Alexander had realized how much of the power in those days, hundreds of years ago, must have been a matter of real personality. He knew the political facts of his contemporary time. When the Men of Commitment and Decision had reached their chair the leader in them disappeared. When the actual time for leadership was given to them they had nothing to say to their people. They could talk the talk... "At least we didn't inhale...?" Alexander asked his politically eroded heart. "Why is it that parties intermingle compromises between governments and even between countries, as if their own power was useless. How did The Sceptre of Demos so quickly become nothing but a businesscard?" he asked himself. Alexander clearly saw how the wheel of democracy soon lacked enough spokes. "The more efficiently democracy seems to evolve around its axis, the less purpose it has. It is constructed like a giant neverending camera lens that never quite focusing. It just fucks around and around. No ass is going to take the picture." Alexander knew. "Does anyone know what the picture looks like? Does anyone know what to look for?" Alexander laughed. Actually he cried. Everyone wanted to be seen in the camera but why weren't they... the motif? People wanted to look like someone. Someone else... and the motif? Where's the button that makes people think?" Alexander laughed hard. Outrageously. "Let's meet in the middle of the road!!!" He shouted. "Political fucking catchwords!!!" It made him irritated the more he thought of how extracted he was from his unartistic society. He was distracted by its argumentative analysis because whatever political arguments didn't build hope or inspiration, but only undermined their counter-arguments' premises, of what use were these arguments in the first case? How did they improve the health of the environment? How did political argumentative analysis prevent diseases? How did it create a wish in people's minds for a better future?" Two guards that had sat down
rose up their heads towards his direction. Immediately they came toward him.

"Sir?"
"My name is Alexander. I'm wick...ed. Whatcha want?"
"Silence!!!"
"Sorry." He looked them in the eye with indulgence squeezed between his teeth. "Are you claiming that your argument is a conclusion supported by pieces of evidence or unstated reasons?"
"Are you leaving this library or not?" one of the guards asked him.
"I'm just reading about castles in Scotland."
"Then quit act like Jim Morrison OK?"
"Fair enough." Alexander said. "But I'm still wick...ed. Jarwicked." The guard left him with an angry look and decided not to react on his last comment. They walked back to their seats. When they sat down they stared at him for something like half a minute. They were pissed.
"What an F-ing guard," Alexander said. "Jim Morrison?" he shook his winestinking head. He knew the guard must have had a eunuch's sexlife.

Alexander thought democracy had gotten a face-lift the last thousands of years. The perfection of Greek philosophy had made life more complex for many people, Alexander also understood. It was more complex to deal with because it didn't have a face anymore. Alexander clearly understood how hard it must be for the people to live under a power that was a perfect force of justice. It was like air, everywhere for each person to use as much as she or he wanted, but invisible. Alexander thought of how clear the contradiction between a perfect existence of this modern power actually was, with the steering will of a man with a face like everyone else's. Alexander wasn't particularly turned on by Hitler's mustache or Lenin's silly and hairless little head. "Yet they were humans who had gotten where they ended up, on top politically because of an insurmountable will. How will people know today if something is wrong? When power is faceless, but for some gigantic societal pistons pumping on because it cannot do much else?"
Alexander thought he liked the book but he wasn't sure. He was extremely sceptic. But it had a message. It made him think, Alexander couldn't neglect that. "The good old owners of power probably always had been drinking liquor and had hooked ruling noses," Alexander read. Whiddlebarn was saying that the citizen couldn't play chess or cards with his chief anymore. If they wanted to shoot him, they didn't know where to aim. Alexander followed Whiddlebarn's train of thought that the human fault had been erased in modern governments and sources of power until the real face-lift didn't exist anymore. Alexander just felt sorry for the man.

"He really misses his medieval shithouse, his medieval pony and his own personal county and kingdom." Alexander sweated inside his shirt. "He really wants Bloody Mary and Henry VIII up on the governing throne again." Alexander was reading more and more eagerly. Slowly he began to understand that his own society nevertheless was functioning by that faceless machinery Whiddlebarn had given his hints of. Alexander thought that maybe it was its perfection that blinded him. "No one who wants to identify oneself with the governing apparatus would find any humanity that would risk its own perfection with his or her personality." Alexander thought modern process-governing had nothing in common with the little citizen, the invisible individual. How much a government may have ever failed, how less and less each person knew who was responsible, how well the media profile ever was carved among chiefs of nations or the leaders of the opposition, the little citizen would reflect on them with the same sincerity or concern as of Pac Man or any other LCD-figure. Alexander knew Whiddlebarn's text by heart now. "It's impossible for the people to decapitate their leaders. They couldn't negotiate with them face-to-face. They can't feel the smell of their sweat from working any more, yet the language of sweat is the language any hard-working man does understand and trust. There were fewer and fewer links between leaders and their peoples," Alexander said as he thought how something that was actually becoming more and more inhuman was steering the human. "Where's the communication?" Yet he knew how complex the world was, it was bound to have a perfected machinery to make everything work.
Alexander wondered why there weren't any pictures of those castles, so he could see what kind of "reliefs" Whiddlebarn and Klopuffierfield actually were talking about. He noted that pages 81 to 96 were missing. Someone had torn them out. Then he was wondering if he hadn't affected the layout somewhat himself, as he had dragged it down onto the floor. He rose and discovered that the registrar was leaping at him. It was those pages she had in her hands.

"They always fall out," she said smiling while giving him the sheets of paper. She walked back to her desk and Alexander returned to his place. He put the pages where they belonged. Then the tablemate next to him hauled the chair's wooden legs over the powderly porphyry floor. The obscure screech hammered like an ear-butcher sledgehammer. It lay in Alexander's head for over a minute after it had died out. When he opened the picture section of the book, Alexander saw how the first castle was one in the line of some somewhat familiar buildings. He studied intensely each one of them. He tried to remember his own sketch. Alexander's dejection of spirits grew for each picture he had to flip by. They were often very beautiful chateaux, mysterious but massive constructions. The pictures were, however, out of focus. He had a hard time finding details. The photographer seemed to have taken it for granted that they would fit into the film's cheap size. Obviously the photographer had tried to defy his own incompetent photographic equipment of some tourist instamatic manufacture. The compositions weren't completely bad, Alexander could see. He turned to the last picture. It was the same corners and capitals. It was the same roofs and pompously crafted entrance gate and arch over it. A small digit was noted under the picture. Rapidly he looked up in the end of the book to search the index. On page eighteen it said "Franks desire." "Without apostrophe between k and s?" he said to himself in silent proofreading for the applied printing-works. Alexander didn't understand anything any longer. He left his book and glanced at the stack of books his tablemate had piled up. The titles were telling about a certain interest for the Turkish art of cooking. Alexander was clear that the student really had made his imaginary Turkish stew going. Alexander thought of his own little biscuit. Again he looked at the picture and flipped the page. It was the front of the same house. "But?" he said to himself. "What is this?" He flipped to page 328 in the book. Under the index number it said "The Ghaerwiyc Castle." Alexander read about it over and over again, smiling. The situation had changed. All of a sudden his little biscuit lay on a silverplate, beautifully served in some of that particular castle's party halls. Disappointed he found that very little was said on page 117, titled "The Ghaerwiyc Castle." Whiddlebarn again had referred to his colleague Klopuffierfield, who both after a prolonged hypothesis had found that the Jarwick clan was not at all connected with the castle, but then after all was, however not in the way one usually connects things with each other. Klopuffierfield had held on to his theory like a dog to his bone, in spite of some introducing placards of lugubrious logic that were something like this.

The years between 900-1200 AD is a period in which mysteriously little theatrical action is recorded all around Europe. Between the years 965 to 975 the bishop of Winchester, England, completed a manuscript Concordia Regulares. It was an attempt by him in England's contemporary turbulent political climate to propose practical solutions of how to get England politically back into order. Perhaps it was the actual purpose of politics he wanted to establish. Alexander was agape. He was just waiting for Aristotle's Politics to be brought up. He knew that the Greeks had had some interesting ideas approving that music and politics in some respects had similarities in function and effect. But this time Whiddlebarn was a little bit more to the point. The liturgical play was used in England to educate monks preparing them for their task in life, the mission. This Klopuffierfield had regarded to be perhaps the greatest cause why theatre officially wasn't documented in this time. The mission had used the bishop's play to teach how the loosening effects of theatre was nothing but tricks of the devil. The bishop's play was used as an example of how theatre was mortal fruit to the unprotected human. Then the second century before the birth of Christ, a slave boy by the name Publius Terentius worked his way up in the hierarchy of the Roman Empire. He ended his life as one of the Roman Empire's most celebrated comedy playwrights. His and his colleague Titus Maccius Plautus' works were of highest significance to the bishop because the plays were a
natural biography of how the Latin language had really been spoken. This was the golden claw of Kloppersfielder’s theory. Hroswitha, who first was thought to have been a nun, and then wasn’t, was however a female playwright from Gandersheim, in the northern part Germany, acknowledged Terentius’ way of writing. The modern world has found six plays written by her. Hroswitha was also the first known female playwright after the antique era. Kloppersfielder meant that the first modern perspectives of women and their attitudes towards the family had been born by Hroswitha. By the help of Ethelwoold’s writing she’d been able to maintain her interest for the theatre. Fearful of being accused of malignancy and intriguing with the devil, she wrote a religious alternative to the originally savage tales which were published firstly in 1501, hundreds of years after her death. Kloppersfielder argued that Hroswitha was some sort of ancient mother of a coming world, and a very possible injector of feminism. “Her plays,” Kloppersfielder said, “were an impossible love stories made possible by their mutual passion for the word, the sterling joint of intelligence holding them together. Kloppersfielder sensed that people of all arts felt like maniacs without trying to belong to this chain of communication. Kloppersfielder meant that the chain proved powerful by simply looking at any serious artist’s combustion of self just to be able to maintain his or her production of art. “Any artist’s creating of art was in some invisible, incomprehensible way a communication, much more powerful than living a normal life.” Alexander read as if he was reading out of a bible, from its untold third testament. “When an artist says the art is my life, they cannot be more honest, they purposely make their life totally dependent upon this communication.” Kloppersfielder’s defence for the artist’s walking from chaos to order and back to chaos Alexander thought was a remarkable introspective he hadn’t thought of before. “Why we think the artist is obsessed is because they have seen and felt a fourth dimension we will never comprehend, we will never see... with our three dimensional eyes, because that goes against the law of nature.”

Kloppersfielder’s conclusion was that this was what had started the myth of the fictitious highlanders chasing through centuries to find a time that was theirs, having started out like a forbidden and impossible lovestory. Kloppersfielder meant that it was in the actual communication between the chosen man and woman that the real highlander was concealed. The dead Latin language Latin that had brought Hroswitha and Ethelwood together, he meant to be proof of his theory that the highlander lived in the communication. It wasn’t a human being but more an essence of a superior intelligence. Alexander thought the Kloppersfielder guy was nothing but intriguing. “He’s my fantasy in words!” Alexander said to himself. He continued.

In the 17th century there lived a Dutch theatrical director by the name of Angus Archibald van der Ghaerwyck. Well read in poetry and some kind of philosophy with queer religious undertones, he started a theatre club in 1637. As time went by the club grew from an ensemble to a complete theatrical company, which undertook a number of tours around in Europe during the fifties and sixties. What the Dutch most of all were ashamed of was the director’s fanaticism and almost hallucinatory conceptions of the world that followed him through his life. In modern Holland one tried to forget about Angus Archibald van der Ghaerwyck. The man had been a dictator to his employees. During the mid-1650s he had had one heyday in spite of all. In his late thirties he began to adore Hroswitha, because of her in his opinion incredibly perfect plays. His desire then kept on growing through life. To a certain extent it was the co-operation of his alcoholic abuse and an almost insane personality that made him build the Ghaerwyck Castle, where he spent his last days waiting for Hroswitha. The Jarwick clan was the ensemble’s nickname that each member had been conspired with by their new employee after their refuge from Ghaerwyck. Consequently the Jarwick clan was only a clan in a fictitious world, Ghaerwyck’s world. One by one each member had escaped head over heels as Ghaerwyck demanded a construction worker, actor, cattle keeper, butcher, shoe polisher, nail polisher, eye brow brusher, shit house cleaner, rug shaker, stage floor sweeper, curtain hauler and a cook by each member of his personnel. They were more likely a group of slaves than anything else.

The castle had been built like a different theatrical stage and Alexander realized, by Whiddlebarn’s
complimentary comments, how fantastically strange and remarkably sly Ghaerwyck’s genius was behind the building of the construction of the castle. An Australian theatrical researcher and his colleagues had found how Ghaerwyck’s drama in each of his 29 plays so sagaciously and skillfully had matched Hroswitha’s material. Ghaerwyck had been able to manifest such a true essence of communication in his fictitious relation with Hroswitha that it was practically impossible to say that he’d never met her. Now Kloppesfelder meant that it all was a big illusion. The bishop Ethelwold originally came from a Coptic monastery in Provence, France. Coptic monks came from Egypt and had a patron saint, Samserada. She had exclaimed a prophecy of an eternal illusion between two natures which would cease to exist when the meeting of the two natures had been completed. Kloppesfelder meant that the illusion was love, and the complete meeting, communication. Here Whiddelbarn disagreed with Kloppesfelder saying that love was the complete communication, and that the illusion was to accept impure love as the true love. Alexander was cold-sweating. His gut reaction was that Whiddelbarn and Kloppesfelder lay pretty darn good in their coffins or that one of them was right. He thought of how easy it was sometimes not to see the wood for all the trees. On the other side he asked himself what all of that material that Kloppesfelder and Whiddelbarn had presented really meant to him.

“What exactly is the deal, dear Gentlemen? Either I can believe you or misbelieve you. Either everything you’ve said about the Ghaerwyck Castle and the myths of it and that highlander myth or any other preposterous myth...is a big, big dumb tale or the truth, or what?” He could already feel the smell of hallucinatory soup, the one which is impossible to surmount without becoming insane.

Then Alexander began to think about Katja again. He thought of their relationship with a little bit more of a clarity he hadn’t had so far. The real problem was whether he’d been able to help her. Even if he wanted to she’d listen to her heart, listen to what her pulsating love told her. He wouldn’t communicate with her. They wouldn’t communicate. Their two individualities were blocked from each other because of love, a blind love. Alexander was being mentally crucified. He felt how his own heart was trying to kill him, in its furious rhythmical statements proving the validity of carnal love, and its functionality.

“Without communication. Without seeing what’s wrong, and what’s right.” Alexander felt heavy. Suddenly he saw all that wood. He understood why Whiddelbarn and Kloppesfelder didn’t have to give explanations to their fuzzy, almost incomprehensible quasi-philosophical theorems. Alexander didn’t even react to all the sick things he’d gone through the last month in his life. They were edged into his system. He knew pretty well that if a guy was able to sketch something out of his head to see it on a slide that was a photocopy from a book showed in a speech a couple of hours later, he’d passed some barriers. He had to face it. If Sandra yelled the name of his motif three times, it was communication. It was anima talking to her animus. Alexander cried as he realized that he had lost the rights of his own being because of her.

“She knew I was the superior artist all the time. She knew that only someone as crazy as I would do it for her. She knew I could give up my male instincts because I glorified the art above all. She knew I could find it for her. She knew I would give it to her. Even if I knew, she’d break the human race. She knew all the time I’m the artist who would see the beauty of her perfect communication with the perfect man. She knew I’m the real craftsman who takes my art seriously. Yes, Sandra. It’s true. I don’t have to see the results of my own actions. I trust the Christians. Any Christian. But why do you give me the choice. To be or not to be?”

Alexander closed the book and walked away to the registrar. As he had gotten up to the desk he put the book back on the shelf next to her desk. He left the library.

“Am I a soldier or a savior?”

He saw the long olive green coffin next to him on the street. It was full of soldiers. Their tired and grey faces looked at him. He felt nothing but death stinging in him like a lance through his spirit. All depraved of a father, Alexander felt how they all questioned him, as if they wanted to burn his blood, because he didn’t have the answers they wanted, as if they also wanted to drink of his blood because they
knew that no other drink would give them their spirit back.

"Am I a soldier or a savior?" he asks a second time with staring far away into the end of the street, to see above the horizon that didn't exist, there where Christian tears of true love mixed bodies, traffic lights and roadsigns with show-windows and pedestrians, with chaos as the only outcome.
Chapter 5.

The bus didn't have that stale smell of rubber it used to. No one had sat down next to him, yet. He let his skull fall backwards. He kind of halflay in a strange trance in his seat, smiling. He knew it was 6.30 in the afternoon. They had 14 hours of travelling to do. He thought for a while of how much rawer the atmosphere among the soldiers had been eight years earlier. None of that rawness was to be found in the present atmosphere his unconscious memory now was wrestling with. The journey continued with some slight murmur. Like an old friend the discipline reliably came to every man on the bus. The driver was unusually jerky in his maneuvers. He seemed to have some kind of tactics for each bump he passed. Before passing one, he down-shifted and stepped on it to pass the five inch bump as quick as possible, so that no one would even make a notice that they had passed one... Christian thought the driver sucked. It sounded as if a horse neighed 2 inches from his ear drum while fifty other kicked him over a mountain for each bump they bumped over.

"But. It's OK. It's one of those maneuvers with the squad..! ...eh?" He hated the chill and fatigue. A smile was torn from him. "Some snow, some sweat, some shit, some blood, who cares when you're in 52nd squad!" he smiled ironically. He knew that the lie was defenseless. It was a deal of the fakire's paradise and Christian wanted to smile at it. He tried to talk himself away from any connection with the reality. Act totally irresponsibly and smile for a while. To let go of the irony.

Somewhere through the misty light he saw how the tactical driver took up the microphone.

"Endstation." Everyone stood up and began to pick up their personal stuff. No one was completely quiet. The atmosphere was made of lead. One by one the men jumped down from vehicle 104, either mocking around or yelling around. After three minutes there was no one left. Then Captain Lindahl stepped up into the bus.

"Eeeeeeeendstaaaaatiooon!" he howled. Christian opened his eyelids a half yard in front of the commander's nimble and alert raven-eyes.

"I'll be damned!" he said disappointed.

"What..?" Christian answered. He wasn't the slow kind of guy, but in a strange way he had been caught in action. "Isn't it..." Christian observed Lindahl's ensign. "Caaaptain Lindahl?!" Christian said hesitant.

"You bet."

"I'll be damned..?" Christian said with a slow voice. In the army the Lieutenant ensign and the Captain ensign spoke their clear, but now obviously very discrete languages.

"That's exactly what I said a moment ago." Christian knew that if he tried to laugh at this point, it would only sound like a neigh of a gnu. At last the gnu break loose from both of them. Eight years ago it had been tough, cold and dirty, but their companionship was still there like an old unpolished medallion. In this squad no one had neither the time or passion to bleat out, with perfected larynxes one superorder after another in problemsituations outside the aide-de-champ's utterly disordered office or inside the canteen-keeping. To all the winter constantly was too much dangerous of an enemy to watch out for.

Christian recognized himself. The barracks were still there like untouched pine tree. The snow spread out generously and majestically. He saw the spruces' authoritative positions as snowpillars with snow one yard thick, burdening their branches. "Obviously the second snowstorm of the season had passed by." Christian thought as he slowly recognized both old and new buildings. The dining-hall was new. On the opposite side of the road he saw two hangars that hadn't been there before. Later he had found out that one division of the worn out Er.Ec.TION-fighters, and another with the good old Tactical Vehicle 105. He could hear how the Hueys' ancient patter made its entrance, faraway along the southwest background of the sky. It was a little bit below -17-C and soon dawn. Christian heard how Marne and Lewen called at a field fox that
walked along the fence to the entrance. Two sets of bandwagons just drove out from the service depot. It was same old bandwagons that Christian saw, that had been used during his period of military service. An attempt had been made to paint them in camouflage white, but the decay shone through on the engine’s motorsounds, the rust and lack of even basic equipment. He didn't like it. It was as if to see old friends starving.

"Aedel-whisper! You've got your harness in order." someone cried 15 yards away.

"That's all for peace..." Christian understood as he saw who was coming at him.

"Well, well, well one hath heard of those writings..." Elk said without compromises as usual.

"You read the article?" Christian hoped he hadn't. He pondered for a while if Elk had worked on his academical career hard enough. The way he remembered it, Elk had been split at the mustering-day. His girlfriend had taken off to the ghosttown with a Slovenic theatrical designer (Larryerrij Rascacopij) and had been in her sixth month of pregnancy. Elk had been informed by one of his best friends on the day of decampment, the 25th of May. He probably just had put himself together, the way he always had. His full name was Anton Elkclaw. In Christian's flashback he saw immediately how this guy had had all the possibilities on his side. "He hadn't been able to make up his mind." Christian recalled. "Obviously he was talented enough as he had gotten himself into Technical Institute B and the Constructor School in the capitol. The problem was as Christian could see it, his hesitation on such self-evident matters. At the same time Elk was the man that twisted the map into position and committed the decision totally without doubts.

"I've read, I've read, old fellow. But I can't understand it!" They looked at each other. They had approached each other and were now standing in front of each other, eye to eye.

"Really." Christian said having given up. "What could I do and what matter did it make anyways?"

"I didn't know for a second that there was such an exploit of masses of 'worried spirits'..." he continued. The discussion had turned around.

"You bought the whole concept?" Christian looked hesitantly at Elk. Perhaps he exclaimed himself a little bit averse and criticized himself for his documentative lack of focus. Christian discovered something of a 2nd-division-copywriter-at-a-2nd-division-advertising-agency with himself. Elk was thinking of how to get a good depth of the discussion.

"Hey Christian, even if we have purty damn many things to go through before we talk about that freereligious rumpus... First of all: Man! I had no idea that you were a writer!" he smiled tastefully at him.

"It must have been one hell of a racket at the office. It was a purty "hot" week there...in... was it August? It became a case for the nation and a sudden inconvenience to a complete society that wanted to take its responsibility for it... How do you get a research goin' on a topic like that?" Anton set his eyes into a position that strangled Christian's, even though the discussion to the highest possible degree was a rejoice.

"Eh..." Christian said somewhat tumbled. As a matter of fact he didn't have much to add to Anton's complete grasp about what really had happened. He was actually scarily close to the reality merely by his sheer estimations. Christian recalled how Bertil had put on the lid only one hour after their discussions. The whole thing had become juridical tangle, a matter for courts, lawyers, politicians and even the police. Christian realized how Bertil had been left alone, next to the bombarticle's detonation. It then struck him that Bertil actually hadn't been tired of it. It was as if he accredited the award to himself. Christian just stared at Anton. He stared because he simply did not have any logical reason to escape the debate with one of his closest mates in the army. Of course he wanted to tell the truth to his trustful friend, but the reality had hardened. He was a journalist and his perspectives were completely different from what they had been eight years ago, the last time he'd seen Anton. Christian knew immediately how that alarnclock of his conscious now cried for honesty. Anton had started it. The journalist still couldn't say everything. Of irony the thoughts landed upon the English monk Pelagius that denied the original sin, vindicating the human right to chose between purity or sin. Christian was happy that the conciliatory of Elesos, Greece definitely had condemned that doctrine in 431 CE. Sometimes the human simply couldn't make a choice. Sometimes there was only one single road that fate had staked out for her to walk on. If she teared herself away from it
she would never get it back and forever she would become that wanderer, without a future or a passed. This Christian felt right now, in this very moment.

"Am I sinful because I keep my mouth shut? Because I'm making a choice to remain silent?"
Christian asked himself. "Am I a sinner because of how the circumstances have developed in the way they have and because I can not control them like politician but abides to them like a citizen?" Christian liquidated himself with morality. He thought it was wrong to think that the original sin followed one's actions in a way that disabled oneself from doing anything about them. He wondered for a while how sin could lie on each man's shoulders like a conviction, an original sin munks knew they could never get rid of. Christian was out of hope. "If this is the case the human race is fooled of her own future." Anton searched in Christian's sight to catch his eyes.

"Christian, I do understand that that you're just loaded with info of a certain value. Maybe I was asking for too much, not staying satisfied with what I know, and most important: the cetitude that it was you that dug out the truth."

"Christian took advantage of the situations." Christian said trying to put an end to their discussion.

"Wasn't that an underestimation, mustn't you, as I asked earlier, have done a lot of research..." He got silent.

"What are ya doin' yourself?" the question flew at them from some corner behind. Sixten Petren's corner. Anton cleared his throat and looked down into the snow. It didn't tell him anything. It lay there quiet and cold, like a corpse.

"I'm working at Geijer Architects Inc." He looked down into the snow again. Siwten was satisfied with the answer. Both he and Christian had expected something like unemployment judging by his listlessness.

"Executive," he added quickly to be safe.

"Uh huh." Sixten dropped his chin. He did think Elk was a little bit different but all in all as usual.

"How about you?" he looked at his friend desperately.

"I'm a writer of the National Pages, Cultural Affairs." Christian got silent. He saw that Sixten was a little bit older, a little bit more fat, but with same good old temper as always. It appeared to Christian how they all were still in their civilian slots and now desperately were trying to reanimate their friendships. They were just rewinding the cassette of jokes and spirits to be able to press the play button again.

Christian thought of how different their careers had developed, and how they struggled to find each other again. When he looked at Sixten he just smiled.

"And you?"

"I, well I, I'm just taking care of the bathtubs and the WCs in a largest general sense," he said in that self-evident way he always had. "Why're ya lughing?" he asked astonished. "Is it perhaps too cheap for you, men of the Big Town? Or what?" He looked down in the snow at first but then he looked up as everyone started laughing including himself. Everybody had heard his quarrel with his wife and his six small glies, when the bus had stopped to pick him up in Little Swamp. Without hesitation on could hear the desperate, tired and stressed father's voice, "Yes Jessica, no Ruth, never Nancy, maybe Mich, in two weeks honey..." only to hear how the family all of a sudden became to much for him and he had said "Fuck you darling!" in the entrance, so that half the bus had shook of peristaltic movements. Now, as the three of them had began to get up the steam, the real star of the gang, Hjalmar Gunnarsson appeared thirty yards further away. As usual it wasn't a very pleasant sight. Hjalmar puffed and blew out from the clothing supplies. He just had gotten his equipment. The guy probably had a third in the mouth, and another one between the legs. The last one resembled nothing but a turban. From a hole in the middle of it, red turfs of hair shot up in the air.

"But what the hell... is he wearing?" Sixten said stressed as he lit a John Silver without a filter. They stared intensely at the creature that approached them, now at only twenty yards distance away from them. One could see that what glittered was parts of a greenpurple spangle costume, one of a kind that one
wears if playing in a danceband like Kenny Roger's Roosters or some ridiculous Swedish vikingband like The Thorleifs or something.

"But what the hell...cowboyboots and a damn bloody cowboy- hat..." Sixten peeped with his cigarette hanging from the left corner of his mouth. At last the spaceinvader stood in front of them. The three looked at him with the same generous attention a Marsian most likely would have received. Hjalmar looked back at them. Anton just seemed pestered. He had gotten a unison feeling of decay and felt that he had to give Hjal on some compassion or sympathy.

"It looks nice," he said. He had a hard time deciding what exactly it was that he had in mind. Actually the whole man just resembled a fiasco. Hjalmar looked at them as if he was about to decide upon something, not knowing exactly what. Elk was worried. Accordingly they were standing, staring at each other after eight years of silence. Anton thought that soon someone will say something foolish about Hjal on, even if it appeared as if they did not have the slightest worries or wonders. "There's no insecurity between them," it puzzled him, "but it's such an unnecessary risk to ask. A lot must have happened to this man..." Hjalle remained silent. He stared.

"I mean the blazer," Anton was really desperate and made gestures with his arms. Hjalmar let go of all his unpacked stuff. He looked gaily at them all. Then he stretched out his sleeves and discerned them.

"you're playing in a band...?" Sixten tried a little bit more seriously. He really hoped that Hjal on wasn't. He knew there wasn't one true bastard that would take this Hjal on seriously. Not today. Hjal on saw the three questionmarks growing in each face, and then he laughed his wide, hearty superlaughter that sounded like artillery fire echoing out over the barrack square. Then another three were laughing in a similar way.

A soft wind blew over the military sites and out over the district. Far away in the horizon snow was whirl ed up on the edges of Jeknedok's mountain. If one looked long enough on the southwest side of the massives one could see how a group of six or seven reindeers were descending from the slopes. Christian saw a gang of buzzards in the air passing by. That feeling he hadn't had for a decade now all of sudden was there again. He had hoped for it to have been repressed, perhaps at some moment when he'd been really hammered, perhaps at some of the critical moments during his last two years of running marathons. Disconsolately the northern hunter realized what that reindeertribe told him. He knew their language too well. Their clear message meant that he soon, very soon would be encumbered with the disgusting frost. Hjal on looked in the same direction Christian did.

"I'm actually playing in a German danceband." he said proudly.

"But...?" Sixten said who couldn't believe his ears. He couldn't get any further. Probably it was his adulthood that hindered him from arguing some points with Hjalmar, the all of a sudden lost child. All of them realized that they were around thirty years of age, except for Christian that was a couple of years younger. A silence, at the same time uniting as well as horrifying, spread among the men. They were reunited as if to perform an old theatrical play. For each little detail that appeared they realized that they were going to play against each other in totally new roles. At this point Christian was probably the most mature, Sixten the most anxious, Anton the most irritated, and Hjalmar the most happy. They searched for answers in the silence, in their sights. They knew how they always had gotten immediate eye contact, and how it in many exhausted moments during some heelmarch had been the only communication they had been able to cope with. Not even there could they meet anymore.

"Fifty second squaad!!" could be heard from the other side of the barrack. The voice belonged to Lindahl. "Line up in front of the schoolbuilding. Entrance B. At 1.00 PM." He made one of his classical pauses. It always sounded as if he was done by the end of each sentence which he after a while thought of continuing. "Up til then I expect you to have arranged all reciepted equipment into order." Lindahl took a breath. "And Lunch." He brought out a map and looked at it. Then he used a lectgraph, searching on it. After a while he was done. He continued his speech. "The wheathercast speaks of storm during this week
to come, so count on a realistic maneuver, from start." Perhaps he was smiling. Perhaps he was he was just screwing up his eyes in the sun because of the wind straight at him. "We at Cavalry Regiment Q thereby warmly welcomes you back and we hope for as good of a maneuver as possible." He waited for a couple of seconds before he strided on to the gunroom.

"You betcha. The good old Lin-lke has not lost his battle-cock yet," was heard from a tired lowlander that had given up a couple of yards from Christian. He stood wandering in front of his pile of equipment that was just lying around in a mess.

"Davidsson?" Christian asked wondrous and staringingly himself. Viktor Davidsson whom had been picked up by his own grandfather on the day of decampment, heading for business education at what he referred to be Stanford University. His mum from Michigan had arranged the whole trip over and the four-year stay at the university. Viktor had wanted to stay in his homecountry. Christian remembered how he had been the world's most awake guy at the time they went to camp. He was an access to everyone. Always a sound step ahead. He lived offensively. He was a true machoideal. Now Christian discerned the skinny and lankhaired Davidsson. "DON'T GET CLOSE! I'll BITE YOU!" his look screamed out to its environment. Christian couldn't understand why. "Was he a hippie? Had he been suspended from school? What the hell had happened?" he asked himself.

They were sitting in lecture hall B2 and were waiting for Captain Lindahl to show up. Actually they weren't waiting for him, in these cases Major Frameberg had always been the central figure. The lecture hall was a technological surprise. Christian hadn't for a moment thought that the good old military organization could have afforded ASD-equipment. Audiovisual SoundDesign was a concept that had revolutionized the HiFi world since its breakthrough three years ago. A few couple of businesses were licentiatued with the authority to construct a sound, correct to 100%. The two latest decades had since the good old servant The Compact Disc, showed the road for how the sound in its foundation was a very simple physical apparition. Optical sound reproduction was an important step, but it wasn't until the Ligna filter of domestic manufacture, that researchers had began to have presentiments about the real width of the laser sound evolution. The ASD-technique implied that the room where sound was to be resounded, first of all had to be analyzed. Speakers then were constructed to function only in a certain part of the room. The microcomputer-chip that had ended up being called Lign's filter steered any sound impulse according to a specific, very peculiar sound schedule innovated Dr Ernst Ligna. Any possible sound impulse was stored in new CD-discs that also memorized how the room's background noise and other disturbing sources, present at the time for recording, to use this memory bank like a negative to produce photographic prints, which at a playback turned the noise into a perfect opposite-relation, making noise delete noise. The problem that Dr Ernst Ligna solved was to come up with a chip that was small enough. No one had dared to even dream of how the computer technology of the eighties not even with its processing computers would have managed the task that now was catered by one single chip.

Christian thought of all the HiFi-magazines he had read from which he gathered his technological knowledge, the stuff he thought he absolutely had to know as a journalist of popmusic. He knew well how many writers of rock'n'roll neglected the vast multitude of technology that built the music of the nineties and now had become its insignia. Once again he thought it was best to reason like the musicians themselves, that music was about the thought, the feeling, a curiosity from within crying out for an allround education. He knew how much a reportage of a musician benefited from his knowing how they made the technology work for them. Other critics' interest in music was a solemn matter of listening and commenting upon what they heard. A new link from the musician to the reader/listener had to be aligned by a so far undiscovered horizon-broadening perspective. The technology is a trap for the creative artist who becomes a self-preserving addict, he convinced himself. He thought how easy it was to get lost abiding by the true interests of rock, with a lifestyle where picks and nickels shared the space in the wallet.

"The morning milk is exchanged for 50 grams of a chalkwhite little powder or to some other fellas, four fingers of 12 year-old Seagram's. Critics to a larger and larger extent glorify the lifestyles of the
different composers as being something more important and more loaded than the actual music. Their messages are so magnified they become larger than the musicians themselves, so pumped up the musicians become cases of their own baccanals. Critics want nothing but the booze, the women and the bucks and to hang on to this as much as they can. In the end this sludge is impossible for the rockstar to land in, between their ecstasy “uppers.” Star reporters work like animals for a picture of how and when famous people have intercourse. Famous rockstars buy their underwear and panties somewhere. They use perfume. Music has become a torn rug of drugs to the entrance to high life, from once having been the beautiful and minutely handknit piece of art it truly was. Rock on! With Virtual-fame and plastic VISA-money the door to that little rug on the rocks is standing wide open. Just suck up your powder-orgasm through a tube. The social aspects of visiting Café Onyx, nightclubs like The Hangar or Le Petit Diable. Cocaine. Sex. Scandal.” Those were the contents of the rockbag he knew of.

To Christian the attributes were kind of blooming. “These myths true or not true are,” when Christian thought about it, “nothing but the horny piston of rock’n roll music.” All too often he had ended up in its myth machinery trying to interview eccentric people on totally overcrowded nightclubs. He knew how that idealized, constantly blooming fruit of rock smelled, and how divinely sexy it indeed was. “It has a certain carving value. Most often completely different than just different.” It scared him. He had seen famous people with personalities disappear in the landscapes of rock. It made them produced. Christian was scared of Christian, because Christian wasn’t scared of that technology, the literally one and only part of the whole of modern rock machinery. “A rambler knows the technology of music by heart. A rambler is able to sort out its artistic values from what is its commercialized metal junk and bullshit, with his toenails!” Christian screamed inside of himself. He wanted to be cautious if people were getting burned in the steel wheel of rock. The more he was thinking about it the more scared he got. “If it is just a machinery and everyone buys from it, buys like mad, who will be in its center? I talked to those few who had become famous like no one else. Everything was twisted. People had no dreams anymore. All dreams are all alive at the same time. Imagination is reality in that world. He got afraid as he saw how those people in its center let machines take care of their musical imagination. People cared more about contacts with people with technology than about their imagination.

He glanced at the holographic blackboard, where the instructor used a joystick or a drawpen to supply his speech. The hall had Widescreen HR-TV, probably with the latest resolution 2400x1700 points per inch. He thought of how the building had been completely constructed in concrete. It was boring he thought. He hadn’t seen the two gigantic panorama windows that threw the whole of Jeknebo’s mountain range in the arms of anyone who decided to look outside. He discovered the automatic curtains that now were pulled down. The room was very skillfully painted in offwhite with a tiny little bundle of lines in all the colors of the rainbow. Christian didn’t understand that he was sitting in one of a line of Spanish leather chairs. The guys that sat her woke up a little. Each having eaten the world’s largest portion of pork with brown beans, which was loudly announced by the 85 men, they slowly became astonished. They had never been in a hall like this one before. It was more modern than the future outside of it. They thought it was a part of the maneuver. Their sounds from the lunch were slightly anachronistical from the point of view that they belonged to a different generation sort of. They were far away from this hyper modern luxuriously designed room. When it cried for bankers, 85 military hunters occupied the seats.

As the clatter silenced of the last GRUs put down on the floor, Captain Lindahl entered after the two Generalmajors from Milo Grey, Schwartz and Arvidsson. The Captain stepped up to the little podium. The surprise was total. The nation had for the time being only 11 Generalmajors left in the severely downsized organization of defense. Three of them were somewhat involved in the airforce and two of two others in the navy. Of the Army’s six, two were now situated in this very room and every man was probably thinking of that fact at this very moment.

"Well, well good old fellow hunters!” Lindahl introduced in a very good-humoured way.
"A little bit too cosy, there weren't any old women Lindahl was going to send out into the bush," Elk thought and Christian agreed. They exchanged a short sight and pretended as if nothing had happened. All sights were turned too Lindahl and intensified the atmosphere of hard concentration. Lindahl's Adam's Apple skied up and down as he swallowed. He lifted his searching sight towards the two commanders and they nodded shortly. Lindahl let his Higin and Munin sweep over the hall as if to induce each person with a patriarchal power. He looked for seriousness.

"Well, as I said. A very, very authentic maneuver. He laughed shortly at the storm that flew over Jeknedok. Christian didn't like Lindahl's arrogance. It was a feature he had had the feeling Lindahl would develop since he first got to know him eight years ago.

"At my side today, is GeneralColonelCommander Lars-Erik Schwartz and SuperiorErectusOverCommander Knut Arvidsson. They'll give a detailed description of how the maneuver will develop, after my introduction." A slideprojector was turned on. The first picture showed a Siberian prison camp from 1993. The situation obviously had not improved, but worsened men immediately could tell. The criminals on the picture, those that were considered the nation's rubbish by OSS, were men of all ages. They were starving and had shrunken together by a continously biting coldness. On a picture Christian saw how two prisoners were being dragged out from a steel wired fence in giving another example of the traditional Soviet kind of fostering. The picture disgusted with obvious content but also for its actuality. It was a living contrast between east and west.

"A Prisoncamp 256 miles outside Murmansk, the Sevaliuskyj camp, opened 1973." Lindahl began quietly. "We're going to run a maneuver that tries to assimilate these conditions with some slight modifications." He gave room for Arvidsson.

"You're to be the first pilotgroup of drill in: survival of, and escape from the Prisoncamp." Arvidsson got silent. The next picture was presenting a summer's idyll at some lake. In the foreground lay a completely normal family with two children, realxing at the beach. "This is the purpose of the drill. We hope you'll get your mind on things like these. You're gonna need it." He made a break and laughed where he stood. Loudly. He changed picture. His cynism was a brick in the game.

Another picture showed up. It was taken from a military rehearsal in a German bunker somewhere during WW2. In a very close perspective Christian saw how two agonizing eyes emplyly stared into the photographer's lenz. Arvidsson explained how the prisoner was one of the nation's lost officers Hans-Eric Leven. He had helped the Swede Raoul Wallenberg's staff in what today is referred as Budapest, to get 800 Hungarian jews escape the claws of gestapo in the spring of 1942. The mood was down among the men.

"The pictures are from FaLo's TAD-department." he added shortly, as if to gather the eyes and ears of every man's attention.

"Consequently this material as you can understand is classified topecret." The man's face in the picture was pale grey and sweaty. In his deep dark eye-cavities one could sense a look of absense, one near exhaustion. From the nose slime and blood slowly streamed down on his cheek and throat, Christian saw. In the damp forehead the man had two dark dots the size of a thumb's nail. It had been the two points where the two electrodes had been attached to execute electric torture. "From what we know this is the last picture taken of the man before he according to theory a; was executed outside Dachan or b; was deported in a similar way to different prisoncamps in Siberia." Christian saw the ink inscription on the bottom of the picture that said 17th of March, 1942. A thick slimy goblet squeezed and pressed in his stomach. "For natural reasons we won't explain why the different governments of this nation so far have chosen to remain silent. After a fastly arranged autopsy and identifiation of the man, the case was closed in the summer of 1942" Christian felt a pestering smell about this maneuver. He looked at Sixten that just shook his head.

"It hasn't even started." he said as their sights charged against each other. The journalistic ear of Christian realized that very much of how Arvidsson talked and said things every- thing was true. They weren't saying the whole truth, he thought. "Just parts of it." he said. Schwartz stepped up on the podium next to Arvidsson. He didn't quite have the pounds to his advantage which was obvious to most people in
the room. He had a thin white hair, having pretty much with that Churchill silhouette in common, the cheek, the nose, and that somewhat bitter look.

"I'm...Leven." the hall was filled with a long murmur. It could be either an extremely bad scenario or Schwartz was a horrid revelation of truth no one had the guts to believe being left from WW2." Christian asked himself, wondering where the man got his energy from.

"For sure I've accepted a life without my family. I never had one." He put his body weight on the other leg. "That much I can say: I am one of the hidden keys to that the foreign affairs of the nation the last forty years have been as intact as they have." Christian thought it sounded like a bad high school farce narrating the old Soviet union's KGB activity. The difference was that it was being told by a grandpa rather than a young man full of vigour. Schwartz had a hard time standing on right leg Christian noticed and his rattle breathing only most of all made Christian think of someone ready for the boarder. He was as old as a log in a wooden floor.

"I wasn't executed as firstly thought, but was deported to Treblinka after one week of examinations. I stayed there for five and a half years before I came to the Serdanya camp in which I was imprisoned for two years. In the summer of 1948 I had gotten to know an Estonian, Major Esko Liina, whom just like me had been in examination after examination in Treblinka. Like many times before the moisture that actually showed up under his left eye he corrected with a handkerchief. His face expression was cold. It daunted everyone how inexperienced they must be in comparison with Schwartz... or Leven. They had seen movies and read until doom about the politics that surrounded the 2nd World War. They had grown up with it. They never had had to touch the war with their own hands. They had never really been confronting that sweaty, bloody and very dirty beast it was. Never earlier had any of these thirty years olds seen, and with such a surprisingly convincing power been forced to realize how their perspectives fastly needed to be arranged. Leven repeated the documented sorrow and feelings of depravity of the 2nd World War, by simply standing and exhibiting himself. He made a difference, every man in the hall understood. He'd gotten out of it alive. The old Leven began to tell about this escape. First, he'd found some steel wire that he'd been able to smuggle away. Esko had had the bunk under his, living in the barrack most westwards of the seven hangars. He told of how they'd coaxed and sawed up a hole in the outer wall with the steelwire, planning each work shift carefully. Outside they had had to find out how the lights searched on the wall to know exactly when the hole should be opened. They had had 200 yards of different steelwire hinders to pass, and guards within deadly yards range. Esko had gotten a nasty scratch through his bad clothing and into the flesh of his lefty thigh. "One little wound is lethal if you have two weeks of marching in front of you." Christian heard Schwartz slowly saying. "Esko had been tough throughout the first week, but one morning he simply didn't wake up." Underfed he had died in the chill of the night. Leven really described it well Christian thought. The paint he used for his image was really alive and he continued. "Liina had however been a free man and, most importantly, on his way home when he died." Leven told about when he'd put him under the root of a giant and ancient old spruce that had fallen in some winterstorm. He hadn't dared to cry until twenty years later. Leven had followed Esko's map which they had repeated and repeated before themselves, for weeks. It had been correct, with perfect accuracy having lead Leven to Esko's home regions through the Soviet borderline and well into Estonia and Varsoas. He had gotten to the site of the family house exactly where Esko had explained it to be, but then, for the first time the map failed. An old man had stepped up to him and when questioned, told him that the family now lived in a newly built house further into the city street. It wasn't until Esko's personal belongings, a Champagne cork from his wedding dinner and a knife he had made in the camp, that she annihilated let him into the house. In there Leven had told the whole story, for the father, two sisters and three brothers. The story was just as fascinating as grotesque Christian thought. After four months of getting back into shape, Leven had been able to get a new identity through contacts that Liina's family had with the underworld. In his new disguise he had been able to get out of Estonia to continue his journey back home. His voice changed thereafter.
"This is why I now with joy, finally since fifteen years of planning is able to execute this prison camp, and escape-manuver with you guys. Christian felt cold shudders along his back, followed by many others. Christian felt what kind of hate Leven had, and wanted to live out. And would live out. The assembly was paralyzed by the military's hostility, however it was a part of the sick game Leven had been planning.

"Your situation is pretty much the final result of our staff of forty researchers have been occupied with the last fifteen years or so." There was tension in the air. Everyone of the men wanted to be a part of this big moment, yet as they looked at each other, less and less wanted. He could see how men began to shake their heads, as if to say, "we've been through a lot, but this is really too much." He saw that everyone at one instant moment became insecure, insecure. It was science fiction. Lindahl took command.

"Ok guys, count on some extra hard work for two weeks." At this point 86 men wanted nothing but to get the hell out of the place and as far away from the regiment as possible. Just like bloodhounds, braintrained since birth, these guys reacted with a fury, almost inhuman. It was sheer fear. The brainwash eight years ago made them ignite like matches. They couldn't explain how it happened, or why they felt this battlefieldanxiety, a neurosis that drove each man almost insane at the start of each maneuver. They felt nothing but death's hunger for death. They just felt and couldn't talk to themselves or take an exit out of their inner inferno's fire of fears. "Because of the maneuver's nature we're unable to inform of why we executing this maneuver. The only thing we can say is that the maneuver in any of the world's military organisations, and that no one knows that we are running our." In twenty minutes Lindahl drew out the nuts and bolts of the mission. There was nothing that pointed at exhaustion from what Christian could remember eight years ago. "the last month had been a pain in the ass," Christian admitted. But there was nothing in plans, schedules or in the different distances they had to march that was a step outside normal procedures. "Everything is "normal." But I'm scared," Christian said to himself. Everyone left the lecture hall half past four and loomed towards the dining hall. Everyone was already in the groups they used to be in, eight years ago.

