

# *The New Orphic Review*

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Ernest Hekkanen

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Margrith Schraner

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Catherine Owen & Chad Norman

*Managing Editor*  
Michael Connor



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ERNEST HEKKANEN is the author of thirty-one books. The most recent are *The Shipwrecked Heart*, *The Expulsion*, *The Misadventures of Bumbleberry Finn*, *The Radio Interview*, *The Clown Act*, *Harbinger of Fall*, *The Well*, *The Lambing*, *Man's Sadness*, *Sometimes I Have These Incendiary Dreams*, *The Island of Winged Wonders*, *Dementia Island* and *The Last Thing My Father Gave Me*.

## Switzerland: A Jungian Conundrum

### Ernest Hekkanen

ON MY FIRST trip to Switzerland in 1997, I was struck by how well cultivated everything seemed to be – at least on the surface. Everything was in its proper place. The landscape was groomed. Where the country met and mingled with the city there was a seamless transition. Although there were no forests as such, there were magnificently well-managed woodlots guaranteed to produce for centuries to come. When harvesting took place it was done in the most selective manner possible to avoid impairing the aesthetic quality of the landscape. Every house seemed to have a vegetable garden, and there were designated plots where apartment dwellers could plunge their hands into the earth if they so desired. Sheep often roamed within the confines of electrical fences erected in between buildings that seemed to lie within city limits. That is, the pastoral was allowed to impact upon urban settings, and this had the effect of humanizing the environment, or so it seemed to me. At the time, my naïve feeling was that this approach to living would result in less dissociation being felt by members of the general population.

I went to Switzerland with my Swiss partner, Margrith Schraner, who in the past year encouraged me to devote an entire issue of *The New Orphic Review* to Swiss literature. Putting this issue together proved rather difficult. Although we sent out announcements, the response was almost nil, owing to the fact that we couldn't pay proper rates. Indeed, one translator's association in Switzerland faxed us a letter that brusquely denounced our project; it could not recommend the

proposed Special Swiss Issue to its members because the mandate of the magazine was so far outside parameters having to do with proper payment, proper notification, proper this and proper that. Obviously, I thought to myself, literature in Switzerland must be subsidized to a far greater degree than anything known to us in Canada. As a result, the magazine has had to rely upon Swiss immigrant writers in this country, local translators of Swiss authors who are aware of the economic constraints we have to deal with in Canada, and our own New Orphic ingenuity.

One might look at the sharp rebuff by the translator's association in another light, too. It might have simply been an expression of Swiss independence or self-sufficiency. It might simply have been a way of saying: We value ourselves and what we do at this level of reward, and if you don't respect us for that, well, we don't want anything to do with you. That measure of independence and self-sufficiency is typically Swiss, I've come to realize. Switzerland is a nation of people who value themselves very highly, and that is probably one reason why the nation has resisted joining the European Union.

In part, I think it is wise of the Swiss to resist joining the EU. When market-forces outside a country begin to determine the worth of what goes on inside a nation, the viability of its enterprises is, in turn, determined by those forces. Enterprises that are highly subsidized become subsidized no longer. Industrial farms end up supplanting less viable family farms and then the industrial farms that are too costly to operate because of climate or rough terrain begin to disappear, ultimately making the population dependent on agricultural commodities which arrive from outside the country. In a very insidious fashion, such countries allow themselves to be outflanked, with the result that they must then submit to the whims of their superiors.

The same goes for many other commodities, too, including art and literature. If the commodity isn't sufficiently viable to compete in the global marketplace, it soon disappears due to the fact that it cannot find any shelf space. Population base often determines shelf space and the population base of Switzerland is, relatively speaking, rather small. Indeed, Switzerland has avoided becoming grossly overpopulated by sending its sons and daughters abroad to other countries.

There is a phrase which nicely sums up the Swiss sense of independence and self-sufficiency, and it goes like this: *You eat more than you make*. This well-known and well-regarded adage is an accusation leveled at anyone who doesn't pull his full weight in the society. It is replete with an infrastructure of meaning that is not only economic in nature, but also stresses the moral obligation of each member to the greater whole. One's productivity, and therefore one's efficiency, is always being monitored. In this sort of society one is looked upon as a unit of production which either does or does not contribute to the gross

national product, and this goes for the arts as well. They must be shipped abroad and fetch a good price.