"They good ol' overdrive..." Sixten said as he looked down into the snow when he looked up, Hjalle was walking next to him. "Tell me more about that German danceband you're in..." Sixten said burdened and disconsolate. Again they were molded together without actually reflecting at how the companionship simply existed. However at long distance from each other in the career, but with the insight of how meaningless of a fact it seemed to be now. Now they were only soldiers again. Just privates and nothing more.

What FaLo in reality had planned was something completely different from what they had said to the gentlemen, an elite. They were totally unaware of that six minicomputers and one ATEL-Large System computer in Stuttgart, Germany had been loaded with 85 complete gene-portraits. Secretly, a perfectly stored information of each person's psychological as well as physiological development had been installed since the mustering day. Research of each man's suitability for the maneuver had been ordered straight from the minister of defense. This meant that their families now were being informed about the real conditions, the bitter reality that their families now were being informed of the real conditions, the bitter reality that the thirty-year-olds were to confront. The gene portrait being a complete picture of how each individual functioned, made a mathematical estimation possible of how its reactions were acted out in the infinite number of situations the program confronted it with. Through a computerized technology the department of defense had been able to discern the theme these guys were to be experienced with, how to escape the death. There had been discussions of how close the researchers were to the reality than to a normative computerized one. After comparisons they had found that the random act of probability as denominator in common for both a real reality and the computer's fictive quartz-calculated made it possible to exclude miscalculations after around four and a half trillion calculations per person. Of course the real issue at this point is in what manner the calculations were calculated, but a calculation in itself is just as good as any other calculation, i.e. to calculate the calculated calculation's calculativity would be to
calculate oneself into a spiral of calculations, where the only proof of existence lies in the act of calculating, the progress would be to not get anywhere, except for the calculation of another calculation... Right and wrong about how a person reacted to a certain stimuli in the long run closed up around a normative truth, an average that was just as valid for the real reality as for the synthesized. That the computer had found after calculations was in short terms that the philosophical original thought that good evens out with evil, that white corresponds black, was true. For each person, the researchers had programmed the computers to always present that synthesized opposite of how each person was expected to act in some certain critical situations. If the computer weren't able to come up with an estimation, the specific person presumably have been able to brake a genetic code and thereby indicating in black and white how the human survival instinct could be conjured forth in some certain individuals but not in others. Afterwards the conclusions would be drawn out of these results, the staff were certain of achieving after 15 years of research. Under any circumstance whatsoever, nothing was to go wrong. For a long time the government during the forties and the fifties discussed whether a maneuver very much like this one was applicable. The technology and the governing governments. Military budgets hadn't been able to allow for the almost pseudo-scientifical experiment to take action. The last seven years the debate had been intensified on FaLo of how much utility the project was. Then at last the proper technology and politicians showed up. The purpose, to scientifically document the person's physical and psychological reactions during different degrees of stress, that was the proberstone the ministry of defense always had wanted to get answers to. The invisible debate that civilians would have had if they would have known of the affair, was of how the management of the experiment's staff weren't able to distinguish between experimental purposes and the killing of humans. The project had many sides to it. The researchers wanted to know the physiologically exact values of what the body produced during a two-week period of being constantly threatened to die. Psychologically, one hoped the 27 interviews those men who survived were to participate in, to find out exactly when the memory stopped functioning in relation to what situation each soldier was confronting. What hadn't fetched the scientist's interest of human defense mechanism was that of how the human reaction exactly looked like, when she was put into situations that proceeded in a faster tempo than she was able to cope with. Many experiences and psychological theories had been presented by scientists around the world each with their own bit of truth. The terms were numerous, "Warpseudosis," "survival instinct," "mental block," "killer instinct," "instant loss of memory," "Loyalty of the battle." Each idiom covering a different area with discrete content but with one factor in common, to not want to die. In the end the human was nothing but an animal with its natural, aggressive instincts. The fight was something that had followed throughout her evolution, and now it seemed even to have refined her aggressiveness a little. FaLo hoped for things to fall into position. They wanted to find the mother of this instinct of aggression. The science would finally perhaps find the answer to why some humans survived and others fell. It was a courtesy to not speak of the term "survival of the fittest," as it would be careened, that was obvious. The researchers wanted to see what it could take, and maybe through a subconscious self-communicating see how some individual re-created a stronger will to live than others.

In the dining hall 85 plates with cold oatmeal were put out on torn wooden tables. On the middle of the floor a single canteen of water stood on the grey-checkered floor. The hall was dark and cooled down. No one said anything to anyone. The silence cried out its anxiety over the heads of the disguised crew. No one wanted to argue with anyone. They knew they had to accept. Each bowl of porridge contained 105 microscopical metabolic devices. These self-combustioning readers were something completely new from the German microbiological science, that in co-operation with two Japanese medicin business-giants had been able to produce the hybride technically in their laboratories. Each set of 105 readers co-worked to compose complete and continous data of how some of the body's physiological activities were doing. A hypersensitive radar could interpret how the readers changed by the way the body changed. The porridge was the silent start of the maneuver. A medecinary staff of 251 persons began to time the 85 mens' individual mental statuses.
As Christian and the others left the dining hall they saw a sign in the dark, "walk towards the barracks." The situation resembled a parody no one at all, any time, seemed to have taken seriously. Each one of the men did they discover how a crisis situation began to arise. Several of them began to talk intensely with their friends, very imaginative. Some mumbled something to someone else only to look up at each other and then down into the snow again. Back at the barracks they discovered that the only thing that remained was their equipment. Everyone discerned their rucksack immediately. Christian found that all his stuff was there and so did everyone else. They were done with their preparations to go out in the morning. The skies were tared and to Christian it seemed in a strange way as if nothing extraordinary had happened or was about to happen. Everything was gloomily calm, while the storm raged outside. A couple of the men disconnected their GRU-Ss into parts for safety reasons. They cleaned the barrels of grease already at this point. The men were in the routines. The discipline came to the men in compact clusters and embalmed them for each minute that thundered by. No one lost concentration. All 85 were building up their will to fight quietly, meditatively as they had been taught. Within three hours and fifty-seven minutes a staff they didn't know existed would kick them out into the cold. Death was a fully logical parameter in the practical execution of the plan. Sure enough every participant would be feed the annual salary of a colonel, but of course money was one of the biggest scorns of them all at their families and an unknowing society. Breaking with the paragraphs in the the constitutional law of human rights, this military maneuver had become a power conspiracy between the governing strata of the nation. Some, very few, knew what disastrous crimes that feebly had been clubbed out through the last four year's upheaval negotiations. It had become a cracked china doll in parliamentary sessions as well as in the Government's offices and amanuensies. Big brother had finally in an obviously invisible way gotten the power over every leader involved. The affair was to hot of a potato. No one dared to stop the maneuver from happening. While at the same time the maneuver's scientifical potential completely new and for generations to come, invaluable. It was known, by the immense research that had been done, that the meeting of a philosophical abstract thinking and the concrete practical action not at all any longer would stay in the imaginative knowledge's cradle. The politicians were convinced by the internal scientists' seminars that silently had been arranged by the Farinolska hospital's neurological faculty in co-operation with FaLo's department Psychological Defense. All people involved in the affair, politicians as well as scientists had become exultated by the fact that it was possible to practically carry through what had started out as a philosophical idea. The experiment also had made the politicians aware of how the theoretical science was lightyears ahead in front of their own rigid situation of social democracy, decisionmaking and futureplanning. Some of the politicians in leading positions were amazed of how the science was able to utilize a computerized technology for quick and correct decisions. Some of those politicians really thought how a communication had started between the technology and the society. It was clean and fast without disturbing human emotions or feelings. Early both scientists and politicians had realized the timeless, incredible advantage the documentetion had the possibility of becoming. For the military staff of the maneuver it was as if to finally turn on the TV to watch their own, home arranged "World Championship in Survival."

It was halfpast nine. Christian froze a little of his feet. His gun had remained untouched, tucked close to his arm the way he always had had it when he was taking the field. No one could change their mind. Christian thought of how late he was giving a shit about getting up on that bus. It struck him that he didn't remember when he had gotten up on it. All of a sudden he'd just been sitting there. He thought he'd been an idiot. He was fooled. Christian discerned the last 24 hours, hour for hour. The busride. The busdriver. Captain Lindahl. The meeting with Elk and the others. The information at the ultramodern lecture hall. He realized how different his military service had been in comparison with others. Some guys he'd talked to, trained at the regiment in later years, hadn't done a fifth of all the stuff Christian talked about. Christian knew well how each annual hatch from another, but not one bastard had had four survival weeks in row. Asked for hours with cold water gushing at oneself. Bathing in tanks of cowextrements.
Christian wondered about those old commanders all being 50 years old or older. Christian couldn't drop his thoughts about the information. He thought he could buy it, unconditionally. "It was too good to not be true, and bad enough to fit with the equally bitter reality," Christian said to himself. "It's about life in a prisoncamp this time...or what?" Christian tried to finish up his contemplation on the cold concrete floor of the barrack. But again a researching alarmclock ticked. There were too many factors that he hadn't thought of earlier, but now lay uncovered, never questioned him or anyone else of the 84. It was so much a deal of perfection..." He felt sick. He the exactly same feeling he had had that day in front of the monitor some months ago, after his talk with his boss. The situation had made him wanting to throw up. The reality at that time had cut him into pieces just the way it did now. "The problem," was clear to Christian, "was of how safe and carefully every moment was executed by him at the squad." Christiansaw how each day with a mathematical precision had followed different but consistent patterns. There was no human factor of hassle in each period or detail of their 18 month long education. If there was hassle, it was planned. Then he realized he was getting close to paranoia. It was 11.18 PM and the military regiment was cleared of all personnel except for Christian and the 84 other people.

A file of Er.Ec.TION fighters had just taken off from a prepared country road, 50 miles away. Their single mission was to make a real close sniff, with afterburners on, above building 37a in the regiment's western area. The timing was important. They were not allowed to be off with more than seven seconds. 85% of the buildings' windows would be broken by the longitudinal pressure of soundwaves. Five armoured trucks rolled through the dark winternight. Searce barks was heard from inside the trucks. Angry, hungry dogroars that crystallized any human's blood. Hjalle lay down talking with Sixten. Elk was close to them. Christian heard him snoaring. It sounded as if he had a lot on his conscious. Then he got silent. Hjalle and Sixten didn't react until after twenty seconds or so, but nevertheless with a doubtless sight to each other. A sight they had in common, a sight that recalled memories of joy but mostly of horror. Anton's sudden silence alarmed their senses in a way they hadn't been alarmed for almost a decade. Their bodys started to produce adrenalin. It was always Anton that best could sniff a situation among the four men. If he got silent for more than ten seconds something hostile was about to happen, actually lethal in most cases.

"Major Lector, over."

"Major Lector here, over."

"Target sighted at 2 o'clock, two red lights, over." It took two seconds before an answer could be heard.

"Target confirmed... Positions." The airplanes were moving with a speed of Mach 1.1. The elven Linker-schaefer hounds from Schleswig-Holstein were quiet, as they had been trained. For safety reasons every dog had two keepers from a foreign police academy, with uniforms as black as the fur of the bloodhounds. They now stood outside the pansar trucks waiting, 250 yards from the barracks. The jawgrids of stainless steel were taken off. Now there were 33 important creatures waiting on the ground. The low height made for a harsh turbulence.

"Afterburners," the Major commanded. Two fireflames shot out behind the two black steelbirds.

"What?" Sixten said, "...what about it?"

"Hey Sixten, it has been eight years since he was monkeying us with that business," Hjalle hoarsely whispered back. "Ok. I can see your point. But what the hell. Why don't you just relax, huh? He's just napping. It was just something occasional, that stuff a decade ago."

"But damn it Hjalmar." Sixten peeped out from his despairing lungs. The two stared into each others eyeglases. They both knew, deepest in their hearts who was right. In that innermost nook that had been closed for eight years. The one that contained fear of the unknown. Now they were forced to leave the life as civilians. Their heartrate increased, as their adrenalin had been at a high level for a long time. They knew they had a couple of minutes. On the groundfloor the entrance was opened. The first dog followed by
its keepers stepped inside. Six seconds before the file passed above building 37a Christian looked
extremely alertly into the eyes of Hjalmar and then Sixten. His instinct brought him a certain amount of
years back in time. To the time with these guys at some mountain passage, someone being injured and
something like Anton having a broken left ski. The enemy could have been at 500 yards distance. In the
same way they had stared at each other then, they stared at each other now, in search for a solution. The
three turned towards Elk, that sleepily rubbed his eyes. As he let his arms fall down he met three pairs of
eyes that glimmed in the blue and cold moonlight.

"Well then it..." was all he said. Two fireflames lit up the whole hall. A half second later glass
pieces exploded into the hall like horizontal glassrain. The three men saw the flames and let them burn in
their pupils without even trying to turn around, or even close their eyes. The shock paralyzed. A guy who
lay just beneath one of the windows had glass falling all over him. It rinsed inside his shirt and larger ones
that pierced his clothes and into the body. Niclas Gabrielsson had a part of a pane of glass falling onto his
leg. His wound was as final as one could have expected of an heavy sharp edge of thick glass forcing
through a human tissue. Christian threw himself at him with his hand digging in his right leg-pocket and
saw how Niclas two closest friends had done the same. Christian saw that the wounded was being taken
care of. He saw that no one was left alone. In the hallway outside the hall, the foreign police officers let go
Attack!, Attack!" where upon the two doors of the ward-room were slit-up by the massive weight of four
animal bodies. The barking roared through the whole building like an alarm. Christian stood up and had a
relatively good position saw how a man standing next to the door had been swept away, like dust for a
broom, by two dogs that wanted blood and death. In the twinkie of his eye, Christian saw something that
he was too late to react upon. His decision about what to do never came. The dog jumped up at him with
opened jaws aiming for his throat. Christian finally stooped and both creatures ended up in a pile on the
floor. In the background he heard how a bark was silenced and exchanged for a howl. Christian got a hold
of his beltknife and pulled it up front. He saw how his wrist disappeared inbetween two dog-jaws. His
thick shirt made it impossible for the dog's mouth to wrap things up and nip it off. In desperation Christian
let his left arm reach around the beast's head to take the knife from his left hand. In a struggle that lasted
for a couple of seconds the two bodies were twisted by pain. Christian stabbed furiously again and again
into the the body of the dog. It collapsed on the floor with blood oozing out from several cuts into its lung
and heart areas. Its howl was silenced. The animal was dead. When Christian looked around himself he
saw how a group of men were trying to tear a dog loose from Niclas Gabrielsson's face, but too late. A
second later the dog had three knives in its body each one stabbing deadly. When Christian finally saw
Niclas' face it lacked jaws. The human was definately dead from severe losses of blood and the dog's
furious attack on his face and throat. For another thirty or forty seconds, it kept on, the same wild and
obscure mix of sometimes attacking, sometimes suffering dogs and humans. The dogs were killed one by
one. Two OSS-uniformed soldiers entered the ward room and fired with balls into the ceiling. They were
screaming hysterically.

"Out! Out! Away! Away! GET OUT FROM THIS BUILDING!" No one wanted to believe this.
Sixten raised his GRU-5 towards one of the foreign policemen. He was answered by a bullit next to his left
boot. Sixten carefully lowered his eyes and became very stiffened in his motions. Some men screamed out
their anger. Everyone stared at Niclas, lying like a victim for something unreal, something completely
unreal.

The nightmare had begun. Two men were now instantly shocked. One man cried as he was forced
out from the wardroom by four policemen. No one dared to think any longer. They all thought that
something had gone wrong. Elk knew that something had gone madly wrong. The screaming guy was
silenced by a bullit through his thigh. In military terms the wound was considered single track fleshwound.
To the guy it was a deal of not anymore being able to move. Everyone grabbed their equipment and flew
out in the dark in the night. Just like running to one's own backyard the skis were all lined up as they had
been left, as if forgotten, as if no one wanted them. A track was lit by torches taking off from where the skis were racked up. After twenty seconds or something the eighty-four men were on the track, dead silent following the light from the torches. After miles there were no torches anymore. The storm had calmed down but was still furious with its 9-11 Beauforts. It was warmer, -15°C, however the head-wind made it colder, Christian thought. He had ended up far behind Elk and his other mates. It was about twenty men behind him. The track had been prepared for safety to make the test-humans clear the military area as soon as possible. At FaLo the atmosphere was tenacious. They had expected deaths but not already in the beginning of the maneuver, that was again in the as they thought. It was much too late for both sides to put an end to this maneuver. It was bound to happen. The staff felt it as if the science now was very, very far away. They had to accept whatever tricks reality played them. After another mile of skiing the men met a sign. "Open your envelope of mission" it said. Christian saw that it was a wellmade sign of wood with a pole of steel. It seemed expensive. He wandered about the alarmpost that wouldn't ring, was going to. They split up into their groups. Circles of groups were formed. Everyone searched their group. Someone that saw a familiar face in the dark, cried a little bit too loud. Out from the pines teargas was launched into the group.

The storm destroyed much of its effect. The confused men were forced to split up. People found each other but immediately an OSS-soldier shot with real bullets toward the sign and that sent away the 83 men away away like rockets. The eighty-fourth person, the guy with the fleshwound, died from exhaustion due to his last couple of hours' extensive loss of blood.

Lysnedok, close to Jeknedok's mountain range, was quickly cleared by white-dressed clusters of soldiers taking off in all directions. Elk took the lead as usual. For the first time he didn't complain about the weather, or exclaimed his characteristic analysis of how to swear swearwords in order to make the weathergods calm down. That was always an evergreen in the group. It always sheered them up a little. Now, however no one wanted to hear of that game anymore. It would bring them straight back to the civil, peaceful, happy world. To abide to Elk's word game meant a direct mental danger to life, as it would cause anxiety, it was an anchor of truth to stay in the reality. At this point no one dared to think reality, to use logic. They were trapped. No one wanted to think of what had happened. To think of what would happen. Now all they wanted to do was to ski in silence, digest every event that had happened the last twelve hours, or maybe the last hour, or even perhaps just trying to hang on. They were all working with a mental block. The deal was to be able to file one's feelings in a way that made sense.

"But now, was anyone to do it? Or even, why should we?" Christian asked himself while he was trying to do the best he could in track in the snow. "It's a danger to life to repress and at the same time one could, if one cried, let the anxiety take over the whole business. Then you'd be in the squirel's wheel, a no man's land, that strait-waist coat that only someone from outside could pull you out of. Earlier it always had been the three people that could help the fourth." Things cleared up a little for Christian. "Now, we're all wrecks." he thought intensely. "All we need is time." At FaLo a wild unexpected discussion broke out whether or not they should raisen the tempo step by step. Theories entered and left their minds. After one and a half hours of negotiations they agreed upon getting full attention to the mental breakdown through the combination of physical exhaustion through dehydration with the confrontation of airborne forces and infantry vehicles ahead of them and from behind.

"Man, did Elk take off!" Sixten thought. It was as the guys were skiing for the first or second time in their life. They were fast but wabbling. No one skied a mile without falling into the dry, icecold snow. Elk had gotten really scared when he'd seen Christian fall. Everyone was hysterically afraid of someone's showing the least sign of incapability. It was a double nervegame. To show one's feelings killed the moral for fighting. Every person trusted the other ones, convinced of his own inferiority. The skiing went on while a wardevil drove their minds crazy. Each listened to the silence outside their white wind jackets. The only thing that was heard was the dry and furious caressing of eight tared skis on snow falling from a
snowstorm. It blew in spite of the fact that they were situated deep in a cold heart of the nation's northern
spruceforests. Everyone heard the pulsating heartbeats of horror everyone carried inside. The staking of the
skipoles whipped the snow like death rattles, calling for help. Elk, Hjalte, Sixten and Christian sweated,
cried and bled together right now. After two miles southwest they stopped for a check on the map.

"Torchlight?" Elk said shortly to Hjalte both being exhausted. Hjalte bowed down and unburdened
himself of the loaded and very heavy green military rucksack. He gave a long angry eye to Elk as a
response to his request. Apparently he wanted to playmate Elk chess for a while. He just did it for fun, like
a little stuck up answer to Elk's desperation. Hjalte handed out four Halolight to each member of the group.

"Thank You, Hjalte." Elk said. Christian tore out the map that unwrapped itself like a pseudo
scientific document in the midst of devilish stormwinds and lashing snowflakes. They looked for
keypositions behind a thicket meadow that somewhat covered them. The Suorta Swamp lay in front of
them. The mountain massives rose like sleeping hobgoblins' stomachs farthest away in the horizon,
struggling against the roars of the stormjaws. The snow didn't stick to anything, it just tossed away like the
blood in an aorta artery. The terrain was dark except for a scarce light from a half moon that sometimes
pierced through the stormcloud.

"This is an arctic inferno." Christian thought silently but amazed.

"All right!" Elk said sarcastically.

"Halo right!" Hjalte said expectantly like a TV-dealer.

"Hell right!!" Elk cried out loud. He was hysterical as he made the discovery on the map.

"Damn." Christian said to himself. He and Hjalte looked at their leader. They were turned away
from him because of the skis and compensated by twisting their upper bodies. They could clearly see the
agony in Elk's face expression. But it wasn't so much of that stuff in it. In the chill and the snowy wind it
was very difficult to shape the face to something expressively looking pretty much the same in any
situation. It had a comical side to it. Now both of them tried to define those small details that distinguished
eventual joy from eventual desperation. It was always as uncomfortable to get that shock of a nail of either
horror or happiness, hammered into oneself. They tried and tried but even at one yards distance they
couldn't see one sign of joy or anything else in their boss' face. Elk stared down into the upper fifty
thousands speechless. The more Hjalte and Christian looked at Elk, the more they saw of emptiness,
something quiet, something bad.

"We'll have to go back 4 miles on the other side of Jehekod," Elk said as he compared the Arctic
star with the compass direction to check that it was all-right. After having stood like that for a long and
sturdy while, he looked down into the map again. "A four miles northnortheast." he repeated, assured of
his correctness. It sounded like a murmur even if he spoke with a loud voice. Elk wrapped up and tucked
the map into his right leg pocket as he overviewed the swamp. "Where's Sixten?" He looked at Christian
questioningly.

"Takes a piss." The three looked at each other and later towards Sixten who stood ten yards away.
They could see the beam snapping in the wind.

"It's a mighty storm." Christian said.

"Well, you take map, god damnit!" Elk said expeditiously and took off to join Sixten.

"Poor fellow..." Hjalte said to Christian.

"Well I wouldn't be the creep to blame him for anything." the answer came from Christian while he
looked at the two, lined up in front of the little spruce. He looked at Hjalte again as if to say something,
but in turn he saw that Hjalte was about to say something.

"Well..." he said thoughtfully looking up and around a little in the surroundings. The thoughts
exchanged each other in a rapid tempo.

"All that matters is to keep the mouth shut." Hjalte said while he seemed to ponder at something
perhaps completely different. He seemed to concentrate on the situation as a whole.

"I guess it's just a hell." he said smiling at Christian and then turned his head towards Sixten that
came skiing.

"I guess that's what it is," Christian said mockingly to Hjalle.

"What'cha mean, that's what it is?"

"What was that?" Sixten said as he stopped in front of them, wondrous like hell. "What did you say?" he repeated the question towards Christian.

"We've skied in the wrong direction," he answered.

"Yeah. Elk just told me." No one said anything until Elk had gotten back. Even though no one of them wanted to get lost in a helvetic snow storm, they appreciated Elk for telling them straight out. They could still have been lost without knowing heads or tails. They could have been four miles off, or even five or six completely wrong miles off. What was remarkable was how the human error broke the macabre atmosphere that had held the men in a paralyzing deadlock. They had been chased away and now they had just simply gone a little bit too much westwards. No one dared to think of Niclas Davidsson's death at the ward hours ago.

As Elk came back, everyone stared at each other. No one knew for sure what to say. The time passed during a half minute of dense silence. No one dared their thought into the last five hours' grotesque hell. No one knew or trusted their own ability of getting out, out of the hell of wonders knocking on their minds.

"What's happening?" Elk said shortly.

"...because of the maneuver's nature we are unable to inform you why we are executing this maneuver..." it echoed in Christian.

"They couldn't inform us. They said we weren't supposed to know why they executed the project," Christian said sighing.

"That's right!" Hjalle said. "It was Lindahl's words." Hjalle said what he had to say, shrtly and concisely, yet he shook his head. "But why?"

"What do you mean, WHY??" Sixten said. "HAVE WE EVER BEEN TOLD WHY IN ANY GOD DAMN MANEUVER!? HUH??" he shouted. "Have we?"

His exhaustion began to pester his emotions. They all knew it was temporarily. He was, sad enough to say, the voice of the gang. He had reacted to a sick reality that all indeed were confronting face-to-face. They all agreed upon his call in silence. It was a mourn. It didn't really matter what he said. Someone had to say something. But it was a mourn. Everyone knew it was a mourn. Some seconds slipped through their tired consciousnesses.

"Niclas Davidsson is dead." Christian thought out loud.

"It's completely incredible. It's just such a fucking disaster." Elk said as if he needed a shrink, but no one knew if they would be able to put up with bullshitting around. All talk was just bullshit. No one knew about how the maneuver was to continue. They were now a cluster of rigid nerve threads without any hold or end. Everything was locking up for them.

"We're also going to be..." Sixten said to Hjalle like a child. He had lived a fairly calm life with his sanitary firm for over eleven years. He'd managed to take a Ph.D in economy and had seven employees. He thought of that those people still were hired, yet he had the feeling that that wasn't the case. Not any more. He'd grown up in the Main City during the eighties and had gotten his career rolling during the nineties. "The education was like a yoke. If one didn't carry this very yoke of life, the surroundings thought that one didn't have any buckets at all. It was a yoke. A show," he thought gloomily. He knew he'd done a pretty decent job with his yoke, adorned it six kids and a wife. He had gotten that house on the west coast that he had wanted. He had a complete metallurgic workshop in lieu to his house at home. His family's traditions of iron and cupper forgery he had inherited as a knowledge from his father and grandfather. He had finally been able to realize what had been a dream for many years, the small but well equipped hobbylocal. People liked a person who knew how to keep up an old tradition. Sixten knew his metallurgic craft. Now he
wondered how Margareta wasn't knowing at all what was to happen with him, or what shit she had to blow into the minds of their kids.

"...in two weeks, darling..." Sixten said to himself.

"Of course you're right Sixten. Of course there's a probability that even we will be killed like Niclas. But we're still alive. We're still relatively free wolves. If you could just quit howlin'," Elk said like a commander, yet feeling pretty empty himself. In his heart he swallowed deeply to just let the muscle beat on, with bleeding wounds of compassion. Sixten looked at Elk faithfully. They seemed to have an agreement, as if to accept one another's psyches. They tried to be courteous but it was hard. Damn hard.

"What the hell are you saying, you little Recruiting Commander?" Eyes were moving from Elk back towards Sixten that had opened his mouth. "Don't give us that satanic bull! You heard me!? Don't give us the idea of it! You creep!" he yelled through the chill and storm that had fallen outside their discussion. This saliva lay like a thin white line in his lower corner of his mouth. The Elkman just looked at him. They had been skiing for a while and had reached shore line of the swamp. Shaded from wind by giant spruces they simply made a stop.

"What the hell do you think the commanders should be doing?" he said as he nipped of a piece of chocolate from his bar. He talked again.

"Do you think that it's some cadets that want to pursue a bunch of innovative ideas they have about new ways of educating National Army's hunter division? Do you think it is Lindahl that has been sitting at home drinking, certain of his aptitude as the ideal of how to run the profession in leadership? The Elk was straightforward and cold when he put down Sixten from the civilian pedestal. Sixten was still in the world of caviar and sick income taxations. Elk really took the bull by its horns, and he gripped even harder as he saw the tears coming from the cheeks of Sixten Christian noticed how all of Sixten's spirit and courage just disappeared through a little hole in the ground. Hjalle looked at Elk beggingly as if to give both him and Sixten some pity, some mercy.

"Save the powder guys. Let's just stay alive," he said. He wished Elk could stop his truth-telling so that his own little pearl of belief and hope for a continuation of his life could shine a little bit more bright. Hjalle looked at Christian and then at Elk. Elk moved in turn his eyes towards Christian. All that could be felt was fear. Sixten bowed down his face in his hands that folded around it. Sixten realized how he wasn't able to take the bull by its horns. He was afraid because the world had passed his mind, and he was sinking like a mental wreck, deeper and deeper into his squat.

They entrenched below the branches of the spruce they stood next to, a really big one. Elk spoke up.

"...it's obvious that if Arvidsson and Schwartz is there it's not the standard annual maneuver. They're doin' something else. Something like an experiment. Why did Davidsson die? Why did Davidsson die...?" he shook his head almost for himself. Christian asked him about the envelope of their mission.

"The envelope?" he repeated the question since he thought he hadn't been heard. But it had. Christian tried to catch the sight of Elk and finally got hold of it.

"The order is thrown away."

"Listen up damn it! I said that I wanted the envelope containing a description of what tasks we're to execute, and the coordinates that tell us where, what with one word is called order!" Christian said in a slow but killing way. Nothing happened. "Are you deaf...? I said that I wa..."

"I said that we don't have any order, we don't have any coordinates! Is that clear?!" Elk scream at him from one yards distance. "We haven't gotten one direction."

The only thing that was heard was the wind. After a while it teared down a pile of snow from the branch of the spruce they were sitting beneath. It landed next to them with a dull thud. After that noise nothing was heard, except for a dead silence no one could do anything about. They were scared to death. Elk had to many threads to keep track of at the same time," Christian thought. "He could have risked their lives." Christian said to himself. He was angry. They were all tied up by his words, what he had in his
head. "He had too much of that hidden information he didn't want to say because it was more prestigious. It was his right as a commander." Christian worried as he saw the real nervousness of Elk. He talked with a calm voice to Elk.

"Anton."

"Yeah?"

"Tell me what they gave you." Christian said like a father demanding the truth from his son. To Christian it didn't matter who was in charge, or who should be in charge, as long as the right questions were asked within the group. He realized that as no one including himself know anything about their situation, it demanded a commando, whatever kind by whomever. The worst thing he knew was to demand things from people. He just asked the question the way it was to a more and more powerless Elk.

"It wasn't any usual properly written out sheet of paper that we used to get. It was a laserprint-out that said that we should "go to Jeknedok's northern declivity, a little bit east of the usual meeting ground. I thought of Bellevuuri Swamp that we always have trained around and that always have been our base camp in almost everyone of our campsours. At Bellevuuri I realized my mistake. We were at Halesjaari and consequently we now have to get to Bellevuuri by the northeast side. I thought of using Sirka's track."

"So they meant Jurka's meadow as the usual meeting ground?" Christian cheeked with Elk, who confirmed with a nod.

"That's odd." Hjalle said.

"We've only been there...what is it...?" He asked anyone.

"Four times." Christian said thoughtful.

A very, very distant snapping was heard. The group got silent.

"That is, for sure that is automatic rifles at about 800 yards distance," Sixten said cocksurely. "Or maybe 400 yards in this storm," he added. When he looked down into the snow he knew he'd made a fool of himself. Christian looked at him.

"How far do you really think it is, Sixten?"

"Well, actually it's really impossible to know for sure, but at least with the storm...gosh!...I don't know. At least with the present direction of the wind... 500 to 600 yards distance. The sound isn't very stable...the wind pushes the soundwaves away, but that's what I believe."

"What? Believe in what?" Elk said harshly and irritatedly.

"In at least 575 yards," Sixten peeped.

"Continue." Christian said to Elk.

"Yes. What we all know..." The snapping was taken over by a clatter. It was tanks. Several, five of them rolled over the swamp towards at where they were situated. Big lights searched where they were hidden. Then Christian saw how the three last tanks sharply broke the formation and continued towards the west.

"It was a disgusting and sick vehicle." Christian hated within himslef. Sixten cried in panic and no one did anything to try to get him quiet, his suffering was to deep and real for that.

At 425 yards distance the tanks began fire by the light which actually was on a spruce pretty close to Christian and the others.

"This is murder." Hjalle screamst to the others as the grenades hit only 20 yards next to them. Even though their distance now was at 400 yards getting closer, the thick wood terrain would slow them down considerably. Elk seemed to think of something like that but he didn't make a decision. They waited as they knew they had to pass through an open little area, as they had a mountain wall behind them. Christian took off towards a spruce and slowly Elk and Hjalle stood up. They exchanged sights and became worried. They stared at Christian and then at the machines' roaring thunders. From a distance they heard Christian call at them.

"Come on!" Then Hjalle took off, muttering and mumbling.

"Captain Lindahl. I'm gonna live to make you die." Elk said emptily of rage, as he saw how
Christian waited for him. They got out on the meadow, knowing that it was eighty yards in which they might die. Out in the middle of it they heard how the first tank entered the meadow, and continued straight through as if the trees had never been there. When Christian turned around he saw how light from inside one of them enlightened a man from beneath that stood on its hatch with a pair of redeye binoculars. In a couple of seconds everyone knew it would say bang.

"Leave it!" he said to Sixten that was trying to get something out from a pocket.

"Let's go!" Elk said rapidly.

"Let's get the damn hell out of here, damn it!" Hjalle cried in a whisper straight into Sixten's ear as he twisted the guy's head towards the tank that was about to kill them. They exploded over the last twenty yards and to every man of the group, it felt like an eternity. When they were going to get by the first spruce the man in the hatch very, very late saw them due to the storm. He yelled and cried as if he had caught his first fish in the North American Lake Superior or something. Christian and the guys made it mentally clear that they in a couple of seconds would either die or stay alive. They understood that all their chances to live were exchanged for risks of dying. In the same second the shot hang in the air. It hit a tree thirteen yards from Hjalle.

They could hear someone yelling to someone. For each ten yards the group got away from the tank, the feeling of survival, escaping the doom was strengthened. Each spruce was like an abstract proof of still being alive. They felt it as if yet no one had managed to find the off-switch to their lives.

After another halfmile the unity was total. It was scared out of proportions, however alive. They didn't any longer believe in that order. Something had gone terribly wrong and it was hard to abide to that normal, sound and logical way of thinking. They decided after a quick look on the map to head for Buurna Swamp west of Ellesvouri. They took that path as it allowed for sudden changes where a quick and safe escape was needed. Actually they didn't have much of a choice. After three hours of following the edge of the wood they finally got sight of the familiar ravine that lay like an navel in the middle of these wintery and warlike fields of bloodthirst. They came to another giant spruce and escaped beneath its large branches.

After ten minutes they had started a fire and heated up lemonade soup mixed with DextrosolSuper, which was Hjalle's special receipe to fastly get back in shape. He tore out a plastic bag with dried meet of reindeer.

"I had planned to have this for myself," he unlace the bad and put next to the fireplace. "Oh well," he said quietly while poking around in the fire of the fireplace. A slippery cold horned owl of death had settled down on his shoulder. Hjalle was imprinted by a kind of gawkyness no one had noticed yet. His mood had changed. He just leaned towards the fire, dazed. Christian saw the tears falling from his cheek and he thought of how little anyone really could do for anyone else in this odd situation. Surely enough Christian knew how important it was to take care of each other. To talk. But they wouldn't get rid of the present situation in the way it was. It wouldn't bring them back to the Main City or the Village Town or National Pagues, Cultural affairs. Elk explained that he hated Lindahl. A day earlier he had said something about "replacing Lindahl's vital parts." They all sensed how those words, compared with his present, were so much of a civilian's way of talking, so virgin. All they was thinking of was of how wrong the maneuver had gone. They were disgusted by all whys. Christian thought of how the commanders hadn't cared so much for creating motivation and interest to participate in the mission. Christian reflected upon how it didn't seem to be a necessity. A little bit insecure but pretty much up Christian thought that there might be a grain of truth in his reasoning. He questioned Elk about the order again. The maneuver was out of bounce that was clear. For fifteen quiet and effective minutes Elk drained his brain about everything that mattered concerning their order. As Christian spoke out to the unit his ideas were thinking of what the unit's destiny was doomed to lead up to. He reasoned and it was a struggle to make them listen. Christian wondered why, but soon realized it was because they didn't want to listen. "I don't give them any illusions
about the reality..." he thought and his conviction was
strong. Elk gave up and swore himself loose as usual and all of a sudden they all listened.
"I don't think anything has gone wrong." Christian swept his words into the dusty discussion.
"That nothing has gone wrong?" Hjalje said astonished. He blared at Christian. "What about
Niclas Davidsson? What about the bloodhounds and the tanks with sharp ammunition? That's according
to plans, you think?" He paused really trying to scare Christian. For once he would let the silence speak to his battle
compatriote like an honest law paragraph. Like a common sense. Hjalje knew that it was matter of some
few sweet seconds before Christian would come to his senses and trust him. Then after those seconds he
got scared. He realized how he had bet his single belief on a card that was not one of the most waterproof
ones. He had suggested that Christian's self-confidence and fear
would work in the his head and against himself. Now Hjalje realized how wrong he was about Christian.
They stared at each other like two stubborn teenagers. After five seconds the situation was interesting. Too much time had rinsed out in dry sand, deactivating the topic, yet, enough for them to prove that it matched to both. Christian waited until he saw that Hjalje was listening.
"Maybe it hasn't gone that well for our maneuveral commanders," staggered on in the cathedral of silence. "Maybe not for Lindahl, but to Arvidsson, Schwartz and worst of all to FaLo everything is just according to schedule. Christian's sight was as firm as grey stone in water. Hjalje froze to a little ice-cube and fell down on his padding, behind the protective and mysterious fire. Even this was what Christian thought he saw, it didn't automatically prove that he was right or that Hjalje was wrong.
"Hey, hey just slow down...a little bit." Elk said quite fast and commandingly. "Let's not get excit..." He was cut off.

"For once couldn't you just shut? Now when Christian know what he is talking about!" Sixten talked with inexplicable focus towards Elk.
"And how did you get involved..?" Elk said to Sixten. He his mistake until it was to late.
"Well Mr Boss. I got on the bus in Little Swamp." Sixten thought he didn't have to say anything
more.

Christian remained in a neutral pose. He was leaning a little bit into the fire to be mingled around in the fire. He was thinking and the others watched his brain activity with a somewhat blunt attention.
"The best is just to face it. This is real."
"As if we haven't so far...?" Hjalje said irritatedly.

"No we haven't." Christian said shortly. He sighed deeply but nevertheless calm. "We haven't." he repeated as if to establish an already well beaten up atmosphere. He continued.
"We aren't if we aren't planning ahead. Not if we don't take the situation as it is." His voice clingled in the stormy winternight. It clenched them. All four sat like mice around a couple of flames somewhere on the edge of a deep spruce jungle. He took off his cap and drove the hand through his sweaty hair. "We don't have a choice." They realized how they had been so afraid they had lost all will concentrate on teamwork.

They had only been thinking of their own life. In their individual fear they had looked for answers deep in their own zeroed conscious. No one had wanted to accept the situation the way it was making what was just about to become a lethal mistake. So, here they were just welcomed into the world of war, where the self was erased to make the person a link of something greater. Christian was baldered with how even more mad everyone of them should have been, not knowing who had pressed the start button. Silently he realized how little compassion there actually had been by their educators, only satisfied when they saw all bullets in the bull's eye, not asking if they had learnt anything, not getting any real reaseurement of whether the soldiers knew what they were doing. It didn't seem to matter to them whether the soldiers knew what they were doing. It didn't seem to matter to them whether he himself or any other of the former 84 men
reacted on the lack of logic in certain aspects of their military education. Christian didn't expect things to be all that clear, that was part of the skill of handling situations like the one they were in. Christian thought of
all those strange people that had asked them questions and that had ran around with print-outs of their physical conditions. They were told they were making a comparison with elite swimmers and cross-country skiers to see how they could improve the training. Christian thought of how great they had felt when they were told that their training was just as hard as the elite swimmers'. It had been a high but he saw how it couldn't have been anything else than a big lie. Christian thought of how it must be a governmental deal. They were the rabbits in some kind of experiment run by the absolute headquarters. He got mad of how little consent he had for the Nation's parliament and of how their situation was a perfect example of how this parliament knew to control humans. Not only their lives, but also their fate.

"We're the rabbits...is that what you're saying?" Sixten said as if he had read Christian's mind.

"Yes, partly that perhaps..." Christian looked out through a chink in branch to see the snowflakes pushed away by winds. He saw how some solitary birchtwigs were being torn to and from in the howling wind. Something within him was rotten he felt. His decisions weren't decisions any more. His feelings weren't feelings anymore, but results for some hungry unseen, hidden science he knew he didn't know 1% of.

"Why don't you do anything?" He thought within himself silently. He knew all of a sudden how he wasn't anything but an idiom tucked into some treatise no one would listen or even less understand. Like a torch he existed only to be burnt for to shed some light for a blind science.

"Practically there's no such source of information that makes for a foundation of logical conclusions or even less a logical reasoning." Elk sitting with legs tucked under arms received three surprised sights that wondered from where that philospher or perhaps business planner had showed up. "Christian is right." Something in Elk told him that communication was really what was important in their situation, that was nothing but a crisis. He remembered the words from Dave at Aaron Invest, "right information from the beginning." Something told him that truth in this very moment came from that Christian man with sweaty hair in front of him. "Speak out Christian." he said.

"I've got nothing to add. There's nothing more."

"But!" Sixten said, who had began to shiver was chattering his teeth. "For God's sake, you can't quit now Christian. Damn it Christian don't you get that? We're here in front of you." Christian felt that sickening Scientology Church-feeling oozing up again, exactly the way it had came to him earlier. It was abominable to him.

"What am I supposed to say? What am I supposed to do that I knew was the Truth? What's right from ther beginning?" his loud thoughts puzzled him. The compulsorily thoughts were igniting in him. His brain was exploding. Instead of looking for false answers through the covetous eyes of power of action, courage and intuition for how to survive he just shrugged his shoulders like the tired soldier he was. He knew what their next 48 hours were going to like. Then, that topic time tricked his mind and inspired him. It was a joke that came and left the way it wanted, in time as well as out of time. It was an abstract human invention substantiallyizing a division now and then. It created values.

"The power of the game isn't the player's. It is the puck's." Christian said to the group. "The deal is to take every minute as it comes. To re-evaluate our selves and our situation. To take away all the self-value and importance of our own being until there's nothing left. First then we've got the right cards. First then, one can act." Christian made the men understand. He knew fairly well how hazardous it would be to play up a false philosophy to oneself. To push things to much, he knew was to sign a contract with the devil. To expect too much. In fact you shouldn't expect anything. He knew he only had to be right once. Christian thought that their situation must be driven towards a certain direction. It must be patterns that it follows that they hadn't seen yet. Already from the first sketch on the drawing desk of negotiations, a philosophical thesis must have been initiated to be pursued all the way to the practical execution.

"Ok." Christian said in a somewhat insecure but pretty much confident tone. "We have to see our life without any helping hand. Without the explanations of a philosophical lenz. Neither philosophy nor anything else can help us focus or expose correctly the complete truth. To help us see what really is going
on. We have to concentrate on the picture the way it is. We’re not the camera or the photographer anymore. We are parts, the constituents of a sick constellation of new, completely grotesque parts of a philosophy that we’ve never seen put together before. My idea is that we are the picture. A rough draft. There is no reason for us to look for answers to why we are here now or why Niclas Davidsson has been killed. From a practical sense it would be equal to committing suicide to look ahead and try to forget what has happened, the way our human life has taught us. We’re in the situation of becoming more primitive human beings. We want because of our stress, to listen to our emotional signals. It makes us disoriented, as we begin to concentrate more on what’s going on for the moment. Consequently to make the body function, our psyche doesn’t allow us to be digested immediately meanwhile staying alert for new sensations. During certain conditions like these we’re in now, therefore our conscious is forced to make a choice. The maneuver should accordingly be a deal about that matter. To find an insufficiency perhaps and to derive it. In various amounts we’re all a part of that insufficiency. Every human carries weaknesses. I would say that our psyche blocks us in our everyday world from having a total contact with primary actions, and gives us space to believe that we’ve tackled our problems. As our senses connects to both our conscious we never do have and never will have 100% control of our emotions and reactions to our environment. The unconscious is like water, it acts like a mirror reflecting upon, Whatever is before it. It can't be polluted. It can have many faces, sometimes tumultuous, sometimes calm. Any matter that falls into the pond of unconscious moves differently, it doesn't get about like things are in the reality. Just like the tide, both the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious find their own level. Just like boiling spaghetti with the lid closing tightly around the pot, the water needs more space when it's heated. Finally a minute, perhaps only a second will come to us when the load of experiences boils over and our shadow gets out from even the collective unconscious. Then our body has a psychological crisis where too many discrepancies are active between unconscious and conscious and the human tries to live as if nothing has happened. The return of repressions. This maneuver is to hyperactivate and distort these two processes. To give us as much shit to find out specifically when we give up, and why.” Christian was frightened as if he had totally blew it. He thought he really had screwed up and lost their attention. He couldn't understand from where all his words came from. They were knowledge. He hoped they wouldn't care about proportions, but more of contents.

"Consequently you're saying that we've been educated falsely? You want us to give a shit about what they've taught us about survival in coldness without food?" Hjalte asked. He seemed disappointed.
"Sorry if I knocked you over with words."
"No. Keep talking. I mean we like what you're talking about," Sixten said totally asbord by some outer para- psychological part of himself. "I like it anyways." he added.
"I just developed a reasoning."
"But Christian," Elk said. "I agree with Sixten but...what the hell are we supposed to say? Can we tell you, you're wrong? We can't say anything about the truth in your story." Elk talked with a bitter voice, however without wanting to command.
"No...no you can't say anything. But..." Christian looked at his friends that had began to smile faintly.
"What?" Sixten said as he laughed a little.
"Well..." Christian searched into the faces that were gathered around the glow in the fireplace. The group had tied up the spirit completely. All fear was gone.

While sitting there the snow fell tighter and tighter outside. The wind decreased more and more. Soon the winterlandscape would change as the white magic veiled the grey trivia. After one hour hardly any wind could be heard. The snowfall slowly broadened its dry and infertile web. It was cold. Christian wondered what Lindahl was doing.