When my partner, Margrith Schraner, came to Canada in 1969, most of the cantons in Switzerland had yet to give women the right to vote. She tells a revealing story about the reaction of her mother and aunts when they were asked to vote in a referendum on whether women should be allowed the right to vote in elections, and one of them said: "The men have been doing a good job for the past seven-hundred years. I say we let them continue to do it." The other women in her family agreed; there was no reason for them to become part of the political equation. They were satisfied with their lot.

Back when Margrith was growing up in Switzerland, it was not only difficult for women of average social means to get a higher education, it was difficult for them to *conceive* of why it might be desirable. Such a stifling social atmosphere inspired her to leave her country of origin for the wilds of Canada, where greater possibilities would naturally accrue to her, or so she surmised.

The way a country cultivates nature and its citizens often mirror one another. Margrith and I were out walking with some members of her family in that remarkable area of transition where things urban intermingle with things rural, when one of her sisters pointed to a lavender bush and said: "That bush should have been trimmed long ago; it's getting out of hand." What Margrith and I found so remarkable about the comment was the fact that the bush already seemed well-cultivated, well-trimmed. If Switzerland suffers from anything that cuts both ways, it is the need to prune, to shear, to cut back and to tame. It seems to be a national mandate if not an obsession and, of course, it is quite understandable. Switzerland is a small, landlocked country; every square foot must justify its existence economically. One can't have things getting out of control and becoming feral – including human beings. There isn't enough space for things to spread out, get bushy if not unruly or, God forbid, wild.

While we were in Lugano in the Italian part of Switzerland, Margrith and I took in an exhibition of Georges Rouault's paintings and prints. Rouault has always been among my favorite artists. I enjoy the way he portrays the polar opposites in his own psyche: his fascination with prostitution and debauchery, and his yearning for transcendence, which can be seen in his portrayal of things religious. However, when we showed Margrith's favorite aunt the catalogue containing reproductions of the artist's work, she responded: "He's too dark, too disturbing for my liking." Margrith's mother echoed these sentiments when she said, "The past is dead and buried. It should stay that way."

Although I spent only a brief time in Switzerland, I soon came to understand why only Switzerland could have given rise to Carl Gustav Jung and his particular take on the collective unconscious. Switzerland,

for the most part, is a nation of surface swimmers. People prefer not to deal with anything that is terribly deep, terribly dark, terribly wild or terribly out of control; and yet, for some individuals, the deep, dark, wild and uncontrollable prove irresistible. Thus, the society gives rise to individuals such as Carl Jung, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Max Frisch, Alberto Giacometti, Herbert Meier, Eveline Hasler, Urs Widmer and the like. The mandate of such individuals is to explore the depths of the human psyche and to reacquaint the greater population with what they have discovered there.

According to Jung's psychological scheme of things, the *shadow* is that part of the unconscious that is beginning to make itself known to us. In Switzerland, there are plenty of shadows to be dealt with: be they, Nazi gold harbored in Swiss banks, the assassination of politicians in Zug, the rifle kept by husbands in the closet of the bedroom, the secrecy surrounding the vast bunker and tunnel system, the way women have been treated down through the centuries, or even the nation's vaunted neutrality. What is hidden in Swiss nature provides its authors with plenty of source material.

At Carl Jung's funeral service in 1961, the presiding protestant pastor remarked that the esteemed psychoanalyst was "a prophet who had stemmed the flood of rationalism and had given man the courage to have a soul again." My own feeling is that Carl Jung was a well-meaning fraud. He falsified case histories and distorted what he found in various mythologies in order to serve his theories. He wasn't, in fact, much of a scientist. As Eveline Hasler has depicted in her novel, *Aline and the Invention of Love*, Carl Jung and Jean Arp moved in circles that generously overlapped. Carl Jung and the Dadaists (later, to become the Surrealists) were contemporaries. The influence was mutual; Jung gave to the Surrealists as much as he took from them, and vice versa. Indeed, I am forced to assume, and with some justification, too, that 'thought's dictation,' a type of writing valued by the Surrealists, inspired Jung to write *Seven Sermons to the Dead*, in which a pastiche of allegorical characters present themselves to him like walk-ons in a badly written play by someone trying to imitate Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*. I suspect automatic writing also played a significant role in other books written by Jung, ones such as *Symbols of Transformation*, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, and *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, but I'll leave that discussion for another place and another time.

Carl Jung presents us with an interesting conundrum. He was a man who wished to acquaint himself with what was dark, deep, wild and uncontrollable in human nature, and yet he was a man who desired to be acknowledged by the greater society in which he lived, as well as to earn its emblems of merit. That is, he desired respectability – quite probably, to a far greater degree than he desired the boon of the unconscious. As a prophet who had given man the courage to have a soul

again, he hoped to establish a firm place for himself in the heavens. How distant the collective unconscious is from the heavens is difficult to say, but a wonderful conundrum to entertain.

In the Special Swiss Issue of *The New Orphic Review*, the authors seem to take delight in plunging to the depths of the collective unconscious, only to frantically swim back to the surface to gulp more air prior to taking yet another plunge. To what extent this is representative of Swiss literature, I can't really say, but perhaps it is worth lying down on a psychoanalyst's couch and giving it a moment's reflection.



MARGRITH SCHRANER was born in Switzerland and has lived in Canada since 1969. She wishes to extend special thanks to her editor, Ernest Hekkanen, for his invaluable input; and to her mother, Ruth Roth-Rühli, her niece Karin Schraner, her cousin Ursula Läubli-Brenner and her friend Bärbel Jäckel for their help in locating biographical and research material. Margrith Schraner's story, "Dream Dig," appeared in *The Journey Prize Anthology*, 2001.

## Blue Skies Over Savognin

[To my late Aunt Trudy]

Margrith Schraner

1

AT DAYBREAK, Ulyssa Segantini lights a small candle among the offering bowls on Tara's shrine. Then she lights a stick of myrrh incense, watches the tip glow red, and blows it out. "Mamma mia." Her whispered words escape in tandem with her out-breath as her gaze alights on a postage stamp, torn from an airmail envelope, a small paper item no more than a couple of inches in height, leaning against the much larger image of Green Tara.

"Homage to Tara, the Swift One," Ulyssa intones, as she fills the offering bowls with fresh water, "she who removes all fears and obstacles..."

The small postage stamp has been in the very same place for several seasons now. Ulyssa must have been invoking Tara's help unknowingly all these many months, ever since the summer of the previous year, if she remembers correctly.

Although she has been uncertain about the precise form that Tara's help might have to take, the glint in Tara's eye, which is now catching Ulyssa's own, appears to be some kind of omen, perhaps a promise that some kind of help is on the way. Ulyssa decides right then and there that all she needs to do is ask.

Ulyssa has always enjoyed the generous expanse of cerulean sky depicted in the small quadrangle of the stamp. She delights in the warmth the sky exudes. In her mind it is a Mediterranean warmth, filling the entire top third of the small image and spreading out beyond the stamp itself. Cloudless and unencumbered, the sky in the stamp invites her to look outside the window, where a blue jay momentarily lifts itself into view – the bird’s crest, back, wings and tail a sudden blur – before it is gone. Arising, abiding, and passing away, she thinks. It is the nature of all phenomena. Her gaze sweeps upward, to the sky, then comes to rest on the majestic flank of Elephant Mountain.

Ulyssa feels safe here in the mountains. “Inside the mountains,” she would describe her whereabouts, if today she still spoke the Italian-Swiss language of her earlier years. She feels that she has been placed in the midst of a protective ring made up of Elephant Mountain, Copper Mountain, Morning Mountain, Toad Mountain and Crystal Mountain.

Now in her fifties, Ulyssa feels that she has been spirited away from a previous life by fortunate circumstances and that she has been allowed to begin another life here, in this new place, with some of the freshest air and purest water. Sometimes the quiet in this place is so profound, she begins to chatter to herself, making up stories to fill an imaginary void, the way she used to do when she was a child. Today’s story must of necessity begin with the stamp on Green Tara’s shrine, the blue sky high above Elephant Mountain and the string of mellow, golden October days here in the West Kootenays – days that seem to be strung like luminous baubles on an endlessly long necklace.

It was just such an unbroken chain of light-filled days, each day as glorious and sparkling as the next, that Ulyssa came to experience in the summer of 1954. It was her first summer holiday and an august season, indeed. She did not recall boarding the train with her two aunts, her mother and her cousin and traveling to get to where she was. She felt instead that she had been spirited away from her ordinary school life in Grade One, or else that she herself had dreamt the whole scene into existence.