A young man in a darkgreen suit exited a room with a diagram that fluttered in his hand. He
seemed worried. The officer hastily disappeared through the stern mountain passage way to another room ten yards further away. He stood silent as of fear mixed with a courteous devotion. When he'd gathered himself he knocked on the door.

"Enter!"

"GeneralColonelCommander Schwartz! Information verifies that the suspects about group 7 have fallen out to our disadvantage," the officer said as he immediately handed over the diagram to Schwartz. He studied it during a couple of seconds. His expression showed concentration. The reading seemed to make him bitter. He stood up.

"What square?"

"I work in the medical dep..."

"I don't give a god damn if you work with medicin. What square?"

The officer looked at GeneralColonelCommander.

"...eh." he said.

"Do you have bad ears?" Schwartz roared half a yard from the officer and immediately ran out from the room. As he entered the hallway, to elder men in white coats exited the same room that the officer had come from just a minute earlier. They had several diagrams in their hands. The GeneralColonelCommander stopped five yards from them. The professors searched in his sight. Schwartz stood with his legs wide apart, hands on hip.

"What?!"

"Group seven are bouncing..." The scientist quieted, as the younger of them took over.

"I'm afraid we have to inform of group seven's interesting lack of data..."

"Speak so that a man understands!"

"The best thing would probably be..."

"Here I'm the one who makes the decisions. What is it that you want?" The two men looked at the tall military person in desperation. The young officer came slowly walking with his diagram in the hallway. When the officer passed Schwartz, Schwartz nipped from him a second time. He looked up at the professors clearly more thoughtful. He became quiet. The elder white coat began to talk.

"Come with us. Hall A." Their eyes met as if they had a hard time understanding or accepting each other. Then they took off into the corridors in the mountain. When they had reached the observatory they walked in.

"What's happening?" Schwartz asked his two colleagues as they were switching on monitors.

"What seems to be very evident is that of person B in group seven. For unknown reasons 89 of his readers either read absolute normal values or never got started. Something seems to be wrong with his personality program. It is as if he changes by ways that neither we nor...

"...ATEL hasn't quite yet figured out," his colleague.

"How much memory is needed for a virus-detect?"

"Enough." both answered almost in unison.

"But...what's going on?" Schwartz asked in last attempt.

"But don't you get... Doesn't the GeneralColonelCommander see how the codes already are broken?" Schwartz turned around and walked away a couple of steps.

"Damn." he muttered while standing in his position.

Bang it said next to Christian. As he turned around he saw the smoke coming out from the barrel that slowly was lowered. Hjalle looked with bloodshot eyes through his Lectroscope. The temples throbbed of as frenzied pulse that didn't want to slow down. He stood up and almost hit the lowest branch of the tree with his head. He looked for a place to grab a handle, constantly searching with his tired and hungry sight towards the left. He saw how an elkdeer's crown pierced up into the sky next to an steamingly warm body.
Above a red area of blood had stained the rock behind it.
"What the hell are you doing?" he screamed at Elk.
"Oh... I'm just shooting elk," Elk said.
"But what about the commanders!? The Enemy? Perhaps that was The Mistake!!?"
"Uh uh. Not me." His sight looked behind and was met by a little audience of three pairs of eyes. He disappeared out from the spruce and latched the skis to his boots. The man glid frustratingly over three feet of freshly fallen snow. It was dusk and the landscape didn't quite have contours yet. After a minute Elk could be seen stooping towards the animal to flay it. He probably made some good flesh-choices. Five minutes later he was back to the spruce.
"Get out of the spruce. Clear the spruce! Now!" He screamed low and harshly. Sixten peeped out with his eyes and when he saw the desperation in Elk's eyes he grabbed his stuff and got out of the tree. Christian and Hjalle followed.
"What's the matter?" Hjalle said just the way he always had, very casually.
"Ruben Persson, Klinten and two other men are lying over there, freezed." He caughed from having problems with catching his breath. "If we don't fuck out from this spruce now, we're going to die. We shouldn't play with the destiny..."
"And that's coming from you... shooting a bloody elkdeer!?" Christian asked him angrily.
"Ok. Ok. I'm sorry. We should still have been dead six hours ago." Christian looked out over the white landscape. His hand broke out from the four men lined up, pointing towards an area eastwards. All of a sudden Sixten stiffened by fear as he was the first one to distinguish a body under the snow. Sixten took down the Lectroscope. He'd seen a man twisted in anky position and that had been too much for Sixten. He didn't hesitate a bit as he latched the skis to his boots and just followed an instinct that the last 12 hours had gotten stronger and stronger in him.
"Follow me," he said half muffled by disgust. In his voice there was some sort of instinct of self preservation that none of the guys had noticed so far. All of a sudden he stood on his skis and the other three hang on. Elk said nothing. He knew that either they nailed those 200 or 300 yards once and for all or they'll keep up the dying at the spruce. As they got up to the dead men, Klinten's ugly face met them. His right chin had been slit up by something sharp. The man kind of sat staring out over the landscape. He looked bad. He was thin. It seemed as if he'd died of exhaustion. As they had searched around the place relatively fast, they chased in towards the woods again. They were all of breath by the shock. Even though they tried it would take time before anyone again dared to open their mouth. They just looked ahead of themselves. Christian's thoughts were focused on the tips of his skis and how they forward like two small pistons. They met the forest after a minute and headed on through it and the Ruokajarvi swamp on the other side. Christian understood how little he would ever get to know about the results of this extravagant maneuver. His pulse beat more evenly and with more stability even though he was filled of hatred. Then his brainactivity came to a full rest. Elk had suddenly raised his hand to make a full stop of the group. It was dead silent. The only thing moving was the expiratory steam from eight lungs that excitedly delivered carbondioxide out in the sterile wasteland. In front of them Captain Lindahl stood at three yards distance. But it wasn't Captain Lindahl any more, but Bertil Alsterlind.
"The maneuver is over on your behalf." He uplifted the worn briefcase in oxen leather that stood in the snow. While his right hand and arm held it, the left digged for a pile of documents. Christian saw that the soldiers didn't recognize their Captain. He saw how Bertil's face was stiffened. Its movements were as if executed by a machine.
"If you sign the following four documents and this act of agreement you can leave. The condition is that you sign it, now." Christian noticed that he all of a sudden was alone. When he looked behind himself Elk, Sixten and Hjalle were chasing him. He had about one hundred yards of an advantage. Bertil Alsterlind was driving a tank and shot after him. Christian saw how the crevades exploded just next to him, all over the place.
He began to ski like he was chased by a whole world. When he looked at his sides people were lined up as if they were the spectators of a circus. Christian realized he had been skiing in circles. Then, when he looked down on his skis they skied on sand. He looked up and saw that he was standing on a beach. He didn't have his skis on anymore. He only wore a military pair of underwear and his sweaty military shirt. Then he saw something that floated in the surface of the water, just next to the beach. He marched down not daring himself to look around. He sort of knew that if he turned his head he would be back in the winter. When he picked up a wet ball of paper he found that the beach was completely empty. There was nothing behind him. When he turned back to look out on the horizon he saw that it was dawn as the sun began to pierce through with its first forceful beams. Carefully he began to unfold the wet paper that made the ball. It was documents and notices of that woman he'd met on the street he couldn't remember where. The pictures were in black and white but when he looked at her face it was in its natural color. He looked for her name but couldn't find it anywhere in the wet papers that began to fall apart.

His hand were lying in the mess of newspaper he'd fallen asleep from reading. As he found the glass between the sheets he realized why the magazine was soaked with water. His forehead was sweaty. His body shook of frustration. He threw the alarmclock to the floor because it was ringing too loud. Christian heard how it fell into one thousand pieces. Just before his action, it had turned half past seven o'clock this dark and snowy Saturday morning on December 31. But, he never really woke up.
"Today it's New Year's Eve." Christian thought who wanted to get in tune as soon as possible. He didn't like his dream.

"The party begins at Margareta Westerwik's!" he remembered from some slip somewhere. "But where?" He paddled out to get the morning paper. He opened it. "Ulf Jansson caught for 41 drunk'n drivings," it said beneath a picture of a seemingly respectable businessman. It was a story of how he'd been a hard working salesman of highly flammable paints. The police repeatedly had refused the man's drunken behaviour pleading not guilty, and put him jail. Christian turned the page, turned off. In some distracted thoughts on his way to the fridge, Christian discovered by a random act of nature the card on the bench of the zink. "There we go! That's Margareta all-right! It was a while since I last heard of that woman!" Christian said delighted. He scratched That kind of chin. That raspharrowing could be heard as of 23 frenzied twelve-year-olds, sanding in some wood sloyd hall in some wood sloyd class. As he rifled in his forelock and rubbed his eyes he of course remembered what it was that his unpolished grey cells at all hadn't remembered. The dinner at Martin Sandblom and his girlfriend. Eight o'clock.

"Damm." he said to Felix that just had entered the room. "I have to ask Martin if...if he can join me to get to the party...or...I have to ask Margareta to move her party." He discerned Margareta's body like a horrible playboy in his head. He hated it when two choices killed each other, yet he liked the fact that they measured up to each other so well. Soon enough he got his good mood back as he found that he for once had a characteristic voice. He'd discovered the bluesinger's cracked frequencies the more and felt satisfaction. They were rough and he liked that. He poured up a good splash of water into the saucepan and simultaneously electrified the plate to heat it up like hell.

"Coffeeee?" he said a little bit listless to Felix who had found the disappeared old handball. "What a hint," he thought wide awake as he realized that he'd been dreaming quite substantially this last night. "Man, what a racketing hint," he said in a sort of secret tone to Felix. The cat immediately quit its dazzling dealing with the ball and resounded his animalistic sound just because. Looking at its eyes only, Felix appeared totally unaware, as if the animal didn't care about Christian's nightmare.

"It's got to be Margareta damn it. It's a party damn it, I've got to mount her...YES!!! I've got to! She will obey." Christian exclaimed like the unreal bachelor he was. He sat on a green stool and screwed his eyes into the life of the street. He felt rusty. It was all black in his mind, but he was amused by discerning this impenetrable darkness within him, that he wanted to penetrate so badly. He wass unknowing, he knew that, and it drove him crazy at times. But he was going to get himself out of it befor twelve. He was convinced of the java's healing force upon an half by half alcoholized journalis's brain and felt good about the three quarters of a gallon of coffee water that now had began to boil on the stove. Christian turned off the heat, took a firm grip of the saucepan and moved it like everyone does, to the larger plate to the left of the smaller one. Of course you could say that not everyone does like Christian in this matter. It is really smart though what he does, 'cause the "heatleftovers" is saved much longer in that larger plate than if he would put the pan on one of the smaller. The smaller plates really suck. Don't use them OK! If you ever dare to use them, oh maaan, the devil of plates is going to chase you and... He applicable the water through the prepared funnel on top of the pot. After a while he heard he heard the twinkle-sprinkle under the coffee filter's dark contents and headed for the bathroom. Christian put himself shivering under the nozzle of the shower and turned on the water. As always, he strutted away when the first sprays came. He thought of how comic it must have appeared for someone that perhaps would have video recorded five mornings with the equally whimpy skips. As if he could never learn that the shower
the beginning always was cold.

He soaped himself and washed the hair with herbal schampoo. It was good because it had "...a whole lot of B-vitamins that the turfs apparently are screaming for," he had read on the bottle's front. It was when he had begun to talk to the shampoo bottle telling it about his B-vitamins the day before that he realized that it was time to leave the shower. He sat down at the breakfast table in a creased but clean jeansshirt and underwear and continued reading the newspaper. Christian noticed his plants' thirsty anxiety in their cries for water. Christian was dealing with the flowers for a quarter of an hour perhaps. Then after another half-hour, his occult, violent technique dealing with the vacuum cleaner could be heard in the whole of his apartment. One could really hear his search for things. He mastered the hollow, sucking rod just like a musician with his instrument. Perhaps it was a melody or a rhythm he had had in his mind. Like a vacuum musician it sounded as if he had missed a guitar he'd wanted to play on for 15 years, and just had found out that his wife surreptitiously had grilled it on some barbeque with her friends. He desperately searched something that could replace that lost electrical guitar. With powerful bluesriffs, that sucked, it could be heard how this mentality really had found its instrument in that sucking rod. Christian hadn't incredibly enough lost his contract with the Record company, Dustsucker Records Inc., "Two rooms and a kitchen" was his next album and...

The vacuum cleaner died. Christian notices a smell of tar and blood, the room is suddenly dark and dead. It's cold.

"Your boat is leaking, Christian," a man in full armour says, standing in the middle of Christian's living room, reading from a book without lifting his head. Thor's authority is total. His head holds up a platinum helmet with a ribbon of diamonds. He wears a thick fur of wolf skin, tied by his thick durable hammer-belt of golden swine leather. His chest and upper body swells of muscles. On both his arms thick scars point at inhumane battles and pains. He has a thick dark beard covering a thick and muscular jaw. Christian is frightened by the mixture of odours that comes from Thor. From his left thigh a sour dark blood smears through his golden oxen leather pants. Something has burnt away the piece of leather and Thor's skin covering that part of his leg. Christian can feel the odour of burnt flesh, of sweat, of liquid metal, of golden leather and of yellow lillies. On each of Thor's shoulders the black-feathered Hugin and Munin sits and whispers frenetically to Thor what is happening in the world. Christian can feel the smell of death and oil from his monstrous hammer hanging down along his right thigh. He is stunned by fear, he is so scared of his old friend's new appearance it makes him wonder what the mere inhalations of Thor's presence will do to him. Thor's posture is at once immense and majestic. He stands with his legs wide apart and a broad, straight back holds up his pride like a pillar of titanium. It looks as if nothing can fight this man, nothing can conquer Thor.

"But you're not supposed to be here...or are...you? I'm confused... Didn't you...and...Loki...?"

Thor looks up from the book and discerns the poor creature Christian for along time, with his steel blue eyes.

"Is there any reason why I shouldn't be here?" Christian was silent but after a while he said, "I guess...not."

"I see three kinds of love in you. First of all I'd like to mention the love for the concept of your God. But he was hospitalized... What kind of God is that? Then comes the love for the one you love the most, wife, husband or the spiritual love. But your work prevents you from having a wife or a spiritual life. What kind of boss is that, just making you work, and not to play?"

He drinks something from a Greek amphora but throws it in front of himself so that it breaks into pieces and it's dark beer, that looks like the blood of the baccanals, or Baccus' wine, dashes out over the floor. "And last we have the most natural of all loves, the love for oneself. But you don't love yourself, Christian. Why?"

Christian was deadsilent.

"Only then, when you can't any longer see what the purpose is of our article, then you've become
the purpose yourself..." Thor says.
    "I thought you and Loki were no...longer."
    "Well as long as the energy is focused, as long as the work one is doing has got a purpose.
Christian, who knows for sure?"
    "I have no choice."
    "So what's your next story? How many more lies before you tell us the real truth?"
Christian was silent.
    "I'm going to give you a last chance. Take this book and make up your own story, Ghaerwyicked
Russian prostitute poet, who likes to wear Celtic kilts. If you can. I used to trust the Christians. Any
Christian." He laughed a dry laugh. "Your boat is leaking," he said and left.

Christian bent down to pick away the rubbish that had fallen under the carpet. As he clapsed away
the edge of the rag-strip carpet he saw a paperback that seemed 10 or maybe even 20 years old. He
grabbed it and turned off the vacuum cleaner, that had started to run again. He fell into the armchair and
turned on the reading lamp that didn't work. The light-bulb just burnt out as he turned it on. Christian
stared for a while up under the shade. Slowly he let his eyes fall. "Highlanders in Scottish history and
mythology," its headline read with that boringly cheap layout from the seventies. The text was black in
front of the cover's angry orange-yellow-green bile-like background. Of course he couldn't remember
exactly when he had pulled this losing lottery ticket. He thought about his journey for a week to Scotland
in his sophomore year, in the spring semester. He opened the cover and closed his eyes, and knew that it
would say Ulster or Perth. His nerves didn't allow him to pronounce the name of the city. Christian had the
ugly feeling that his thoughts were circling around in those too familiar paranoid circles of his.

Christian couldn't let go of the thought once it had entered his head. He said that it would of course
say something about Jarwick. In the upper right corner he read surprised, "Kensington's bookshop 89-04-
03." Christian thought his self-mockery was pulling his leg. He wasn't in control of his thoughts anymore.
Just like jolting cans after a wedding car, his ideas didn't care about the person Christian, they just took off.

He froze and grabbed a blanket that lay on the floor. He tried to remember where or when he had read
the novel, but quit questioning himself when he got to the if. He'd never earlier seen the pocket. Now
it lay in front of him like a cap that just had hung around, always. Since he actually was done with the
vacuum cleaner he thought a good idea would be to check out this particular pocket. He opened the pages to
chapter 1. It said: "Peoples and ancestors." Christian got a feeling of having found something extra. His
fear was gone in spite of the fumies of insecurity. Felix walked over the living room floor to the kitchen
and found his ball. He began playing around with it again. After a quarter of minutes the angora got tired
and lay down on the radiator as usual. Christian had placed out some magazines so that the radiater would
be safefrom eventual spots of moisture, the ejections of the cat's vital but lazy body parts. Dried cat odours
wasn't preferred by Christian as he came home from a hard day at work. But he could trust Felix that had
begun spinning after a while. The cat flattened out pretty quickly and slept for over three and a half hours.
During those hours Christian read.

Rain poured down and swept by like heavy leadcurtains just next to their living room window.
Christian didn't for a moment darken his literary concentration. From a mythological perspective it
rendered an account for how Old Scottish history in many ways depended on the Norse Aesir cult and
tales. Christian's scrutiny of the text had reached a peak of interest at their 1st Celtic chapter, but then the
telephone rang. The signals called one after the other unanswered. He wasn't even interested of knowing if
the answering machine was on or not. He devoured its 4th chapter "Highlanders- the continuation of
history." It was the author's own interviewing some two elders who were the only few left supposed to
know exactly how the Scottish aboriginals to a large extent agreed upon how it had started. The split about
the origins of the legend was however total. Christian discerned the Brittish words. He realized how all
clues, with few exceptions, ran to a standstill at the two names Whiddlebarn and Kloppersfielder. Christian
laughed at how one of them, Whiddlebarn, was the author of the same book he was reading. He immediately knew how he didn't have any choice as a reader. He had to take some of whiddlebarn's explanations for granted. Christiam looked out through his living room window. The rain had ceased and the dusk was exchanged for a calm darkness. He was forced to get up from the chair, even though he didn't want anything else than just to fall asleep, right now in this armchair. After a couple of seconds he got his wanted crazy-jerk and one and a half minute later the new 60 watt light bulb was in position. It was his last traditional Volfram light bulb ha had. One of those relics that gave just a little bit more of that harmonic old-fashioned reading light he did like the best. There was more of a drama with the Volfram thread he thought, than with the Halogenic sticky flashbeams.

After a couple of pages an interesting theme was very clear to Christian. "Scotti" was according to the text the original Irish verb for "To rob" or "To plunder." The name Scotia had been the Latin name for Ireland until the 11th century. Christian then understood that it was the Celts that had plundered their way down through the north parts of Britain. In the 5th century the kingdom Dalriada had been founded in Argyll. It was a small province to the much larger kingdom Dal Riada of the Northwest part of Ireland, that became the entrance for the spread of the Gaelic language. Christian saw the map that shone through the page. He flipped it. He saw the time mark 843 AD, and went back to the text after a prolonged second. He read that during that year the Pictic and Dalriadic royal family tree had been united by some marriage. He saw that through this marriage the Celts remained of Irish origin, as Christian saw by a marking line north of the Cheviot mountains between England and Scotland. His surprise came slowly but steadily. Firstly he had at the most seen the contour of a literary horizon with what the text was trying to explain. Then he saw the actual masts, sails, the crew and he could see how a complete idea as a matter of fact landed in its harbour before he himself had. He read: "This doesn't exclude the probabilities of an English-speaking population and kingdoms such as Strathclyde and Rheged.

Christian skipped the twenty some family names, which during the century still were powerful. In the final end the Celtic branch in the north was forgotten completely, circumvented as it may by Gaelic speaking Scots on the one side and by the Englishmen of Northumbria on the other. Further on he read: "In that respect the duality of the Scottish lingual heritage, the Highlanders speaking Gaelic and Lowlanders English. Christian brought his attention to the explanation from where this Gaelic language had its origins. It was clear to him how the language had separated as well as united the islands through history. The sentences were long and complicated but the more Christian read the more he absorbed them like a conductor reading a orchestrated score. He could hear the majesty of knowledge already piercing through the author's slowly unveiling curtain. He thought he could already recognize names like music's short but obvious motives. Christian weren't ready to break his study by looking at the LCD-display's scarily correct watch. It was too late to be late for some event, and that's how simple it was. Christian's forehead was released from creases and he continued. He learnt that Ireland's former name Eire came from the people erainn. The town Ulster had apparently received its name from the ulad-tribe, as well as Connaught had from Connachtta and Leinster from lagin. It wasn't until the Welsh missionary men from the Roman-British church, that with its term gwddel attempted a first lingual conclusion to the tie the Irish people together like a people. The Irish had accepted the word on condition that they could change it to goidol. Then it was to Christian that the word gaels was a result of an agreement between God's messengers and a savage people. It was a promise from the church of a new life, and during the raids of the Scandinavian vikings during the 8th century people realized that they had to make up their mind pretty quick if they didn't want to die. Then the myth about Goidel Glas had appeared. Christian unliked the book's strong emphasis towards Ireland, but then he realized his scarce amount of choices about historical facts. In this book it was the reality that surpassed the poetry. Christian was fascinated by how an important nucleus in one of these discussions was so evident, but yet so lavishly discerned.

He saw that the Celt's philosophy of living almost served like a thesis for how Christianity had been worked out and today functioned. Halfway through chapter six he had a clear picture of a consistently
searching people before him. The Celts had already in their isolation, long time before the mission of Eire, developed the Thought's muscle, skeleton and blood, a machinery for Christianity. Christian stood up. He walked out into the kitchen and saw the window that hadn't been closed. With hands cold as ice he trembled when he swept it towards its solid frame of oak. Felix hadn't gotten fresh water in 24 hours Christian now recalled.

"Daamm," Christian said by a sheer reflex. One could hear that his voice hadn't been used for several hours. Slowly he walked up with the bowl to the faucet and rinsed it. Felix tripped out from nowhere and began to drink from the 12oz bowl that contained new, fresh water. Christian raised from his crouching position. He didn't like the author's talking about how "the Celtic system in year 1601, at a last battle of Kinsale had ceased to exist. After having read 101 pages he felt for some reason that the message of the book had many dimensions. It talked to him with a lurking voice, very much like that of old witches' ways to express themselves. He couldn't tell of course how many witches he'd met so far in his life. He hoped the time would bring all dimensions into one, soon. Every Celtic town on Eire seemed situated according to a symmetrical system, Christian read. Each of these places then had a function apart from its trivial connection area for people. There was a story for each place. "Uisnech..." Christian read weary, almost laughing at how much information he already had received and still was receiving. A center in Ireland would consist of five symbols, "a mountain, a pillar, a fireplace, a tree and "life's well." According to a mythological event the coronation of Cerball's son, a hailstorm was said to have taken place the created 12 main rivers on the island, beginning at Uisnech's well. Consequently it was said about the white product of this river, as well as of Comna's well, they were nothing but the Norse mythology's Mimer's well in English words. Christian remembered Yggdrasil, the Scandinavian world tree, that it was nourished with wisdom and inspiration from a similar white milk. He thought he had found out how the mythology was constructed. "It makes sense to believe that it's basically only one story which everything is built upon," Christian said to himself. Christian knew that he had the parts to the story in his hand, but he had to connect them himself. "Is it a coincidence?" Christian thought of the Greek philosopher Plato's world pillar. He continued. Uisnech turned out to be, not as thought by Christian, only a geographical epicenter, but a place for symbolic reunions of people. Then he saw the there was some kind of dual reigning over Ireland together with the town Tara, the political center. "Just like black and white, or fire and water, just like the wisdom between man and woman," he thought.

The origins of the social Uisnech and the political Tara Christian found in Indo-european preancient Roman and Indian rituals. In a laborious tone it spoke about two fires, "The heat of Vesta" and "templo quadrata." The heart of Vesta, the west fire, was circular and symbolised the earth. It was said to be the originator of all fires, a proof of the possession of earth. It symbolized the men's world. Christian was puzzled by the book's mindgames. But it was facts. The symbolism of the fire rendered in a total power of the center of Tellus. Surprisingly the power was said to not specifically belong to the man. "It wasn't a property of the men's world." Christian read the four last lines slowly. Even though his comprehension comprehended their cognition, two words rinsed through his head like an incomprehensible riddle. He was stuck. It took him a lot of time and guts to twist on that very last sentence. Then he felt stupid. The only reason why he had not continued reading was of some superstitious reluctance of facing the facts. "The land, the earth and the men's world," it said. It didn't explicitly verify if this land belonged to the men or if it didn't belong to the men. It had pointed out that "the possession of the earth was the men's world," that was clear.

"That's it." Christian said to himself. It was really true what he had read about. The men had the rights to shape their own world, the world of possession. Christian surprised himself of how he saw what was the real problem. The question wasn't of getting one's hands on as much property as possible. The problem was how to govern it. He was happy because he saw how the Roman, Indian and Celtic cultures were such individuals far from each other, yet so distinct in their philosophical similarities. Christian put away the book. The room was filled with sultry air and he left. As he bit off a bit from the gingerbread to
rinse it down with a gulp of hot coffee, he began to think of the second fire. Before taking off from the kitchen he froze in his wandering pose. He was thinking.

"Either he brings the whole box of gingerbreads or he goes straight back to his chair forgetting about all of those nasty, gulping thoughts of gluttony." As he stepped up to the jar and snatched off the lid with his thumb, he remembered. He looked down at what seemed to the remainders of perhaps seven, eight gingerbreads.

A moment later an elder couple on the street happened to look up at Christian's kitchen window. They saw how a skull disappeared into something that looked like a bucket. To them it seemed as if a man were drinking crumbs but the older man explained to his older woman that, "That, no one does..." As they had stood down there for a while looking up kind of scared. No one knew that it was the Ollen's walking their walk in the moonlight.

After a couple of seconds Christian put the jar on the floor and began to jump on it. He wanted it to be flat so that he could throw it away. After a halfminute's hullabaloo it was flat and then he threw it. He'd been working like a military officer with that jar and finally now he could walk out into the living room again. The 183rd page was opened. He repeated hastily what he had read so far. A professor Dumezil had by a comparison understood that the two symbolical fires resembled the two Roman ritual sites "The heart of Vesta" and "temple quadrata" so far Christian was OK. The Indian culture's quadrangular fire was in difference with the circular tributing gods, instead tributed the unity of the gods. "It seems to fit," Christian thought, "with Uisnech's 'Oenach,' meaning in translation a "re-union festivity" for the people. Christian concluded Tara to be the circular fire and the locality Uisnech, to be the Quadrangular. As he finished the last sentences of the paragraph he was mused by the Celtic creative wealth. Uisnech was described also as a symbol for the original unity, a groundwork in which all contradictions were solved. Christian was confused. The authors' conclusions were solid, but since the three worlds cultures seemed not to be wanting to speak out in clear words, their text couldn't but stay unclear in some respects to Christian. He wondered exactly what kind of hot porridge the Celtic, Roman and Indian cat wanted to get, but yet couldn't. Christian wondered if this could be added to his... certainly different ninepage reportage, "...but...but." Christian shook his head as if he knew a lot of stuff. "But!" he said with a new kick of energy. "What about those Celts?" He understood how his article had fallen into pieces. Christian knew how he'd been playing fire at those nightclubs, inter-viewing drug-addicts trying to raise the sceptre of rock'n roll. He understood that he and Thor only had been trying at those coffee tables in those cafes. He smiled at his last three weeks of furious Pall Mall consumption. His diet of all those god damn cafe au laits or expenuchinos or what the hell they had called that satanic bean-fluid. "Oh man!" he said to himself as he contemplated about legs. "Those thighs...I was dependent. I needed them. I wanted their sweat. I wanted to hear those nylon. All the time. It was manicula." he thought. "To produce or to be produced. That's the god damn answer. Hamlet, hear me! Listen to me. I am telling you. This is me talking to you now. I beg you, listen. Take my words as they are. Let them heal you. Let them heal." Christian was scared. He wasn't afraid that Thor had lost it on their acvenge hunt for a lost story. He knew they had hunted themselves in the end. Thor with his stack of cameras and he himself with his pressed white collars and axing smile. They were trying to produce results. Christian was astonished at their success. Not until now he was thrilled by what they really had been. Shadows. It had been one hell of a time the last couple of weeks. It had been a syndrome. Christian realized he was a wanderer. They had become the results they were looking for. They had become produced. It was the spinning everyone wanted. All the people he'd met. No one cared. Burnt. Burnt." The only way, Christian knew, the only way was to become one fire oneself. He had pity on Thor and all strange characters he'd met in his life, cause he couldn't see how one person had a choice.

He threw himself into the next chapter "The druid." The book was talking about the druids always butchered by moviedirectors' narrowed down perspectives. Merlin in "The knights of the Round Table," had never been that well discerned before in a book," Christian thought. The druids were explained to be
the interpreters for the overnatural forces that surrounded the society. They were recruited from a war nobility a Celtic off-spring from the Indian caste system. It was clear that the druid had had a natural place within a distinct category of socio-religious professions. A new perspective began to grow in Christian. The book spoke of how it in different time periods among all peoples with an Indo-European language and traditions alive, there existed a certain caste of priests, interpreters who would be the origins of the later druid. The Greek and Latin created the word druid under influence by the celtic. Caesar made use of the term "druides" and Cicero often spoke of "Druidæ." The word was connotated as something like "The Oak's knowledge." As Christian realized that the author began to pull in the Hindu bramines into the discussion he realized how far away he'd been taken from the actual subject- highlanders in Scotland. Nothing in the text had dealt with Scotland. The author hadn't been talking falsely though. Christian saw clearly that there were some interesting connections, coincidences it seemed. The text rhymed well with what he knew about Indo-European culture. The Greeks and the Romans were not only creating the myth of the specific kind a philosophical perpetuum mobile. He flipped the page. He read, "The mysticism, a dominant feature in the history of the Celts, was referred to as a magic power with which the human's knowledge and wisdom was guaranteed everlasting continuation." Christian brought his attention to Mercury, whom especially by the Gallic Celts in present north-northwest France, was ranked the superior god. The god over the arts. "But..." Christian said in a doleful tone. "As the mysticism and the riddle is exactly the holy shimmer the Celts surrounded themselves with..." Christian thought. "It's a fond... but why is it there? What is it hiding?" then he saw the answer. "Would it be more logical to expect the real god to not appear in a veracious and all too cunning of a garb...but rather...the protective mysterious...Lug?" His thoughts charged. "As for being an ideal of the intelligent Celts he would be most successful in a human shape... Through this the Celt would come the closest to his ideal. A young unknown, the pretense master of any artistical skill. The artist, systematically weaved into the Celtic mythology, so that he becomes such a natural part of it that he passes through everyone's mind without a real notion of who he is?" The more Christian dwelled he realized it was only in that shape that the real supremacy, the real grandeur, the real idiom god, the real commander-in-chief was best preserved. He leaned himself back into the armchair. The nerve system was torn. In an adrenaline ricochet he developed a little observation of himself. "What am I doing?" Christian asked himself being lost. "Just what the heck is going on?" Christian again unwrapped the plaited eyelids after having rubbed them for a while. He was tired than when he had started his reading. He knew the widespread conception of a world tree was tightly weaved into the Indo-European culture. It was a myth about the tree that grows in the middle of the world and reaches the sky with its branches, and to the underworld with its roots. Something had slowly been unveiled to Christian. What caught his mind was an idea about that enormous pole, some sort of the world's axis, that held up the sky and hindered it from falling down and apart. Christian was for a second time back at the Greek philosopher Plato. In the 4th century BC he had concluded an ingenious cosmic picture of the worldaxis twisting itself like an enormous staff between sky and earth. Another tale in history told about the Sachs worshipping the pillar of the universe, Irminsul. Plato just like the Sachs had attacked what he called the three daughters of necessity, The Goddess of fate. Christian thought of how Lug as a result of the co-operation between good and evil had a lot in common with Norse mythology's Yggdrasil and Plato's world staff. He read the last paragraph of the book. "What is outside cosmos' barriers was inferior to cosmos' center. As the cosmos was twisting multitude was turned into unity." His memory reflected upon those two very intense and characteristic hours he and Robbie had spent on their train-luffing through Europe. They had visited a renowned, very attractive pietist monastery in Naples, Italy. They had been amazed of the guiding monk's expressive English, especially intense at that painting covering the ceiling of the west chapel. There he'd seen that world pillar again, painted in 1618 and so well crafted it hadn't needed restoration yet. The name Artemisia Gentileschi gave them a feeling of divinity, mystery, martyredom. The motif was tasteful. Her idea was again that Celtic polarization of what had been reckoned as the dark forces in one corner and the good, the light of life in the other. Christian began to realize how he had almost become infatuated of her idea. Her vision had vibrated in him. It had
taken him to places no other woman had been able to so far. She was paid with martyredom. She had envisioned what Christian now had a feeling few people knew was going on between evil and good. Too bad the guidance had become a traumatic coercive proceeding through life's arranged spectacles.

Christian hated it. He had come to experience a convent, not to learn how to live. Robbie and he had finally been on another train through Europe, Christian thought of that power of the monk. How he had spoken in that inspired ecstatic tone as soon as they had gotten close to that ceiling. Father Paulo Grivaldio's seeming to have had an erection Christian didn't know what to do with. Christian leaned back in his armchair closing his eyes. Because of this book he'd been reading he saw what it was. It wasn't anything but a big, big vibration of her colors, her idea, a beauty Father Grivaldio didn't know exactly how to deal with. It was like a communication he wasn't ready for. But it was there. It talked to him. And he took it. He had needed it, just like Christian.

Robbie and he had sparkled off from that guidance. Christian looked out in the dark living room. It had really been some contradiction during their hourlong discussion, full of doubt. They had been very straight to the point about God's existence or non-existence. Christian thought he believed more the cosmological ideas and Robbie was inclined to believe more in the teleological. Now, to Christian their discussion seemed meaningless, just filled with doubts. He believed more in Tuatha de Danann and fomór. It was mysticism in itself. It made more sense. Robbie wanted the religion and God's existence to adopt to their purpose. He believed there was a common sense in each living organism's propagation and so forth evolution. He said every thing on earth had its purpose. In response to this Christian had thought it enough to know that only a first initiating cause was needed to start the validity of God's existence. The discussion had been interesting only for the reason that it had tried their own belief in God. The fact that they hadn't worshipped pretentiously was what had made their words a threat to the counterpart, but a trial of their own being. The discussion had been fruitful. It had made them aware of that they probably didn't know so much about it. While still being on the platform Christian just knew how the whole Christianity-business, the goals and all that stuff lay like an oasis in the future. He knew he could just reach out and grab it whenever he wanted, but he hadn't. Robbie and he didn't know for sure. They both just knew it had been there.

"But why hadn't we tried to reach for...?" He remembered the mathematician Whitehead's mathematic's pointing out the correctness of the cosmological perspective. He was confused. He recalled Robbie reading from the Time a phrase from Jesus, "I have been teacher to all Christendom, I shall be on the face of earth until Doom. And it is not known what my flesh is, whether flesh or fish," like a logogryphic riddle he hadn't been able to sort out. It was just a treasure in itself. The words. Then he turned to Freud's ateistic attitude that the religion would be "Humanity's universal compulsorily neurosis." Freud vindicated that the human, when she had explained everything that could be explained with science and technology, she would liberate herself from the religion. The destiny was decided by dark forces.

"A cocaineist...all right," Christian said knowing how the man had disapproved CG Jung's notions upon his theorems lack of logic, because it would go against his authority. "Maybe Freud was only talking about his own personal authority and not the scientifical, which Jung took for granted," Christian tried in an attempt to balance his illogic. after all Freud seemed interesting to him. He was mysterious. For a while he ruled the world with his conclusions. For a while he had been that druid and it had worked out just fine. Like a sniff of Cocaine, for a while. "Of course the man couldn't go against his authority, his illogic, that was his world!" Christian laughed. "He was his unconscious," he thought. Christian felt the irony from Jung's self-realization as a meaning of life. It didn't quite fit with Freud. She was supposed to individuate her personal unconscious, to process successfully all of her experiences. Then depending on how well her co-operation existed with the collective unconscious, an infinite selection of archetypes collected through the evolution of mankind, would lead to the total harmony of the person's self. This harmony was supposed to help the individual to deal with her experiences. The religion was a healthy way to avoid the unhealth of soul. The religion as a concept did according to Jung, take care of the development of the collective
unconscious and kept it fresh and alive. Again Christian had the feeling of having an example of some sort in front of him.

"You can't see what you are," he thought. "Nor he nor she could see who they were in solitude. They need each other to see that they're different."

Christian was burnt out. Point after point slipped through his mind like water through a rive. He wandered. It was impossible to find a reasonable way out from his reasoning. It was as if he had lost the reason for getting up on that train of his own thoughts. He just sat by the window, his right elbow leaning on the sill. It was a journey he thought. Either you're on that train of knowledge passing through cities of love, landscapes of toil, rivers of death, over mountains of will. You can watch it. Or you can be it. Some people he knew would never get off the train. He knew that he had either spoilt the whole night with a good portion nonsense or he had simply just gone mad. He heard his cat up at the bowl drinking from it.

"Strathclyde...Rheged...?" Christian said by sheer memory. After some seconds he was in full concentration. He looked himself around in the scarce light from his reading. The head was heavy, deeply sunken into his shoulders, weighing in between four walls. He was pale like a mummy. His forehead, sticky of sweat, contradicted in a really uncomfortable way the opposite cold-sweated hands. He dried them at the couch, to the left of the armchair. Slowly he turned the pages. He was exhausted.

"There was a page...somewhere...soon..." His eyelids closed slowly and then were opened. He sat up with a straight back. He was reading about forgotten castles. As he within the next half second would fetch the name, it would only be that last conclusive affirmation about something that had been lurking around in his head for a long time. How insightful wisdom or penetrating knowledge he may have ever had, all human being rinse out of him like milk out of a dropped milk bowl. His finger stopped at the second last name. This kingdom was one of the last six that Susan Klogger strangely questioned the existence of. She also announced her with reservation for eventually incorrectly spelled names. One of them were Ghaerwiyck.

"It said Ghaerwiyck." Christian said repeatedly confirming a signal, an order. He instantly knew that he had to take off. The party was left far behind in his conscious like a redlight to an escaping refugee. He was probably on his way somewhere towards that direction. "...wherever that party was," Christian thought as if split by a hidden agenda. The book was thrown onto the table and broke apart. Almost all leaves fell out on the table and down on the floor. Felix almost roared of horror, a yard in front of the massacred book. Christian pulled a match over the striking surface and let it fall down on the table.

"You're on your own," he said to his cat and it was able to sneak out through the door before he closed it. As he looked into the mailbox he saw that the table already was completely on fire. The cat sprinted down the stairs and out onto the backyard. Christian calmly took the elevator down to the entrance and walked out into the street. His eyes searched, first left then right. As Christian looked up Christian saw flames punching out a livingroom window. Then his legs moved until he stood in the middle of the street. He heard the fire. Christian decided to go left and let an exploding force thrust his body forward until he flew over the streetstones. He ran towards something and he ran because for the first time he knew towards what.
Chapter 7.

Panting breaths tore up large pains in her throat because of the chill. She sat on a park-bench close to her and eventually she could cope with her tired legs. She was worried about Alexander. Sandra had lost track of him half an hour ago. She knew it was life-threatening, but she had to ask him, or else nothing would happen. At a restaurant she found a piece of pizza that had been left over. She ate hungrily. Her vision had changed. She thought she was more awake. Her person took a life of its own and she felt guilt of who she was, and where she was now. "Everything had its natural pace and would remain in its natural pace," she said, trying to calm herself down.

Her shoelace needed to be tied. She turned around and bent down towards the seat and her feet. It didn’t take long until she was done. She put down her foot onto the ground and started searching for a direction to run. It was a little bit past eight o’clock. She looked in her handbag for the telephone book as a phone-booth had appeared out of nowhere, some blocks on her side of the street. Furtthest down in the bottom, between two CD discs and under a ghosted mascara brush, she found Klara’s new number she had written down shortly before the funeral. Sandra thought for a while of her own family. Even though she had left them, she couldn’t quit thinking of them. Her cold index finger pressed the numbered buttons and after a while she heard a tone, then another one, and another one. She checked the number. She dialed a second time. No answer. It was stone-dead at Klara’s, Sandra was quickly confirmed. She found an old chewing gum, in its wrapping paper, still unused. She tore away the red-white foliage paper and put the white mint cube in her mouth. She decided to go to her friend’s place, however idiotic the idea was. She kept herself at a proper distance from the public. They weren’t supposed to see her. Sandra just wanted to say hi to Klara. Nothing else. Scary roundabouts along badly illuminated back-streets and quays were occasionally pretty hazardous for a girl like Sandra, all alone. She tried to see through the dangers until she had only her friend Klara in front of her. After half an hour’s marching she stood in front of the little gate. As she glanced through the glass of the entrance door she heard a voice at a distance behind her.

"Sandra?" it called prolonged by a tone of surprise.
"Klara?!!" Her sight didn’t let go of Klara’s.
"But, Sandra... I don’t understand..." Klara said surprised. Her gaze couldn’t tear itself away from Sandra, as it registered that she wasn’t looking too good. “Your shoes are smeared with clay... Were you the one who had to dig the hole?” She said as she pressed the door-code in the little box. Sandra slammed her arm above Klara’s and her friend cried of pain.

“What?” she said to the kneeling Klara.

“I’m sorry Sandra. I expressed it totally wrong. But you don’t have to break every bone in my body. Please agree that patent leather high heels, full of clay, is pretty strange. What’s going on? WHAT HAS HAPPENED!!?” Klara screamed out in the dark. She got up on her feet. Klara opened the door and let Sandra enter. They discerned each other full of fear.

“You must’ve had it.” She looked at the elevator that was soon down at their floor. Her friend opened the door and let Klara step inside. Klara pressed the button after her friend had managed to close the old elevator’s grating. “Just a terrible time,” Klara confirmed her own statement. They hugged each other and two minutes later they sat in Klara’s kitchen defrosting. “This is an occasion for a whiskey,” Klara said decisively on her way out towards a cupboard in the living room.

“No, no, you don’t understand. We’re just fictional. Klara I think I’m several persons...I’m not ready for whiskey. If you give me ethanol I’d drink it. If you give me blood I’d drink it.” It was silent. “Whiskey?” Sandra said, amazed.

“Oh yes. Pure whiskey.” She closed the cabinet door and went back into the kitchen. “Just to
begin with,” she said as she came back.

“This is alcoholism,” Sandra told her friend frankly. “I’m not going to touch a drop of that bottle.”

“You will. A little glass. Together with me.” Sandra watched Klara as she poured two glasses.

“I hate whiskey,” she said to Klara and swallowed. She coughed. “This will make me hate myself

even more, like a bloody alcoholic. If you give me ethanol I’d drink it. If you give me blood I’d drink it.”

She found frozen slices of bread in the freezer. “Where’s the toaster?” she asked.

“There,” Klara said with a smile pointing at the kitchen window.

“Thanks,” her friend said. She loaded it with four frozen slices and pushed down the fork.

Something really worried Klara. Sandra ate with her hands out from a jar of Boisenberry marmalade.

Yet Sandra was distant from the action in front of her. Her mind was drifting. It was not only

hunger. It was the world outside. She felt how it was inside. She was hungry like a savage, feeling like a

jaguar in a cage. For each breath she made, she was eaten by wilderness. Klara loaded the toaster with

another four new slices of frozen bread. She sat down on her place in front of Sandra. A strong atmosphere

of uncertainty spread over the messy kitchen.

“I like it here,” Sandra said.

“Aren’t you sad for your grandma?” Klara said as if there were yet many things to be straightened

down.

“Because she’s dead you mean?”

“Yes?”

“We’re all going to die. Sometime. It’s not that tragic. It is natural thing.”

Klara stood up and picked out the ready-made toast and added butter and smoked ham. The coffee

was done and she poured it into two cups. Klara put a partly eaten sponge-cake she had baked two days

earlier on the table. It had the taste of lemon, which Sandra thought was fresh. Sandra looked at the

candelabra and then at Klara after she’d lit the seven candles. They both extinguished the whole kitchen of

light to let the solitary candlelight spread out.

“I don’t have a family any more. I’ve lost man’s first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden

tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world... I’m unchristianized. I’m a savage.”

“That I understand.” Klara’s senses sharpened. Like an animal fearing danger she knew not to

say anything. To keep silent. She was afraid of Sandra. “Isn’t it rather a grandmother that has left you?”

she said timidly coaxing. Klara saw how Sandra was in full possession of her senses. She had a grandeur

in her position, she sat like a dangerous wild animal. Yet it was exactly those senses that Klara had

problems with. She couldn’t control them anymore. She couldn’t communicate anything. She was small,

she was nothing. She felt how civilization was gone in the kitchen.

“Poetical prognathous jaws,” Klara began, “but why?”

“Who’s got a paranoid frame of mind?”

“Who’s mind is becoming a poetical Fibonacci sequence?”

“I’ve lost my way,” Sandra said as she lost her train of thought.

“The future?” Klara asked while wondering how a person could lose the breadth the way Sandra

had.

“A paranoid frame of mind?” Sandra answered.

“What’s a Fibonacci sequence?” Klara asked innocently. Sandra’s sight remained in Klara’s.