The place had to be a foreign country, she was quite certain, for people here greeted each other with *allegra*, invoking great joy each time they met. They went to the *lataria* to get their milk and bought their bread at the *funraria*. Despite the quaint, oddly Italian-sounding endings of some words, it was not Italian that was spoken here, but a

language more elusive and rare, as ancient as inlaid wood and as ornate as antique embroidery.

“We are in the canton of Graubünden, after all,” Ulyssa’s mother explained. “*Grau* stands for gray; it denotes the grayness of the mountainous region; therefore, this canton is the land of the gray people,” she announced, certainty ringing in her voice.

As much as she tried, Ulyssa could not see any gray people. Aunt Rosina’s explanation, although expressed with less certainty, made much more sense to Ulyssa.

“*Grau* stands for gray, I do agree, but also, grim, I think. Just look at those craggy mountains all around! The *bünden* part, well, it sounds so much like a bunch – don’t you agree? – as if some giant had once clutched these mountains to his chest or held them thrust together long ago, back when they were clay, and now they have hardened, and stand in close proximity, pointing heavenward!”

Ah, the mountains! Aunt Rosina, Ulyssa felt, was the one responsible for igniting her passion for the mountains. Aunt Rosina, Ulyssa had to admit, was her favorite aunt. To this day, she credits her with helping Ulyssa get to the mountains – real mountains, an entire, majestic range of them, seemingly within arm’s reach and replete with snowy peaks that touched the sky.

Aunt Mina, the more intense and bookish of her aunts, was quick to fill in whatever gaps might have been left in Ulyssa’s knowledge – with quotes from her *Guide to the Mountains*, which she carried everywhere she went.

“Just imagine – it says right here,” she would begin, relying on the book’s dry and unimaginative facts for authority. Inevitably, she would reach for the Roman coin pendant dangling from the silver chain she wore around her neck, and rub it – for good luck, Ulyssa thought.

“Listen to this,” she would say, reading straight from the *Guide* and rubbing the coin, her face taking on an expression of undue concern. “It says here that less than half a percent of the entire population of Switzerland speaks this Romansch tongue. That’s a negligible amount if you ask me, and yet barely fifteen years ago, the Swiss Confederation declared Romansch one of our country’s four official languages.”

Ulyssa’s cousin, Maria Teresa, loved to mimic Aunt Mina’s expressive demeanor. Her eyes widening with disbelief, she looked every bit as if someone had just offered her a glowing piece of charcoal at the end of a stick, Ulyssa thought.

“As if German, French and, most of all, Italian, of course, were not enough!” Aunt Mina continued. She loved to editorialize. “This curious dialect of Romansch was probably brought in by those wild, uncivilized Latin conquerors from the south!”

Ulyssa pictured men, entire hordes of them, complete with thrusting spears, entering forbidden territory, murdering shepherds and slaughtering

ing their sheep for food. She imagined a short, but gruesome bloodbath followed by extended peace. When seen in this light, the squat white cross centered solidly in the red square of the Swiss flag made more sense to her.

“Yes, they were a tough, tenacious people,” Aunt Mina summed up, as if she had read Ulyssa’s mind, “in a gray, forbidding land.” She nodded in the direction of Ulyssa’s mother for approval. “These Latins certainly were a stalwart people. I bet their motto was *Nothing ventured, nothing gained*,” she concluded, pleased with herself for having been able to use one of her favorite adages.

“Actually, they were Etruscans, the people who first settled here some two and a half millennia ago, a northern Adriatic tribe,” Ulyssa’s mother chimed in, happy to have something of importance to contribute. She had borrowed her sister’s *Guide to the Mountains* a couple of hours after their arrival in these new environs. “They named this territory Rhaetia, after their leader, Rhaetus, and that castle over there —” she pointed to a fortification on a hillock in the distance — “that is the *Rhaetia Ampla*. We must visit it.”

Ulyssa’s mother did not mind bookish knowledge as long as it had some verifiable applicability in the real world. Ulyssa felt a surge of joyous anticipation at the prospect of visiting such an ancient, historical site.

“Can we go right now?” Ulyssa pleaded.

“Nothing ventured, nothing gained,” Maria Teresa interjected, imitating Aunt Mina.

“I think we’ve done enough for one day,” Ulyssa’s mother told them. “Tomorrow we can explore the castle. After all, we don’t want to do everything in one day, now, do we?” Ulyssa’s mother wiped at her brow with a cotton handkerchief. “To tell you the truth, this heat has made me quite thirsty. I say we find ourselves some water to drink.”

## 4

It is here, in a more obscure region called Oberhalbstein, in a valley that runs perpendicular to the more prominent valley of the Engadine, that her aunt Rosina has managed to secure reasonable holiday accommodations for them all, albeit without the accustomed amenities such as privacy, for instance, or the use of running water, which they soon learn must be fetched in a large tin pail from the village fountain.

The bucket of water is much too heavy for Ulyssa’s small hands, but she is eager to carry it nevertheless, the precious liquid sloshing on her hurrying feet all the way from the warm, sunlit world outside to the

dark, cool interior of the large house with the small windows. There she sets the bucket on a three-legged milking stool, for everyone to admire.

“There is nothing like fresh mountain water to quench one’s thirst,” Aunt Mina declares, sipping from a ladle. “It’s like nectar sent from heaven itself.”

They all take turns sipping from the ladle and exclaiming how wonderful the water tastes. Only Ulyssa fails to perceive the difference between this water and the water she has drunk all her life. However, to please everyone, she declares the water to be quite delicious, too.

“We should heat some for later use,” Aunt Rosina says, setting to work. “Better yet, we should wash these dishes one more time, for good measure,” she cautions both of her sisters, squeamish about possible germs. “Just to be on the safe side,” she adds, pulling pots and pans and cutlery from the cupboards, shelves and drawers. After washing all the dishes, she starts to wipe down the shelves and, as a grand finale, decides to mop the wooden kitchen floor.

Later that evening, having made herself thoroughly at home, Aunt Rosina fills a large washtub with more heated water, for the hilarious bath which Ulyssa is invited to share, hunched, knees hugged close to her chest, and face to face with her cousin, Maria Teresa, Aunt Rosina’s daughter, who will be Ulyssa’s close companion for the duration of the week.

“There is nothing like a bath to help two people get more intimately acquainted,” Aunt Mina proclaims, glancing over the upper edge of the *Guide to the Mountains* and giggling in a girlish fashion. “Would you not agree, my dear sisters?”

“Indubitably so,” says Ulyssa’s mother.

“You couldn’t have said it any better,” Aunt Rosina agrees.

There is no shortage of water here in the mountains. Ulyssa notices it everywhere she goes, spilling forth abundantly from fountains, day and night, coursing down streams and brooks, trickling in freshets and rivulets throughout the village, glistening and shimmering everywhere in the sunshine.

The babbling of the fountain and the babbling of the village voices seemed to follow Ulyssa everywhere she went that summer holiday. They even followed her into the house where they slipped into her dreams at night. The local dialect with its silky, pleasant lilt and curious blend of words seemed to join in conversation with the babbling of the fountain to soothe her ever deeper into sleep.

However, water was conspicuously absent from the outhouse; of that fact Ulyssa has a distinct memory.

Ulyssa is daydreaming out the window of her shrine-room as she watches minuscule, feather-light snowflakes being borne hither and yon before descending to the earth. Elephant Mountain is barely visible in the distance: it appears to be weighed down by a dense, gray mass of clouds. Along with the first signs of winter, a letter has arrived in the morning mail from Switzerland.

“I have practically gutted an entire section of my mother’s photo album,” Maria Teresa writes in the letter that accompanies a handful of black-and-white pictures. The photos are quite small in size, framed by attractive, creamy borders with beveled edges. Ulyssa puts on her granny glasses. She wants to take a closer look at these images which now, some forty-five years later, strike her at once as incongruous and quaint. And yet, they do lend credence to the summer holidays in Riom.

The prime focus of Maria Teresa’s letter, Ulyssa soon discovers, is to shed light on the subject of the outhouse. The topic is a near obsession that seems to have followed Maria Teresa into the present; she has latched onto the subject the same way a puppy dog would latch onto a smelly tennis shoe.

“Take a look at that massive protrusion ballooning out from the house,” she instructs Ulyssa in the letter. “They called that the outer house, a direct translation, possibly, from the word in the Romansch dialect. But I have always referred to it as the crapper.”