Month after month after month had passed by. There wasn’t any friendship between them

anymore. Klara just couldn’t get out of her head that this was Sandra, visiting “her beach” for the

thousandth time probably. She was drifting away from Klara, away from their lifelong friendship, away

from her own life. “Why... what’s going on with Sandra?” Klara asked herself in silence. It was too phony
to discuss things that always would be natural to each individual, his or her way of being. No friend could
question that. Klara lowered her eyes. Sandra saw how Klara’s cheeks were colored red with indignation,

how the crying was forced out of her friend in ugly hulks. Klara understood how she was becoming
depressed, how she was vulnerable because she was civilized. Sandra wasn’t. She knew Sandra wouldn’t cry. Klara’s heart of civilization broke under Sandra’s raw blood, which was thwarted by a completely different beat. Klara felt how her friend could overpower her. Heartbeats were in vain, her mind so civilized, so weak, as if it didn’t exist. She could tell that her friend didn’t even reflect upon their friendship. Sandra was in her own world. Klara stood up and walked out to the living room. She turned on the TV and sat down in front of it. Immediately she heard the news reporter’s serious voice.

“...nder disappeared in the afternoon, at the funeral of a close relative. Her family and friends have no clue or idea as to why she had to leave in the seemingly half-unconscious the way she did. The police suggests Sandra Nordlinder to be one of the victims of the new popular drug Ukloptornit. Through a random mixture of microscopic capsules of LSD, Cocaine and amphetamine, the drugs might dissolve all at the same time which has a lethal impact upon the body. In California, U.S., the drug is referred to as “Body Roulette.” The police strongly warn against any contact with the lethal drug, as J.J. Allen, commissioner of the Police, says: It doesn’t turn you on, it turns you off. Sandra Nordlinder is suspected to be one in the increasing number of mortally drugged victims. The public...” Klara turned off the TV. Only after one or maybe only half a second later she heard how the entrance door was slammed to a violent close. From outside she heard roars, as if from a lion.

“Sandra?!” she wanted to call out, but this was different. Klara felt relief.

The danger of their meeting was over, but it had made Sandra a loveless fugitive willing to go almost anywhere, like a leper. She knew that any artistic subject matter called for material and she was the subject matter, but she couldn’t do anything about this. Words were using her like a medium for their subject matter which Sandra didn’t want to be a part of. She wanted to be her own subject matter. She wanted to escape from being used by “MOVE AND FLASH AND BLINK AND GO BACKWARDS” or “I WANT TO GO TO THE FUTURE PLEASE!” She didn’t want to be “WHAT URGE WILL SAVE US NOW THAT SEX WON’T.” She was too bewildered to understand that she already was “HE IS A SUGGESTION THAT AFFECTS PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY.” She had become suicidal because she didn’t want to be continued by these words or any other words, either. She wanted the freedom that words could not give her. But if she could have changed her own plot she wouldn’t have been a part of that plot so why did she worry? She raged because she had no choice. First she heard “YOU ARE TRAPPED ON THE EARTH SO YOU WILL EXPLODE” and then “I LEARN THAT TIME DOES NOT HEAD OVER HEELS,” and it almost choked her and she believed it was her art. She was a part of the rainbow. She was red, then blue and then orange and then yellow. She was a truncated victim Klara’s unzipped world of scientological faith. She understood that it was a Klara’s world. It trapped her. All that black blood pouring out from the TV. She heard, “Manhattan...FULL BODY... mecca for experimentation. TORTURE IS BARBARIC...FEEL NICE... Survival launched in 19...ABUSE OF SURPRISE COMES AS NO POWER.” She had to live in her paranoid frame of mind, backwards. It drove her crazy. She wanted to get out. To leave. She was getting Holzerized. Someone was taking his femininity and turning into her virility. “CAUCAPHONY...EAT YOU...SAVING EDGE...CUT YOUR SKIN...MOSQUITOS CRAWL BENEATH TO SUCK YOUR ORGASM.”

Sandra ran down the stairs and threw herself out in the street. Her black dress was thrown into the gutter, as if an old skin a snake had to creep out of. She washed herself at some of the communal baths, early in the mornings, when the guards didn’t know what was going on. She kept herself in shape. To hide in a big town wasn’t that big of a deal. Sandra made use of the subway tunnels as a practical hiding place in the nights. She noticed that the more she played or acted someone else, the more naturally she could mingle with daily life. She couldn’t be honest straight through all the time. A little bit false on the surface, and somewhat mean, with a boring little smile, then no one noticed anything. It was good if she could maintain that quick look of a mingler, roving about. Just like the slight touch of dishonesty every person carries. The ability of using others seemed to be the absolute fundamental by which the world
pillar was built. It was the edge of people’s eyes, their attitudes, in their speech, and their ability to go where the most information could be found, Sandra saw most people’s instincts come alive. As Sandra’s instincts were sharpened to an optimum of perception, she always got a very complete conclusive idea of how relations either worked or didn’t. Sandra understood that this had been an impossibility half a year ago, before the trip to Cyprus. Even if her prejudiced communication had been limited only to observations, her thoughts created something real, out of every situation or meeting between those human relations she stumbled on, day by day. Cafes had been a favorite for a long time, but after eleven days she had to abandon their environment because of her risky exposition. The newspaper reports were frightening alarms, making painfully aware minds, like Alexander’s, for example, even more aware of the inevitable global environmental catastrophe. Reports drowned each other out. The same messages were launched and cried out from ten sources at the same time, and none seem to reach the humans.

For a couple of days Sandra’s attention was directed towards this split of the individual in its confrontation with media. News made her wanting to bite her breasts because they were rotten. She was distressed by how clearly humans feared their own incapability of understanding the contents of news. As if people saw too much at the same time, of a world they didn’t understand how it worked, but rather questioned if it worked. Sandra felt how they were all fooled by civilization. As it it told people: “This car is going to explode, the engine is overheated, there are flat tires, there is no driver, but you don’t have to care...you’re just a passenger.” Sandra understood the news had become civilization’s paralysis of analysis, asking its people, ironically of course, “...and don’t you dare to be a backseat driver. Just lean back, look outside the window. It’s beautiful, isn’t it?” When as many people needed to hear what was really happening to the earth, as many as possible tried to block their ears, close their eyes and shut their mouths in a desperate attempt to stay sane. “People are trying,” she saw, “people are trying to concentrate on the stuff they do understand. People understand the real action between two teams struggling for a couple of yards, getting some concrete oval thing into a goal.” Just like everyone else Sandra was marching in a society, in an intense hunt for truths. Just like the people around her, Sandra saw and immediately understood this people’s human language of sweat, blood and swearwords. Her only reaction was that it was too bad it was just a game.

“Now the real politics of the society, only a few shrewd talkers seemed to understand and get something out of. Arguing. Money is the society. It is power, happiness, culture, inspiration, food, dreams, sex, drugs. Its narration is false, because the truth of this media world is false. The only thing it has in its mind right now is to move through naivety. It doesn’t say on the bill what, or whom has performed the experience. It doesn’t think of Czar Nicolai II who in his pictures mentally puts himself in the midst of the perspective he is photographing, to be able to photograph it. In some way it pulls back eternity a couple of steps.” Sandra’s senses welded her instincts together, she felt fury, a big burning fury. Every human she met carried something to her. There was some sort of individual in them, far far away, hidden by a rapturous system of laws. But each person was original, and even though they feared this originality, they wouldn’t be able to escape it, because it was there, right in front of them. Sandra wanted so much to be a part of Martin Luther King’s dream, but her own presence of mind was so ultimately framed by her own world paranoia, which she also was a part of. She felt Martin Luther King’s ideals were all like a big bucket of thick nourishing milk and her own time prevented her from daring to stick her atomic hand bring it up to feed the crude-oil lips of her civilization, kissing the world’s oceans, with the third world’s teeth of starvation hiding behind. She wanted to, but her paranoid frame of mind told her she was just another brick in the wall. Her paranoid frame of mind told her that she was just a token of a man’s manhood, and made her claustrophobic, unable to be a flame of Martin Luther King’s fire, unable to save his milk because of her soul’s pollution, but only to feel guilt and self-hatred. Sandra was but a mirror, a perfect reflection of who she was deepest in her collective unconscious, her shadow, what anima and animus were not put together. She couldn’t sense that she produced the world, while it produced her.

For each day in December the Christmas shopping increased in intensity. Sandra saw the real ego
coming out in people, in the public stress and anxiety to make Christmas as perfect as possible. While the earth was months from an atmospheric collapse, all they had in their heads were right sizes, right food, right temperatures in the oven, right mood of relatives. The Absolute Imperatives of Christmas tree decorations were hysterically discussed by newly married couples, hysterically in love, hysterically uncertain of how Christmas should best be celebrated, and Santa Claus’s credibility in front of the kids, saying Merry Christmas every time his head looked at a certain angle of the room, making the exact same gesture with the exact same posture, for hours, for days, for weeks. Sandra was there in between sights, smiles, Mr. Scrooge and the intrepid amounts of booze, all those chaotic entities which constituted the celebration of a person who once tried to make people listen to the harmony of soul, feeling they were appreciated. She learned a lot from those invisible paragraphs and wills between husbands and wives in the trial of love. Sandra saw how the Christmas hysteria race glimmered through eyeliner and aftershave, until only that grain of honesty was distilled in their eyes. Sandra wanted eyes that said something. Eyes that shared of warmth and joy, that told of an origin. It was a race against time, feelings, and money. She was thrown around in that inferno of families, and she cried like a pure, clean, melting snowfling in the human warmth, that devilish heat from parents’ disintegrated ambitions and kids’ sparkling eyes.

She lay down in the dark of some subway tunnel and fell asleep almost at once, a little bit cold, somewhat hungry. The darkbrown and dirty coat that moved towards her was about to lose one of its arms. Something black and tousled pierced up through the coat where one could have guessed the head to be situated. The coat rocked jerkily ahead, like a limping rocking-chair and was really excited when he’d seen the woman that just had lain down, waiting for him. His face was scarred and creased from years of injected drug experiences. Seldomly could this man take these kinds of occasions seriously. It was seldom he could get his organ up. His potency had left a little bit of its own will the last four years. He knew it hadn’t been for much use but now he needed a hard on, and got one just by his sheer amazement at the woman, two yards in front of him. Legs wide apart, he stood ready for attack. It was ready for attack. He then stood on his knees with Sandra beneath himself and took out his blunt combat knife and held it in a stabbing grip. He twisted out Sandra from her folded side position until she lay on her back. His sick, wide open narcotic eyes stared attentively and with excitement at the shape of her breasts. With his free left hand he grabbed her right wrist and shook her. At the same time Sandra was at a circus with her family.

It was an old childhood memory. They were going out to watch the horses and elephants. Mommy held her right hand and Daddy her left. She often said his name, Judas Iscariot, which was very unusual for her age. Judas lifted her up on his shoulders. The ground was full of clay. Her feet that lying against his poplin coat were stained. She gave the horse sugarcubes. She wasn’t afraid. After a while the horse disappeared and an elephant came up to her. Sandra held out the sugarcubes and as Zimbra’s trunk was stretched out toward her from nowhere it grabbed the whole package. She got scared and silent out of fear for her life. Mommy was laughing heartily. Daddy directed his face sideways up towards her and smiled warmly. She was afraid that the trunk would come back another time, even if she knew it had never happened...

“GET UP PUSSY!” the hobo screamed. Sandra noticed how the trunk was there again. It had grasped her right hand and she was lifted up from her relatively safe position on her father’s right thigh. Her parents disappeared out of the tent, and were screaming at the staff to look for their daughter. They couldn’t see her even if she was straight in front of their eyes, thrown around in front of the mouth of the elephant. But it smelled rotten. When Sandra opened her eyes, all she could see was a dirty blade of a combat knife and a creature that held it in front of her face. Her pants were pulled down and she felt how the creature had let go of her wrist and was working with her at another place. Sandra roared animalistically. It was a roar that explained that she was going to defend herself. Her right hand grabbed onto something above her head. She felt how the endpiece of a plank stucked out. In one single convulsion she pushed it forward. Its massive weight was heavier than she had thought, which made him
comprehend what she was attempting to do. In the dark no one of them could see clearly, so when he raised the knife and stabbed he counted on its hitting a little bit everywhere. Suddenly it echoed from the knife hitting something, in the middle of the dark air. Sandra methodically pulled up her legs and kicked him between his legs. He collapsed in moans and Sandra pushed him over at her left side. She flew up and after a couple of seconds she had a smaller plank in her hands.

"Get some education you mean motherfucker. Just don’t try and frame my paranoid frame of mind. All I have to do is to dance and my exit will explode open.

"What the fuck!" He was twisting in pains.

"Tell me you’re sorry!!" Sandra roared.

"I...ah...mmme...eh...Rossscruhge...eet," he said between the waves of pain. Sandra looked long time enough on his head. She put her mouth two inches from his ear and shouted the loudest roar she had ever shouted in her whole life.

"I CAN’T HEAR YOU, ASSHOLE. LOUDER!!" She stood up and held the plank over her shoulder, like a baseball bat just before swinging it. Her head pierced into some folded steel wires whose pins all pierced into her skull.

He managed to twist around.

"Ross Thorpe..." Another break. "Thor...pe." He looked at Sandra. She stood with her legs wide apart in front of him, looking straight into his eyes. Blood was oozing down her face.

"Bitch!" He roared. Sandra saw the knife flying towards her and then she felt how it cut a deep wound in the side of her lower left chest. She kicked him a second time between his legs and this time he only coughed and had to go down on all fours like a dog.

"WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?!!" she screamed. A train was coming. Ross Thorpe stooped with his sight first at her breasts, then her belly, slowly down and then further on to the thighs, the knees. His skull needed a couple of seconds to understand. It hung down, staring at her thick leather boots. Sandra struck him straight on the head. Her adrenalin and an absolute fear for life couldn’t be stopped. She hit him over the back and thighs three four times extremely hard. The noise of the train made her hit him the hardest she could. Sandra observed the strikes for a short while. She looked around for her stuff in the angry red light from the train, grabbed it all and just ran. As she had gotten away some ten yards, she stopped and turned around. His face had changed to her father’s. The hobo lay in a small pile. She remembered his breath, a mixture of tobacco and puke. She thought of his skull’s deeply rooted dirt, his greywhite sweatpools in the forehead and his brown saliva that had hung down over her throat. She thought of how during those short seconds she had had the time to see up in his toothless palate chamber and the stuff that hung on with the salvia around in the mouth. She’d been lucky not to feel his untended beard, a frightening look of greasy tufts of hair from face and parts of the head. Sandra had been disgusted in a way she wished she’d never experience. She didn’t know if he was dead or alive. She knew only that it had been her father, and she felt her self-hatred for what she’d done to him. Sandra cried, not knowing how to escape. Even though she was pagan, even though she felt unchristianized, something died within her. “Was Ross Thorpe her friend Thor just because she was dreaming, or had she really killed her best friend by mistake?” Sandra was dying of fear in her own nightmare. It was all in her own mind but she couldn’t sort it out. She knew that as long as it wasn’t sorted out her living nightmare would go on. She wanted to leave her own psyche before it left her.

She walked along one of the city’s quays to see how the dark disappeared. It was a clear sky. Not one slash from any arrogantly whipping morning wind. She had sighted a pillar of smoke in full grace. It swept in towards the city with slow and strange contours. It soared like a thin veil from the sky and seemed to pull the little boat gently forward. The ship’s steaming along the ice-cold marble surface of the water was filled with grace as if it was a battleship, coming home from a long, long war. Sandra’s mood flinched because of her wound, but when she put her hand on her arm she was surprised to see that it was
all gone. It was all forgotten, trickled out of her mind as easily as it had come into it, as she saw the graceful lighterman peeping out from naked headlands, furthest away in the dusk horizon. The ship’s round prow and stern made it look like a tow boat. It tooted and signalled landing. It was easy and enjoyable for Sandra to follow its pace, 3 knots at the most.

They were a good people living on that boat. They put on a new fresh bandage on her wound, even though Sandra herself had forgotten all about it. Tserbil told her, after they had gotten to know each other, how her father had been crazy for boats the whole of his life. His journeys had stretched around absolutely all corners of the world. Tserbil herself had been with him on some of them. It had been hard for Evil Rake to get permission to land at the winterquay, but it had been solved by his presenting a list of merits from his numerous freight expeditions. Tserbil was like Pippi Longstocking, wild and full of life and freckles. Evil Rake was pretty wild he too, but in a different way, with a pipe and tales of searobberys no one had ever heard of. Sandra thought they were reliable skippers more than some mean and constantly drunk pirates.

The 30th December it was Sandra’s turn to make dinner. Tserbil had bought food for a month ahead. The chef had ordered filets for a stew and a diversified collection of vegetables. Tserbil could, as Sandra had understood it from her third day on the boat, come back, however, with any bloody thing. Sandra hadn’t much of a choice but M/S Esmeralda was one of the few places where she felt really safe. Tserbil and Evil Rake were down to earth with things. If she’d begin to put up demands, they’d ask for explanations, and that Sandra wanted to avoid at any cost. Tserbil got back at 6:30 p.m. She hadn’t bought any filets. Vegetables there were plenty of. Tserbil and Sandra helped each other with the bags in the cabooses. Sandra asked Tserbil about the meat.

“Tserbil where’s my meat?”

“There is none. Meat will just make you hunger for more. Besides, it’s bad for your heart. But, you know,” Tserbil said.

“What?” Sandra said in front of the sink, somewhat split.

“You know, as long as you’ve got a good Vermouth you don’t have to worry,” she said with a sweeping smile. Sandra unpacked the last bag and put the cans in the fridge. As she was done, she saw Tserbil beginning to cut up lettuce.

“Wasn’t I supposed to make the dinner?”

“I was just going to help you a little. That’s OK isn’t it?” Tserbil asked gaily. Sandra thought it was fun with someone who took initiative. She and Tserbil agreed upon making one hell of a dinner. Sandra peeled, cut, and chopped three yellow onions, a cucumber, tomatoes, carrots and three kinds of peppers. It took her thirty-five minutes and meanwhile Tserbil made a good base with beans, vermouth, flour and some other spicy ingredients. When Evil Rake came puffing in he was rapidly driven out from the kitchen regions by the busy chefs. They worked well together. Element after element of the preparation was expedited and soon the dinner was ready. Finally Sandra’s stuff was thrown into Tserbil’s stuff to just simmer for a while. After half an hour Evil Rake took the staircase back to the cabooses for a new sniff of those professional fumes that now attracted him quite a lot. He lifted the lid and inhaled. He coughed severely, but not because of the boiling food. As his throat had calmed down he said shortly but enthusiastically, “Good girls, good girls.” He had washed himself and had put on a new shirt. As they finally had sat down around the round oak table a second time, Evil Rake opened a cupboard cabinet behind his back. He took out a bottle of Chateau Ribœingmarloise de Gauloise from 1985 and pulled out the cork.

“Tomorrow we’ll bring out the ‘82 one,” he said shortly and nodded to his two tableladies. “1982, upon my word! That was a... damn good year,” Evil Rake said almost in euphoria. Sandra didn’t know if he was talking to himself or to her, or to Tserbil.

“You can tell us of your hobbies later, Dad,” Tserbil said and lifted her glass to propose a toast. “Let’s toast the three of us, here and now!” she said in a genial tone to Sandra and Evil Rake.
“Cheers,” Sandra said.
“Cheers, my beloved,” Evil Rake said smiling, cluing his glass with the other two, which also clued with each other.
“Oh well, yes... I am a wine lover,” Evil Rake said to Sandra opening the dinner, but all of a sudden he stopped. His eyes were wide open. “What a steeew...aaahh,” he said from his position in some gastronomical galaxy. He held up his glass to toast again.
“For the steeew...” his eyes noticed that his glass was almost out of wine. He took out the bottle and filled it. Sandra also had another squirt and so did Tserbil. They lifted their chalices and Evil Rake renewed the toast. “Pour le goût deliciex,” he said eagerly. Sandra and Tserbil toasted and drank gigglingly. A couple of minutes followed when they ate and enjoyed nothing but the food.

“How long are you going to stay here?” Sandra asked Tserbil.
“Well, for how long Dad?”
“We had planned to stay at least up to April. Then we’ll see. It depends on how long the wine lasts.” He laughed.
“But, how...” Sandra wanted to know how they made a living, but hesitated as she realized that it was none of her business.
“The ship’s interior needs to be restored. We restored its exterior this summer in a little dry dock in the Harbor.”
“It’s a nice boat,” Sandra said.
“Thanks,” Evil Rake said. He filled his plate and asked if Tserbil wanted some more, but she averted his offer. Sandra let her plate be filled. She set her hungry silverware in her food. Its aroma seemed to bring Sandra into a state of sheer replention.
“How long had you thought of staying?” Tserbil asked Sandra.
“Well, how long... can I?” Sandra said, very hesiant, perhaps astonished by the impetuous question.
“As long as you wish,” Tserbil said smiling to Evil Rake who, rosy-cheeked, just smiled to comfort Sandra. He took up the wine bottle and shared the contents democratically between the three glasses.
“As long as you wish and can endure,” he said with a wider smile. Sandra thought it was almost too good. “Is this it? Is this what I’ve been waiting for?” she asked herself.
“But... hey what do you mean?” she asked Evil Rake. “Endure?” She looked at Evil Rake. “Is this boat driven by a charcoal burner or what?” Sandra’s smile was contagious. Evil Rake laughed like seamen do when a witty woman entertains.
“A sailor’s life is the sailor’s life!” he warned, with a twinkle in his eyes. Tserbil put down her glass.
“We thought of going to Iceland and perhaps Greenland to visit some of Evil Rake’s friends.”
“Huh? You know people from over there?” Evil Rake and Tserbil looked astonished at Sandra.
She was a little bit too curious. Tserbil couldn’t but let go.
“Well, Sandra, Evil Rake you see, he’s buddies with yellow, black, red, brown and white people.” She looked heartily at Evil Rake and then at Sandra.
“Uh huh,” Sandra answered. “Is there anyone he doesn’t know?” Sandra continued cheerily.
“I have a hard time believing so,” Tserbil said smiling at Sandra.
“There’s some your dad has to tell me of,” Sandra said.
“One thing, one story for each corner of the world he can tell you,” Tserbil said, proud of her dad.
Evil Rake laughed.
“You’ve got to...tell,” Sandra said in an angry hunger for knowledge.
“Tell and tell... What do I have to tell?” He looked at his daughter that looked back at him and
then at Sandra. After some seconds of roving about with her eyes, Tserbil stood up.

“I’m cleaning the table,” she said. Sandra stood up. “Where are you going?” Tserbil asked.

“I was thinking of getting the dessert.”

“No no, don’t worry about it. Sit down. I’ll take care of it. Sit down. I’ll soon be back with the fruitbowl,” she said with a nice voice. Tserbil carried out plates, silverware and glasses in a couple of rounds between the kitchen caboose and the dinner table.

“All right. So what do you want to know about?” Evil Rake asked while stretching for his pipe. “Tserbil!” he called. A “Yeeah??!” could be heard between the dishing noises of plates and silverware.

“Could you hand me the tobacco, dear?” Sandra looked up along the staircase towards the kitchen. She saw how Evil Rake knocked the pipe against the heel of his shoe.

“Please catch the tin,” he said to Sandra, who again turned her head up towards the kitchen.

“OK, someone down there catchin’?” Tserbil said loudly and stepped out a couple of steps until she stood at the top of the staircase.

“Yes!” Sandra said while she ran up to the bottom of it. Tserbil threw the tin and hastily checked that Sandra had caught it before she went on with the dishes. Sandra handed the tin to Evil Rake.

“Have you seen a real seaman smoke real tobacco before?” Evil Rake asked her. Sandra felt as if she were seven years old talking to a big fat man in the park.

“It’s not...grass, is it?!”

“Dope! Are you out of your mind?!” he said with an astonishment that seemed originated in the deepest woods of Timbuktu. “This is Burlington’s Tobacco. The Scottish East Indies traveller who learnt how to dry and roll genuine Chinese tobacco before the French hardly knew what a pipe was!! Ha! HA!!” Evil Rake carefully stuffed the pipe full of tobacco with his right thumb. After a half minute’s preparation he let the flame of the match start the glow.

“I’m sorry I asked,” Sandra said with a slight shrug of her shoulders. They laughed a little. He seemed to be a real seaman, Sandra thought. Evil Rake puffed small puffs in a dreary silence between their eyes. Evil Rake seemed deliberate. He slightly screwed up his eyes towards Sandra, and she suddenly imagined that this is what a real, sly and insidious pirate looks like. Evil Rake had a tense drama about his eyes that at once emanated energy and curiosity. An ancient mariner with such a sight that could travel over half the globe for treasures.

“What’s so attractive about the ocean?” Sandra asked.

“Oh my dear...beloved. That’s a good question.” Evil Rake thoughtfully looked around for a while. He enjoyed the tobacco. “There’s always a new experience in each destination, a new exploration behind every horizon. That’s darn flat in words.” Evil Rake began to recollect his thoughts. “An odyssey, Sandra, that is as if to experience poetry like something concrete, a three-dimensional rhyme. The real temptation is the actual wandering, the actual journey toward a goal. Not all can read, much less understand poetry, not all can play an instrument, not all can make the paintbrush dance on a piece of canvas. But to be a traveller, that’s to enter into the actual work of art. A pilgrimage, that’s exactly that painting, that cultural treasure each man can experience without knowing how to read, sing, or dance. A peregrine jewel is greased by the bluntness of words or the vagary of colors. To make an exploring expedition, that is to say good-bye, to be able to say hi, and to stay in the action.” Evil Rake quieted. Sandra looked him in the eye.

“How long have you been out on the ocean?” she asked artlessly and impulsively.

“Oh boy...since I was a kid.”

“What experience affected you the most?” She wondered what his answer would be.

“Is there anything you’ve discovered is the same the world over?” She knew her questions were hard to answer.

“What a question?! But all right. Nothing is the same...everything changes. Life is born, it lives, thrives and dies. What you see is how people from different cultures either are good or evil to their
environment. But the love, the friendship, the affection, the hate, the leadership or the fights -- they’re the same wherever you are on the globe.”

“I’ve never seen a tribe war in Zambia,” Sandra mentioned straight to the point. “But I’m convinced it’s something different from the civil service.”

“It is,” Evil Rake said. “A tribe war is an armageddon of life and death. It is a battle for survival and the protection of one’s own ranger’s district, and possibly to earn a chance to capture a new strip of land. It’s the same thing that generals and commanders are dealing with in their headquarters. It’s two different systems. A primitive and a less primitive, but it’s the same important and valuable land areas one wants to defend with blood, sweat and tears. I ended up in a tribe war once. It was in the sixties. In Brazil. We were far deep into the Amazon river with our small boats from the main ship. All of a sudden we saw a complete rain of arrows shot above us towards the other side of the river. The arrow-rain was answered by another similar wave that would have hit us if we hadn’t started to get moving in time. We’d been on this weekly jungle river expedition and all of a sudden we had ended up in the middle of a wrangle between two tribes. I’m never going to forget those savage faces. There were rings in both ears, noses and lips. And artistically made scars in the face. We had our rifles and guns but we couldn’t shoot just because we had them. All the guys survived. I remember how amazed we were by the splendour and the courage from each side. They had a pride we western people do not have.” He paused. “But perhaps that pride doesn’t show until war is about to happen,” he added. She looked at him for a while. Then Sandra heard sounds from Tserbil coming down with the fruitsalad. She rose up to help Tserbil. Sandra put down the bowl on the table. Tserbil laid out the plates and the spoons.

“This was good,” Tserbil told her father and turned towards Sandra to see her reaction.

“Thanks for the dinner.” Sandra said like a ten-year-old boy.

“Anyone for coffee?” Evil Rake called.

“Yees...” Sandra said hesitantly.

“But what time is it?” Tserbil said to her in a somewhat louder, but hesitant voice.

“Time and time. I’m heating up a kettle,” Evil Rake decided loudly, turned down towards the saloon.

“Would you perhaps bring down some cheese. A Gorgonzola and some Brie, maybe?”

“No. I want cookies. Those mint ones, you know. By the way, you could come up yourselves to tell me what you want, dammit. I can’t keep on yelling like this all the time. It fester my heart.”

“Bah! Don’t exaggerate,” Tserbil said. They went up into the kitchen and saw that Evil Rake had put two different bits of Gorgonzola and a larger bit of Brie on a tray.

“If someone is interested in Poitier cognac you will have to get glasses. I’m pouring a glass for myself anyhow.” So they sat for half an hour and had a time of joy. Evil Rake spoke lively about his escapades along the coasts of Greenland and how he had established acquaintances with its natives. Sandra felt forced to empty the Poitier bottle, together with him. The night was a success. Evil Rake’s vitality was stunning. He seemed as if taken out from some gangster movie, twenty-five-years old and full of energy. She understood that the oceans had made his mind forever young. There were features of wisdom that the tooth of time and life itself had in-grained into his character. He brooded on something very serious. As it was getting close to 1:00 a.m. on the morning of New Year’s Eve, Sandra knew that many of her earlier roads weren’t navigable any more. In the heat of the discussion she saw how three persons together were creating a motif. The conversation cut through everything. Sandra noticed the opening of a new philosophy. It thirsted forward and into the future. She wanted to know if she was with it, or not.

“The formation of Stonehenge is really impressive. It is considered to have been built during three eras, but none of them finished their mission since more than thousands of years of development that each era put into the creating of Stonehenge. It is bound to be hidden in clouds of mystery and uncertainty. I heard the Neapolitan people laid the foundation to it around 2700 B.C., and the Heelstone, the central
keystone of the whole stone formation, being its center of logic. It is the pivotal point touched only once a year by the light of the sunrise of Midsummer’s Eve. There are tales about this author Aubrey who supposedly discovered 56 holes, just inside the formation, a wall built by the first Stonehenge generation. In these holes, cremated bones have been found. Ha...HA HA!!!” Evil Rake tapped up a cup of black, black coffee.

“Stonehenge II was built by the so called ‘Cup people’ eight hundred years later,” Sandra added. Evil Rake took over immediately as if her knowledge belonged to him.

“Seventy enormous bluestones from the Prescelly mountains in Pembrok, South Wales, were transported to Wiltshire, a distance of between 375 to 400 miles, by sea, and through the British channel, weighing four tons each.” Evil Rake drank from his cup.

“Stonehenge III, built around 1500 B.C., completed its present formation together with the stones from Marlborough Downs, 50 tons each, 18 miles north of Wiltshire.”

Evil Rake quickly put his cup to his lips and drank, drank thirstily from the oozingly hot beverage. “The fantastic thing is how they’ve been able to raise these gigantic stones on those that had been placed there already, in an age when the wheel was not invented. The Heelstone, that one, I can’t figure out. I can understand its function but what purpose does it fulfill? Couldn’t you help me a little bit on this one Sandra?” Evil Rake’s sigh looked down into the surface of the table. Sandra tapped some more coffee for herself, and for Tserb, who wanted only half a cup.

Sandra took a couple of gulps from the, right now, perfectly tempered brew. He made a deep inhalation from his burning pipe. There was some silence.

“Huh?!” he almost screamed. “Don’t you know anything...Sandra?!” He looked stubbornly into her eyes. She was afraid of him. Finally he moved his gaze onto her breasts.

“Through all these years I’m bound to have advanced in my...degrees. This has given me the opportunity to get my hands on classified as well as unclassified information. One cute little document, a file from 1911, fell down on my desk and I guess we’re still working on that one. Classified stuff of course. It is called ‘Anna Achmatova-Parisprotokoll 8.’ It was an interrogation of a Russian girl who is supposed to have had an affair with the current Czar Nikolai II.” He laughed a little. “Did you know that?!! The same year he had honored his woman Alexandra Feodorevna a golden egg on the 15th Anniversary of his own coronation. The egg is another piece of art by the jewelry production group Fabergé giving another extra polish to their already golden-edged fame. This Anna Achmatova, who had grown up in the background of the courtlife in Tsarskoje Selo...her appearance is nothing but a truth which slowly has unveiled itself before my eyes... Her appearance is of such an impractical and... unethical kind...just ridiculous.”

Sandra didn’t know what to say, it was as if she had to approve to this man’s utter disgust of the female race, as if she was another Anna Achmatova... And Anna Achmatova, a Russian poet, “who was she?” Sandra wondered. “What is he trying to do with me?” Sandra wondered. “Is he trying to do with me what he couldn’t with this mysterious Anna Achmatova? Oh God, take me out of this place please!” She felt how a core of hatred welled up inside of her. Even though she wasn’t a feminist, she realized what she had to become, to survive him, and most of all, to survive her self. To avoid lunacy.

“The result just laid in front of me in a packet of six folded, thin sheets of paper. The interrogations of Anna had been without any results.” Evil Rake shrugged his shoulders to assert a mood, as if to make Sandra really feel the taste of his bitter caramel. He went on.

“Nothing had been proved. The Russian interrogators were pleading witchcraft through gruesome occult poetry, which they claimed the alleged mistress to have composed to lure the Czar to commit adultery. They interrogated her about her growing up, her political ideas, what she thought was the meaning with life! THE MEANING OF LIFE!!” He shook his whole body. “What’s happening with us...with US Sandra?!! What?!! Do you know? HUH!!?!” He had a hysterical expression on his face that shook, and his eyes were at once bloodshot with dilated retinas. There was something sick about this man,
Sandra now came to understand. Something deeply, deeply awkward, something alien, absolutely inhumane. Sandra still sat like Tserbil, like a schoolgirl watching a movie, bewitched and at the same time stunned by this dark, attractive actor, with a charisma she had never experienced before, pulpign itself into Sandra’s system.

“So far I was satisfied by knowing that she had found someone else. It seemed most logical, most profitable, sort of. The affair couldn’t be further expedited, however, I thought. It was nothing but an old and nevertheless interesting story of carnal drive from the turn of the century. I remember I made numerous visits to her vicious diplomatic family. My contact with her improved. I consulted diplomats and my work soon enough paid off, even if it was for strictly personal reasons.” Evil Rake took a new inhalation. “You have to understand at least that, Sandra! Huh?!” Again he had that sick, weary look on his face, as if fire would come out from his mouth if he opened it. Sandra did not understand why he said, what he said to her. “He is pushing me into a corner,” Sandra thought. “His story is cutting inside of me. Like mosquitoes sucking my...”

“I’m talking about a Russian who died one hundred years ago...about desperate love or about the passion, the lusts, how the flesh in humans is attracted first, more frenetically, so nastily that the thought of real love does not dare to keep up with what is not passion, the carnal drive...” Sandra was scared of what this sailor had in his head.

“Knowledge was built on knowledge. Some things one has to put up with. I found this book about the Russian revolutions.” Evil Rake looked at them as if he was about to make some kind of confession. “Whatever. Does someone want some more Poitier cognac?” Sandra shook wearily on her head. She wondered what really was at stake.

“One thing is for sure. Anna Achatova...she’s my grandmother.” Evil Rake turned around reaching for a box, but asked Tserbil to bring it down as he could not reach it from his position on the other side of the table. He took out a medallion, with an inscription in Russian. “To Anna’ it said on this remarkable piece of remarkable jewelry, with stunning ornamentation and marvellous, wondrous works in marble.

“Anna Achatova?” Sandra asked herself, puzzled.

“I’ll get to that, I’ll get to that,” Evil Rake immediately said as he raised up from his sunken down position. “She meets me and then you know the rest. Sometimes it doesn’t have to be harder than that simple straight feeling. One can let things just happen, by their own will. My daughter, she saw, she sees things by her own free will, she sees the giving out of her self in its own pale simplicity. We always keep looking onto each other’s eyes just like one does when discerning one’s enemy. Because you are attracted to me aren’t you? Sandra?” Evil Rake smiled darkly and looked like a lost puppy at Tserbil, inhaled through his pipe, let the smoke work in him and exhaled straight into her face, as if she wasn’t there in front of him. Tserbil just watched. He said that it was impossible for Tserbil to deny her pact of allegiance to him. Sandra felt regret. How strange it may ever sound, she felt regret for Evil Rake.

“It’s all about an edge of love. Most fertile right at that point when the actual flower of it has blossomed. The sparkle, the obsessed affection, it is so strong. Why hindering it from simply happening? Don’t you agree with me Sandra?” Sandra was caught by his stare. It had none of which she was affected by. None of what she wished. Yet, there was nothing that could replace it. She couldn’t understand what she was going to justify or replace this force with, as she questioned herself whether she really should, whether she really needed it. Sandra wished to let go of herself, to lose herself. She felt hollow in his presence, like a completely lost child. She was tranced by his voice and there was nothing she could do. “He was a leech.” she thought. He was dangerous like the fire, trying to lick her with his nonemphatic flames.

“She meets me and then you know the rest.”

“For such a person like Anna Achatova, this was an Honor’s Duty to become an unknown and mystic symbol for Russia’s court. Her husband lived enough on his own like the writer he was. She was
full of...wishes, right there in front of the lords of the October revolutions. They couldn’t see the wood for all the trees. Anna was glad to “do it” in order to give her courage and artistic talent the Empire’s empirical emerald polish. My story continues. By the way, it hasn’t even started.” Evil Rake took a break. He smoked deeply out of his pipe. His eyes were red. “It’s said that the only thing that is needed in order to make a story a story, is the decision one makes about where the story begins in history, and where it ends in it. I don’t really know where mine begins and where it ends. Even though I’m Tserbil’s father and should feel confident about her, I always give up. I can only patiently watch her, the way one is alternatively pushed and pulled by fate.” Evil Rake’s eyes opened up, as if he had hit his own tail. “I remember that moment long, long ago when for a moment all my senses operated at a maximum of their perceptive ability. I was transformed into a package of obsessed affection for my daughter. In that moment in which Tserbil had given the slightest sign of division, something happened to me. Something strange, I don’t know what it was. I began to feel the scents from the trees next to me. I began to see how clouds changed their shape above my head. I could hear people around me, I saw with the purity and clear vision of a child, as if a medium was dependent on honesty to see fate before it happened, if it happened.”

Sandra thought that he was turning his mind into a more and more infectious frame of mind. She sensed that he was talking about fate as if it was something that one could control. He spoke as if the control of fate was the key to future. As if the future had to be unlocked, and he had to make sure he had the right key.

“I was fast enough to believe that Tserbil was a little innocent appearance at the soundwaves of the echoes of her words that charged against me. Against me!” Evil Rake let the words grow inside his two listeners. “My daughter then saw the debilitation of my mind, I had debilitated myself deliberately and she saw it! My treasure! It was all about that edge of love, at a peak of fertility. Such...communication I’ve never experienced neither before, nor later...” He was breathtaken and excited. Tserbil clapped him on his back, and held his hand.

“Maybe we’ve been able to put up with each other just because you’ve been out...sailing...for most of the time.” There was no laughter, just a deep sensitive look into each other’s eyes as if they hated and loved each other at the same time and were pretty hysterical about it. Sandra was fascinated at what she saw. These people expressed such an intensity in their looks, that she was afraid to move, to breathe almost.

“So far I had been immature, completely incapable of listening to anyone but myself. I’m noticing this little girl and it is me, DO YOU UNDERSTAND SANDRA! DO YOU FUCKING UNDERSTAND!? IT’S ME!!! MEEE!!! I’m the one who listens to her spirit.” He had a hysterical, insane look in his eyes. Sandra just wanted to leave this boat, she just wanted to get back onto the quay right now. Something told her he...was not good to be around. The silence was intense. Evil Rake’s words were intense. There was nothing in between. Sandra didn’t know if she should open her mouth, she thought it might be polite...and Evil Rake might kill her...because she’d been impolite.

“And?” Sandra said out loud. Evil Rake looked at her with his heterodoxly bloodred eyes.

“Tserbil...was carrying on this book called ‘Joan of Arc.’” He smiled at her and pet her on her head.

“Oh well, Evil Rake, you are speculating,” she said. “I don’t know how Joan of Arc fits here.” Tserbil looked at her. Sandra thought, “Is he real? Can I feel him, or is he just nothing but pain, can someone exist by sheer...evilness?”

“Joan of Arc,” he repeated slowly as he looked at Tserbil. Sandra was scared to death at what she saw. She just wanted to escape. She knew they were insane. It had just slipped out of her. Immediately Evil Rake showed his insecurity and fear when he turned his sick face towards her, as if he for a while had lost all the control he had over Sandra’s mind. He thought for a while. Then he spoke with a warm and soft voice of a completely different character, like he all of a sudden was a different person, with a different voice. He talked so that Sandra felt pity for him instead.
“Oh...well...now I must be talking of a mystically religious corner.” He breathed through his pipe and looked out his window. Sandra couldn’t see anything when she looked out through it. It was too dark outside.

“It is said that Noah’s Ark would have been what’s called a ‘figura.’ A figura for the Christian church. It is said that Hagar, the slave woman, would have been the figura for the old testament, as Sara was a figura for the new.

“As Joshua was for Jesus,” Sandra said out of sheer fear for losing interest. “He brought the Judean people to the promised land of Palestine,” she added just to be safe.

“You’ve studied, I can hear,” Evil Rake acknowledged. His senses were more alert. “With Jesus’ appearance before the humans came the perception of time. The woman I’m about to present, the old French Catholic Joan of Arc, she understood Christianity before Jesus’ revelation, like a series of attempts and wishes, like blind steps in the evolution of humanity. According to her, the human race had been raised in a dusk, un-enlightened...forward. In battle Joan was unconscious of absolutely all dangers and therefore also of her superiority, an ability to win, to dominate, a drive for victory. Legends prove that Joan sat very well in her saddle, and she was obviously keen on athletic exercises.” Evil Rake puffed his pipe. “Of all kinds of exercises.” His eyes shone humorously. “She was without any technical knowledge of how to supervise a course of a battle, therefore looking at all the battle she did won, she was the natural born winner! A natural talent in fighting.”

“Evil Rake...why are you telling me this?” Sandra said.

“She fought with only a flag in her hand.” Evil Rake hid the laughter behind his yawn. “One episode especially, I can remember at Les Tourelles, which the Englishmen had captured outside Orleans. There are different versions...one goes like this.” He creased his forehead somewhat.

“The holder of the flag had become weak and is supposed to have given it to a certain Monsieur de Villars. The commander, who thought the retreat was about to happen, proposed to Monsieur de Villars that they together should get themselves up to the wall of the fortress, and this would turn the courage of the soldiers to a source of power. Commander Dunois walks, however, quickly up to the wall without his flagman with him. Joan of Arc calls to the flagman, Oh my flag! My flag!” Evil Rake paused. “At that moment Joan expresses a will of steel. It was a matter of wanting one thing and nothing else. Joan had a vision before herself, and when she roared, the roar pulled out the courageous blood, the battle cock every soldier imagined he had, however, without reasons enough to make use of. She inspired their wish to fight! How about that, huh?!”

Evil Rake looked around full of questions.

“Where’s that banner going? Where’s that courage? Why doesn’t people wanna fight for their rights anymore? Where’s the cock? Doesn’t it exist anymore...Sandra? Huh??! Joan instinctively must have weathered what was ticking in the soldiers, don’t you think?” He smoked his pipe and let her think what he just had said for a while. He studied her. He wanted to see her reaction. Sandra was paralyzed with fear. She wanted to get out.

“Descendet Virgo in dorsum sagittarii et flores Virgineos obscurabit.” Evil Rake said. “That is, ‘A maid is supposed to descend onto the shooter’s back and darken the maiden flowers.’

“Evil Rake, why are you keeping me here? Why are you telling me this?” He just stared at her, as if she were stupid, as if she wanted to die. And it made her want to die so she continued.

“According to the French, Merlin said ‘A maid will descend onto the English bow and arrowman’s back and with her shadow protect the French lilies.’ She thought she was going insane, she didn’t know how to protect herself, for each of her words to him it was as if she felt eaten, raped. She was disturbed by his manic voice while her instincts told her she had never confronted something better, something more manly, something with so much hard-on as that of his. Evil Rake walked away to change the record. When he came back, she said,

“Merlin also said that she would come from Lothringen.” Evil Rake shook his head with an
inexplicable stare. He wondered.
    “How did you know that?”
    “Yes...” Sandra said quietly and as if she’d said more than she should have, and now she just
looked down on the floor next to her, just like a criminal ready to hear its verdict.
    “Go on!” she said in an almost indifferent tone.
    “I was just about to tell.” He was thinking while he pulled his hand through his thick dark fatty
hair. His eyes were staring at the little but beautiful crystal crown above the table. He then looked at
Sandra and wiped his facial moisture off his face with his pale, grey hand. He gave Sandra a look as if he
tried hard to understand her but she made it difficult for him.
    “There are many small peculiarities about Joan of Arc’s destiny. A lot of things must have
affected them during the following centuries.” Evil Rake got quiet. He just sat like that, totally quiet all of
a sudden.
    “And?” Tserbil said.
    “In Selles-en-Berry, one of the brothers Laval says that Joan of Arc’s horse wouldn’t let her step
up on it. Then she’d commanded, ‘Take it to the Cross!’ Standing at the cross, the horse would let her
mount it. It was as if transformed totally, according to the reporter de Laval. Totally tame, soft and kind of
like a piece of silk. Like it had lost its potency!” Evil Rake drank from his coffee cup.
    “She communicated,” she said shortly. “The example points at nothing else than a communication
with not only the human, but also with the animals.”
    “Yes! I know...isn’t that something. Then one is bound by a mission...or?”
    “Pictures?” Sandra got out of herself as if she had hesitated for a while before the truth. Evil
Rake stared at her a long time. Sandra continued, “Joan had an intuition for environments. She knew that
the horse could be affected by different...”
    “Symbols?” Evil Rake said.
    “Right! I think the horse has a communication system much like any other animal, different from
the human way of communication. Animals speak simply, telepathically, as if they project thoughts to
each other, simply through these mental projections.
    “That is speaking for a rather sensitive sense to perceptive things,” Tserbil said lurkingly. Sandra
looked at Tserbil. Tserbil smiled at her.
    “Go on!” She said to Evil Rake who was wiping his nose. When he had tucked the handkerchief
into his pocket he lay his pale hands on the table.
    “Joan of Arc was interrogated in long and prolonged periods of time, during a year after her well-
known capture at a bridge, the 23rd of May, 1430. The interrogator was Bishop Pierre Cauchon. The
result was seventy paragraphs of charges against her. It didn’t go as well as Cauchon and the others had
imagined it would. As the interrogations had been taking place within the domains of the church, Cauchon
realizes, at one point, that he has to get hold of more and stronger authorities to get the ‘right’ verdict. The
seventy articles are transformed into twelve new articles, which Joan of Arc of course never is allowed to
see, most of it was stipulating that she had been a witch, and in different ways had manipulated the French
kingdom. A fault was, for example, that she had dressed in men’s clothing. During the interrogations,
Joan is confronted with skillfully formulated questions by well-educated and well-prepared bishops and
monks in the name of the church. The trial is pushing the time limits. The interrogations are concluded
into those twelve new articles, by an assembly of men of the University of Paris’ best educated men and
some of France’s best lawyers.” Evil Rake spoke with a calm voice. “The highest faculty in theology of
France and academic elite attacks the nineteen-year-old girl in an organized way. Completely without any
consistent proofs. In spite of that Joan lived this year, and was moved around between jails, was tortured
and even raped, her answers were still simple, straightforward and honestly clear. It had all in all been a
matter of power over the woman, a power that Pierre Cauchon, lawyers, or no other man had.” Evil Rake
took a break. His eyes looked demandingly at Sandra.
“The trial is clotted with complicated terms of the language of the ruling French law system,” she said, simply because she was woman, she knew that. It was an instinct.

“But Sandra? Look at her case! Huh!? Look at it!”

“I know very well the case.”

“WHO IS THE LAW?!! WHAT IS THE LAW??!!” Evil Rake roared at her.

Sandra looked at Tserbil who looked back at her with an empty, hollow sight, she just sat silent.

“Aren’t you going to defend...me...yourself?” Sandra asked Tserbil while her bitter tears fell of a new much more cold awareness. She looked down at her hands which lay in her lap. She felt little, small like a six-year-old girl. She didn’t know where to go.

“Joan could neither read nor write. She could hardly have understood a third of the questions that were being racked up against her...”

But Sandra knew it was too late, it didn’t matter. She knew she could not defend herself anymore because she knew less and less of what exactly it was she was defending herself against. She tried again.

“It’s interesting to see how she...” She burst out in tears so hard she could hardly speak.

“HUH??!” Evil Rake roared and saliva flew out from his dark mouth.

“That Joan of Arc managed so well...simply by speaking through her...” Again she had to pause for Evil Rake.

“HUH??! GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER, WOMAN!! NOW!!” Evil Rake was furious.

“HEART!” Sandra looked up at Evil Rake and all of a sudden he became feeble like a lamb again. Sandra was so disgusted by his weird changes of mood, and she understood how there was no logic in his world, no regulations, no standards...

“How does it really work, Sandra? If you’re one of the Christians you wouldn’t know because Christianity is the liquidation of original sin, isn’t it? Only someone free like a Greek Goddess would know what to do, or some pagan uncomplicated person, someone from the Norse mythology... But that’s all taken care of... Killing your last pair of photographic eyes...for what use? Did you think you’d get rid of me because you got rid of Thor? HA HA HA!!! I can sniff Christians with my toe nails. They smell. By hell, they smell!”

“How do you know that I got rid of Thor? Maybe it was he who decided to sacrifice his own fictional character for the sake of me?”

“A god from the Norse mythology trying to SAVE a CHRISTIAN by throwing his torn and shabby old ax at Loki? To die for the sacrifice of Christianity?”

“We had nothing to lose. We were pretty much in the same boat. We were both given this boat to paddle through the sea of wisdom. You thought it was pretty fun...with a high donkey...a donkey stoned to death?”

“But dear, you caused all of this! This is all in your head! This is all you! You’re the one who makes all of this up! HA! HA! HA!”

She understood how right he clearly was, how wrong she had been, and her self-hatred ate at her. She felt as if she had a fire inside of her which she couldn’t let out. She understood how she couldn’t be logical anymore, she had to leave it...the mind. She had to change language. She watched him and she felt pain. The immense pain of her soul was in the way, it signaled that something was wrong, yet Sandra had no alternative, her mind was losing sense of what was real and unreal. She could only feel fear and no way out. She knew her fault was to reason logically when the world was...illogical. Her soul yelled a last cry.

“As commonly known, honesty lasts the longest.”

Evil Rake looked at her as if he didn’t know what to do with her. He sighed deeply and drank out of his cognac glass. Tserbil held up his pipe to his mouth while looking at Sandra with pale, dead eyes. Evil Rake smoked through it and spoke again.

“On one occasion Cauvon gets lunatic because Joan demands to be brought to the public Church meeting in Basel. Cauvon had overlooked this theoretical risk that with some lurking...smart thinking
Joan could turn to her advantage... Huh!! How about that Sandra! What do you think! Isn’t that nice?" He paused to smoke some more to let Sandra rest.

"The seconds before her trial Joan gets...through a whisper..." he scratches his back as if he doesn’t know how to continue. "Ehmm...let’s see...oh well...let’s be nice..." Now he whispered. "Through a whisper by the Dominican monk Ysembard, she heard of the public church meeting in Basel."

He looked at her smiling, returning to his normal voice. "When Cauchon discovers how theory is changed for a virtual mistake, he shouts to Manchon at the protocol, to go on. Then, at this point Joan of Arc asks, ‘Why do you write down that which is against me, but not that which is to my advantage?’ Now isn’t that a smart girl?! Huh!"

Tserbil had never heard his father tell anything of this before.

"I think that exclamation very well clarifies Joan’s situation and how ridiculously wrong Cauchon and the other monks and lawyers were," Sandra said and she began crying. Evil Rake looked at her, relieved, and smiled.

"Certainly, yes, of course! They lived in a time that feared the woman who could speak with the devil’s sliness. It seems to me that Joan of Arc had a peculiar way of making him feeling guilty occupying space in the world. As if she constantly pushed Cauchon to withdraw into himself.” Sandra thought that Evil Rake himself was more “self-conscious” than earlier, in the way that he was aware of his self, but that this awareness of his self wasn’t his self’s awareness of itself, but rather turned into an object of someone else’s observation, because he’d never thought of himself as an object before, but was suddenly interested in himself as an object. She watched him silently. He smiled at the peculiar thought “Is she growing in me, or am I growing in her?"

“To crystallize things, Joan’s logical thinking is simply better than the reality that doesn’t exist, which the bishop Cauchon and the others loosely try to direct. Joan speaks of things that exist. Of appearances that really appeared. The bishops were making up things...”

Tserbil poured up Poitier cognac to all three of them. Sandra wondered how much alcohol she’d been served this night.

"The world is different today."

"The Core?"

"My career hasn’t had so much with the Christianity to do, but rather...with that goal which is out there at Wiltshire.

"Christianity...isn’t that a goal in itself?” Sandra said, to the point.

"My task is to get experiences, the experiences of the adventure, even if it has been hard and sometimes lonely to both me and Tserbil. My existence is all about Tserbil. There’s a trustworthy calm in her. Her growth I thought should go before anything else. Even though my duties have become more than so, I know that I govern over an incredible inheritance from a lost...Russian...empire. I, Evil Rake, had all of a sudden a little girl in front of me that was much, much more than just a daughter to me. I understand more by reading the interrogations over and over with Anna Achmatova, Russian poetry’s perhaps foremost talent."

"Have you read her poetry?"

Evil Rake looked at her for a long time.

The courage to dare to give out oneself so totally which Joan of Arc does with herself I understand must be the genial trick over everything else. A self-portrait that in one blow mediates origin, the belief of the Czar, his wish and hope for the future, the actual edge, Anna Achmatova’s..."

"Fantasy," Sandra said with cold streaks along her spine. She didn’t dare to think of what she had responded to. She felt mentally blocked. She didn’t understand his discussion with her anymore. He ate like a rat from that which belonged to Sandra. His nonsense she was forced to accept as her new reality, her new world. Evil Rake was making it clear how true self-transcendence meant relationship and this relationship he forced down her throat... Sandra was becoming schizoid as his power of making her feel
authentic guilt. Her individual felt guilty at daring to be, doubly guilty at not being, and at being too terrified to be, and at attempting to murder herself, if not biologically, then existentially. She was massacred by her own narcissistic philosophy and soon exploding her exit, universal for all humans, all Christians. She felt guilt at not knowing how to solve her personal problem, because it was a worldly problem since original sin, because it was a biological and existential problem for the human race.

"Of course! The Artist! The Re-Creator! The mother! But the best thing was to use the strange woman Joan of Arc!" Evil Rake got silent and watched hopefully. Tserbil’s chin dropped after a moment’s hesitation, at Sandra’s sheer guess,

"The courage...the victory!” Tserbil was disturbed by the roaring silence, the quick exchange of knowledge between Sandra and Evil Rake. It was as if her religion came alive by the sheer conversation Evil Rake had with Sandra, and it hurt. He was making himself dependent on his word, the spoken word, and this made her worried, just worried. There was already so much dusk outside and she had to trust her father, even though he was setting things alive, that Tserbil...knew was not alive.

The last quarter of an hour’s very intense discussion still hung in the air when a tremendous silence developed. It was Tserbil’s silence.

"My crucifixion!” Sandra said. Evil Rake nodded slowly. She knew how he lied, and that he lied.

"That coronation I really wanted to happen so I got out on the ocean in the hunt for something!! I wanted to find the right one for Tserbil, myself. He got silent. Tserbil looked down into the table.

"But hey, Evil Rake, you don’t find an artist out on the ocean? Huh?"

Sandra said, “How can you...make an art of my shed of blood...of the death of my flesh?”

"The real artist Sandra, he exists in the center of what is happening...eh. The real creativity is the adventurer.” Sandra was bitterly and savagely disgusted, tormented by this six hour long dinner, her mental crucifixion.

Sandra thought Tserbil must be furious at her father, furious at the whole situation, but she wasn’t, Sandra could see. She was scared to death. They had a strong unity of thought. Tserbil was not tired or pissed: She seemed tired after all ages that seemed to have passed. She wasn’t in any way sad or apathetic, as if she seemingly had accepted the situation the way it was. Sandra’s pain was majestically unbearable, far beyond the borders of sanity.

Two cardoors were slammed outside their cabin. They heard steps and a dog that barked “almost barks,” but for loud whispers. Evil Rake pulled away the curtain to see who they were.

"The police?" he said puzzled. Sandra and Tserbil flew up towards the pane. The two policemen each had a flashlight in their hands. They boarded the boat.

"HELLO!!!" called the one who had walked on first. He, the second person seemed to be in his fifties. Tserbil saw that he had a bushy but well-kept moustache.  

"HELLO!!! THIS IS THE POLICE!!! SOMEBODY HOME!!!? The female police officer said through her megaphone a halfyard outside the closed door. Tserbil shook her head and critically watched the two officers. Sandra was afraid as she reflected upon what gang she might have ended up in.

"Perhaps M/S Esmeralda was nothing but one big blank?" Sandra asked herself. She dwindled herself close to a window and immediately remembered how her bag was idiotically turned inside out, up there in the kitchen. Now she was in a trap. “Fate’s fatal trap,” she smiled self-ironically with a dry and completely crunching throat.

"HELLO??!! IS ANYBODY AT HOME? IT’S THE POLICE!!" same female voice repeated from the same direction. Sandra heard how Evil Rake muttered something about how the police really were the worst land-lubbers he’d ever experienced. Sandra quickly thought of the fact that Tserbil was up there as well. Sandra swept away the curtain. There in the sharp light of the bridge, that had suddenly been illuminated, she saw that the policewoman was possibly half a yard shorter than Evil Rake. She had a fantastically red sort of erupted hair, that seemed both perfumed, greased and permed, but also blown with
a hair-dryer, then toned, brushed upwards and finally moussed in. The glasses mostly looked like two army radars out of order. She thought she was familiar, she was sure she’d seen this Pac-Man-looking lady before but she couldn’t see how that would have been possible. She held the megaphone stiffly and totally concentrated on the door. Her companion looked at the prow with the dog. Sandra saw on its breast that it was a sheaf of bractch. Then she saw Evil Rake’s arm all of a sudden flying out from the door grabbing the megaphone. She saw him fiddling with it for a while, before he found the button.

"ONBOAAARD!!!" she heard his barking voice amplified to max. "YOU DAON’T SAY HOME ON A BOAT!!! YOU SAY ONBOAAARD!!!" The hyper-concentrated policewoman was completely numb, just staring. "ONBOOOAAARD." Evil Rake repeated almost louder at half a yard’s distance from the policewoman. Sandra hoped that the Captain of the ship wasn’t going to do something he’d regret. Evil Rake walked up towards the gunwale and elevated the megaphone to his mouth. "I AM THE CAPTAIN. I KNOW THE RULES," Evil Rake said with an impeccable concentration not to slur his words. Then he turned 180° still standing with the megaphone towards his mouth as if he was going to talk to the city. He let it sink and stared with a couple of alcoholic eyes towards the gaping police officers and the expectant dog. He raised the megaphone towards his mouth and pressed the button to talk to the city over the cold water. "ONBOAAM...ooyieeeyaaaaaaannnnfzzz...kadonk." The megaphone bounced at the wet and slippery steel deck. He was still turned towards the water and looked at the city. It looked as if he was thinking that he needed to pee. The way he fumbled with his right hand it seemed as if he tried to belittle the matter. As he got started he gave some foolish occasional looks over the shoulder, especially towards that dog. Tserbil talked to the female officer. Apparently they wanted to see the piece of paper that gave them the right to stay in the harbour. It was something about a harbour razzia, Sandra heard. The male officer looked nicer as he stepped up towards Evil Rake discussing with him from standing two yards behind. Evil Rake remained calm in his position, urinating his proud parable. Sandra saw how Tserbil now stepped up to her dad telling him to quit his nonchalant behaviour. She asked where the papers were. Evil Rake at once gave a prolonged but correct instruction. Tserbil went down the staircase.

"Dad...tonight he’s completely crazy," she said while passing Sandra in a rapid tempo towards his cabin and up to the desk. She pulled out a drawer after having unlocked it with a key on a gigantic key ring. After a couple of seconds she came out in a little bit a calmer tempo out of the cabin. She stared concentratedly down in the stack with papers. As she was going to take the last step of the staircase she fell flat on her face out over the kitchen floor. The policewoman couldn’t but to laugh unrestrainedly. Her male colleague laughed a distinguished and perhaps more curried laugh. Sandra saw something that through her little outlook resembled shapeless grimaces but if it was laughs, she shouldn’t out of courtesy speak out about. All of a sudden the dog began barking and pulled its police officer towards the kitchen entrance. Sandra by an impulse turned off a lamp in her immediate vicinity.

"...passengers?" she heard. The sheaf of bractch came down yelping and sniffing on her. Sandra stretched out her hand and pet it. Her fear was breaking her into pieces. To her surprise she saw that the police officer didn’t have his flashlight lit as his legs step for step lowered him into the caboose.

"Hello!" the voice said arbitrarily but harshly from the other side of the saloon.

"Hi," Sandra said. She felt like a talking corpse. He looked around for a couple of seconds and then climbed the ladder again. He ran down again after a minute.

"Kylie!" he called and smiled at Sandra who had remained in her dark position in a corner. A little bit more relieved. Her arms lay like two dead herrings on the oaktable. Sandra noticed how the bractch immediately left her and ran ahead in the staircase. After another minute Tserbil came down with Evil Rake’s arm around her shoulder. Sandra heard her asking him why he had to overdo it the way he had. They discussed all the way until they had reached the table and sat down on their seats again. Sandra poured up coffee into their cups. She looked at Evil Rake who looked down in the cup until she was done pouring. "Thanks," he said as sober as anyone.

"How are you?" she asked genially.
"I guess I'm all right." Evil Rake looked at her with two sober eyes. "Harbor razzias...harbor razzias," he said shaking his head and clasping his palms noisily to rub them as if they were held in front of a fire. Evil Rake looked around and continued to warm the ice cold hands. "Nope! This is way too much fuzz. Let's have some Rossini!" Tserbil got down from the kitchen with a refilled cheese tray and nonchalantly tucked the document down in her right back pocket of her jeans.

"Rossini..." she said extremely hesitant as she put the tray on the table. "Champagne..?" she asked him looking straight at him.

"What?!" Evil Rake said utterly surprised as if she had buried Sir Winston Churchill straight into his face. "Miss Crazy!" he said in astonishment. "Champagne?" Evil Rake said and now he had quit stuffing his pipe. "Rossini...a Champagne?!? What?!" His cheerful laughter echoed out and all the way down into the keel of the boat.

He pulled away the curtain and saw the last glance of the police car before it turned to the right, still laughing. "No my dearest little kiddo. This is Rossini." He turned around laboriously and went to the room’s farther end. Sandra saw how he glanced with tilted head on a shelf that was filled with CDs. After half a minute he turned around and glanced happily at Sandra that had been sitting still in her chair. He approached her slowly and it looked as if he was going to ask her for a dance. But he didn’t. "This is music," he said as he found his partly prepared pipe. The tones lay like a quiet rain in the background and gave their speech a new tone. As the pipe had begun to smoke Evil Rake continued where they had been stranded. He looked thoughtfully at the glow of the pipe while inhaling a puff.

"Then, in my powerful days I was forced out on the ocean. Heading out was the adventure like an unread novel. I had to cruise all the way to get the answers to questions I knew I’d ask myself if I never did the Sailing Tour. To sail and command I knew from the day we met, Fairy Queen and I, to be my Just Duty. Not for a moment did I surmount my own thoughts, to believe that I actually had been successful. Now you are there on your chair." He looked at Sandra. The silence was intense. Evil Rake’s words were loaded. Her train of thought whatever shape, philosophical as well as psychological she understood less and less of, as if it depended on others like a parasite. She couldn't get him out of her system.

"Why’re you calling Tserbil the Fairy Queen?" Sandra asked him.

"Have you ever heard of Balder?" Tserbil answered.

"No," Sandra answered.

"It’s from an old Scandinavian tale. In Old Norse mythology the Fairy Queen is a seer goddess who can see both forwards and backwards in time."

"How does it go?" Sandra asked Tserbil, who looked for a long time at Sandra. She lurked and lurked as she glanced at Evil Rake. Sandra felt that she was becoming lunatic and she couldn’t do anything about it. She felt an urge to avoid love. It hurt to think of love. It made her insecure. She felt a guilt-complex tearing inside, a hatred toward herself because she was not able to become herself.

"Balder the good man had severe nightmares about his life. Therefore the gods in Asgard begged for all worldly matters not to hurt Balder. Odin’s wife Frigg, who could make all earthly things to swear their oaths of allegiance, recieved the mission to fish up the promises from the fire, the water, all kinds of ores, stones, diseases, birds, snakes, poisons, the soil and the trees. The Aesir tried their decision by shooting at Balder, but he, he could resist it all. This Loki was jealous at..."

"Loki!!!?" Sandra interrupted.

"...eh, yes? Have you heard this tale before or what?

"No. Go on."

"Then Loki dressed up like a woman and departed for Fensalar where Frigg rejoined. In his story about what had happened to Balder, Frigg explained to Loki that all earthly things indeed had promised not to hurt him. Then Loki asked: ‘Have all things made their oath of allegiance to spare Balder?!’ Whereupon Frigg answered: ‘There’s a young sprout to a young tree growing west of Valhalla, its name is mistletoe and I considered it too young to claim an oath from it.’ Hodir who was blind, stood in the first
line. Loki walked up to him and asked: ‘Why aren’t you shooting at Balder?’ He answered: ‘Because I can’t see where Balder is standing and besides I’m unarmed.’ Loki then said: ‘Why don’t you do just like the others are doing and honor Balder! I’ll show you where he stands.’ Hódir received Loki’s crooked arrow and shot where Loki had showed him. Balder was struck in the heart and died immediately. The place was too holy to demand the guilt from someone. As the Aesir had calmed down, Frigg spoke up and asked whom of the Aesir wanted to win her love and good will by riding the long way to Hel and offer Hel ransom, if she would let Balder come back to the Aesir court. Odin’s son Hermóðr the Swift announced himself ready. He was allowed to borrow his father’s horse Sleipnir and immediately took off. As Balder was carried out to his ship Ringhorn to be burnt, his wife Nanna’s heart broke of sorrow as she saw the fire. Nanna was also put on the pyre. Thor sanctified it with his hammer Mjölnir. A little dwarf by the name of Lit happened to run in front of Thor’s feet and this one Thor kicked by accident so that he also went into the pyre. But the ship was not to be moved from land. Hermóðr rode for nine nights through dark valleys and couldn’t see until he’d reached the river Gjáll and rode over the bridge Gjállarbró with shining gold. Modgunn, who stood on guard before the bridge, asked why he rode the Hel road. Hermóðr answered: ‘I’m riding to Hel to find Balder. Have you seen him here on the road?’ As he got the instructions northwards, downwards, Hermóðr rode until he reached Hel’s border. He jumped over the fence and went into the hall. He found Balder in the place of honor and stayed overnight. In the morning Hermóðr asked for Balder to travel with him back to Aesir court. He told about the sorrow over Balder. Hel said that now was the time to try and see how loved Balder really was. ‘If all things in the world living or dead cry for him, he shall be allowed back to the Aesir. But if someone speaks against him or doesn’t cry, he shall stay with Hel.’ Hermóðr rode back to the Aesir court and told what he’d seen and heard.” At once Sandrə knew the rest of the story inexplicably.

“The Aesir sent all over the world to pray for Balder to be cried out from Hel. The envoys were really successful making everything and all to cry but on their way home they met the giant woman Tokk, who sat in a cave in a rock. They asked her to cry Balder out of Hel, but she answered: ‘Tokk will cry dry tears over Balder’s pyre journey. Neither alive nor dead Odin’s son seems to me. Let Hel keep what she has.’ Balder’s procession couldn’t even be carried out without the witch Hyrrokkin’s help. She came all the way from Jotunheim and when she arrived her horse proved to be a wolf and her bridle an adder.” Sandrə quieted. The truth was somewhere else. She was afraid of saying anything of what she really thought to Tserbil. “According to the legend, Tokk was actually Loki, the evil creature that always arranged for the worst accidents for the Aesir,” Sandrə said looking into their eyes.

“One is puzzled by these figuras, indeed…” Evil Rake puffed on his pipe. Tserbil watched Sandrə dead silent. Evil Rake continued.

“She is a figura herself, isn’t she Sandrə, what do you think? Huh?” He looked wearily at Tserbil and then towards Sandrə. He let it rest in her for a while.

“But for what? Huh!! DO YOU KNOW!!? SANDRƏ!! HUH?? PRETTY GOOFY STUFF ISN’T IT??!! HUH??!! What do you say?”

Sandrə looked at Tserbil in the eyes to see what would happen next.

“Joan of Arc got a visit from this Scottish man in September, 1430, in her jail, in Arras. He painted a peculiar portrait of a woman dressed in full armor, standing on her knees under the king, giving him a letter. Who’s this Scottish fellow?” Evil Rake left the table. He came back with a sketch of the described motif. The paper was old and yellow, smaller than a standard 8x11” size of a paper.

“My grandfather’s grandfather’s father bought this at an art exhibit he was at in Amsterdam, in 1814. My grandfather gave it to me on my 15th birthday. He said he had inherited it. The portrait had been important to him. It seems to have been painted by a Scot, Edwin McBaur. Later on I’ve heard different stories. The painter’s real name was Edwin van Buren and in 1424 he had emigrated from the Franco-Netherlands to study in England. For some reason he was sent to make a painting of this woman, who was according to his commissioner, “the supernaturally and beyond comprehension the most
blooming lily, Jeanne d’Arc. Here I got anchored for a while. Nothing was said about who this commissioner was, or what department he was working for. All traces from Van Buren alias McBaur ended at the harbor in Amsterdam, the 14th of July, 1424. He was supposed to get to meet this Angus Ethelwold Ghaerwyck, at the harbor chapel.” Evil Rake discerned Sandra’s expression on her face.

“Well, what do you have to say Sandra? What do you think? What does it sound like?”

His tone was malicious and Sandra was out of bounds. She had no self to rely on, she could not escape him. He continued. “He is said to have been a fantastic Dutch theatre director who illegally supervised a travelling Theatre company. According to the Dutch National Encyclopedia, he had been nothing but a swindler who sold tickets to performances and left the audience, not even having given them a single line. I believe the Dutch doesn’t want to downshift their old theatre idol from the renaissance’s spiritual 17th century that was full of events. The man is said to have been in love with this German theatre nun who already had been dead for centuries. During the latter part of his life his obsession for women became more and more... Fanatic.”

“BUT IT IS NOT TRUE!!!” Sandra yelled right out in the caboose. It was dead silent.

“In his sterbaus documents showed that he had an adoration for the devil.”

“NO! NO! NO!” Sandra shook her head and put her hands in front of her face: “Please Evil Rake,” she begged him. Evil Rake got thoughtful and appeared to have somewhat more reluctant acceptance of Sandra’s appearance. As if he held a rose he knew the scent of, trying to crush the glass that prevented him from feeling it. It just watched her hungrily and he was excited about this little creature in front of him, how it forced him to use a lot of strength just to understand her. Evil Rake couldn’t understand how he could come up with so much promise. He could just watch her like a rose in a glass cage...left to...he did not, he DID NOT WANT TO SAY THE WORD, [word:belief/faith]he had to...to accept. He had to accept that the flower smelled something. Accept. Sandra couldn’t control her mind anymore.

“Among these documents...” he looked at Sandra who he thought had lost her attention.

“Sandra?!” Her tears fell down her cheek. She was frantic.

“Among these documents, six of Van Buren’s seven charcoal sketches made in Arras of Joan of Arc, were found. At that time they were worthless, but certainly not today. All six sketches each has a motif from that of the painting that Van Buren finished in September, 1430.”

A pause took place.

“Evil Rake. What has a Scottish and a Dutch theatre director to do with this? With a German theatre nun and Joan of Arc? It’s like taking the words out of de Gaulle’s mouth and confuse their sense by saying that it IS possible to govern France because it HAS eighty-eight different kinds of cheese!! Tserbil just told me a story from the Norse mythology’s Asir Gods’ adventures.”

Sandra sort of woke up like an instinct.

“I don’t need this what’s what and who is not who, do I Evil Rake?” Sandra said feebly. Tserbil and Evil Rake watched her like two dark candles who could be where they were at the moment they were. Sandra understood Evil Rake in order to know how to escape him. Yet she knew that as soon as she became insane she would no longer know, care, if she escaped from him or ran straight into his lap. Evil Rake went on.

“I’ve noticed that there’s one person who had the most decisive role in Joan of Arc’s trial. The 24th of May, 1431, Joan of Arc is transported out to Saint-Ouen to be decapitated at the grave yard. The bishop Caucon can finally, after one year of processing, read up the charges that as it turns out without proof doom the non-understanding analphabetic Joan. But he is hindered by the English priest Laurent Calot who thought that the slow French bishop had let the witch get away too easily. At that point Caucon gets outraged and throws the manuscript into the ground. He’s beside himself with fury. As the hysterical Pierre Caucon doesn’t know of any more tricks he gives up and, turning toward the Cardinal of Winchester, asks him what to do.” Evil Rake looks out over the saloon as if really to gather himself before
the last final dramatic movement of his.

“Do you know what this man says?” Sandra shakes her head as she is ready to get slaughtered, just butchered.

“TAKE THIS WOMAN TO A HEALING!” Evil Rake’s has an ugly expression of anger on his face, a total fury. “I guess he’s saying in some cryptic English sense that the fire that is ready to burn her is this healing. BUT HE SAYS ACCEPT!!!!” Sandra looks at Tserbil and then at Evil Rake and again it is so hard for her to understand.

“No. He doesn’t. He says take.” Sandra answers him.

“The man says accept, and in this word there’s that slight, tiny touch of affection for Joan of Arc. It is loaded with faithfulness and obsession...huh?! What do you think of that Sandra!! Now, isn’t that something!! Huh???” His eyes leaned over the table and drilled into Sandra’s brain, she wondered what organ in her that really worked. She felt tired.

“I get familiar with Van Buren’s artistic style and looking at other sketches I see that it is exactly the same style that is present on the British monastery at Winchester. Damn fucking repetitive isn’t it Sandra!! Just like the rifle, huh?? So what’s your guess, chick?”

“I have no idea, Evil Rake.”

He puffs a couple of times on the pipe and blows the smoke straight in Sandra’s face, staring like a sick patient with a pale-yellow face right up at the ceiling.

“It is...it’s the Cardinal. The Cardinal of Winchester. See, the Van Buren sketches must be sold immediately when the Cardinal realizes he simply can’t keep them for safety reasons. They’re hot. Hot stuff Sandra!! Van Buren gets them all sold except for the one with the painting’s motif, which he of course keeps himself. As an act of randomness, you know, this is the sketch that falls in the hands of my grandfather. I’m fascinated by this Cardinal from the enemy nation to France, which at that time was England. There’s such a tremendous amount of...

“Anxiety?” Sandra says.

“...balance in his short sentence. Such a solid, straightforward action...”

“What action??”

“The motif of the painting which she gives to King Charles VII, that is what he humbly explains with nods and whispers to Cauchon, right there in front of Jeanne!! Oh gosh. All these men just...oozing around this one woman. I think it’s great. So much work and thoughts and yes! I agree anxiety...but what an adventure huh?? Just that whole year in 1431. She had so much power Sandra, so much power... I mean...the whole law system of France against an analfabet. She really wanted to fight. She really had it Sandra. Oh my.”

“Why are you just sitting there in your corner Tserbil, dead silent all the time. Why don’t you say something?” Sandra asked her these questions knowing that it wouldn’t help her much.

“Tserbil has always had intuition. We both trust it. She knows of the Prince that’ll...come to her one of these days. She went to this fortune teller, some twenty years ago. This seer told her to wait. She warned us of the myth of Balder, mentioning what happened in the end of a folk tale from Bourgogne. At that time we couldn’t quite understand her, now I understand in general terms what really happened. I know of this fallen Empire, that I’m its only heir.

“What Empire? What year are we...are YOU in? What the hell do you want from me? You make me crazy! Do you understand that! You drive me fucking crazy. CRAZY!”

“I realize what an aristocratic fruit one is like the little girl from the fallen Czar’s empire in the east. I realize how unfortunate it is to try to keep something alive that died one hundred years ago. That is what that seer told me. Hermod wanted to bring Balder back from the Kingdom of death, as if he wanted to protect pure life for the price of kissing death. His wish is mine, I’m his death wish, I’m all his, all mine. Those people, those Aesir, they knew that I who’ve belonged to a slaughter’s family for generations... They knew. Well they knew that...I...never would give up. Instead we’re both become
victims, forgotten victims under Nikolai II, Olga, Tatiana, Marie, Alexis, Alexandra and the other members of the Romanov family. We’ve become the last victims of an incredibly authoritative regime’s last game of powerplay. One has to compliment the director of Tserbil’s liberation. How unknown government forces and nations afterwards seem to have co-operated for a stable and secret growth of Tserbil. Who knows how much that was planned, or how little.”

Evil Rake moved his arms and finally he was at the end of his explanation. He looked harshly into the eyes of Sandra, just drilled himself into her. “Today I know you’re a messenger of all these messages. Tonight this very night we would have met Tserbil’s Balder, the old world’s new master. Instead I look into you Sandra, and all I can see is desolation, a no man’s land, in which hatred and love already has measured up against each other. I see in you that love and hate are illusions, simple tools in the new world. That it wasn’t in the now dead’s kingdom. That they were not earlier. I don’t feel any sorrow or unhappiness because of that...he he ehm, you know.”

He smoked his pipe and looked at her through two thin, thin openings of his eyelids in which only darkness looked out and onto Sandra. He sighed deeply. “It’s different...you know. But it’s OK. It’s not too bad. It isn’t that bad.” He laughed weirdly. “What used to be the screw today is the screwdriver, which in turn will make a new screw to screw itself through future...so don’t screw up chick!!” He laughed. “In the new world, ideas and morals doesn’t any longer fit. Of course, we must adapt, Sandra. Right?!!” He looked at her.

“RIGHT!” Sandra yelled out of hysteria. “YOU’RE RIGHT. WE must adapt. WE must adapt.”

Evil Rake had lowered his sight and stared into the table. Sandra wondered if the alcohol hadn’t hit him after all. She felt sorry for them, Without understanding how she had any strength for feelings left. She thought they were a last splinter of a last empire, like a wish that had been called out but returned as an echo facing a completely different world from the one that cried.

“I wonder what happened there at Stonehenge, and why at Stonehenge of all god damn places? HUH? YOU TELL ME, SANDRA!! Bitch. What has happened?”

“What’s happened?” Sandra replied astonished. “What’s happening...?” she repeated to herself.

“But don’t you get it?” Evil Rake yelled at Tserbil, and threw out with his arms at the same time. “Can’t you see the thread?”

“The thread...?” Tserbil said who suddenly knew how the battle was being lost.

“The communication between different worlds and different eras. Can’t you see it Tserbil? Their thread. That which in the old world was bitter struggle between man and woman today has developed into nothing other than modern communication.” He looked wearily at Sandra. Her response was hard to believe because she didn’t believe what she just had heard, it sounded so unbelievably believable in her deaf ears. She didn’t know how to interpret what he really had said to her. She didn’t dare for the first time to trust what was the truth, simple logic right in front of her. She didn’t dare to trust what actually had been going on for quite a while between Evil Rake, the man, and Sandra, the woman. She couldn’t believe what had been acted out, however, and that the end result of their argument was something positive in itself. Evil Rake’s words were tying Sandra to his dark world with the threads of her own psychic fabric. He wanted her soul like a man, madly in love, like a mad man eating feminine sanity. Sandra knew she was insane and couldn’t reason herself out of her self-hatred. When she finally had overcome evil, she felt too insane to take it seriously. She knew that the world was not what it looked like, and this fact ate inside of her. Sandra called it self-hatred, original sin, but she knew that the more she thought of how wrong she was, and how right Evil Rake was, it would drive her even more crazy, and more anxious, and more illogical. Sandra had no way left to get out of herself. When she knew she had had no choice other than to become totally insane, she hated herself bitterly for making it happen.

“What’s the end of the story?” Evil Rake asks her. He scratches his head and looks out the window. He then looks at Tserbil. She looks at Sandra, and says,

“The myth about that legend about Balder tells that Loki showed up only in the shape of Tokk...”
before Ragnarrok." She looked at Sandra with an extremely enraged stare.

"I had an experience," Sandra said. She was scared. She wanted to say dream, but it was impossible for her to do so. The more she spoke with Evil Rake and Tserbil the more she wanted to swap her fingers to make them wake up. She wanted to say it was over. They stared her straight in the face. She was trapped. She walked back in her mind a couple of steps. Both Evil Rake and Tserbil were looking at her. They were just there, in front of her. The more Sandra wandered around in the room with her eyes and her mind, she found nothingness and disharmony. She could smell his protruding tobacco, like an evil snake ringling through her biological systems. "This is death," she thought. She was in a death chamber.

Everything was in a strange disciplined order in this caboose. The dinner table was perfectly dark, perfectly round. The room was like a heart of an evil beast, a stove, a sharp diamond that cuts through anything. She looked at Evil Rake.

"What about Loki and Thor?" she said bitterly but clearly.

"If I were you I’d tell the whole story," Evil Rake answered. He was surprised at her insight. It frightened him and he didn’t want to lose control of her. He took a puff in his pipe and looked into the darkness of his saloon. Tserbil’s lips had whitened, completely immovable. She spoke with a stiff poker face.

"Tell us." [earth= Tellus]

Sandra was tormented thinking of her friends, her family, all blind, all tools just like herself, just like Hoder. Sandra hardly had to think anymore. She thought she knew everything about what was about to happen. She had run out. She had acted. But now she wasn’t even an actress anymore, now she had lost her role as a human being. She had nothing left to be. She was nothing. Worthless. She was in the hands of Evil Rake and Tserbil.

"They killed each other."

Her thoughts exploded her mind. Even though she hadn’t labeled Balder as some kind of Irish lug, she knew of that will, that head that always was on, his constant creative testament. She finally could grasp all of that vision of his that no one had dared to hope or believe in, an artistry that just existed like the wind, like the light of the day, inside of her, but really like wood for all the trees. And now she had kissed him with her lips of death, just like Hel, and just like Loki had wanted.

"So the word goes from the desertland, where hate and love have seized each other. So it does." Evil Rake said. "No, Sandra, it’s nothing there. Just leave it." He paused leaned a little bit closer to Sandra. "I wanted to hear the echoes of my own screaming. I had to. Only with the simplest tools, only with struggle, only with pain you would reach out for each other and be, which is all that I can see. I’ve been looking for a future for so long, Sandra. Never had I believed I would become myself, never could I fancy about being what I see. And... now you are here... here she is..." Evil Rake had lowered his eyes and stared into the table. "What time is it?"

"Three o’clock," Tserbil said.

"What! Did you say Three?!!" Evil Rake stood up and stretched for the coffee-pot that was empty.

Sandra was left like a corpse, like nothing but the pure nothingness she’d been made into. Yet Sandra knew Evil Rake and Tserbil were killing themselves when killing her. She couldn’t understand what had happened. She had felt so strong, so vital, so full of love. Then she left the civilization behind her to become herself, to suck life with real roots. She had returned to her source, and she had quit asking questions about herself. It used to be enough just to be, but not to Evil Rake. She felt like a mother for him, with a mother’s discerning eyes that makes her child aware of its self. She had given away of herself, she had let him eat of her, eat the whole of her from inside, alive. She had no access to her imagination anymore, it was all in his hands. But by giving love to Evil Rake, she had started to love with hatred, and this made her cry bitterly because no woman could love and hate at the same time. Yet her bitter self-hatred, her nothingness, the big void she had become to Evil Rake proved that she could only survive, she
could only understand his self, that was hers now, by committing suicide. She cried at how the devil ate of her, of her own will.

Now, she stood in the kitchen. She had to do something and remembered the bag turned inside and out. Tserbil turned on the radio and all of a sudden all the three heard the characteristic news-jingle. Sandra realized how real her horror was. They both sat down there in the caboose. She turned her head to the staircase and listened.

"The news, three o’clock, the 31st of January, 1999. No new traces so far of the woman who disappeared four weeks ago at the funeral of her grandmother, the contemporary dance’s leading dancer Mrs Callas. Sandra Nordlinder’s friend Klara Cleareyes had run into..." The radio was turned off. She saw how Tserbil and Evil Rake staggered up toward the first step of the staircase. The three characters stared at each other. The two downstairs feared what the third thought, or what move the third was about to make. Evil Rake held his pipe and moved it to his mouth. He observed her from his dark position down at the end of the staircase and,

"What are you going to do?" he smiled surprised.

"First I saw that I was different from you Evil Rake. I think that to feel pain is to struggle. I think that to struggle, Evil Rake, to struggle in itself is to believe in something good. One has fear just like I have now, just when I look at you, when I stare into nothingness, into my own self. You have made me struggle less, making me believe that there is less to struggle for. The only way a human could be convinced to do so is by making her life more comfortable, to let her know of pleasures that are not hers and to give her those pleasures."

"What pleasures, Sandra?
"I don’t know."

"So what are you talking about?" He looked calmly at her. He stood perfectly still in his dark spot, cold, vicious.

"Love cannot be seen. Love is blind in itself. Love can only be felt. You are looking for the rainbow satan, but you are colorblind. You can not see love...because you must have feelings...and you hate feelings.

"But not as much as anyone else, as you yourself. Sandra, what’s the matter with you? Come on!" Sandra stared down at him and she was scared to death, and she hated herself. She was lost in herself, she was delirious from all the booze...she believed.

"Sandra, don’t get yourself in trouble, you’ve had too much of the good stuff tonight." His eyes completely filled with darkness. There was nothing she could do, he was the law and she simply could not disobey it. Yet she knew how she was nothing, she was a void and her mind told her how nothing would happen if nothingness disobeyed. Then Sandra turned away her eyes.

"I’m blind Evil Rake. I can’t see you." Inside she felt how she built up a tremendous wish to live, to love, yet to have something to hate, and this process tore her apart. It killed her. It was her only way to survive herself, her only way back into her collective unconscious, to the time before original sin.

She looked for the bag, grabbed it, ran out on the deck of the boat. All she could see was water everywhere around her. It was dark. Cold. The boat was somewhere on the ocean, drifting. Evil Rake swept away the curtain of a window in the saloon. He looked out over the calm harbour and the other boats. He knew what she saw. Tserbil still held his hand, even tighter. Evil Rake was amazed. A tear lay on his eye-lid. Tserbil didn’t even dare to ask him.

"That’s the future," Evil Rake said. "So insane it doesn’t even take itself seriously.” And he laughed.

"Why me...Oh Evil Rake. This is death...this is death."

"Sandra, it’s illusions...just leave it. I am you and you are me. Ha Ha Ha."

"I don’t care about myself anymore, I just want to die.” She cried where she stood on the boat. She cried because the lack of a wish to live scared her. She knew it was against her humanity. When she
looked at herself she saw her arms and legs and they told her she was something, she was more than nothing, she was human. She understood that if she jumped off the boat into the sea of death and uncertainty, she destroyed herself. Then she understood that the action of jumping, if nothing could jump away from its destiny, if it jumped, it did something out of nothing. She screamed because of how these thoughts lurked and marvelled in her mind that was already so insane, so confused, so terrorized, so full of self-hatred. Her anxiety was at a maximum and at the point where she became insane, in which she felt she could do paintings because of all the insane colors that exploded in her mind. She jumped. She fell into the water and sank into it, without knowing how to swim. She felt how water exchanged place with oxygen in her lungs and she wanted to scream even though it was physically impossible. She knew and understood nothing of her present seconds of being except for coldness, darkness and dying. Then a terrifying voice roared at her disintegrating in the dead water she was falling through.

"Run away from yourself Sandra, leave me. I’ll be standing there in the end, waiting and then I’ll get the two of you!! Ha ha ha. HA HA HA."

She fell down on the harbour 2 yards below her, as if the boat had never left it. When she looked back, she saw that it was gone, but then she thought maybe it had never been there.

When it was seven o'clock a couple of hours later Sandra was almost not allowed entrance. The guard always recognized her but could never remember where he’d seen her before. He knew that she fit with some notice he’d heard of from somewhere else. Today he finally decided to check with his buddy working at another pool. The buddy had recognized who it was immediately. The guard then hung up and worked out a method in his head. He gathered all the female guards by calling on the microphone.

"All female personnel to the entrance! Now!"

Sandra was just done showering when two guards quickly passed her. Sandra got an impulse and swept the towel around herself and walked out into the pool area. The woman that had stood at the pool cafe was gone. Sandra let go of the doorknob so as not to disturb the passage way between the pool and the showers. Then she saw the gathering in the entrance. She couldn’t see to a beginning because of the flowers that stood in front of a wall of glass, but after a couple of seconds she began to understand what was happening. Before any further maneuver she looked around. A male guard was doing some kind of washing with a hose. He seemed totally endorsed by what he was doing. She couldn’t see any other guard. As she looked back towards the entrance the group wasn’t there. The guard with the hose glanced at the pool area and finally saw... She walked back into the shower room without knowing if she’d been discovered. She heard how clogs were approaching the relatively calm shower. She entered into a toilet that was vacant, and shut the door. All she could do was to wait. Two elder female guards spoke to each other. They seemed angry with the entrance guard or what he’d told them to do. Their voices disappeared into the sauna regions. Sandra didn’t know if it was now that she’d make her move. Just as she was thinking of opening that door the two ladies came back out again.

"...yeah, okay. At..." Sandra thought she heard them well but a couple of young girls had gotten into the shower and had began screaming. The water seemed too cold for them. Then she heard the voices right outside her toilet door.

"Darcy, I’ll be back soon..." The doorknob was pressed down. The door slid up a little. Sandra heard the two of them arguing.

"What the hell... If you have to take care of the cashier... that means responsibility...if ne...you can’t..."

If some offensive action was to happen it would have to happen when the female guard got back alone, Sandra knew. The elder female guards left the shower room rapidly for some reason. Sandra got out of the stall. She checked that the girls didn’t see where she came from, or where she was going. Sandra unlocked locker 309, dried herself, tore out her stuff and got dressed. She turned to the locker to get the key. When she turned around, the male guard stood just behind her. Sandra thought of the word glue. She tried to smile.
"Hi," he said with a psychopath’s sick voice. He looked straight at her breasts as if he was hungry, and was going to eat them.

"Hi. You like my body? Maybe you’d like to do something with it? I can dance. You want to dance?" Sandra turned her back towards the guard and waited until he’d gotten a little bit closer.

"Hey you...are you that girl that the folks are taftataking about..? That fokf taft...ab." He stood where he stood. "That they taft..." Sandra punched with her elbow into his diaphragm. He collapsed without any air in his lungs and fell down onto the floor. Sandra laid his right arm under his head to ascertain a flow of air. She heard him breathing weakly and decided to run out in the hallway. She flew down the stairs and up towards the corner where the entrance doors were situated. She adjusted to a fast promenade speed and threw down the key through the key deposit, fastly pressed down her towel and swimming suit in the same deposit hole and turned towards the doors ten yards away. Another male guard was over there instead of the one she’d met when she’d entered. He hadn’t noticed her so Sandra gathered her courage and walked up.

"You! I saw a guard totally collapsed at my locker. What’s really going on at this bath?"

"We’re looking for a woman...like you." Sandra looked at him as though he was a real dumb one.

"But hey you. Why would I be out looking for women?" She thought it was a really dumb comment to get away with. The guard looked at her for a couple of seconds.

"Where, did you say?" The guard asked her suspiciously.

"It was at my locker down the cellar. Number 1984."

"But... I saw you coming down from the stairs!" He was a real pain in the ass.

"But...but I went up there to see where the guards..." Sandra’s voice got quiet. For some reason the guard had it in his mind to get down to the cellar for some reason. Sandra got out through the doors and ran away from the bath. Her margins was getting closer and closer for each minute that passed. Sandra was happy. This morning just like every other day was entered by her cleansed body. The shower was important to her. She could take any danger in order not to lose her contact with water in the morning. It was an act of cleanliness.
Chapter 8.

Alexander had gotten back from a supper with some friends of his. He didn't feel like going to Katja. He didn't feel like going to his parents. He looked at the pile with Christmas cards that also wished him a Happy New Year. Alexander's senses were exhausted. He wondered what he actually was going to do with the last hours from a millennium to another. He turned on the TV. Antonius Block was playing chess with the Death. They started the game sitting on some rocks, on some rocky beach next to an ocean. Alexander wished him good luck and switched channels. He was scared at Antonius' wish for answers. He switched channels. He heard the seven characteristic trumpet fanfares before the news were broadcasted. As it started, he started to think.