Just to make sure Ulyssa would not miss the location of the outhouse in the photograph, Maria Teresa has scratched the initials W. C. to mark the dreaded spot. Ulyssa is amused by the initials, which stand for water closet. The outhouse could hardly be called a closet and it definitely had no water in it. In the picture the extension looks like an afterthought, tacked onto the building at a later date. The walls look gray and rather flaky. Indeed, the protrusion reminds Ulyssa of a joke she cannot divine the meaning of, given the way it sits on the piled-together, rough-hewn stones that rise to several feet off the ground. A large, triangular shadow falls on the outhouse while in the window next to it the stark noon-hour sun illuminates a face with eyeglasses that glint in the sunshine.

“Remember the spinsterish damsel who lived upstairs from us?” Maria Teresa asks in the letter. She has obviously anticipated Ulyssa’s question. “That’s Fräulein Jannutin, the owner of the house. She spoke nothing but Romansch, but her godson, the goatherd – Peter, how apt a name for him! – spoke to us on her behalf.”

Ulyssa remembers Maria Teresa’s infatuation with the goatherd. It began when he gallantly offered her some milk, still warm and steaming from the goat, and she, a city child, took to it instantly. Is it any wonder, Ulyssa muses, that her cousin ended up marrying a farmer? Ulyssa her-

self, having grown up in the country, found the goat milk much too pungent for her taste. Its warm animal odor got caught in her throat and made her want to heave; she felt repulsed at once.

There is no evidence of goats in the photograph of the house in Riom. No goats could have grazed in the yard which, in the picture, is suggestive of a demolition site. The grass is littered with boards, planks and beams, revealing various degrees of rot, as well as useable lumber loosely assembled into piles – evidence of some building that no longer stands. Chunks of foundation are piled against the wall of the house, in addition to colossal tree trunks cut into lengths, trees that must have been ancient when they were felled.

“There was this wobbly contraption in the crapper,” Maria Teresa, never one to mince words, relates in her letter. “It could be called a toilet seat, I guess, but from what I can remember it was built with debris taken from those piles outside the house. In fact, the seat amounted to little more than a few rotten sticks spanning the dark abyss, plus some smelly boards piled over top of them. How uncivilized, how unsavory, how uncouth! Each time I had to go, I feared I would fall in.”

Even now, Ulyssa can see Maria Teresa as a child, her eyes wide with horror.

“What were they, anyway, those creatures who lived down there in that abyss,” Maria Teresa carries on, “those roly-poly bugs, crawling up the sides from God knows where – were they potato bugs? I was afraid they’d come crawling up and bite my naked bum!”

Ulyssa visualizes her cousin tipping over backwards on the seat and upsetting the precarious balance of the perch. She drops away into that bottomless pit, into that unfathomable abyss of muck below. And then, before she even has a chance to call for help, she drowns. Ulyssa shudders. Maria Teresa, dead, at the tender age of seven! Ulyssa sees her laid out in a casket, her hands clasping a white candle, her pale face shielded by a white veil from the gaze of curious onlookers in the village.

Ulyssa catches herself, and chuckles. No point in going there. Not now, at any rate.

Compared to Maria Teresa’s memories of the outhouse, hers are a lot more sedate. When Ulyssa ascended the grand step to the outhouse seat, she used to pretend that she was a princess approaching a throne. If pressed, however, she would have to admit that she experienced the odd, fleeting moment of dread when her own small body was suspended over the dark, dank void below, with nothing reassuring to hold on to. The gnarly tree branch serving as the door handle was out of reach, since Ulyssa always kept the door wide open to admit some much-needed light. She was an avid reader and loved to decipher the long, complex words in the newspaper, which had been cut into proper-sized

rectangles with a bread knife. After reading, she would scrunch them up to make them soft for later wiping purposes.

At night, the outhouse ceased to be a source of terror for Maria Teresa. Gratefully, at night, young and old alike could make use of a chamber pot tucked away beneath the bed, its wide ceramic rim reassuringly close to the ground.

There is much to be said for tradition, Ulyssa thinks, tucking the letter and the photographs back into the envelope. She takes off her granny glasses and prepares a hot water bottle for bed. Outside, the temperature has dropped; snow is falling in great profusion. Clutching the hot water bottle to her chest, she recalls the much-loved linen sacks of her childhood – filled with dried cherry pits and pre-warmed on top of the woodstove. When placed next to her small feet at night, the warm sack assured her of a deep and dreamless sleep.