He regretted that he'd gone to the police and told about the accident and what had happened shortly before it. He regretted bitterly for the sake of Sandra. He knew her situation must be awful. And he couldn't do differently. He was the chief witness. After some time he switched back to see how Antonius was doing, because he didn't know...if he wanted to know. The Death had a vicious pale face and it tricked Antonius to tell of his strategy...inside a church. Alexander raised up from his arm-chair and looked at the elk and Marilyn. He got close to the crown of the elk and unburdened it of all that was hung in its horns. Next to the bottle shelf behind a statuette, a pair of underwear lay seemingly unused. He remembered that they had shrunk in the last wash, and that he'd just thrown them from himself out of pure anger. He picked them up and wiped the dust from the Elk's head. When he was done, the elk smiled at him. His mind he couldn't control except for relying on that game between Antonius and the Death. It was as if he became more and more undecided because Antonius was...or wasn't winning. Death now got Antonius' queen and it pushed Alexander beside himself with anger. He felt nothing but frustration. He walked up to Marilyn and tore down the poster. He scrunched it up and tucked it down into his recycling container between all the other papers. He could clearly see that the Death guy was nothing but a fool. It was Death's comment, "I am unknowing," he couldn't accept. Like a slap in the face at Antonius...a crusader for ten years...still not knowing... Knowing only that he, Antonius, was unknowing, not Death. But of course he can not see this clearly, Alexander understands. "Antonius' mind is all occupied with the game," Alexander knew, and again he cried, as if pains were coming into his body from all parts...thoughts spinning around his head like a steel wired thornbrush of electrified insanity, nailed invisibly through his feet and hands to sit in front of the television, and just eat whatever came out of it, knowing that every time he leaned back a devil would flog the flesh off his back and eat it, eat him. "The Death eats Alexander's flesh!" Alexander roared out, but in the next moment he was sane again.

As he looked around he saw that it all was a mess, as if he was Chaos himself. Alexander felt he was getting a wish to clean for perhaps seven or eight hours. Then that inflicting brainstorm blew him by just as easy and casually as it had appeared. The living room table was divided into two camps. One side was an entirely grotesque circus of human belongings, molded together. The other camp was just the flat and empty surface of the table, as if a mean injustice of nothingness ruled over it. He looked at the flat surface for a while, and put his legs on it. He leaned back into the chair and looked up in the ceiling. He saw the clarity and light that radiated from her. He could distinguish each little corner of virginity and chastity that echoed from her heartbeats. Alexander wanted his love to carry him all the way where she was, but he was stranded. Each time he tried he got stranded. She was the ocean, and the smile. He remembered a storm. His mental ship had been tumbled around by it, fatally lost between her mind waves. Alexander's resignation was pressed out to a maximum. He felt his human fear slowly burning him from inside. Laws of Nature pulled and tore out the human in him and brought it down to her depths, to where it was the most calm, to an everlasting moment of time when spirits could enter each other. It was a
scourge of love. He stood up and went to the window.

Firecrackers were shot outside. The view was beautiful in the dark. As usual some cheaters were out there shooting three hours way too early, before the clocks had struck twelve. The crackers were being shot irregularly without organization, taking away the surprise effect at twelve o’clock. Alexander discovered the gang sitting on the roof of a tall apartment building. They had arranged bottles as shooting ramps, sitting on sheepfurs next to some sort of basket with bottles in it. A person stood up to urinate from the roof down into the gutter six floors below. The person could slip in any moment in his superstitious balancing act between life or death. The guy seemed to have a hard time deciding in what millennium he wanted to live. Finally Alexander looked into his room. It was such a scorn of life’s glory, he thought. To him everything had to be artistically expressed. He had to maintain a certain style. An hour of dishes lacked style and it was hard to pack a style with it, he knew that. He knew he would never be able to have style in doing the dishes. He went up to his palm in the hall and urinated in it because someone had told him that the nitrogen really made things grow. He just had to try it. A half hour passed. The smell spread like old cigar fumes through the apartment. Alexander then took a hold of the palm that weighed about a thousand pounds and lifted it into the shower. He turned on a cold and even flow and left it like that, just pouring into the ceramical little bowl. It was really hard to describe Alexander’s situation. He thought that he was simply a wanderer.

“...wandering for one’s own...self. The calm after the storm.” He couldn’t find it. There were no hallucinations or misconceptions that tormented his soul. Alexander was frightened by the sheer reality that couldn’t be replaced. He would have loved to call her to explain why he hadn’t... heard... of...even himself, in four hours. He was four hours delayed. His laboring mind began to get contact with some sort of a motif. He thought how guitarists worked. One hand created while the other played. He stayed at the expression fight and struggle. Alexander thought there was something parallel between listening to music and playing music, an urge like that of hate or love.

“That’s maybe how it is? If the left or the right hand makes a mistake...” Alexander threw an eye towards his paint box that was racked up towards the easel like a board. He made a new attempt. “Music, the organization of creativity...playing it...digesting it...” His mind was bolting. “The act of listening is a communication. The fight is the fault, the communication is the response,” he raged in his mind for answers. Alexander sat silent and held his eyes towards the record collection. “The reaction,” he repeated to himself silently while rising up to an erect position. “Then the discovery of this fault, this pain of the struggle, the disturbance and, the correction of it.” He looked sharply at his record collection.

“Communication...?” he asked himself. “The expression of the impression.” He threw himself at the stereo. Alexander was wild. All his records he had, he tore out on the floor. He looked for a guitarist. He needed a guitarist. “The guitarist of the world...” He read, “Jimi Hendrix and the Experience. Why, that guitarist was all wild and warped up.” Alexander tore out the old and worn record. “This guy...grooves out the marrow of life.” He took out the vinyl from its sleeve, put it on the turntable and injected the needle into the carved divine vinyl vein. Staring stars and...amazed stripes...the cacophony pushed him far out...far away into the unknown...he wasn't a door anymore...he wasn’t in between. His presence was slowed into pluperfect and Alexander had walked up to the same stereo in trance. He listened to each of his speakers, carefully, one at a time. He was paralyzed by the carnal dialogue that was sustained feedback between guitar amplifiers and guitar pick-ups. The sounds of Hendrix exploring Experience were the galloping sounds of his six steel horses shamelessly whamabamming into a surreal, cacophonous unreality of sounds. Alexander turned off the stereo. The record was over. He knew the second melding of it wasn’t going to be like the first one. He didn’t want to take Jimi Hendrix anywhere else than where he and his music were right now. Then Alexander remembered the palm and ran out into the bathroom.

The palm was just soaked with water. He turned off the shower. As he carried out the giant flower pot back into the hall his mind was puzzled with the guitar-maniacal sounds he’d just heard. He thought of how alcohol amplified a mental condition just like the guitar’s microphones mediated the artistical and
analytical thinking of the guitar player. "There was no balance in an alcoholic. Feedback was the technological scream of anxiety for more and more juice, just like the drug-addict’s despair for more, and more...and more drugs. "Scary," Alexander thought. "Yet it’s there like a beauty in itself, a vibration that communicates something that the listener becomes dependent on." Alexander saw a red back of a book in his bookshelf. "The Mattock and Sickle," he read. He took it down. The contents were about the revolutions in Russia from the turn of the century and up to the 1930s, where the Soviet Union had taken its fully matured grip over the Russian people. The pictures of the incredibly beautiful Olga and Marie from the last Czar family interested him. He was fascinated by the jewel of families the Romanov family seemed to be. They were relieved of aggression and disintegration, they must have been, when they were, nothing but just that fender core of a family. Alexander looked at the photographs of the family members taken by the Czar himself, Nikolai II. He'd taken pictures all the time up to their execution. The family seemed to have had nothing to do with their empire and its giant dominion of power which they became victims of. Alexander saw the tremendous difference between the 19th-century farmers who sold frozen human body parts and the Czar family’s silverware. The absolute top and the absolute bottom of Russia seemed to have been the true victims of the Soviet Union that wanted to bring equality among its citizens. Alexander returned to the pictures. His trained eye detected an unquestionable artistic talent in the Czar’s photographing technique. There was something of naturalness about it, something of origin. "They are timeless,” Alexander reasoned as he had sat down at his desk and convulsively held the cover of the book. He had noticed that all the details were there to conform to an ideal. "The family is obviously a fruit of something that had been planted centuries earlier, a unity of love, so crisp, so vulnerable...like the leaves of that red rose," he said while watching a detail in one of the pictures. Tatiana and Olga stood on a balcony in the city of Tobolsk. Alexander couldn’t understand why he was caught up with those two girls. Something played in their faces, there was youth in their eyes, something not yet destroyed that ran into the future. Alexander felt unlocked by the clarity and the love of the pictures. They were singing to him with the force of the caveman’s patience, an origin of visual arts. This family was giving him something. He heard some firecrackers again. One exploded right next to his window, shedding its ultra-violet umbrella that bounced off against the glass of it. He was scared.

"It’s a family that makes use of each member’s role. It is...was a family that didn’t disregard its members as disintegrative threats for the family unity. Like religion is...was." "Yet he couldn’t reflect upon it like a normal human being because he himself felt like the melody that had to keep going in order for Sandra’s humanity not to die out. There was something missing in him, the pictures made him aware of a lack of some sort. “I am any Christian’s matrimonial love. I am his unconscious and I penetrate the dynamics of an outer cosmos, the outer world. I am any Christian’s life values. Am I invisible because I’ve become an abstraction? Do I have to untie my own...religion... Do I have to turn myself into concrete passion...” [Jesus’ word for action in my point of view]

He knew the dance of creativity was all torment. “Why me Sandra? Why did you pick me of all persons...? My vision kills me. I see betrayal, murder and endless suffering in whatever direction... in whatever religion for that matter. You are surrounded by violence, and of course you've adapted...to be able to live... to be able to walk over this dust. How can you expect me to see that which you see and that which you don’t, to judge against my own being? Why am I the sufferer in your play of passions? I can see beauty but I feel the evil. And now... you make me judge to send evil with you...against my own being, my own soul, my will. Oh Sandra, you are the blindness. I see a darkness and a light and I have to judge to give you none or both. It’s not a judgment, Sandra. It’s love falling in love with hatred, and I’m the sufferer for all that which I worshiped and worked for.”

Alexander walks up to the window to hear and see what’s going on, more clearly. Some people down in the street seem desperate in some way. One of them points at a massive column of smoke about a
mile away. He knows he has to turn out the lights of his apartment. It is the exit that worries him. He closes his door finally and starts his walk into unreality. Down in the street he found only a little girl with a dog left by the whole group of people. He walked up to her. She held the leash tightly. The girl was shy. The big schaefer just sat calmly down on the gutter and looked at Alexander as if Alexander was his old friend. The girl looked into the wet and grey gutter. As Alexander looked for the people he'd seen from his window, but without any results, he got down on one of his knees. The girl tried to hide something and lowered her head until the cheek touched her chest. He put one of his hands on her shoulder to make her look up at him. She remained in her position and the dog just sat. Alexander saw a string of transparent slime running out of one of the girl's nostrils. The small six-year-old girl was crying.

“What has happened?” The girl didn't dare to speak. “Why are you crying?”

“I'm crying... because...” Her hulks became more severe. Alexander couldn't believe that he ran into all of these unhappy women all the time.

“Why are you crying?” he said calmly and friendly. The girl seemed to make an effort to stop the hulks.

“I'm... crying because...” She looked at the direction Alexander had looked at. Then she turned her disappointed eyes towards the left corner of the street. “You're crying...?”

“Because... cause... cause,” she finally looked up at him. Then she looked back at the corner of the street. “Cause they... they left me,” she said, not really understanding what was going on.

“They left you?” She looked up at him again.

“...cause they left me.” Alexander ruminated upon her tears as he looked at her.

“They left you?!” The girl approved with a shy nod.

“Yep... they did.”

“It wasn't very nice of them to do so against you,” he answered. Once again she looked away down the street.

“It's only me and Argoz Cerberus left here now.” She looked into the eyes of Alexander.

“But I'm here with you!” Alexander said. The girl gave him an honest look. “It's too bad,” he said and let the whole matter pause for a while. “They've just left you? With?!” Alexander said.

“Mmmm,” the girl nodded and swallowed. The dog rose up and walked up to Alexander. It began sniffing at him and Alexander pet and scratched its neck. It swayed its tail casually.

“But where are all the people?” he asked again.

“Grandpa heard that there's a fire going on... Then everyone ran...” She looked at the street corner again. “And now it's only me and Argoz Cerberus here.” She looked at Alexander, who looked back at her.

“What's your name?”

“Hel...ena. Maria Helena. Sometimes Tsebril.”

“Hi, Maria Helena. My name is Alexander.”

He saw an older lady rapidly parking a large automobile. As the old lady got out of the car she yelled at them.

“Helena? HELEENA?!” She came walking towards them. “How are you poor thing?” Alexander stood up and was going to say hi but instead the lady took one of the child's hands and picked up the leash that had been in the child's other hand. She put her arm around Anna's shoulders and hurried towards the car. Alexander ran after them a couple of yards but he didn't stand a chance.

“What is...” he began calling. “Is there a fire going on?” They jumped into the car. It seemed as if they couldn't hear him. The girl pressed her hands towards the window. Alexander fetched a glimpse of Argoz Cerberus' nose, and his tongue that hung out, behind her. They both looked at him seriously. As they passed, the girl threw her head back and forwards behind the window. Alexander thanked her. Not until now, when it was only nine minutes left of the second millennium CE, his conscious mind began to decry the column of smoke he'd seen from his apartment, thirty minutes ago. He was scared of the fire.
He began running towards the corner that Helena had looked at. He could not see any smoke or flames for all the blocks he had yet to pass. He looked at his watch and it was eight to. Alexander began to hunt along the street in hysteria.

“If I can only find it,” he said as if it was all he knew. For each step he took, Alexander was more and more inhumanly tormented. His vision was blurred by tears and sweat as he thought of the world that surrounded him. It was the man who had lost track of his temptations or reasons for doing what he was doing. He only felt anxiety and fear like whips on his back. He had no value anymore. No one cared to listen to him. He was a living message and his messages had become much larger than the human he was. As he had gotten around the corner he saw a complete block on fire 666 yards away. People were standing below and the fire brigade was there with three large trucks. They had lifted ladders and two or three men flushed from the ladders’ into the sea of fire. Already at this distance he could see the fire swallowing all that was close to it. Humans were jumping from floors 20 or even 30 yards up in the building. Then he could see how New Year’s Eve celebrates were in doubt about whether to help out or not. A bunch of them was gathered next to one of the fire trucks. Cords were welling out from a van that had been parked right next to them. An antenna was broadcasting live, and absolutely every detail of the burning incineration of human lives. A bunch of guys in fire brigade helmets and coats were trying to catch something that fell from about the top level of the building. The falling thing fell into the firemen’s trampoline so hard that the firemen fell. It had been a human with its hair in flames, following the head like a curtain of fire. Two firemen threw themselves where the human had fallen, trying to put out all fire on it. He realized how acutely insufficient manned it was. It was a catastrophe. There wasn’t anyone or anybody who thought he or she could do something. The place was locked in by fire trucks, media vans from TV and radio and ambulances. It was like a rock concert without music, where the main attraction was the burning of human flesh. Alexander could see fifteen men at the most, moving on the ground in front of the building. Alexander just ran crying, not knowing what to do. Everything within him raged. He was like a leopard expanding his whole body to prevent a fire so powerful, and so evil, it ate whatever came in its way. He noticed block by block how people, instead of concentrating on rescue, tried to avoid the fire with their plastic cups and fire crackers sticking up from plastic bags. He could hear the rattle from the Champagne bottles and people screaming because they had to decide whether to die from jumping down on concrete, or to die in the devastating heat of the flames.

Alexander heard two hysterias going on at the same time. He understood that no one wanted to miss the birth of a new millennium, to remain outside of the fire, while those inside had to die because of it. Three hundred yards away he could see how people began to shoot the crackers into the fire totally turned on by the drama inside of it. Wherever Alexander looked around no one seemed connected to the same mental track he was on. Soon Moët et Chandon corks would fly up in the air to let the fluids foam up and down over the bottlenecks. Soon people would drink out of transparent plastic glasses to celebrate what only could be celebrated once in a human life. He could not tell if people would care even afterwards, when it was too late.

Sandra was walking down at the harbor in frustration. She believed Evil Rake. He was her shadow. She couldn’t stop it. He was inside of her. She was stuck with him. Now she was trying to forget all about her imagination. She told herself that all of the mess during the last three weeks never had happened. She didn’t know what to do, now when she knew that Alexander was blind. She was sick of waiting. She had lost her faith in him, and she felt stronger as a pagan, consuming love if it showed up to her. She had to eat not to be eaten. Her world was insane and loveless. It made her careless. She would eat anything, even herself, if it helped her to stay alive in this world. She suffered from not knowing how to put an end to everything. She wondered about ways to ask Alexander to forgive her. There was none. She just wanted to tell him that she was a woman. A woman who lived outrageously. She cried for each of her steps next to the water. She wanted him to understand. She thought she knew him. She’d seen his art.
It wasn’t until now that he communicated much more than love to her. He’d opened her visions. But when she thought about it she only felt like a loser lost in love. Yet, to Sandra, love was nothing but a survival instinct. Alexander was a friend who gave things to her by his simple being. She saw how a roaring light was reflected in the water’s waves. She looked up. On the other side, behind some house roofs and trees she saw that a complete building was on fire. Sandra’s instincts took over quickly. She looked at her watch. It was forty-three minutes before the stroke of midnight.

“The time!?” she asked herself astonished. “Is time the signal?” Sandra’s body thrust itself toward the bridge and the fire. She was drawn by a motherly intuition. The masses were walking slowly toward the harbor, paralyzed by the fire on the other side. In her body blood was exchanged with exploding adrenalin as she saw two police officers in front of her. They were both looking up towards the fire when one of them suddenly looked down on her. In the strong city light there had been time enough for him to see who it was. He warned his colleague. They surrounded her and both of their arms were pressed up towards her back. The police officers searched her rapidly and routinely.

“Hi, Sandra Nordlinder! Long time no see!” A family stopped up and saw the policemen’s hot capture.

“So where’s your Uklo?” one of the police officers asked her. His walkie-talkie was talking to him so he couldn’t interrupt with his own report. Sandra understood that her only chance was their police car.

“I don’t have any hand-cuffs ye...” Sandra looked for the car keys. She could hear the clatter of hand-cuffs and saw how the other officer took out a pair of hand-cuffs and heard him opening the steel jaw. She could not see any car keys. She tried to catch sight of the steering wheel from her position. Then processes were sped a little in the woman without a choice but full of action. She twisted around her body and felt her two arms, as if holding a golf club, smashing away everything that stood in its way. Her eyes flittered. Sandra could see a car door opening. All of a sudden she sat in front of the steering wheel. The car had been running the whole time. She shifted into first gear and moved away with a burn-out. As she had gotten out on the driveway she pulled down her seat belt by the help of the teeth. She was almost passing the red light and a whole fleet of pedestrians that gave her long, angry looks as if she was a shame for the Police force. As she lowered her eyes anticipating her downshift into second gear by the green light, she discovered a perhaps 15-inch blade that had been erected and that was held some inches from her throat.

“You pussy,” the half-conscious probably twenty-year-old, but forty-year look-alike growled. He had nothing on his upper body except for scratch wounds and some splinter of some material that Sandra saw was sticking out from the major part of his left chest. His pupils were non-existent, then they dilated completely, and as she watched him for a while she saw that they were shifting like that all the time. He was on a high of some kind.

“HEY!! WHORE!! ARE YOU GONNA RIDE ME ARGH UH!! WILL WE WILL GET TO AUTOLALA AND THE FLOWER POWER STATION SOON... MY LASER REX GREEN AND THE CAPRICORNE’S DANCE... WE HATE ALL. WOMAN.” The man slavered froth and Sandra felt him putting his knife on her throat to keep himself upright. Sandra was driving at a phenomenal speed over the bridge, and she had something like hundred, perhaps one hundred and fifty yards left to a red light at the opposite end. She stepped on it for perhaps one more second and then, with all force she had, she stepped on the brakes and closed her eyes. The car slammed violently with its back part into the meridian. It turned upside down and rolled in the air until it landed on the opposite lane. The furious rotation stopped with a jerk. The man flew out the front window. She got out of the car when it was done sliding. She quickly ran back to the other side of the road again. She thought she’d been wounded when she saw the blood on her upper body but then she saw the naked male body fifteen yards in front of the car. It was covered with blood, wearing only athletic shoes. It seemed as if he had been scourged by some sort of a slide on the splinters of the front window. The whole of his back was rugged up skin and flesh.

“100 yards to go on the bridge.” Sandra thought like a soldier blinded by the adrenalin rush of
being chased. She was too scared to think. When the distance was completed she threw an eye towards the wreck for a second time. Two cars had stopped near it. Someone pointed at her. On the other side of the water at the end of the bridge, two police cars drove up on the bridge where Sandra had been only a couple of minutes ago.

Christian came up from the subway entrance and saw the burning building at a distance. He was outside a pizzeria. He was back into that shabby feeling, where his power of action and decisiveness were ready to explode, but he still couldn’t figure out why. This last hour was a climax. Christian didn’t care anymore. He was full of rage against his boss. Society wasn’t what he thought it had been. When those reactions came after his tumbling article about the Church of Scientology, Bertil hadn’t listened to them. He had tried to steer them. Christian was jaded of chasing truths instead of writing just lies. He was sick of it. There was nothing more to do. The article had been finished for twenty four hours, yet he had not turned it in. He thought that the security he had was nothing but a trick the devil or God fooled him with. He felt like a bit of cold lethal steel. He had made his own discoveries. Christian felt that he had captured truths that were his truths. This time he knew he had followed the rules of the game. Still, Christian ruminated upon what manuscript, or picture, or maybe even just the sheer feeling of what this game was exactly all about. He couldn’t love anymore. He was hate. He couldn’t laugh or cry, with senses frenzied in a no man’s land. Wherever he looked he met illusions. Love was a pastime for villains, talking west, walking east. His sight was filled with adrenalin and his brain played back message after message of natural disasters, an ozone layer that could have existed, and why gays who married gays got kids without pregnancy, AIDS patients raping other AIDS patients, nuclear bombs being detonated when everyone knew it was wrong, and he tried to understand it. He really tried. He wasn’t afraid of death anymore. It was in him. He was ready for his hate. He swam in the bull’s red color of blindness, immersed by a bull’s fury. Christian wondered if he should let go of the bullet. He knew he could look people in their eyes until they felt pain, thick pain. His soul stabbed from inside.

He was thinking of his article, which had scared up him to a certain point. He had only found opposites to what Bertil and he had been talking about, almost two months ago. Since their discussion Christian’s mind could not add meaning to what he thought was the meaning of life, and it pestered his creativity. Day after day. Hour after hour. Christian had hoped for inspiration, or the psychology of two brains co-operating, but it had all fallen from him like overripe fruit. He couldn’t handle it. He couldn’t see anything of what his boss talked about. Thor and Loki had come to a dead-end in their search for meaning...for reasons, he thought. All they could feel was the pain of being who they were.

“I know only one thing and that is pain because I can feel it” Christian said as he stared into the gutter. “Why does everything in the world make me wanna go to the bar?! There is nothing there, Bertil. It is a booby trap. I don’t know about you anymore. And you are my man. You are my boss. You know what it all boils down to. The life of dreams. Plastic ideals. Women trying to get artificial tits. Young men and women becoming bankrupt because of college, before they’re even out in the job market. You saw it all. Then you knew people lived on dreams. They needed them to go on with life. You knew you could sell it to them because they’d buy. They’d buy it all. And then to the bar when it all crashed. You saw what was truth and what was lies. And you sold‘em lies. You fuckhead.” Christian breathed licking tongues of fire. He noticed for each of his steps towards that fire that it represented something that was equal to all humans. He knew he wasn’t going to be anything that a human couldn’t be. He knew that fire was a vacuum, a point of decision, a court. Fire was a law for each individual.

“People need this judgment.” In each step he took towards the inferno he felt that which had been his power of life, his ego, his natural instincts getting close to a collapse. Two hundred yards from the fire all his human thinking capacity was burnt out. He ran towards that fire with decisive steps, as if he was running the steps of the fire, as if he himself were its flames, it burned inside of him, it just burned. He knew there were only seconds left of him.
Sandra's throat coughed up slime and blood in her uneven rattlings. She had gotten behind the first block shortly after having seen police cars on the crest of the bridge. She ran half-way into the next block and leaned with her back to the wall of the house. Her gaze was fugitive and split. She recalled having been chased for over two days without any real sleep. She tried to whip her torn and compressed body further on, but she was tired. Her instincts were functioning but her train of thought got more and more illogical and irrelevant. Just a minute ago she thought she had been a man. She stood up and a wave of pain beat her. She bowed down again in a squatting, avoiding position. As she lifted her arm to see what time it was, the arm was gone.

“What...?” she said as if to confirm her own thoughts with some statement, something that communicated life. She ran up along the street parallel to the fire four hundred yards further ahead. She began jogging and she felt as if her lungs were cut out of her body for each breath she took. After twenty some breaths her pains were beginning to even out. She could swallow the blood that now didn't have to be exhaled and inhaled all the time. She was thinking of Alexander. In about two hundred yards Sandra knew she would be physiologically and psychologically broken.

“Alexander...oh please Alexander hear me now. Little did I know how love was such an illusion, no dialogue but for will's monologue of passion in hysteria. I left the house of Christianity, its freedom was within me. I can't breathe, Alexander. All I can see around me is danger...victims of love. I used to run for Christianity just as I run for you now. Oh Alexander I don't dare to kill, I just know how to die. How hard it is to want human love and your divinity, and to see how desperately they seek each other, and how much harder it is today than it was yesterday, to conjoin them. You became so alive Alexander. How it burdens me to see all danger and having all love for you inside of me. I don't know where I'm going. I don't know if I'm freezing. Am I bleeding or even breathing...? Alexander, see the woman in me as I saw the person in you. Oh...how hard it is to ask for your love so that I can love Christianity. How hard it is to see your ideal and perfection, seeds to be eaten by Christianity. How hard for me to see your absolute humanity just like a balance to evil and darkness. But nature is ruthless and I'm of nature, Alexander. How hard, Alexander, to see the ego of Christianity allowing me your chastity, the vision, the joy that you already have given me through all your creations. Believe, Alexander, please believe that I don't know exactly how, much less why I started doom. My task as a woman is to give birth, and all I was seeing was evil and human life that felt it didn't have any meaning. Alexander, I run to find a safe place for us...but there's none. Help me to see all that Christianity couldn't be. I run because of my instincts, they are my religion. I wanted to give you all of my flesh, all of my thoughts and inspiration. I thought it was a woman's chastity. Wherever I turn it doesn't fit, wherever I go I'm a misfit. I'm running because evil tries to eat me. I'm chasing something new because I can't see who's the carrier of Christianity's evil, while I feel the pain of destructive desire, the addiction of love, the self hatred in humans, which cuts me away from your love. Alexander I'm running because my soul has nowhere to go. There is no up or down in people's minds anymore. There's no science walking straight, I'm saying that truths are exchanged for new truths so quickly that there is nothing that is really untrue. I see wheels running in all directions, just for the sake of their spinning. It makes us humans unable to see how it is possible to get rich by giving of oneself. Everyone protects what is theirs, cautious like cavemen for unknown dangers and the wildebeast. I see how everyone tried to find his own philosophy. Everyone had to become wildebeasts to cope with the wildebeasts. People don't see anything natural with togetherness or harmony. They're afraid of it. Oh how it pains me to know I was one of them following my own religion now asking you to follow it. They are afraid of being humans. We are afraid of ourselves. Alexander I'm running because no one else has the power to die. I am a human suffering under my own ideals. Oh Alexander take whatever is left of me...my love is not that illusion...not yet...I can hardly breathe anymore. Darkness and coldness is closing up around me...Alexander...”

Then only fifty yards from it the first media van Alexander couldn't run anymore. His whole body was paralyzed by pain, as he passed the last Crossroad. When he had passed it he was only 1.5 yards from
the entrance of the building. He saw that two other blocks were on fire as well, which was really the last sculpture of creation he saw. Alexander now saw that his soul was running faster than himself. Still at this point, seeing how Christian and Sandra were about to collide, he hadn't distinguished the whole picture clearly. Alexander was crying in his loneliness. He still did not know how to do it. He was alone. He was the chosen artist to understand what it looked like from behind before it was even painted. He had all kinds of colors in his palette. He wondered what drove him, what pressed his thoughts forward. All he saw was hysteria and destruction, all he felt was the pain from Christian hating and Sandra afraid of that evil which caused this whole thing to happen, but not knowing who it was. Aware, only, of the leaves of chastity Christianity gave her, that she is losing her fertility, the leaves of her own being, and even through she now knows all of her children are dead, they need to be gathered, for future generations... But the gatherer is evil because he makes Sandra believe that she has all her leaves together, not because they're nourished by her fertile trunk's branches, but because they've fallen from her because they're dead. Alexander was screaming out because of how it happened to his psyche, to his complete being at the same time. He was back into the torment of all concepts tearing and thrusting in each direction God had ever created.

Alexander was torn apart by his own all-giving all-loving love. He could not decide where peoples' hatred came from, and where their fear came from. All he could see was the man and the woman he both loved. His love blinded him. Distressed. Everything had a validity to him. He could see doors opening up all unknown mysteries, he could see the solutions to all science, he could share each person's opinion, as he felt like the last leaf from Mother Mary, watching the beauty of all living organisms that he could hear and smell all at the same time. He loved it all and he wanted it all to happen. It was life. It had so much meaning, but somewhere there was hatred and he couldn't understand how. Then he saw Sandra in her eyes. Alexander saw that she saw. He saw what she saw and he felt her fear. Then Alexander cried Sandra's tears for fear of Christianity. His tears were bitter when he saw that Christian was that Christianity that he had lived for his whole life. He cried at all his love coming back to him in hatred, and his heart wasn't in one piece any more. Then Alexander believed Sandra. He felt that her fear was real, so real only chastity itself could fear how she feared. He understood how she was all that she couldn't see. Alexander understood how Sandra then was all that love could really be. And so he gave all his love to her. He felt unity arise, as if he'd met his anima.

Sandra realized it all lay in the hands of the humans, as she moved in a no man's land. She realized only one person could carry the whole of his origin, the one who could create one himself. She didn't know if she existed in his creative mind. She was lost because of disbelief in herself, and she tried to concentrate on the woman in her. She felt fear and oppression. She understood how important her identity was, the female ideal she felt she represented. A light and a fresh wind, some sort of a glittering dust blew at Sandra from the direction where Alexander had been. It was a fantastic moment because she saw that Alexander and Sandra were the same person. She rejoiced and inhaled the crystal dust of Alexander. Animus and anima was united into a tunnel that rotated furiously pressing them to its walls. He couldn't see anything but an incredibly illuminating white light that almost blinded them. It was a tunnel made of light. They could see through their skin and saw the same body functions in each other. Ten thousand children said in unison, "Sandra," and the woman's lips answered "Christian." Their faces were palewhite, but not greyish dead. He lifted his hand slowly and gently as he saw how she lifted her. In the strong light he could see his veins pumping blood and muscles and tendons moving the skeletal fingers. He held his hand next to her and after a while they touched each other in a greeting. They both felt neither coldness nor warmth, nor dryness, nor human moisture. Instead it was as if fresh and soft air had caressed other fresh soft air. Like a thought, welcoming another thought, and how they now thought together. It was more than just the contact. It had been as if a fantasy shook hands with another. His lips gave shape to a thin line of a smile. She answered it. After a while, a mild wind could be felt from below. It was different air. He felt the smell of seaweed but couldn't hear waves or any birds. She looked her friend in the eye. He lowered his. He tried to see where the winds were coming from. He couldn't neglect an endless infinity looking
into the tower’s depth, downwards. She looked down and saw that it wasn’t a tower but a tornado. He heard noises, but he wanted to know for sure what it was before he said anything. There it was again, and he heard it. He looked up at her. The breeze echoed up between the walls of the tornado. Her hair began to flutter. He kept his eyes on something that resembled a little dark dot. “Perhaps the opening,” he thought intensely. When she lay her arm on his shoulder to prevent him from bending over too far, the centripetal force of all a sudden disappeared. The situation was kind of comic. They hadn’t begun to fall but hovered still in the air. Gravity returned and they both fell. Sometimes they were close to the walls of light and they saw faces that looked at them. They didn’t dare to say anything because of the fantastic beauty of people from all ages, in all ages that stood tightly, tightly together to get a glimpse of them. She saw some of the children smiling at her, which made the fertility and joy of womanhood well up inside of her. He saw people in all ages, all dressed in white light. He looked down and saw that the hole was just as big as it had been when they had begun to fall. Their bodies were for some reason turned to each other wherever they were situated in the rotation. He thought intensely on all his visual sensations and all that his senses registered. The speed slowly accelerated. Then the contours of all the faces disappeared. They were thrown down with gigantic forces. She wondered about what actually was up or down. They thought they were falling downwards. She saw that the dark hole had grown a little bit. Then suddenly the bottom part expanded, growing out to an enormous size. She realized that the walls of the tornado lay like a veil from their position and down around the edge of the circle. They saw that the tornado was actually light bound to the shadow of that dark circular plate. Now he saw that the plate resembled more of an astral body. Then soon thereafter the walls of light were hundreds of miles away from them. As they got contact with the atmosphere they saw that they were capsuled into something that resembles transparent metal. It wasn’t glass. They were both turned down to the crust that approached them fantastically fast and noiseless. He was scared by the speed they were traveling. He saw that her clothes were back on her. Then, they couldn’t see each other because of a fog both inside the capsule as well as outside. She heard something that sounded like a thunder and the capsule cracked and disintegrated into what seemed like crystals of ice. They felt the touchdown but couldn’t see anything beneath them. They stood up on it. A brutal wind pushed them out of the ramp and the roar took off. He lost her because she felt as if she rolled out on something like wet grass. Still it was impossible to see because of a thick dark smoke that surrounded them. Christian slipped in the stormy wind and fell down onto something hard, cold and humid. He crouched into a fetus position. His joy had been exchanged for panic, to a cold, intractable fear of losing his life. He didn’t know where on earth he had ended up or if he had landed somewhere else. Christian thought he’d recognized the contours of the continent they had landed upon. But it could have been anything he knew. The smoke dispersed after a couple of seconds and she saw that it followed the harsh wind down the slope and out into the landscape. She laughed. Christian was still lying in his fetus position and hadn’t yet dared to open his eyes. He was fighting his inner being and was afraid that the female laughter was nothing but an illusion, just like the woman he had seen a minute ago in that tornado.

“Christian?” she said.

“Her voice is nothing but a human voice, that’s obvious. I can’t keep up this fetus position anymore. Something just has to happen!” He stayed in his position. He could hear how “She” stood up. Then “It” moved towards him, he heard. “It sounds just like a human...walking on grass and... that hard stuff I’m lying on...it...did.”

“Christian?” the voice said again a little bit louder. Christian thought he had bet his life on it and opened up his eyes. It was dusk. He couldn’t decide if it was spring or fall. The grass was moistened and cold as if the frost in the ground just had left it. He could see some green spots here and there as if it was still late summer or early fall. They realized they had been put on a hill with a view over the landscape. Christian really wondered where he was as he wearily looked himself around.
Chapter 9.

“IT doesn’t look like anything!” he thought. “Nothing but a ruin.” he confirmed loudly. It resembled an old and forgotten castle of stone. As she approached Christian she realized that it had the shape of a fort built for defense of some kind.

“Are you disappointed?” she said with a smile.

“Disappointed and disappointed. Do you know what has happened... Do you know what has happened?” Christian looked seriously at her. “Do you know?” He overviewed the landscape and saw a barren bedrock wherever he looked through the dusk. Fields were spread out like creased sheets. Some areas gave the impression of being yellow and others green. “Where are we?” he asked her rhetorically again. He looked around. He liked the rocky wild terrain for some reason. Sandra saw something that looked like an old pavement right beside them, a hundred yards next to the little hill they were standing on. Haylike grass grew inside and outside the pavement, which, it struck Sandra, could have been a road. She tried to see where it came from. It winded out from behind a mountain and she couldn’t see any further back. She looked at the road again that seemed to dwindle away like a loose string. Like a loose string in the landscape leading up to the ruin. Christian stood and turned away from Sandra.

“Can you see the road?” She called through the wind. She held out an arm and turned towards the direction where the street was closest to them.

“Where?” he asked over his shoulder.

“Down there, at the meadow, can’t you see?” She turned back towards Christian, hadn’t turned an inch.

“What are you saying?” he said.

“Here.” She pointed at the road. Christian looked at where it started and where it went, but had the same experience Sandra had a minute ago. He could see how it crookedly roved about towards the castle ruin.

“Like a vibrating string,” he said.

“Exactly!” She walked up to Christian to get a little closer sight of him. She saw that he had a friendly look. His growth of beard seemed a couple of days old. His facial contours were symmetrical and sleek. He had a pure and honest face. The eyes were green and awake, she saw, as if she remembered all his features from memory. He had two dark lines of eye-brows. The lips lacked the feminine fullness but were manly marked out. His look was virile. His eyes turned toward her.

“I’m cold. I’m going toward the ruin,” she said.

“Oo well.” Christian nodded and they took off down the hill to get at what seemed to be the ruin of a castle. They got down to the road. Sandra jumped over the ditch and up on the path of irregular stones. She noticed that it was more calm on the leeward side than up on the windy hill. Christian followed her and jumped up from the ditch and on to the road. They saw that it was constructed was made of sanded-down cobble-stones of different sizes. In between them the grass grew high. She felt a strange inspiration by walking on an ancient road. It filled her with the bedrock’s hostility and the mysterious wild scent of the ocean. She found a savage beauty in all that pernicious environment on their way to the building in stone. After a while she’d become warmer. The ruin rose up slowly, and majestically in the dusk for each step they took. When there was a hundred yards left they realized that it must have been a cathedral, or a gigantic monastic building. Its size was much larger than they could have ever imagined. It was a strange building. Their walk turned into a march. They were moving on faster now. The last steep hill completely exhausted them, but finally they were in front of what could have been the remains of a stone wall. A gigantic fieldgate of iron lay on the ground like a skeleton of a fallen soldier. Christian saw that it
was rustically but beautifully constructed. It had charm. The other gate hang in its upper hinge only, twisting and tilting somewhat in the wind. It made noises as if it had lost track of how many had passed it. Sandra was stunned by the bizarre terrain of this strange land no human seemed to have visited for over hundreds of years, perhaps thousands. It had a primitive, but strong sense of harmony. The mountains lay like hobgoblin stomachs, preancient, sleepy, mysterious. Nothing was artificial...that was what she realized. It was just a raw desertland and she was there, back into an origin, a virginity.

“What’s at stake?” Christian thought while he disconcertedly overviewed the cold castle courtyard looking like a deadly haunt of untamed demons and unblessed spirits. It was uncanny, very markedly.

“You see something?” Sandra asked.

“Well,” Christian answered in the dusk. They took off heading for what seemed to be a gate, to the right of a giant staircase.

“I don’t feel any fear but...it’s dusk,” Christian heard her saying. They were at the gate. From outside it looked like a shed, or an old stable of some kind. Sandra walked up and opened the door. A thick scent of horse hung in the air but there didn’t seem to be any horses there, even though there was a place for quite a few horses. Christian’s right thigh hit something in the dark. He grabbed his thigh and Sandra bounced into him from behind. They discovered it was a large wet stone in its rack of iron and wood. Horseshoes were hanging on the wall. Then a little bit to the left, further into the dark room, they discovered a shelf. On it was not a kerosene lamp but an oriental oil lamp of brass. A sudden moonlight illuminated its beautiful engravings in a gothically ghostlike manner.

“Whale oil,” she sensed by a quick smell from the bottle’s neck.

“Is this an oriental...lamp?” Christian said hoarsely wondrous. Sandra grabbed two crouched stones that were lying on the shelf. She began hitting them but was unsuccessful in making a spark. Then Christian took over and tried for a couple of times. He couldn’t do much better or worse. Sandra made another try. The spark came all right but it wouldn’t ignite the oil. Christian picked a haystraw from the floor.

“Smart,” Sandra thought. “Dip it in the oil,” he said. The spark from her two flint stones illuminated the straw at the first try. Christian held the little flame under the lamp’s wick and after a while it caught fire.

“What a lamp,” Christian said.

They both smiled a little towards each other when they saw that the flame, in spite of all, was hanging in there. They turned around letting the lamp in Sandra’s hand show them their way into the room. They entered the real building of stone passing under an arch. They could see that the stable was a well-equipped workshop with harnesses for ten or twenty horses, and a whole wall to the right covered with tools. They realized they had gotten into this castle through the gate of the smith. It was as if they had missed the main entrance and now hadn’t gotten in from the back door. It was hard to define why this building had been built. It had a weird architecture with asymmetrical towers and atypical pediments and porticos that seemed as if built by giants. Sandra found a distinguished tone of character through the complex, but also decay.

“There’s a personality about this building...this whole place in fact.”

Christian felt as if he had fallen into something he would never get away from. He walked up to the fireplace because he saw the trellis that held the embers.

“Sandra,” he said to get some of her light. She saw how he moved around with his hand in the ember.

“Lukewarm,” he said in an almost horrified tone. “How long do you think?”

“The ember is...lukewarm,” she said surprised. Their looks met again. Then she happened to look behind his back and saw the flayed body of an animal hanging behind. Christian got stiff as he saw her wide-opened eyes. He turned around and saw the slaughtered animal.

“Have you seen firewood somewhere?”
“No,” she answered. She went away with the lamp and Christian sat down next to the fireplace. He was uncomfortable because he realized he had been sitting on the firewood all the time.

“Hey...I’ve...” he paused. He didn’t want to give the impression of being stressed or scared. “I’ve found the firewood,” he said, but she had disappeared into a room next to theirs. He heard noises. Then the light changed and he heard some more noises. Then he heard one hell of a big noise. It was quiet. A couple of seconds passed and Christian sat in his dark, fearing that the worst must have happened. Then all of a sudden she came tripping. She carried a plate on which a knife and the lamp were placed. In her other hand she held a container of some kind. From Christian’s crouched position at the firewood he hadn’t been able to distinguish much and the events of the evening had been way too strange to be digested all at once in this little pause.

“What is that in your arms?” Christian asked to the point. He saw the knife’s edge in a streak of moonlight. He didn’t get an answer.

“How did you make it? In that darkness?” Christian wondered what kind of person she was. He wondered in what hysterical way she was connected with this particular place, and how he of all people possible could have ended up in exactly this situation.

“But speak out!!” he roared.

“Here,” Sandra gave him the knife. Christian took it.

“Heavy,” he said weighing it in his hand. He stood up and walked up to the slaughtered animal. Sandra put down her stuff on the floor. She watched Christian as he was making a choice. She then walked up to the fireplace, made up a fire, and put a trellis above it. She stayed next to the light and heat of the flames. As she turned around, Christian was staring at her from where he sat. They watched each other for a while. Christian stood up and brought the plate with him. He walked up to the slab of stone next to the fire and sat down. He was going to put the meat on the trellis but changed his mind.

“Spices?” he asked her but she shook on her head. He couldn’t judge whether that meant that there was none to get, or that he wasn’t allowed to go get those that might exist. He was suddenly convinced that there weren’t only spices over there. He knew the room was filled with vegetables. Dairy products, root. “This is just a dream,” Christian explained to himself. “This is...another dream.” He stared out over the little barn or stable or whatever it could be called.

“THIS IS A GOD DAMN FUCKING...DREAM!!” He was hysterical. The echo died away into the building.

“This?” she said and looked into the fire without looking as if she was astonished. She was somewhat gawky. Christian for some reason didn’t want to walk the twenty or twenty-five yards out there around the corner to the kitchen, to explore the unknown and get all the missing ingredients of the dinner. He stared and gared for a long time in that direction, but eventually, started the grilling. She rose up to get some hay because they saw bales of hay lying next to kitchen gate which lay on the opposite of the hall. His eyes were glued to its magic door, as she reached the bales of hay. He turned again toward the fire to check the meat. After a white he could hear how she dragged hay on the stone floor, getting closer and closer. As he turned around he saw three bales lying next to the plate. The light from the fire hearth’s more and more glimmering glow also exposed the bottle that stood beside the plate. He decided to open the bottle, but only yard from it he saw how it was kicked away by Sandra who was arranging the hay bales. He threw himself at it like a thirsty alcoholic, and caught it before it would have fallen down on the rough surface of the stone floor. He stood up with the bottle in his hand. It was as heavy as lead. Sandra turned around.

“Oops, a little bit too fast...maybe.” Her eyes wandered from the bottle to Christian. After a while he laughed like a psychopath, something like a half minute too late. He handed out the bottle to Sandra but changed his mind and put it down right by the fire.

“I’ll go and get some more bales,” Christian said gawkily. He turned around. Sandra was coming at him. She stretched for the bottle and handed it to Christian.
“Open it.” Sandra turned around and walked away to get the other four bales of hay. He looked down suspiciously at what seemed to be an Italian wine label. He wished to look at her once again. She gripped the bales and turned around with a thoughtful eye and grace.

His hands that were holding the bottle got loose, and soon they were out of power. The bottle rolled down the leg and onto his right foot. He felt how a noticeable kinetic energy suddenly spread out inside his foot. The bottle kept on rolling slowly and majestically another couple of feet. Christian’s foot had received so much painful energy it simply began flying all by itself as he could no longer stand on it. He was forced to swirl around and to scream. Sandra hurried up with the bales the last couple of yards and ran up towards the hearth. She looked at Christian and saw the bottle on the floor, a yard next to him. She noticed an alarming smoke from the meat and flipped it to be grilled on the other side. A jetblack crust covered the present upside of it. She knew how fast meat could get burnt. She flipped the other piece around. Christian sat down on the bales and took off his shoe. As he rolled down the sock he couldn’t see much more than a faint bump on his upper side of the foot joint. Sandra understood that that bottle had known where to hit. She took it from the firewood bin and tried to open it up, but once again she was unsuccessful. She sat down with it next to Christian, who had leaned back like a wounded pascha who had to consider both a terrible pain and a terrible shock, simultaneously. Sandra left him and returned to the hearth. The meat was ready. She lifted it onto the plate. It smelled much better than she had expected.

“It is still tender...but not juicy.” She shoveled up the coal under the trellis, and as soon as she was done, she could hear a dull puff in the background. She turned around and saw how Christian inhaled the bottle’s aromatic scent. She walked out to the scary kitchen again, to get glasses. A minute later she was back. Christian poured into two rather delicately ornamented wineglasses. They had an unusual shape without transparency. A marvellous craftmanship in sanding and glass painting had transformed the two cups into two masterpieces of mysteriously artistic talent. They elevated the glasses and let them clink out into the empty stable without uttering one single word. The wine was of a quality Christian understood that he’d never before tasted, and probably never would again. He saw how Sandra was surprised by its bouquet. She cut up a piece of meat and pierced it with her fork. She brought it to her mouth and let the morsel melt on her tongue. The meat was delicious. Sandra felt an increasing hunger as she saw Christian cutting up large pieces of meat. They were comfortable on the loosely packed bales of hay. Christian lingered up towards the fireplace and threw a good heap of logs onto it, seven or eight at least. He fell backwards in his original position.

“How were you able to bring that bottle?”
“It was available and I brought it with me. Refill?”
“Please.” Christian looked into the fire.
“We’ve been lucky,” he said.
“Maybe,” Sandra answered.
“Maybe not.” Christian teased her with a twinkle in his eye.
“What do you mean maybe not?” Sandra looked him in his eyes. He answered with a weak but sly smile.

“Well...” he began. “A lonely castle. It’s cold, raw, dark. A slaughtered animal. A bottle of wine.” He looked at Sandra as if to make her become reasonable. He began to laugh, however. “There’s such an irony...” He bit off a chunk of meat and saw that the fire had begun to grow. “Everything is so ridiculous. What are we doing?” He tried to be critical. He swallowed and looked with honest eyes upon the woman.

“Sandra what is this?” his words echoed out. She was in pretty much the same mood.

“Then let’s go on with your irony,” she said smiling, but not indifferent.

“Cheers!” Christian said and raised his glass. It was clear to him that he was full, warm and soon even drunk. He realized he didn’t have so much to complain about. Not right now.

“Cheers!” Sandra said.

“Cheers Sandra!” he said. They lifted their glasses and let the wine rinse down their throats. Not
even half of their meat was eaten up. They were stuffed. Christian looked for a long time into the fire. Sandra leaned back. The stable was finally reasonably warmed up. The silence embarrassed both at first. No one wanted to take the initiative even if they could. Christian waited for that spaceship to return and pick them up. They had found the oriental oil lamp, they had managed to light it, they had grilled the meat and had drunk some out of the bottle. Christian now gave himself totally for the sheer observation of Sandra. Her feature gave him a feeling of trust. They didn’t have anything to proof to each other. In some way the following minutes pressed them like some kind of absurd confession they had to give to each other. Christian got sick of it and stood up. He took out more logs and energized the fire a little bit. As he returned to their seats he took the bottle and poured into their glasses.

“Have you got any...” Christian thought of many things. Perhaps mostly of the word guilt.

“Explanation to your guiltless theft?” She guessed.

“Yeah.” He looked into the glowing core of the fire. “Perhaps. Yes. Perhaps that,” he decided. Then their eyes were welded together.

“No, that I don’t have.” She said categorically. “We’ll have to make one up. It’s up to us. Hastily and funny enough it has become our job to finish this whole thing all by ourselves. It’s up to us.” Their eyes met again and they looked at each other cautiously.

“Up to us and up to us...” Christian began. “...hasn’t it always been up to us?” he concluded. She laughed shortly. “It sounds as if you...” He turned his gaze towards the fire. Everything was dead. He felt as if he didn’t belong to a family or a species anymore. There was no computer register that could prove his existence. He had the feeling of not having a certain place to be. He could only feel the massive presence of now. She was...in his mind and Christian couldn’t let go of this lost...unfinished...world that she was bringing back to him. He noticed that she in front of him didn’t seem to have much to lose. Instead it seemed as if she had reached a goal she had struggled for and now had achieved. “I’ve had it for tonight,” he changed his mind.

“Satisfied?” He asked her just for the hell of it. She didn’t answer him.

“You seem to have it so easy. You walk into a dark and deserted kitchen and find after some brutal noise, however, you find what you are looking for. You drag bales like a whole man...” She laughs.

“It’s always fun with flattering, but don’t waste it on me.”

“It is not flattering.” Christian looked at her with a questioning look.

“I said it mostly like as a reflection upon our situation.” He kept his eyes straight at her.

“What do you mean by our situation, Sandra? I’d rather say everything. Everything. The complete everything.” He stared back into the fire filled with disconsolation. He was lost.

“All, Christian...” she began coaxing, almost absentmindedly. “Simply all. Maybe there’s only you and I. I don’t know for sure. I wouldn’t be able to speak for one true answer or another. I believe we’re in this stable on borrowed time. Or maybe time that has been worked for. Or we’ve just ended up seriously wrong and the only people who can do something about our situation is you and me, here and now.”

Christian looked at her as if to discover the hidden rainbow, the divine nuance of harmony which his human eye had not been able to distinguish.

“I’m willing to believe what you say, but I...”

“It’s not an assumption, no uncovering, no verification of any kind. It’s feeling.” She knew how much truth she mediated in each moment of their discussion. She felt encumbered by a power, but not a decisive one. Her force existed within her but it didn’t steer her. It lived inside of her like a growing fruit, an elongation of truth. She had a new will for something different and everything was regulated by her impulses and expressions that had been welded into something stronger than only human worldly expressions. They both thought of how the place’s secludedness made their character come out into light. Sandra felt a tremendous comfort by that. There was an enormous freedom of just being. It secured the original, one’s innermost being. They were fully exposed to each other, without feeling any regret or loss
from their dialogue. The contents of their conversation transformed, developed, created and amplified at
the same time what was going to happen with the human psyche. He said that if she had met him a month
earlier she’d never have had the same impression of him. Christian told her how his senses had
transformed him. They both looked into the fire. She turned up her eyes toward the serious Christian, but
shortly thereafter she looked away. Christian turned his face toward her, who didn’t let his fall. She finally
returned his serious look at her. They both laughed like children.

“We’re only humans,” she said. They follow the slow rolling of the fire’s coiling tongues around
the wood that has turned to coal. Christian stands up and put an extra log on the fire. He carries with him
some more. When he sits down the glasses are filled with wine.

“You speak about individuality,” she says.

“Right.”

“What’s on your mind?”

“Two months ago my employer gave me a mission. I know that I once upon a time was a
journalist. A writer.” Christian’s gets silent.

“Yes...?”

Christian watches the fire’s glowing and burning logs.

“I remember that he had a great confidence in me since I had been successful in my previous work
at the staff. I remember that I stepped up on a stool...” His face was neither pale white nor humanly red,
but for a contour of a face from some old movie in black and white. Her thoughts were changing quickly,
but not absentmindedly. She tried to summon up what had happened around her.

“Where are the clues?” she asks herself, “are there any?” She doesn’t know what he is trying to tell
her, only that she had a little rebellious kindle inside of her that stubbornly kept asking questions.

“I guess I talked to someone standing on that stool. I remember that I saw something in front of
me that worried me.” Christian’s voice was clear in spite of all the gulps of wine both he and she had
poured into themselves. “The task was...or my task...is... What shall I call it...?” Christian needed words.
“Ironical, fantastic, ridiculous, inexhaustible, eternal in some way,” Sandra yearned for his honesty. He
paused to throw a glance at the flames. He knew, however, that only her eyes could hold real fire. “My
boss spoke to me about evolution. My article was going to be about...evolution.” Sandra saw how
Christian for once was unaccustomed to difficulties with what he was about to tell her. She knew by
intuition. He was part of evolution like a red thread. “I didn’t like the task. I can recall how my one
photographer Thor really gave his soul mastering me of how I was the one who had received the chance of
my life to write a great article. He was pissed at my daily withering away and decay while sitting at my
desk in the midst of life, destroying the joy of work among other staff members. He took all kinds of
pictures for me and threw them at my desk. He cut out things from magazines, stole files in archives, he
read psychological hi-tech research results from all kinds of institutes. This is how I am thinking. Three
others of my fellow writers plow article on top of article. Essays. Books. I have it as good as ever. My
article cannot go wrong. For each day that passes the no man’s land grows between me and the staff. We
both work hard. I don’t think anyone is doing a bad job. That isn’t the deal. Everyone is working like
lunatics. Each man wants to come up with as fresh material as possible. I’m obviously winning their
respect. If it is because of my loyalty or work ethic, or because I can drink half gallons at the pub with
anyone who feels a little bit alone, I don’t know. I cannot, however, grasp the problem. There is no idea for
me to grasp. We are forcing each other to think differently. Those seven totally go for my task. They live
for it. And I... my poor... bastard I can not judge them, however wrong I think all of them are. We are
working at different levels, sort of. It is his article. I make the conclusions. The final conclusions. I get
the credits. His credits.”

“Why can’t you stop them, or him? It’s dishonesty...Isn’t it?” Christian looks at her.

“That would be the craziest thing to do. I can just see they will never again get the same chance
with a topic they will get the same kick out of. My colleagues are alive.”

Only the cracks of slowly burning fire are heard when he paused.

“I’m forced to walk my own way. That is the most natural thing for me to do in this situation. To think on two levels. Me in one while the rest of the staff takes care of the other one. I have one idea that it is in the contrast between us that contours and vibrations will appear of something that earlier had not been exactly clear. Like a musician who…”

“...plays and listens, plays and listens, plays and the whole time listens until a melody appears.”

Sandra looks at Christian.

“Sometimes you’re the one with words!”

“Oh yes.” Sandra said. She laughs tricky but heartily. “Well?”

“Well, the staff and I keep playing for a couple of weeks. I go out for walks. Wash clothes, polish shoes, throw down food in the cat’s food bowl. Our article is losing its concept more and more each day. It’s all my fault. I’m the one responsible. Yet I think I’m doing the right thing, using the feel. I take a standpoint from myself. All I crave for is just any standard version of how a life should be.” Christian gulps from his glass before he continues.

“Even if it was a misfortunate or happy life, a boring or contented life, I realized how little it all mattered. I realized day by day that I am forced to press the most out of each situation to see the evolution...” Sandra looks wearily at him. She senses that there is a hook. She is amazed that he doesn’t seem to remember the contents of his article. He can’t remember its punch line. Sandra thinks of how he is telling of everything in a mysterious present tense. “He regards himself alive?” She thinks in silence.

“I’m getting all these nightmares. I fall asleep in front of the TV, with Felix in my lap. Things are beginning to fall apart.”

“Fall apart...? And who is Felix?”

“Yes. I’m losing my track. In fact I’ve never had one,” Christian says almost weak-willed. He is honest, actually much more truthful than she could have ever expected. “My goal is not guiltless theft,” Christian adds to make sure. “I am taking off with philosophy. I try to reach the depth of life. Then, as time goes by, I realize my soul throws me into a dead end so I want to trick life to find its cause, it’s reason.”

She looks at him, waiting for an explanation. She needs a deadline. She wonders what his conclusion is, and for some reason she avoids asking Christian straight out about it. She thinks there is no purpose in sticking a hole into his airmattress of thoughts. At this point he is already thrown around between quests and wishes on the destructive ocean of logic. “This boat he is going to be let alone to row home all by himself,” she decides.

“I think that it cannot matter if I am Mussolini or a Swede convincing Italy that I am [Sw.] Frigida Lollobrigida. I have a life with its predestined situations and its situations without destination. It is only when I begin to take them seriously that life suddenly, I notice, all of a sudden hastily and amusingly begins to be lived.”

“Your integrity?” she asks.

“OK. True...true.” Christian got silent. “But is it really mine?”

Their friendship now becomes like living poetry.

“One day I saw what was hiding in the glassbowl. I don’t know why that fortnight still is so clearly visualized in my head. Maybe it is three weeks. I don’t show up at the staff meetings. The boss doesn’t want to make any changes in spite of my protests. He asks me to see the truth and I tell him what I see, the deadend, but he doesn’t want to listen to that. By now people are pretty mellow about me. They are getting used to my relaxing. They don’t have the power anymore to be sour and mad about my moral decay. They can’t feel that I don’t have the sense to fulfill the duties. I work less and less by the boss’s or anyone else’s timetable. I’m beginning to see with the eyes of a child and it surprised me. Everything has changed into different colors and shapes. It is Thor who’s transforming the research into something that is dull and boring to something that gives joy. Like a satellite I am circling in orbits between people’s attitudes based
on faulty material, but I feel he is pulled toward a certain direction. I lose my responsibility and to some, my educated mind, and it isn’t until now that I see glimpses of reality. I lean out of the walls of my self that have no windows. People get crazy at him, but I’m the diva, a really bad diva he tells me. It all had begun so beautifully and slowly, the way it always has before I am about to produce something with capital and lowercase letters. But as soon as I connect the interplay of thoughts I disrupt the order of the house without windows. I felt a fissure of light entering my life because I let his senses take over. I let the person inside of me converse with his ego. I feel how his mind is incorporating me, my own body, from having fought it all the time. Life isn’t any longer something that the human is forced to live through. It is one big crossroad. One single possibility.” Christian makes a pause in his monologue. He is observed by Sandra, who takes his story for what it is, without disturbing him. “We are out for more and more... I find myself in dark corners of cafes and bars, or at restaurants that neither are open nor closed, at dusk or dawn or in the afternoon when most people are escaping work...to save themselves. Her facial expressions talk just as much as Christian’s voice. They handled the subject with secure and very straight chords.

“Cafes?” she says eager to learn. “…in corners?”

“Yes.”

“I’m in the same situation, but it is …” Her voice gets numb.

“A long time ago?” Christian says smiling, as if he knows something that she doesn’t. She thinks of time as a human invention, to see the evolution in a series of intervals.

“Was time what Thor was throwing hammer at, or for ?” she asks herself.

“The boss calls me up at his office. I understand it is going to hell. He is the only one at the paper that decides if my work is a failure or not. I am not done with the thinking and he wants to have the results in ink by the following day. The boss has nothing to say against me. As we sit there the silence spreads out in the same hastily and uncovering way it had disappeared two months earlier. I am missing results. His results. Thor’s results. For each second that echoes out in his large office we are both surprised by our integrity, as you may say. I enter his domains by my way of thinking, and planning the work with the group, myself. But hardly anyone divides the load of work. It is being eaten. Everyone wants to have a share of success, and that’s what people connect me with at the paper. It is fantastic to see how our material is not at all to be found in the historical archives that the boss spoke of. Yet, I force myself to accept Thor’s bridles, his “totally free” bridles that he gives me. Each instinctive step of commitment I partake, kicks Thor downwards on his careerladder, at the boss’s loss of his true and honest Christian. I am inside of the boss’s intellectual pasture ground just the way he has planned it to be there. He is going to get his article, while I’m forced to inhale Thor’s ideas to learn how life is created, and then when the article is ready to appear, it must be ripped, by me. Thor was baking the cake, but our boss steals it from us both.” Christian’s eyes wander around in the room. “It is all about the realization of guilt. The destruction of the Bertil’s frustrated life-complex of not being the first one with something. I’ve understood what grip I have. I’ve gone all the way. I’ve given him my resignation because I know he can’t fire me. He is after me like a game he has released in his own plot and now just can’t let out. My boss is waiting to see what is going to happen. How much that is going to happen. He waits for my agile reflections and the young man’s naturalness. My immortality of his immorality. My pain, Sandra. I sense how Thor’s and my boss’s talents grow in me minute by minute, day by day. Who is the hunter of mine, and who waits to get his personal tribute. My talent is not going to make up for someone else’s lack of talent. The boss had called me up for that personal meeting so that I in the silence and the calm would have the time to dig myself into the solitude of the creator, so that no one in the end would know who had done the article, except for Him. I’m unwrapping his flag of ideas to my other friends and colleagues. They want to hold it and feel its flutter in their minds of discourse. I let go of it to let everyone else have it. It’s wild. It’s pagan. The results are born. The results aren’t research. It’s their gut reactions. What are the boss’ complex that I have in mind? I can not simply understand why He has put them in me. Thor is seeing something new, something revolutionizing, my boss wants, but I’m just the fabric, the cable, the chalice of guilt. Their
concept grows to a creature, a thing, a fantastic animal, me. For a long time He has been thinking of existence, I understand now. It is that animalistic life of it, however, which Thor catches. He thinks it has been around him his whole life, without his being able to grab it, if even just to see it. He is never satisfied with what he has. Yet my boss and I are puzzled by Thor’s hammer, and how he hammers out hours and days...how I pierces into everything that are us, how he exits all around, all the time...” Christian stretches out his arms, one towards the fire and one towards Sandra.

“How does a man full of self-hatred know how to use the tools of love?” she asks herself. “And how can he, over there, figure this out?”

“I’m not an apostle of integrity. I’m in their web. Am I supposed to turn myself inside and out until He knows all my feelings, all of my reactions, to steal the exact moment when I am unified...with...my task, the artist’s? Thor’s? When He knows everything of what true love of life is like, he is going to take it from me. While I and everyone else want power, glory, and money, He is going to get it all from us who need love. Am I the one to help him out? Am I supposed to help him out? Sandra gives him a log to throw into the fire. “I see that anything exists only when it is in action, when it actually happens. Existence can’t be recorded or written down. For each second during these three weeks...in December...I understand now...I understand how sharp the boss’s idea is, so sharp that all it consists of is the cutting edge. But it is all fake. My editor-in-chief wants money. I want the truth. Thor’s pagan truths because they’re life feeding on life.”

Christian finally turns up his eyes exactly where she wishes to meet them again.

“You don’t have to answer any questions,” she said.

“Yes. Very much so. I lack the answers.”

“Nothing more?” she says.

“Nothing WHAT?!” Christian screams right up her friendly gaze. “This is a nightmare,” Christian says. “Soon I’ll wake up from this daze and back to reality. But as I’m dreaming... I can’t specifically explain how, or when things have happened. Or why. Yeah...” Christian says to himself. “That’s how it is...I’m dreaming.

“Why are results so important?” Sandra asks him.

“Why are results so important?!” Christian is astonished with his eyes wide open. “Why are questions important? Why are answers important?” he asked himself rhetorically, and she heard him. He remained sitting in silence for a while. “Some things perhaps from the start of the universe don’t fall into their place right at the beginning. Some thing like, for example, a wheel, or a boat, they don’t lie around in some box the stoneage man could go and buy in any convenient cave when he needed them. Results are important because they show that the needs of the human are at the least, breathing, eating or copulating. They prove that the needs of humanity are the evolution of the intellect. They show the human how to separate right from wrong. The question and the answer are an instrument that the human is learning to play on. The question and the answer are the most basic contrast by which the human can make conclusions of how its evolution is going, and what it can do about it,” Christian says, but is still dissatisfied. He is just about to have a nervous breakdown. He understands that he is a wreck. Burnt out like a cigarette.

“Thor came up to me with a couple of pictures. They still puzzle me. Do you know the Romanov family?”

“Oh yes,” she says stunned.

“The Czar’s own pictures are fascinating. During the years of imprisonment and all the way up to the military execution, he took pictures of his daughters and his family. There you’ve got questions and answers at the same time.”

“Oh well, Christian. What to say about them? Why, it isn’t until now, because of how history turns out, that those pictures have become... What shall I say...indispensable.”

“Indispensable?” Christian responds almost absentmindedly.
“The pictures turn out to be the only remaining and the most comprehensive documents of how the family had lived. So what?” Her voice echoed out over the stable as always when the pause was a fact.

“That, I agree with. But what makes the emperor choose specifically the camera? What are his instincts?” Christian asks. “The family understood more and more how the gigantic plot would end and what was about to happen with them. Something that no one in the nation for hundreds of years had expected to happen. Czar Nikolai II and some of his members of the magistrate’s court just have to bow and sign on the revolution. I’m wondering how initiated he was in the maintenance of the empire, and if it was because it was too big to hold together that he was overthrown. Of course, one takes pictures of one’s family, if one is bored to death by being imprisoned. Reading about his other interests they are really the opposite of Lenin’s, and other revolutionistically determined men. I’m of course extremely aware of the repulsive conditions of the lowest class of 19th-century Russia, similar to that of France in 1789...or what prevailed as slavery during the Roman Empire. Class differences have most often caused humans to start revolutions. That is a tragic and bloody chapter completely of its own kind. The Czar fascinates me. He enjoyed sports. He liked relaxation. Those of the staff members who knew about Russia have briefed me about the Russian revolutions, and the last czar-family’s tragic fate, shortly before the outbreak of WW1. Thor thinks I shall brief the pictures he got from someone on the staff. He has in mind that the czar himself would have been before his time, since his family was one of the families in the world that had a fantastic excess of time for themselves. It is more than this that makes me imagine their destiny. Most of all I’m concentrated on the czar himself and his ability to find an easy and buoyant way of living. Sure enough, he doesn’t have any major reason to complain about his superior position, and the environment in which he lives. But he really takes care of it in a way that is indeed unique for rulers. His engagement with the jeweller Fabergé is in a deep sense the celebration of his marriage and his woman. He decides to go for the family. He believes in it as a functioning social center, in a remarkably loving way. Of course, he can do whatever he wants. He is made of money. He is a Russian semi-god. He is the dream being alive, he is the ultimate truth for the Russian people, the ideal of the Empire’s glory, money and power embodied. Yet, the facts remains. He really puts the glory of his family above all. The tragedy is that the family lives in a society with extreme class differences, while the family in itself is all a product of love.”

“Look at all those faces of his daughters, Christian!”

“The czar mediates love, and this love becomes an extreme authority of identity to the people, even though some of them hate him, and the Empire. His identity, made of love and care for his family, is far different, however, from the one the empire’s identity, the one which the revolution calls out. Czar Nikolai II transcends romantic love but it has to die because the empire’s epoch is over. Now, my experience is that one uses the power one has to reach more power. Most of us can maintain what we already have in terms of power, a decent status quo. Just as many of us have to put down bucket after bucket of pride to maintain this status quo. Another group of people realize that the easiest thing to do is to decide whether one wants to gain or lose power. Few of us are those who decide to win, and win all the way through.”

“Yeah...how did you know...” Christian was numb. He was ridiculed. He said, “right,” and continued as if nothing had happened. “In Czar Nikolai II’s time a vast amount of people within his nation are unable to make these choices that the modern man can because they’re members of the Czar’s empire, and I guess that’s why that revolution happens. I realize, as I look at all of those pictures, that I have pictures of a secluded group of people who really have all the power. It isn’t dirty, but it is of a different hierarchy than democracy. Their power just exists. Like an identity of its own. It has a different face, a face of glory, which the rebels’ aggressive minds don’t.”

“You’re not saying that democracy lacks glory, are you?” she quickly remarks.

“I’m kind of grotesque, I agree. It doesn’t sound right what I say. People make revolutions because they’re mad with a whole lot. What I’m saying is that...it’s really sad how an empire with an ideal Czar
family doesn’t allow its members to reach down to the poor, the sick and all other in need. I’m saying that the Czar family died because there was no communication. There was just the aggression of the revolution.”

“And today it’s the opposite?”

“Today the power is taken over by business managements and big corporations with those pushy forces of Stalin, Lenin, and perhaps Trotsky, but with different causes and under different political objectives.”

“But Czar Nikolai II you’re saying was...”

“...a man on the top, like a lesser god. He didn’t convince or persuade people of his one and single message.”

“You’re bizarre,” Sandra says, thinking of all blood that had been wasted for kings and rulers throughout the history. She didn’t want to give up on Christian. “Christian is good for the one reason that he attempts to pull together knowledge,” she persuades herself. “He’s trying to make the family’s death not one in vain, but for a gain.”

“Well, just what the heck shall I say to you Christian? To live life? To make love? A belief in living?” The echo of Sandra’s voice dies out in the flames of he fire.

“A belief of living life in harmony, just like the priest says and hopefully does.”

Christian smiles, maybe because he thinks he is being heartily ironical.

“Nikolai seems to focus subconsciously around the Logos-concept, structures. His goal of achievement was the interaction between the effort and the spontaneity, between the self’s little logos and the outer world’s cosmos, the big logos. His ambition in life appears to be to raise the condition of adventure in life, to drive the human species to a point where it lives the most. He wants to find the truth, the unity of these two logos, when they are perfectly harmonized. What’s unique is that this unity never actually becomes until it’s energized by love and the energy of the good thought. Czar Nikolai represents a genuine love, a spontaneous and intuitive goodness, an ability to see things, in things. This is what the Czar’s pictures show to me. Few groups of people have been in the Czar family’s position, with a natural instinct to create harmony. I see right in front of me how an unconscious striving for unity of a self with that bigger cosmos is just happening. They are for good and for worse, a pure ideal of humanity.” Sandra laughs a dry laugh.

“Your boat is leaking Christian,” she says even though she is convinced of the opposite. For some reason she forces herself not to stop him. For her, Christian’s words is a fruit of unusual strength and glamour, the proof of savage confidence that she, in turn, carnally is giving Christian. He drinks some out of his glass and stares into the fire. Sandra notices that Christian is thinking intensely of every breath she makes, every word he says, every detail of what is happening. She feels his instincts working with ideas and impressions for some ritual piece of logic. Sandra sort of knows that he already is standing next to that which Christian is looking desperately for. She thinks the best is just to let him think in peace. It isn’t a matter of whether she shall help him or he, her. Christian is running like a cat around hot oatmeal. She is there at that single yard’s distance from him. He is the hungry one.

“He mustn’t be made to believe that I’m not the oatmeal,” she knows. She hopes for them to be able to eat each other to establish the fact of how it warms and stills hunger. “Is everything dependent upon...Christian...?” she asks herself. Is he unconsciously hunting for the adventure? His impulses? Is Christian really spontaneous in everything?” She throws an almost furtive glance at him.

“I see three kinds of love in you. First of all I’d like to mention the love for the concept of your God. Then comes the love for the one you love the most, wife, husband or the spiritual love.” He drinks out of his glass and throws it in front of himself. It doesn’t break. “And last we have the most natural of all loves, the love for oneself, but you don’t... “

“What about love for others besides spouse? Maybe she should be included with the second one, and what about children, or siblings?”
“Is that why you threw the glass?”
“Because I don’t love myself!!??”
“The glass didn’t break!” she informs him. “What kind of man are you? Who can’t even break a glass?” She wonders why it didn’t but then her thoughts of the self-confidence within Christian’s words again creates a better meaning to her. One without guilt.
“The Czar decisively goes for the matrimonial love. He listens to his unconscious and penetrates the dynamics of an outer cosmos, the outer world. He turns life’s values, the invisible and abstract values, into concrete action. Towards the end his family was living under daily threats of being killed. A constant pressure of death. I think the Czar’s hobby of photography is an unconscious means of survival. He searches for an enigmatic center where life plays and lives the most, where it is found to be most eternal. To see this and to photograph it, to see how life’s virginity played in his daughters’ and his wife’s eyes...” Christian’s voice died for a second. “To exist there in one’s family for one’s wife, for one’s kids, still maintaining the harmony, and not to give up hope, if even for one minute.”
“How do you get strength...”
“That gives strength. In the midst of the revolution, they live for each other, right in front of Stalin, Lenin and Trotsky...right in front of them, an ideal of love. Right in front of them. They had something. They definitely had hope.”
“They have nothing to do with the revolution?” He responds surprised.
“They were a family with a joy that could and should have been communicated to the people. They experimented the dialogue and that’s why they can wait. They believe in the language of love.” It is silent.
“All of these revolutions happened more than eighty years ago. Don’t you think years of failures from the imperial headquarters to a certain extent push the political winds toward an inevitable direction? I mean, to start a revolution, or several, it takes more than one person’s madness, don’t you think?” Sandra looks at Christian for some concreteness in the chords of their philosophical jamsession.
“Is the revolution successful? Were the revolutions successful?” Sandra remarks irritated as if Christian is false.
“Were the revolutions successful!!?” he astonishes. “Ask Lenin or Stalin. Write to Trotsky. Talk to Evil Rake.”

There was silence now. Christian’s thoughts were pressed out cautiously like an expensive juice out of an expensive fruit. The more she fertilized his attention, the more he talked, she’d noticed. His deep thoughts dug deep into her womb, like victorious pagan words of power and glory. She was moved by this adventurer and wondered what happened now that he had reached her wide open ocean.
“Is he really going to do it,” he asks himself. “Is he really going to take off?” There was so much he needed to hear, she knew, but she let him go. “He needs a listener,” and two intellects together are creating such a powerful and living creature,” she said to herself.

“Well, as long as the energy is focused, as long as the work one is doing has got a purpose.”
“Christian, who knows for sure? Does anyone know, will anyone ever know exactly what function life has?”

“The human sees functions if the human wants to.”
Still he keeps the matter to himself by exactly that manhood which he thought all great men were made of. Sandra is sitting next to him without knowing what it is to be a man, perhaps not needing to. She understands how the clue she looks for absolutely must be hiding in Christian’s last weeks’ work on that article. There is some material in it he still hasn’t been able to digest in his mind. She discovers that Christian’s psyche is burdened by her presence. She can’t close her eyes from the hints and invisible clues to that something which slowly had begun to fall from him like an illusion he didn’t any longer have. In spite of his clear vision, she knows, he can’t help himself out of himself. She wants to nourish him, she wants to bore him. Christian realizes, however, that there is a dead spot in his consciousness. There is something extremely dead in an extremely vital and central part of his journalistic conscious. The result.
His thoughts scare him out of proportion. "The results of all...thinking...his article. My article" He was paralyzed.

"Only then, when he can’t any longer see what the purpose is of the article, then he has become the purpose himself..." she thinks. Christian looks at her. She looks at him. His arm ejects three logs that he places perfectly in the corner of the fireplace. The glow splashes up and the stable is illuminated as if an exploding firecracker explodes right above it.

"What were you doing in those cafes?" Sandra asks another time.

"I’ve already told you...what I did. It was a journey to the point in which every answer had its question, and each question had its answer. It was a rave towards the ecstatic focus in which no light prevailed or darkness dominated. To the world of the sixth sense without hatred or love. To the sphere in which a harmony maintained the utopian scheme in their eternal way of being." He looked down on his hands. "I was...studying. I made discoveries. It’s probably most of all something of a journey, that which I undertook myself. One long sailing tour, it feels like."

"What?" Sandra burst out.

"What?" Christian answered.


"I and...Thor, we socialized a lot the last week. Practically all the hours of the day, if my memory doesn’t deceive me completely. We had a great time." Christian was surprised at how his own words made him remember more and more. "An irresponsibly great time. We sacked ourselves from the job that last week. And... that’s how we started our real sailing tour." Christian looks at her.

"What!? What bloody sailing tour?" Sandra is about to lose her patience. She cannot believe he said sailing tour.

"That’s when I began to learn about things. I end up in situations and complications everywhere. I just see all of these...collisions of male and female, the evil and the good. Love and wisdom. The will against the reason. All of this had so far just been tumbling around in me like a big whirl, among other whirls. We constantly advanced in all that we said, and did, that in which we participated. Thor and I, I think we had some sort of a basis. We were generally pumped...by the article. It was its thesis that spoke our tongue in that intense and eventful week. We were metamorphosed. We were depersonalized creative instruments as our ideas continously exchanged with each other. We had until that week been sitting in the office like phony horsetails without a horse that ran anywhere. Time just slipped through our fingers like Kalahari sand out of a broken time glass. We were stressed by the lack of material and time. The problem is to know what the material is, and what its context is. We were some kind of hunters at those cafes, restaurants, bars... those dark places. We walked from the one unknown field of dollars into the other. I felt like a war-correspondent. There isn’t one moment, in all of these weird circus performances, that is similar to another. Everything is just moving around like a spinning wheel, around, around, around. Thor and I want the unknown. We want the people of the unknown. We want to see what happens. How the jetset is doing. We want characters. Thor watches. I talk. The whole deal seems to be just a big treasure hunt. We were desperate the last three days. We can’t find anything rational. We think. Thor thinks. We consume each other. We walk in front of each other to grasp the other one’s idea. I understand that it is a one man’s job. We both know a hero or a heroine is needed, but we don’t know who, or do we.?

Someone is needed who can wrap it all up, someone who can trace the red thread with what we’ve been doing. I don’t know anything at all about my article, it feels like. I am back at the starting point. All of that good two months of time, is vanished. I can’t understand why I have ended up in those dark cafe corners everywhere. Perhaps it is because, ironically, I wanted to see how people and groups of people reacted upon the lonesome guy, in the corner. No one can watch solitude. It scares the hell out of people. I realize that if I force myself just a little, there is immediate presence of a dialogue, run by each person, a body language, an attitude more honest than what their own words can tell. Attitude is more
straightforward. Each one of us humans always communicates by giving signals, words. Which is a diametrical opposite to the fantastically plastic exhibition of real men, and real women in the movies. We understand it all because we understand the movie’s signals well. A moving photograph with words and sounds, that indeed presents an intrigue, like the scarred face of an Apache. Some of us get scared of the movieface perhaps. But it doesn’t talk to you, does it?”

“It’s a moving memory of words, thoughts and people’s actions. A picture of time.”

“Does it talk to you specifically?” Christian says.

No one dares to add anything to the discussion. Christian was unable to quit his train of thought. It was as if restraining his own psyche from being and he couldn’t do that anymore. He just couldn’t.

“I sat there in dark corners watching people acting just like the theatre. I felt scents. Facial expressions are an active part of oneself’s integration with the discussion. Mistakes with coffee cups causing real clothes to need to be washed and real excuses to be made, I found suddenly the real drama, the real meeting. I watched a live theatre where the acting had its own ears and eyes that pulled its members closer to each other. There was communication there from each individual. There was so much expressed, so much life. But all I sensed was that spinning of a wheel. All I saw was illusions. No one could relax like the Czar had when... imprisoned...”

“How the hell do you know he was relaxed? Because you’ve looked at some stupid pictures?”

“SHUT UP! I am trying to tell you...something!”

“YOU SHUT UP CHRISTIAN! YOU LISTEN TO ME!

“I’ve seen people who are free. Yet they are locked up. No one has time. The media piston is beating like a hammer in their minds, like a hammer inside each skull, which no one can imagine living without. It has created a rhythm that everyone has become dependent upon. Its beat is so strong, so powerful people can no longer imagine a world without it... A rhythm of maniacal media slavery.”

“You seem just down burdened. Your thoughts are tied. Your ideas are like lead. Unreal. Dead. Heavy.”

“An idea is light, like the wind. Is there in all of these media storms to be found that meeting of a child’s senses? To simply watch or to listen, to smell, to feel for its own reason? Or have we become so degenerate as to give up the scent of roses because we’re afraid to feel its thorns? Look at the child itself. It tastes everything. It works with all its senses at the same time. It constantly creates presuppositions for itself, constantly tuned for experiences. Where are all those children in us, whose senses all work at the same time, to verify ‘Yes. This is the taste of life?’

“We have, I swear, we have never worked so hard before, together. Someone of us, I’m not telling who, someone have realized how the experience belongs to the child. Thor and I as companions at work, we actually blind each other. No one of us wants to lose the cooperation with the other. No one wants to offend the other one. Our reasoning suffers from a lack of respect for each other. We have become captains of an unsteerable, sinking battleship of communication. I feel how my soul rusts and carves against my friend. We were at the Dolomite. A café. He asks me what I want from him. My point of view. Shortly before deadline. He is dwelling on the social track. He’s saying in his slow nasal voice, ‘We’re all a part of the staff. You, me, Michaela, Agneta and the others. But!’ In a couple of sentences Thor states his fear of how the staff, just straight out, is burning out its senses. At first I don’t take him seriously. ‘Well, of course,’ I say. ‘We all change on the way toward our goals.’ I’m reflecting on my profession. I explain to him how the research is a journey. I have a vision of some kind in my conclusion to him. I try to tell him of it. ‘Look at the experience in itself, Thor. It’s an innovation. It has conclusions.’ Now we’re carving on each other. We are cutting each other’s throats, by just sitting still, calmly in front of each other. So far I felt I had been both the listener and the talker. Then, when Thor as usual after two or three gulps of his coffee, having hauled up his package of John Silvers without filters, I see nothing but the habitual, professional photographer. I’ve realized that he catches moments, short moments of fear or joy by routine, because he always have and probably always will. That which I’m searching is reality, live performances,
what makes real things real. We are each other’s ideal but how difficult isn’t it to see how this works as a creative barrier, when we’re afraid to crush the illusions we have of each other. How hard it is when we can not decide whether our companionship is or isn’t anymore, because it is searching a reality that doesn’t exist. How hard it is! Yet no one of us will understand that we are better than our own ideal.”

“Go on.”

Silence.

“Thor speaks laboriously and unfamiliarly with his words. He made me realize how important the ability of exact communication is. He was a man, however, who could only concentrate on either talking, or listening. A person who is completely soaked up with what he is doing technically perfect.

“Just like Trotsky, or Hitler, holding the world in front of them like a little picture.

“Like a blind man, he knows it is there, right in front of him, yet it is so invisible to him... And that’s why he takes pictures. Thor wants pictures of a world that revolves and he burns his ways of living unscrupulously, because I want him too... We both want too. Monotonous, and without melody I found it to be, Sandra, and not to the point.” Christian’s stubborn voice kept talking. “I saw a human who was one hundred percent the talking observer who can’t drink of the picture himself. He doesn’t dare to weave in his person into his art, as if he really cannot care less...about his own art! His own craft! He acts as if he doesn’t have a plan. He lacks a perfect schedule for how a perfect photographer acts. Nikolai II, mentally puts himself in the midst of the perspective he is photographing, to be able to photograph it. This is an example of how a good artist stretches the artistic frame, by transcending his own self into the piece of art he is about to create, to actually become his art, elongating the perspective of eternity by only that little click.

“Why do you compare Thor, a professional photographer with Nikolai II? Isn’t that like comparing Picasso with Chagall? It doesn’t work out. Artistry is originality.” She was unable to let him go any further without a remark. Christian, the preacher seemed less and less dependent on her, yet for the same reasons this gave her joy, a joy she thought didn’t exist. Christian was, however, himself the dictatorial speaker he was talking about. “What he says rinses out like water, from a dropped jar, into sterile desertsand. His words and sentences are still, self-contradiction,” she amazed. She’d begun to hate him from just sitting still, listening. Then she understood that Christian is neither being blinded from his own words, nor exclaiming his indifference to her existence. “His hatred is to be released, but, I am what he is. He thinks, and therefore I am. God, who am I?” She was determined to release his hatred. “It is the only way to make him see who he was,” Sandra thought. She couldn’t tell whether Christian could see any truth through his painful irrelevance of his unconscious, or whether this dream was her being, in his being. She was unable to judge whether this was his problem, or her problem.

“Ok. I am sitting there...in front of Thor. No outsiders could have stepped into our minds...trying to understand... That would be as if to ask someone to pee one’s own urine. Thor developed his scarce words taciturnly. There was something he wanted to say straight out. He is a man of action, yet, he fumbles with his words. His sentences rip deep screaming wounds in our relationship, a dying body without much blood left. He is inside...a wardrobe...a mental wardrobe that he for some reason hasn’t cared about, for ages, as if he is still lost in his own emotional darkness. He says, ‘Ya know, the stuff huh...we had somethin’, for a beginning. But then it disappeared huh... Each one was doin’ the thing they’re supposed to...huh. Everybody was so damn satisfied and happy about it. But damn it, Chris. You are listenin,’ now, Chris...huh? You are...listenin’...to me? That research...everyone’s report...it doesn’t work out with me. I don’t know how to say it... To you... I mean, now we’re at the Mite again and everything is just cool, at least for me...but still it doesn’t... Everything seems to work out just fine... it seems just fine...huh. But in the beginning we had somethin’... In the beginning...but now it doesn’t make sense? Huh?! What do you say Christian!??” Thor speaks of something he doesn’t understand, yet he
wants to understand. It isn’t until the waitress leaves us, clearly affected by Thor’s sentences, that I get my first real idea of what we have missed. The lack of origin. The lack of true contents. It just said bang and everything sort of mingled together.”

“What is really fantastic though is that Thor has given you that Something to think about. He puts himself before something that he cannot quite understand. He blows out the ceiling of your discussion because he has to,” Sandra says, desperately seeking the contour of Christian’s psyche.

“I understand how he is talking to me from the child he is inside. He says the article’s main focus is the actual human experience, without saying anything about this experience, because the article is artificially put together. To Thor, the article had been compounded without experiences, under the study-lamp, at the library, in the institutional archives of psychology departments, with photo-copies or micro film, or any texts in all lengths and sizes...photos, movies, CD-rom...or CD-rhum when all I want whiskey...because all sources seem surreal, pushing the reality into a glass bowl, rolling like tilted spokes of the media wheel inside that glassbowl. Just spinning around, inside this bowl, around and around, until we’ve become so dizzy of the spinning we’re unable to say whether we know more or less of the reality, the staff is trying to catch. Thor sees what...I...already understand. It all happens in some sort of... “

Once again Christian searched in the flames for words.

“Sacrament?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Christian says, full of astonishment, staring back at her. “I visualize the staff’s work before myself. I’m looking at these bundles of newspapers, seminary booklets, videos, rolls of film and I realize all we had for it was aching backs. All the running to printers that don’t want to take the information from the computers, trapping our work and worship of knowledge by its useless technology. No one is able to change the situation. Everyone’s thought depends on the computer. Our knowledge communicates because the technology we use for it, is able to cooperate with some other technology. It has all come down to a non-human cooperation. The technology darkens and closes out what could have been fantastic ideas, because technology doesn’t speak the creative language of ideas itself. In itself, technology isn’t creative at all. It becomes innovative because the ideas that set it into motion are innovative. There is some kind of message to this. Reality composes itself between Thor and me. There is a vacuum just in what he says and how he says it. Yes, you’re right. The sacrament is what they say, and how they say it. There is a core of pure honesty, purity, with the waitress’ perfume, who swung by, mixed with and Thors medieval smell of sweat and burning consumption of John Silvers without filters. So little of crude action, yet so much of a complete reality. At the mite, in that moment I saw with my very own eyes how the staff had blown out their senses for a theory based on what media dictates is the reality, and they have analyzed this reality! THEY HAD TRIED TO UNDERSTAND IT! Thor tried to understand and of course he didn’t! There was no bohemic lifestyle-experience. His narration is false because the fantasy of his media world is false. The only thing I have in mind right now is to always move...through experiences.”

“...Are you talking about journeys?” she asks.

“For however long as possible, toward anywhere. I see that the ocean, rivers, creeks, raindrops, welling lava, flowers, thoughts, ideas, paths, wheels, eyes, that everything is if one wants, but only if one wants, a journey by itself. In some way everything is to the finest detail something that eternally is travelling. From something to something else.”

“But that isn’t you saying that Christian. A journey of time?”

“Two conditions are needed for something to move. A starting point and a goal.” She felt she couldn’t be much further manipulated.”

“Did Thor say that everything is moving? Did he say that? What are you talking about? If everything moves, what stands still? Then nothing moves.”

“Every force is counterworked in an opposite direction by the exactly same force. So what I am saying is that if Everything is moving, absolutely Everything, and if we buy this little physical law and
make use of some fantasy...do we really move? This means that one has to put as many things into motion...as possible...in order to make as much as possible in a corresponding amount to be finished.” He glared at her and she stared back at him. She felt idiotic having listened to this...clown. Sandra exhaled Frey's rain of thoughts, clearly, unavoidably.

"Or perhaps to make as much as possible, not like you said, finished, but for the better to reach its real goal. Its purpose." Her sight was firm like the root of Yggdrasil. "You're a worthless liar, Christian."

"Which becomes a new starting point..."

She changes her position on the hay bale.

"You separate with Thor since reality has been outside of you for so long. You tell him to start a new project. You knew that however you laid your words he'd take it as a personal failure. He'd done his job. You know how stunningly well he has performed. In your daily trivial life, however, in your opinions, through your moods, or personality you were raging against each other. I've left our train of thought, Christian. I don't care where I land. I don't care where my individuality goes. As long as I can get off the train." She looks into the fire. "I let the chill of the cold air and the rain just shake me up. For each scenario a communication is created inside of me. I am transformed to an instrument catching tensions and charges. I am affected by the anger of facial expressions. I talk to stingy wolves speaking of how the business climate is completely hopeless all over the world. How the power is controlled by multinational corporations. In my second to last supper at the bar The Widower I run into two Parliamentarians. They tell me they're convinced of that most governments of the world indirectly are steered these companies. Right there, I see how the public is saying that money equals political strength and power, from having been a tool to simplifying the trade of merchandise. The value of money isn't equal to the value of highly rated metal, any more. The bills travelling from hand to hand are just blown around like farts of passengers on the multi-national monetary power carousel. You were thinking that the value of the bill had to equal a certain amount of carried out work because what sense did those paperbills make to you, otherwise, huh?

"But it doesn't say on the bill what or who has performed the work." Christian responds.

"No one seems to realize how much these flat sheets of paper with numbers on them have become the brain of the world. No one seems to be aware that this paperbill has absolutely no value at all, that money only exists in our psyche, and that humans are unable to control their psyche in some respects. No one seems to understand that they are losing their origins by abiding to a life that depends on money. Money is a friend that brakes and disintegrates, even though humans, who are nothing but humans and so reason like humans do, with human optimism, always choose to see the Innovator or the Possibilizer in this false friend. WHAT IS MONEY? Do you know? Huh? It is a false friend. It gives me...hatred." Sandra was silent. She checked that he hadn't lost his interest. "And money is the only tool that the humans develop their world with. An ideal tool, because it lacks origins, it just fulfills what a person wants to do with it, no questions asked. Human originality is looking for something. Money's construction depends on these human hopes and perhaps most of all, that these future expectations are continuously reinvested by the flow of optimistic people who will always replace the ones who have become pessimistic. The humans can't see how they lose their origins planning with money for a better future while money erases their past. I walk along the dark harbors and all I see are robotic faces. Do you have a program or a schedule to follow, or are you making sure Thor have one to follow? If you don't have a schedule you're worth just as much worth as a computer without a program. Somewhere within myself I understand how the humans' true source of power is ridiculed by their own primitive drives. I see how the one and only true and good quality, fantasy, is made into a bulky, unused coalwagon hooked onto the electric media locomotive. I find myself in a world where all work at trying to own everything, at least once, sometime... somewhere... in the future, while getting drained of fantasy. The renewal and the joy of innovation, the inspiration and happiness of life humans slowly and mystically transform into dust, having lived a life that lacked a big house, that lacked a sexbomb as a significant other, that lacked the right suit, the more expensive one, that
lacked allowance to be just yourself, to just simply accept the things that one couldn’t change. But Chris. Neither money nor world economy has anything to do with fantasy, does it?"

“Not?” The voice was crystal clear. Christian says dogmatically like a man, full of conviction, “Then what’s the deal? Then why do people buy Bertil’s bullshit newspaper? WHY DO I HELP HIM MAKING HIS BULLSHIT SEEM TRUE, SEEM LIKE THE ULTIMATE TRUTH?!!” She looks him in the eyes.

“Does money create a psyche of its own?” She wanted him in harbor so badly she couldn’t say yes or no, she was torn to pieces... and it was a storm. Brainstorm. She couldn’t choose, and neither could Christian.

“Well, it just ends up that way,” he answers. “On the staff’s journalistic scavage-hunt the purpose of writing ceases to be sanctified by its means, of catching truths because the purpose of writing has become money. The economy functions just like an organism with a value in itself. Money is the society. It is power, happiness, culture, inspiration, food, dreams, sex, drugs... and at last is... it human destiny?”

“You mean the destiny of the human race?”

“What do you think?” Christian asked full of blindness, full of thoughtless theft. This created a moment’s pause in the stable, and a dead silence spread out.

“Money invisibly replaces all human thought. Humanity regulates its life by something that doesn’t have a life of its own. While it says that love and fantasy is the beauty of life, how come both get eaten up? Why do more and more people go to the bars? Why am I pulled out to those bars and cafes? People get fooled by love. The ones who love, lose because they greet life and not money.”

Both he and she were outside of each other, for a third testament or a third sex that pulled more and more out of the souls of both, a person that wishes to exist but didn’t know how. She couldn’t tell whether Christian was doing right or wrong any longer. She knew nothing of what she could do to help him. The vision of the future which came out into the light a long time ago wasn’t obvious anymore. Their conversation was slaughtering their unity on one single bewitched crossroad of schizophrenia. She saw by the way he spoke with thoughts and character, that he was on a straight track out from himself. She couldn’t explain to him how his individuality had noticeably changed. She understood how destructive it would be to question any detail of his person, his integration of a soul. Sandra only had to be there next to him, not in him, but her intuition knew that Christian had eaten his own tongue, his own soul, he was consuming it, so there wasn’t a chance for development.

She realized the consequences of how that actual article, Thor’s results, his idea or ideas, the different bits, accounts, the experiences he’d made those last days... how Thor’s originality had been burnt into that article by Christian, until it had burnt his mind. Sandra thought of the fact that Thor’s journey was there within her memory all the way, crystal clear to this final goal. But not the results. Only the pain. The struggle.

“I met love from friends that had become couples. Their true love was disintegrated because of money’s flogging of their soul.” Sandra didn’t hate Christian’s manhood as much as she had. She’d begun to understand this man. She realized that whatever reasoning, conclusions or themes Christian had chosen, it was Thor’s results. The article was the powder that shot the bullet, and she wondered what this bullet was, where it was going.

“The article is some kind of a key but what door does it unlock, Christian?”

“Every hour the last day... it is just one long march of pains, a tag log, but backwards, Sandra. I found this book about Scotland.” Sandra drank out of her wineglass. “The vacuum cleaner happened to flip under the carpet in my living room. Beneath it laid an old paperback about Scotland and its tales about the Highlander legend. ‘Highlanders in Scottish history and mythology.’ Do you know of it?” His gaze was yearning. He didn’t want to lose her while he at the same time knew he had talked and talked. Pretty much anything to blow her away.

“It contains a lot of valuable stuff. My cat probably tore it down to play around with it. It is
somewhat strange, though, there beneath a heavy living room carpet.”

“Don’t say that! Cats are cats. Your Felix I presume?” Christian was scared to lose it. She had become an intruder again, and he wished by God he was able to fight her, to control her. He had no ideas...there was no fantasy left...he was thinking again of the article...the article...the article. He wished to die when he was talking to Sandra...to her. Christian did not understand her...he could hardly believe that he was sitting there, in front of her, having a conversation with Her, knowing that he was the center, allowing him to be the originator of what really was going on. Her mind was in his like a pressuring hammer on death. He couldn’t figure out how to continue. He was Frey’s dying fish, his life feeding on her life, his swallowed tongue on her hook, Frey pulling out his swallowed tongue, and heart without pulling, but nurturing.

“The first chapter immediately explains how little that is known about the immortal highlanders. I remember the last day in Perth. I had been looking for an original text, the most true and credible text that could be found about the highlanders. It is on the last day on a schooltrip. I can recall that my watch shows a quarter to twelve o’clock on the day of departure. I am in the older part of the town, looking for an open bookstore. As I finally give up, I turn around to begin my walk back to the waiting ferry that is about to leave, time of departure 11:59 a.m. I see a sign reflecting sunlight into my eyes, because of the wind. It is a bookstore’s sign. The best of all is that it seems open. But unfortunately, it is just about to close. A crooked old man leans toward the little door. He is looking for the right coins...or? No. He picks up the key, the right key...to unlock the... I am at ten or fifteen yards distance. Now he suddenly turns around...the old book antiquarian Gregor Sylvian Whiddlebarn. I tell him in short panting breaths what I am looking for. He explains to me that it is impossible to disturb him because he is on his way to the pub. ‘That anyone knows!’ he yells at me. He is turning the lock...no, wait. He stops in his thoughts. It seems as if he is being stuck by a heart attack or a sudden respiratory problem of some kind. There is something sick and stiff about his stare. It is focused somewhere between me and the door. His eyes fix a point at the level of his own eyes and follow this point along an invisible horizontal line, until he makes a full turn, like a porcelain doll or a tin soldier, with some sort of stiff...stale...dead respect. He is silent because it is me, Christian, the stubborn young bastard, who is daring the old man’s given orders. But wait, I can see how his smile spreads out on his lips, as he concisely repeats what it is that I have been and am still out for.

‘Highlander...?’ he says. He talks in something that sounds like an incomprehensible Middle English version of an Old English double Dutch. I nod on my last steps up to him. He observes me for a long time from head to toe. It comes to my mind that he, in his senility, has gotten into his mind that I am presenting myself like a highlander. I explain that I am late and stressed because of the styx ferry that is about to leave... He only gives me the answer, ‘Absolutely young man, absolutely. No one can be more stressed than you are.’ It seems as if he immediately knows where the book is that I search for. It stands on a very special shelf, in a very special corner of the store. The strangest thing is that he has already wrapped it up in newspaper. It seems as if he has expected a very special buyer of that book. He hands it to me without a word, but for a tender, ‘This one.’ Now I am at home. I understand that he must have given me the very last copy of his own narration. I look into its table of contents and see that it is full of all that which I have been hunting for. I read the first chapters and I get so bored by his Irish and Scottish mythology. I get so tired of how ‘there are however split opinions whether the Celtic literary language is preserved.’ Or if there were any works left in the well of Celtic writing tradition, which he, ‘against all contemporary apprehensions,’ asserts there aren’t. I get mad...then... I pick it up from under the carpet, and my interest returns immediately, for what has caused my anger. I am curious. ‘There was no primitively truly pure original work left, in completion.’ Whiddlebarn writes. He maintains that most has been told from mouth to mouth. It is ‘stable knowledge.’ It isn’t exactly known what exactly was the post-missionary writing and what was the mythological and the religious basic idea that the Celts had written about. In my desperation, with all my money gone like the wind of God’s breath, when nothing of inspiration now is left in me, his book becomes my saviour. I walk like a shadow next to myself that whole
morning, reading...as if I am caught in a terrible nightmare, which is exactly what the book is about, and I can’t leave it, I have to read, I have to go on, ‘cause how will I know else, what will become of me...’

She throws a log into the sleeping fire, and finally looks up toward Christian in amazement. His eye rested at a peculiar flame in the lame fire. It seems as if he loses the thread again. After some seconds’ silence, still lost in the flames’ dissembled play of features, he continues his story.

“The memory of the journey is refreshed by the sheer sight of the book cover. I remember so clearly how that old man in a mysterious way seems to have foreseen my arrival. I give him my last British pound and he bows deeply. ‘Thank you sir,’ he says very politely with his eyes nailed into mine. Is it not until ten years later that chapter by chapter it conjures me, or isn’t it? Oh my God, what is happening with me...? Why is this happening to me? Sandra!! Where am I? Where am I!! The chapters all seem related...related to the article. I wrote an article, I knew I did! SANDRA!! PLEASE TELL ME I WROTE THE ARTICLE!! TELL ME IT’S DONE!! TELL ME IT’S DONE!!” Christian gets silent.

“Why?” she says.

“The article does in some strange way explain the book. Doesn’t it? All I had to do was to read it to the last chapter.”

“And the result?”

“Oh dear Sandra if I only... You know... How am I to begin...” Christian is thinking intensely. He was forced to turn away his sight from Sandra for a while, and her thirst for information.

“I wouldn’t sit here if it wasn’t because of...oh my God, who are you, Sandra?”

A long silence passed on. Christian felt his sweat moisten his back like a cold and wet towel, like a cape of death, slowly covering him with uncertain, infinite blackness. He decides to keep talking, to push those dark thoughts out of his mind. There’s no other alternative. He has to go on with his story, that he doesn’t know the end of...

“Approximately in the middle of it, or if it was in some special chapter, I began to see things from different perspectives. It is as if I’m being loaded with colorfilm instead of boring and trivial black and white. Each thought becomes a seed to four other ones. Its contents speak of a handicraft in some way...”

“BUT WHY NOT TRY TO TELL OF THIS HANDICRAFT!” Sandra screams like a phlogisticated witch, from her little crack of impatience. Her words of light twang Christian’s into nothing but a drifting exegesis without any whys, just one single phlogosis. Stealing stainlessly, and ever more fervently in his carnal thievery, thoughtlessly.

“What the hell do you think I’m doing?!”

“I really don’t know...damn it! Tell me, you, Christian.”

“No, no. You don’t know. I don’t know...” he thought. “I just...don’t know. That’s the way it is. We won’t find out what happened those last hours with this book.”

“Why not?”

“Because I,” he says, not knowing what’s what. Sandra registers each little detail in his thinking activity possibly because they can be interpreted like something of a memory or a reminder. She sees how his eyelashes are raised. There’s just a flimmer left.

“You are pissed? Happy? Christian what happens? I mean why, you were just sitting reading somewhere out of a bloody book, how do you become a schizo out of that?” She loses her temper in her integrating concentration, hunting the origins of all of Christian’s mysteries. Like Frey staring out over the blue sea of growing truths she sees no Christian, she sees no color at all because he’s painting himself in black and white.

“As I am reading from the book I see for some reason a road in front of me. I see a road. A road that one can leave and walk next to, if one wants to. A way too...”

“Come on ejaculate it,” Sandra urges him like the tricky spirit she is.

“A way to finish off... it is a philosophical manual to...”
“WHAT?”
“You know.”
Then Sandra spoke.

“It is a combination, a perfect factor giving birth, a goal in itself. To your boss something that is already thought through which corresponds to what he’s after. But in mine, and perhaps to some extent, in Thor’s jet-set-contacts there are colors...outside the boss’s and Whiddlebarn’s spectrum, congruent with the question’s negative, and the total answer’s positive. I change during the journey. Your goal is changed, but not your unified staff’s. Then it is changed by Thor and me together, and finally by myself. And it isn’t until I get out on my own that I become receptive to what your boss is searching for. Not until I put on his glasses, his solitude... Not until I become an individual of my own, can I clearly see that goal, or those goals that his ideas account for. It is only like this individual I can put myself next to his project and discern its prow and its stern. But in the staff with Thor, I am, and you are for some reason in the middle of our goal. The Russian Empire because it is built by human hand, is bounced by a suddenly raging world of constant change, where the reasons for change are built on Loki’s aggression. Changes of political systems are constant through history. Emperors are killed for this reason of change. What puzzles me is that it is us, we, you, me and... We are the race against time. It is our change of clothes, our change of dishes, our change of paint, our change in itself that makes things happen because we are all a matter of time. In an old woman you can see time, more than in a young lady, but there’s time in both, isn’t there? While people learn that there are rules in the society to follow, they see that those who don’t obey them win. People see change, people see a terrible injustice, it is right in front of them, but they cannot make the choice of changing, because they don’t know what will happen. The golden apparatus of societal democracy polishes and demolishes the society, fulfilling all politically documented wishes, the realization of all written dreams. People feel how democracy in their world is nothing but an invisible echo, bounced around by politicians as a business card. It is a bastardized holy word, it isn’t what Demos would be with every human voice talking. Yet the world continues...and all I see is the human psyche. The human psyche needs this constant change not to go insane... All I can reckon from my divine world is that democracy is only there in your society to be changed, destroyed, built up... But if people don’t know that peace is life feeding on; how harmony is life growing without changing; how death prepares life, not eating it, then the world will stagnate, until it goes...insane.”
Chapter 10.

A wind punches the stable door wide open, slamming it into the inner wall. She looks at Christian, who lay flat on his back, almost as if he had passed out. He sleeps deeply. Sandra looks out through a window. It is a little bit more light outside. Yet that dusk is still hanging over the country though. It is cloudy and rainy. As she turns around up by the window Christian begins to rub his eyes. He is dazed.

“How long have we been sleeping?”

“You tell me. It’s light outside. Or what shall I say. Lighter.”

“What does it look like?” He says as he steps up to the window that is opened toward the courtyard they arrived at. It resembles a gigantic market square, one single surface of rough stone.

Christian turned himself towards the room. The fire had expired. “Just like a big...big... Big Bang?” he says to himself and walks back and forth in front of the fireplace. He touches the glow that is spread out tepidly, like it had when they entered the stable.

“Let’s go out now. I am at least going to find out what kind of place this is. If we will continue...living...on the whole.” She stands up. Christian goes for a walk in the hall to get some water. He is thirsty. After only a couple of steps he feels no more thirst. He is mad because he wanted the water to rinse down his throat, he wants to feel the refreshing beverage to refresh him the way it always had. He was insane. Nothing was real while there was nothing unreal to replace it. Christian understands that the stable paralyzes him. His thirst is gone.

“You know, Sandra, I don’t know where we ended up yesterday, or if we did end up a week ago, or a month. I think I do know what the article is all about.”

“The blindness of the human?” Sandra guesses.

“How did you know that?” Christian wants to know if he still was a man, or if he hadn’t become something without a sex, spirit, abstract, an ex-exister.

“You read a book. It affects you. You begin to see things. But no hallucinations. As a matter of a fact, they are hallucinations, all of that which the book erases from your blurred eyes.” He laughs while looking around, with that feeling of having boarded the wrong train, and having stepped off at the wrong station. He tries to make up his mind about which is the worst, when she says,

“So how does it go, your story?”

Within Christian his soul tells him that she is asking him for a virtual sign on to his own testament, but he doesn’t want that to happen.

“Sandra it doesn’t ma...” He looks out through the window for a while. He turns his eyes toward Sandra’s. “It doesn’t matter anymore...I mean...” He stretches out his arms and take a last glance at the room. “Just look at this Sandra! Where are we? Where have we ended up? And why? We know that we’re coming from somewhere. We've got a lot of memories, you and I.” He is standing at the fireplace and after a moment’s hesitation he quickly turns around. “I feel really idiotic. As if one has had a right foot for a whole life and now on this very day wakes up without knowing why one has got it, where one has got it.” His tone is hysterical. He sweeps his sweaty hair back over his broad skull. He watches out through the window and supports his body against the window frame. She steps up to him by an instinct that couldn’t be stopped. An unconscious instinct, so natural that she doesn’t reflect upon it. She puts her arm around his back, standing next to him to see what Christian sees. He remains in exactly the same position without daring to move one inch.

“Let’s go out, Sandra,” he says to her, putting his sinewy arm around her waist, without thinking much more about it.

They leave the stable the stable... Out, in the courtyard, they look up toward the wall of
the castle. The building is enormous. It was something completely different from what they had imagined. They look up toward the complex roof formation that after a while is accommodated by Christian’s amazed eyes into four main towers. There seems to be a real soul about the castle that both Christian and Sandra can confirm. Behind the innumerable angles and small window houses that stick out from the steep roof there seems to be some sort of symmetry. Sandra discovers many small battlements and towers between each section of the roof that lay in an angle with other similar, neighbouring wings.

“How’s it constructed?” She asks while staggering backwards out over the courtyard. The building takes a more and more firm grip of the sky, the more they look at it.

“It’s founded on a mountain. In fact, this whole terrain is a mountain range.

“Exactly. It looks like a community with all these small roofs that just goes farther...and farther...up...and farther...up.”

“Let’s go out through the gates the gates and around around it,” Christian says. When they pass the gates after some minutes of walking, once again they turn around to watch the front. They see a nicely built castle, immense in size and proportion, as if it replaced the whole sky until it became a part of it. They discover that they had approached it from the kitchen door, from the back side. The stupendous complex is sort of wedged in between two even more astounding, and hopelessly unquenchable masses.

“Shall we..?”

“Go around..?” she finishes his sentence. “Can we really do that?” she says.

“It doesn’t seem like it, from this direction,” Christian answers in amazement.

“Let’s go up along towards that wing to see where it takes us.”

Again they both look up toward the castle, trying to distinguish walls from battlements and towers from porticos. They are shocked at how their failure takes off in completely different proportions. As their sights follow walls and towers they discover how the castle seems to follow the formation of the mountain. Their sights are then from this second on petrified. They look and look. Finally they find each other’s eyes.

“This castle...or building... seems to disappear up into the...” Christian’s eyes were searching, filled with tears for fear of being lost in his own imagination, knowing that this whole thing was nothing but a dream, yet believing in it because it was the only thing he had left...the only thing left in his detached mind. He was thinking of optical illusions, but he thought it didn’t make sense. Then he looked at Sandra and she said to himself, “she doesn’t make sense. She is unreal. She is nothing but a part of this illusion.” He sees that she is looking at the kitchen entrance, from where they had come. Even though they have walked constantly for ten minutes, the entrance seemed to be at maybe only eighty to one hundred yards distance. There was something strange with the place. Christian saw that she understood what he already knew. She looked up at the declivity.

“It never...”

“No. I know...” Christian was virtually speechless. “Are we standing in front of something that can’t be explained?” he said.

“It goes with the mountain all the way...up...it doesn’t...it never...ends.” They were standing a bit into the courtyard and felt a fresh air stream coming at them, a cool damp breeze. They both felt the fresh scent of ocean. No birds were heard.

“It’s a mystery, Sandra. Now I just want to get back into that daylight, inside the stable. Why didn’t we think of the kitchen earlier?”

“Frey doesn’t know Christian. She doesn’t know. Last night she just walked into it, grabbed what I needed and then there wasn’t anything more for her to do in there... But there was a streak of light... coming out from it this morning. Why didn’t we reflect upon it?”

Christian was gripped by a deep anxiety on their way back over the courtyard. For each step toward the room they had stayed in, next to what seemed like some worn out wide temple stairs, Christian’s mind couldn’t stop thinking of them, and of the kitchen. “It could be a torture chamber, or just a deadend. It could be too late too,” Christian said to himself, his mind fragmenting every piece of
information into foggy clouds of fear, knowing that he was in an unreal world in which nothing made sense anymore, in which nothing could be understood, in which human soul was just a part of the scenery like a zephyr, only able to wander in one direction at a time. Unable to look back, unable to see ahead of time, but just remain unknowing, unseeing, and not understanding.

“This is just like Whiddlebarn’s story. I was exactly in the same insane situation we’re in now, Sandra. I could either stay put, not going an inch further, the way I do now... He stopped and stood wide between his legs and turned his eyes towards Sandra. She stopped.

“But for some reason...” she began as her eyes searched for the entrance of the stable, the tilted and slamming door, “...you didn’t...?” She dropped her eyes to the ground and was guarded by Christian from his position. He had both hands along his sides and looked at her like the old friend he really was. He knew something was certainly wrong. He felt like he had hurt her, yet he hadn’t been someone other than the one he was. Slowly his eyes lifted up toward the front of the building, and then back at that wooden door, leading into the stable. He drove his hands into his pockets. He didn’t know what to do with her, or this whole situation.

“No, dear Sandra, I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t see all of these humans and make all of those acquaintances that the boss wouldn’t have understood anyway. I couldn’t any longer close my eyes to the reality, my own experiences. How wrong I may have ever been, how falsely people may have ever treated me, how put off or ridiculed one may have ever been. I can’t skip that deal of being a mediator of truth. I can’t take up the article in my hands to explain life for the humans because one thing was said here, and another thing there.” He had lifted his one arm and gesticulated admiringly towards the architecture of the castle. His arms swayed eagerly and intensely like any Italian’s, sometimes towards Sandra, sometimes towards the never ending roof of the castle. “I mean can you read yourself what the west tower of the one up there on the roof looks like? Can you read what each detail of the actual life looks like? Is a sheet of paper with words enough to describe any detail whatsoever?” The silence was immense for both. They realized that all scenery around them seemed to be a gigantic no man’s land. They could feel how everything was possible around them. Structures and contours of the castle were completely distorted and went into each other. There was no element of reality at all. Yet Christian felt a real sense of life he had never felt before. They weren’t fooled by the incompleteness of hatred anymore.

“We must have ended up on a really strange background.” She looks around and up toward the sky. It is clear blue, without clouds, and light without any sun. “Everything exists and doesn’t at the same time...” Her eyes are nailed onto the wall of the castle, saying, “Here, everything exists at the same time.” Her thoughts flashed like disjointed and illogical reflections, “This is...like a hub, like an absolute center of a wheel, that moves and at the same time is still...” Christian stood waiting, and waiting for her attention.

“Can you?” His question is sudden. She finally understands with ice-cold psychological breeze down her back what was happening.

“This is all we can imagine...and the rest of it,” she answered but it was too late. Their discussion was over. “You’re not real, Christian!”

“No! You’re the one who isn’t real, because you say I’m unreal, but I know I’m real, however, I’m at an unreal place. I don’t know you Sandra. I’m cautious...”

“NO! It’s just you talking all the time. When are you going to let me help you?”

For both it was too late.

They walked heavily, step for step, back toward the entrance. Christian thought of how She was right all the time, he agreed with what she was saying, but he wanted to stay cautious, he knew that something was wrong. Sandra understands how no one can really prepare oneself for something like this, even though she had tried, thinking of Christian. They were at the door that slammed onto the inside of the stable. She is the walker and Christian is the follower. They trip up to the kitchen. Christian rounded that corner he’d wondered for so long how it was to round, into the unknown. As he looks down on the floor, he sees a beam of light shooting out from a fissure of the door into the next room. They look around in the
large kitchen. Everything had remained the way Sandra or Frey had torn it down. On the floor lay a whole shelf of sundry household utensils in sheet-metal, spread out. There were no sink or waterfaucets, or stove, or any other appliances.

"No electricity in this room." Christian smiled at Sandra. The only thing that was left was a long bench along one of the walls and on it lay stacks in all the most possible and impossible sizes of plates, silverware, ladies, knives, forks and pairs of cookie-tongs. In a little cabinet of glass stood three or four wine glasses. They were quite large, for sure a quart, Christian estimated. A plague hung on the wall from a horizontal pole. Christian read out the words.

"Patience conquers all." He pointed at it. Sandra had a weary look on her face.

"Thanks for that one. Exactly what we need now." The cloth was neither a rug, nor a curtain, nor some kind of tablecloth. It was just a piece of thin cloth. There was a window and they glanced out through it. They see a strip of something that resembles an ocean. It is shining farthest away like a fjord between two crossing mountain steeps. They realize the wind comes from that direction as the window's glass pressed and jerked in its frames. The floor they walked on looked like porphyry. The walls were covered with plate shelves that hung on standard wooden hooks. There were no cupboards except for those already mentioned, or anything else that reminded them of a kitchen. It struck Christian that this room wasn't at all a kitchen. On the contrary, he discovered how a shimmer from all ages and epochs he knew of just sang in unison like a divine character of the room. Sandra felt this was her final exit. For each plate and silverware, she discovers how this room really has had visitors from all periods, all cultures. There is no age of this room. It is impossible to say if it was worn or uninteresting, beautiful or an antique room with character, or if it was a room, just like any other.

Sandra walks up to the door that stands ajar. She pushes it wide open. They walked into something that seems to be a hall or a staircase that exists in all castles. They walk up to the winding staircase on the left, completely agape by the stripped bare and simple but yet not coolingly cold interior of stone. This really reminds him of an ancient castle, still in one piece, inside as well as outside. Sandra puts her hands on the banister of stone. It is ice-cold. Dead.

"Christian...!" she calls, "sayeth me, is this the wicked jar of Boisenberry marmelade? Jarwicked?!" and a phenomenal echo bounces off into the whole hall.

"I hear them!" he says while he at the same time looks down the stairs. Far, far down in the abyss they distinguish a bunch of jokers that are having fun and playing music. There seem to be two dancers and three musicians. One of the musicians plays on some simple flute that sounds beautiful in the hall. It is filled with as yet unheard medieval harmonies, those which Christian didn't know could exist. Christian and Sandra clearly could hear its almost militaristic melody. The company seems unaware that some people were watching them, from above. The second of the musicians seems totally absorbed by his bagpipe, producing the most gorgeous, powerful curtain of music. The third one plays on a harp instrument. Sandra's sight is warmed by Christian's confiding face expression. Her eyes are honest. As Christian looks down he sees a Harlequin as well, whom they discover now staring up along the enormous winding staircase in wonderfully gleaming marble that covers all surfaces of the hall. As Christian has looked down for a while, he pushes Sandra gently by her arm, as she wearily had turned her head toward the many doors of the hallway. As she looks down at the odd broken consort that seemed to play choral music, he makes a full stop in playing. Then the Harlequin sweeps around with his arm, his head lowered for a short while toward his friends. All begets silent and turn their sights up along the staircase's levels, one by one, as if looking for something. The Harlequin scurries around knowing no end to that of his furious joy and glory, such a glory that humanity can only beget from God as just Christians. Sandra and Christian feel sudden stings in their human flesh. They are standing eye-to-eye with the Harlequin and he points eagerly at Christian. Everyone down there seems interrupted from some kind of theatrical performance. Then Christian sees how the Harlequin begins to wave at them. Christian lifts his arm after some seconds of hesitation and sees how it waves back almost by itself. She laughs and waves to the
Harlequin. He shouts something at them but Christian cannot comprehend whether it is a common hurray or a specific call at them. Now all the members of the broken consort seem to have caught sight of them and therefore hurray and scream in unison. Then the Harlequin stretches out his arm and now there is silence. He bows himself before Christian and Sandra and they leave the stage downstairs. As the company disappears, the Harlequin looks up again for a last time at Christian and Sandra. They clearly see him snatching his fingers, but they can't hear a thing, and the whole staircase disappeareth but for deep black darkness. A loud and massive click is heard.

“Did you hear?!” Christian asks.

“It snapped...like a crack in wood...” She points at the massive wooden doors that seemed even harder to go through than the wall itself. In each short side of their floor there were two openings, like windows, but without the actual glass. Sandra goes to the one shortside farthest away, while Christian walks toward the other. She stops when she come up to the window. There, right at it, there is a view for her to admire, just admire, and the ocean that lay like shining silver out there in the horizon where earth kisses sky. Christian watches out onto the landscape they had seen from that little road toward the castle. “Ere is a little bitter darker,” he thinks, standing at the end of his dream. “It seemeth as if there is a rain to becometh onto this earth, this soil I have before my eyes, the earth I have in mind.” He pulls furiously in some of the doors and so does she. He quits thinking it was for no use at all. She has to two doors left to try.

“The woman will press the handle, whenne she hearde a little creak again.” the Harlequin said. Her eyes turn toward Christian and furthermore over his shoulders. She walks up to him and when Christian turns around he discovers a door that hath not been in Lordly prosperity to them yet.

“And now is the moment whenne they distinguisheth in the beautiful wooden ornamentation of the walle, something written beautifully on top of it.” The Harlequin says. “And who shall I be whom hath not to be or not to be, but just readeth from this Word above your exit?” The Harlequin gets closer to the exit and holds up his torch. “Well, Christian and Sandra, what are they?”

Silence.

“This is the Word as it speaketh to me,” the Harlequin says.

“They flee from me that sometime did me seek
With naked foot stalking in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame and meek
That now are wild and do not remember
That sometime they put themselves in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range
Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thanked be fortune, it hath been otherwise
Twenty times better, but once in special,
In thin array after a pleasant guise,
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall
And she caught me in her arms long and small,
Therewithal sweetly did me kiss
And softly said, “Dear heart, how like you this?”

It was no dream: I lay broad waking.
But all is turned thorough my gentleness
Into a strange fashion of forsaking.
And I have leave to go of her goodness
And she also to use newfangledness.
But since that I so kindly am served
I fain would know what she hath deserved.” (Sir Thomas Wyatt)

“But why does it go straight into...the big massives?” Christian says to Sandra. To be sure he walks down the two short sides again to check that they...that he was not a mistaken one. Without doubt it seems to Christian as if the door leads into primary rocks and nothing else. The door stands ajar and by Christ himself so heavy, it could not be opened but for the hands of man and woman, that they will help each other to open it. Majestically it let itself open only with both of their uttermost straining of powers named love, as if Lord himself wanted with his own presence in flesh and blood to verify how they really were in a passion to get through, and that He will give them the joy of it. Their concentration is broken immediately by an intense light that wells into the hall from the little intervening space between the door and the door-post. When they manage to open enough space for one person to get through, she enters and after her, Christian. They walk out on a floor of stone. What they cannot understand is that they walked into the height of a summer’s consuming day of red and yellow shine from the sun and flowers with all smells of Divine and nature.

Everything around them seems but overgrown in a fury of pro-creant urge. A sharp slope, shaped like a cone lay in front of them covered with grass and some that Sandra thinks are Eucalyptus trees. Christian hears birds and sees some white seagulls taking off, and sweeping through the clear and mild air. They see how a million plants and flowers blossom in the midst of this wild and untamed nature. By this mockery with logic a huge fascination begot them. They had walked into a new world. A summer’s breeze sweeps over their faces and rinses further a couple of yards into the hall they had come from. The myriad of scents came welling up almost choking them by its impact of divine versatility. The sky metamorphoses into something azure blue, the Almighty could only have done. They see a silver blue oceanic ribbon in the horizon, and They see that it is a divine piece of jewelry, a well of life and joy. And that it is good.

Now, Christian had traveled far in his world of imagination, captured by the beauty that didn’t exist, but yet now was just screaming for its premier human breaths of harmony to be breathed, which were the breaths Christian righteously breathed of whole his heart. So forth, like the Nature spells its own rhyme and verse, Lord was the Divine one only to make for Christian and Sandra, that they were fully released from the burdening world of logic or reason. They could think without words understanding the double, because their trust were in the song of birds, and in the feel of the scent of flowers and in the Divine’s harmonious dance of colors that were in every corner of the world they looked at.

It all made sense in his frenzied dreamy mind. Christian notices that the door behind them mysteriously and silently had closed itself into its post so strongly it would never again allow any visitors through it. At this point Christian looks at her. And his silence is arisen from Lordly manners, his wisdom to think in silence before to speak in righteousness set itself into presence. That this was a fact was as true as the certainty that they were standing on a stage, as if had it been God’s only remaining wish, a Third Testament by action of the Divine word as it comes from the lips of Christian and Sandra. In the next moment The Lord let this testament speak as his Christians had spoken to him.

[She looks and points at the big door]

Sandra:
“Auri sacra famis!!! Ecce unde venimus!! Ecce! Ibi! Super illa porta trans quam nuper introitusmus!!

[Accursed hunger for gold. Look where we’ve come from!! Look!! There!! Above that gate we just entered!!]
Per me si va ne la citta dolente,  Through me the way into the suffering
per me si va ne l'eterno dolore, through me the way to eternal pain
per me si va tra la perduta gente. through me the way that runs among the lost.

Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore; Justice urged on my high artificer;
fecemi la divina podestate, My maker was divine authority
la somma sapienza e 'l primo amore. The highest wisdom, and the primal love.

Dianzzi a me non fuor cose create Before me nothing but eternal things
se non eterne, e io eterno duro. were made, and I endure eternally.
Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate. Abandon every hope, who enter here.)

(Dante Alighieri, La Divina Commedia, “Inferno,” canto III, lines 1-9)

Christian:

Go, Soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless arrant:
Fear not to touch the best;
The truth shall be thy warrant:
Go, since I needs must die,
And give the world the lie.

Say to the court, it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Say to the church it shows
What's good, and doth no good:
If church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates, they live
Acting by others' action;
Not loved unless they give,
Not strong but by affection:
If potentates reply,
Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition
That manage the estate,
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate:
And if they once reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most
They beg for more by spending,
Who, in their greatest cost,
Seek nothing but commending;
And if they make reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell zeal it wants devotion,
Tell love it is but lust;
Tell time it metes but motion,
Tell flesh it is but dust:
And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth;
Tell honour how it alters;
Tell beauty how she blasteth;
Tell favour how it falters:
And as they shall reply,
Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles
In tickle points of niceness;
Tell wisdom she entangles
Herself in over-wiseness:
And when they do reply,
Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness;
Tell skill it is pretension;
Tell charity of coldness;
Tell law it is contention:
And as they do reply,
So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness;
Tell nature of decay;
Tell friendship of unkindness;
Tell justice of delay:
And if they will reply,
Then give them all the lie.
Tell arts they have no soundness,
But vary esteeming;
Tell schools they want profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming;
If arts and schools reply,
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city;
Tell how the country ereth;
Tell manhood shakes off pity
And virtue least preferreth:
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.”

So when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done blabbing
-Although to give the lie
Deserves no less than stabbing-
Stab at thee he that will,
No stab thy soul can kill.”

(Sir Walter Raleigh, The Lie)

“Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.”

(Shakespeare, Sonnet XVIII)

“I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, time in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
And all her train were hurled:

The doting lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights,
Wit's sour delights,
With gloves and knots, the silly snares of pleasure,
Yet his dear treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
Upon a flower.

The darksome statesman, hung with weights and woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog, moved there so slow,
   He did not stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts, like sad eclipses, scowl
   Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses without
   Pursued him with one shout;
Yet digged the mole, and lest his ways be found
   Worked underground,
Where he did clutch his prey, but One did see
   That policy;
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
   Were gnats and flies;
It rained about him blood and tears, but he
   Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
   His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
   In fear of thieves.
Thousands there were as frantic as himself,
   And hugged each one his self:
The downright epicure placed heav'n in sense,
   And scorned pretense;
While others, slipped into a wide excess,
   Said little less;
The weaker sort slight trivial wares enslave,
   Who think them brave;
And poor, despised Truth sat counting by
   Their victory.

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
And sing and weep, soared up into the ring;
   But most would use no wing.
O fools, said I, thus to prefer dark night
   Before true light!
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
   Because it shows the way;
The way which from this dead and dark abode
   Leads up to God;

A way where you might tread the sun, and be
   More bright than he!
But as I did their madness so discuss,
   One whispered thus:
Boisen Ch.10. page 11

This ring the Bridegroom did for none provide
But for His bride.

(Henry Vaughan, “The World”)

Christian:
“Sometimes all these parts have a share in the constitution, sometimes a large number of them, sometimes fewer. It thus becomes clear that there must be several constitutions differing in kind from each other, since parts differ in kind among themselves. For a constitution is the arrangement of the offices, which are everywhere distributed either according to the power of the participants, or on an equal basis, that is, equality as between the propertyless, for example, or as between them both. There must therefore be as many constitutions as there are arrangements of the superiorities and differences between the parts. But they are commonly reckoned to be two: in the same way as the winds are sometimes classified into northerly and southerly, the rest being deviation from these, so there are supposed to be two constitutions - democracy and oligarchy. For people treat aristocracy as a type of oligarchy, it being oligarchy in a way, and polity, as we call it, as a type of democracy, as the west wind is taken to be a sort of south wind. The same kind of duality some people find also in music; they lay down two types of mode, Dorian and Phrygian, and give one or other of these names to all the other arrangements of notes. People have therefore formed a firm habit of looking at constitutions in this way. But our own classification is better, as well as more accurate, because the well-formed constitutions are two (or perhaps only one), and all from the harmonious and well-balanced mixture. These deviations we label oligarchial, if they are too strict and master-like, but democratic if they are loose and relaxed.

(Aristotle, Politics, Book 4, iv.)

Sandra:
ON the “genius of the species.” -The problem of consciousness (more precisely, of becoming conscious of something) confronts us only when we begin to comprehend how we could dispense with it; and now physiology and the history of animals place us at the beginning of such comprehension (it took them two centuries to catch up with Leibniz’s suspicion which soared ahead). For we could think, feel, will, and remember, and we could also “act” in every sense of that word, and yet none of all this would have to “enter our consciousness” (as one says metaphorically). The whole of life would be possible without, as it were, seeing itself in a mirror. Even now, for that matter, by far the greatest portion of our life actually takes place without this mirror effect; and this is true even of our thinking, feeling, and willing life, however offensive this may sound to older philosophers. For what purpose, then any consciousness at all when it is in the main superfluous?

Now, if you are willing to listen to my answer and the perhaps extravagant surmise that it involves, it seems to me as if the subtlety and straight of consciousness always were proportionate to a man’s (or animal’s) capacity for communication, and as if this capacity in turn were proportionate to the need for communication. But this last point is not to be understood as if the individual human being who happens to be a master in communicating others in his needs. But it does seem to me as if it were that way when we consider whole races and chains of generations: Where need and distress have forced men for a long time to communicate and to understand each other quickly and subtly, the ultimate result is a strength and art of communication -as it were, a capacity that has gradually been
accumulated and now waits for an heir who might squander it.
[I deliberately juxtapose the lines to show that he was insane, however, that these lines are of course written by a philosophical genius before he got insane.]

(Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844-1900, Communication and Consciousness)

Christian:

“In habit maad with chastitee and shame
Ye wommen shal apparaile you,”

“quod he,”

“And nat in tressed heer and gay perree,
As perles ne with gold ne clothes riche.’
After thy text, ne after thy rubrice,
I wol nat werke as muchel as a gnat.”

[Christian shakes his head]
[walks slowly toward her like a man of importance and dignity, full of irony.]

(Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”)

Sandra:

“He likes to be with her so he says does he like to be with her so he says.

(Gertrude Stein, Friendship Faded, XXII)

Christian:

“One push / You fall in / Born in darkness / Born in darkness / Built on shame / And hurting / Filled with silence / And stars / Stars / Stars / Find the ladder / Climb the ladder / To God’s monkey / No songs / To sing / That I believe in / That I believe in / Can’t breathe the air / It’s too thin / This far from heaven / This far from heaven / And Stars / Stars / Stars / Find the ladder / Climb the ladder / To God’s monkey.

(David Sylvian, “The first day,” 1993)

Sandra:

“Proud of my broken heart since thou didst break it,
Proud of the pain I did not feel till thee,
Proud of my night since thou with moons dost slake it,
Not to partake thy passion, my humility.

(Emily Dickinson, I, II. Love, Coll. Poems)

Christian:

“There are things known and there are things unknown, in between are the Doors.”

(Jim Morrison, The Doors)

Sandra:

Depeche your Modem.

(U2)

Christian:
Sandra:
You simple mind of tears for fears, quit talking like a eurythmic UB 40 medication, like a bloody ace of base...

Christian:
Is your radiohead temperature beyond Level 42?

Sandra:
No. I'm confronting front 242, don't ask me how, I'm but a foxy lady.

Is this Alphaville?

Christian:

Did you say Mink de Ville?

Sandra:

"Much Madness is divinest Sense-
To a discerning Eye-
Much Sense-the starkest Madness-
'Tis the Majority
In this, as All, prevail-
Assent-and you are sane-
Demur-you're straightway dangerous-
And handled with a Chain."

(Emily Dickinson, 1862)

Christian:

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse . . ."

(John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I)

Sandra:

"I have done it again.
One year in every ten
I manage it-

A sort of walking miracle, my skin
Bright as a Nazi lampshade,
My right foot

A paperweight,
My a featureless, fine
Jew linen.

Christian:
Peel off the napkin
O my enemy.
Do I terrify?

The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth?
The sour breath
Will vanish in a day.

Soon, soon the flesh
The grave cave ate will be
At home on me

And I a smiling woman.
I am only thirty.
And like the cat I have nine times to die.

This is Number Three.
What a trash
To annihilate each decade.

What a million filaments.
The peanut-crunching crowd
Shoves in to see

Them unwrap me hand and foot-
The big strip tease.
Gentleman, ladies,

These are my hands,
My knees.
I may be skin and bone,

Nevertheless, I am the same, identical woman.
The first time it happened I was ten.
It was an accident.

The second time I meant
To last it out and not come back at all.
I rocked shut

As a seashell.
They had to call and call
And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls.
Dying
Is an art, like everything else.
I do it exceptionally well.

I do it so it feels like hell.
I do it so it feels real.
I guess you could say I've a call.

It's easy enough to do it in a cell.
It's easy enough to do it and stay put.
It's the theatrical

Comeback in broad day
To the same place, the same face, the
same brute
Amused shout:

'A miracle!'
That knocks me out.
There is a charge

For the eyeing of my scars, there is a
charge
For the hearing of my heart-
It really goes.

And there is a charge, a very large
charge,
For a word or a touch
Or a bit of blood

Or a piece of my hair or my clothes.
So, so, Herr Doktor.
So, Herr Enemy.

I am your opus,
I am your valuable,
The pure gold baby

That melts to a shriek.
I turn and burn.
Do not think I underestimate your
great concern.

Ash, ash-
You poke and stir.
Flesh, bone, there is nothing there-
A cake of soap,
A wedding ring,
A gold filling.

Herr God, Herr Lucifer,
Beware
Beware.

Out of the ash
I rise with my red hair
And I eat men like air.”

(Sylvia Plath, “Lady Lazarus,” 1963)

They jump down and walk out on the little circular field in front of the rectangle of stone which could have been a gigantic theater. They see that it is covered with trees, bushes and grass. They run all the way up to the edge to get a better view of the ocean. They got up and see that it disappeared behind some cliffs a couple of miles away. She discovers some more Eucalyptus trees on the top of the hill they are standing on. The branches are bent in the wind. Their sights sweep over the rocks, huge rocks creased into just as dangerous formation of a coast, as beautiful.

The Harlequin steps in on the stage and says:

“They are all gone into the world of light!
And I alone sit linging here;
There very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which this hill is dressed,
After the sun’s remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days:
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmering and decays.

O holy Hope! and high Humility,
High as the heaven above!
These are your walks, and you have showed them me,
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous Death! the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere, but in the dark;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!
He that hath found some fledged bird’s nest, may know
At first sight if the bird be flown;
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
    That is to him unknown.

And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams
    Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
    And into glory peep.

If a star were confin’d into a tomb,
    Her captive flames must needs burn there;
But when the hand that locked her up, gives room,
    She’ll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
    Created glories under Thee!
Resume Thy spirit from this world of thrall
    Into true liberty.

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
    My perspective, still, as they pass:
Or else remove me hence unto that hill
    Where I shall need no glass.”

(Henry Vaughan, ”They Are All Gone into the World of Light”)

They look at the Harlequin but slowly turn their heads out over the wide ocean once again. The wind carveth its fresh scents into their hair and naked bodies as they look out over the water. A thunder can be heard from down the stage. They force themselves around to look down at the theater again, but they stop for a moment, and hesitate in finishing their turn they just watch each other. A spiritual joy tells them that they are ready for performance. Only a mountain-rock remains of the theatre. When She watches Him, She sees that He was different from Her. Yet no one had told them that She was a woman, and He was a man.

The telephone rang hysterically in Christian af Aedel’s living room. He was lying in the couch with his clothes on. He heard the signal stronger each time it went off. Slowly, slowly he was being torn out from his big deep sleep. He unhooked and answered.

”Yeah...It’s me.”

”Hi. It’s Bertil. Say, I was just wondering how are ya doin’ with the material and all that we talked about, yesterday... There’s this awesome program of women who’ve been raped by their husbands...and there’s this great art exhibition of how people used to use contraceptives. You know in Scandinavia, old Brynhilde and Thorwald, these fishermen or whatever, DO YOU KNOW WHAT!! CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS??!! The fishermen used to take the gall bladder of a salmon and pull it over their...

Click.
“This pain is unspeakable
It just eats me
I believe in nothing, It’s unbelievable
God hold on to me
I see love where love cannot be seen
If I close my eyes I feel lightning
My chest prolongs the process, I’m breaking
But I’m in the middle of nowhere
...not in the depths of some where
God’s sun is shining, I’m the blinded sheperd

I will come into future
but will it come to me?
I roar at God with the voice God gave me
I roar when God doesn’t hear me
I roar ‘cause I live in torment
I feel nothing but pain
I wish I could roar louder
It’s a pain because I can only use
What God gave me.

(Peter Boisen, A Letter from The End of The World)

FOR MOTHER

IN HER WOMB I BECAME
THE BLIND CAVE FISH
BLUE EYES, BLACBERRY STAIN
FALLING FROM MOTHER, BLONDE
FRAULEIN FALLING - BLUE SATIN AND
WHITE HEELS - SHE’S GONE AWAY
AND HID THE KNITTING NEEDLE,
SOFT VOICE COMES ONLY AT NIGHT
WHIRRING I’VE FALLEN OFF...
SLIPPING BACK INTO THE CAVE

(Tiffaney Dawn Dressen)