## 6

“I’ll race you,” Maria Teresa challenges Ulyssa. “Let’s sprint!”

Ulyssa has been dragging her feet along the footpath to the castle of Riom. The August sun is like a fiery hot oven in the sky; it browns Ulyssa’s arms and legs and brings dampness to her skin that gets trapped in the ringlets at her nape and beneath the little white blouse with the puffy sleeves. She envies Maria Teresa, whose mother, Aunt Rosina, has wisely packed only boys’ sleeveless undershirts for her.

“Come on,” Maria Teresa yells, looking back at Ulyssa. “Run!”

“Don’t push me!”

The aunts, who have walked on ahead, are now waiting for Ulyssa and Maria Teresa to catch up. Aunt Mina has her ever-present camera slung over her shoulder; she is intent upon documenting everything.

As usual, Maria Teresa has managed to outdistance Ulyssa and gets to the adults first. Ulyssa is badly out of breath; her lungs feel as though they are on fire from the hot air she has inhaled.

“We have to thank the Bronze and Iron Ages,” Aunt Mina now intones, somewhat pompously as they walk on together, “for providing the inhabitants of these parts with the much needed tools necessary for cutting down the once vast, dense forests and for cultivating the land.”

“And for keeping animals,” Aunt Rosina joins in. “Just think how much flesh those troops in the *Rhaetia Ampla* castle must have consumed.”

Ulyssa has visions of brocade tablecloths and platters of victuals laid out on long tables, plus abundant wine, of course, poured into shiny goblets, complete with crystal chandeliers illuminating the great hall,



and black cauldrons hanging above huge fires that blaze in hearths at either end – to keep those men cooked for, and to keep them warm.

Ulyssa's mother, who has been silent all this time, now chimes in, "Are those plants dandelions, blooming at the very top?" She points to the parapet atop the castle wall. Ulyssa's mother has been identifying plants for most of her life; she could spot an herb a mile away, and for years now, she has been curing people, perceiving all of nature as God's pharmacy.

"They can't be dandelions," Aunt Mina answers, suddenly in competition with Ulyssa's mother. "Dandelions would never grow straight out of the mortar; those must be some other weed."

She trains her camera on the parapet, intent on capturing the incriminating evidence, and to prove her point for all posterity. But the sun blinds her and the parapet is out of range.

"At any rate, this stronghold is a ruin now, dating from God knows when," Aunt Mina carries on, slightly miffed. "My guide book does not tell me anything. The only thing I know is that Rhaetus was their leader, and that his men hid themselves along a walkway behind that parapet up there. From there they used their crossbows to shoot arrows at the invaders, those – what do you call them, those warriors from the Celtic races? – the Helvetiae!" she concludes triumphantly. She puts the guide book back into her satchel.

Ulyssa has begun to lose interest. She picks up a stick and drags it along behind her in the gravel. "Why don't we go on ahead," she suggests to her cousin, "and check out the castle for ourselves!"

Upon ascending to the grassy knoll, they search for a way into the castle – a portal, perhaps, or some semblance of a large, oaken door. However, when they turn the corner, they find a gaping hole as big as that of any barn door. Where the windows should have been, Ulyssa notices rows of gaping slits beyond which the blue sky is visible. Everywhere, there are stones and mortar missing from the walls. She is appalled that the impressive, round, medieval castle tower with its sloping roof has been left entirely unadorned. No red and white pennants are fluttering joyously at the top, the way she has seen castles depicted in her favorite book of illustrated songs and seasons, at home.

When she and her cousin cross the remains of the crude stone sill leading to the castle's interior, they find only grass clumps, piles of rock and dirt, and heaps of rubble.

"Maybe some treasures are buried in these piles," Ulyssa says, fighting a sense of disappointment as she digs at the rubble with her shoe. "We're bound to find something, if we dig."

Maria Teresa pokes around with a stick in another pile of debris. "Who knows, the lady of the castle might have lost her diamond necklace here. Wouldn't it be great if we were the lucky finders?"

The heap of rubble, however, bestows no such luck on them.

Soon, Maria Teresa is ready to give up. “We’re probably too late, anyway.”

“Too late for what?”

“To find anything. It has probably all been found.”

By now, the adults have caught up to the girls. “Oh, my, what a grand-looking ruin,” Aunt Mina says, arms akimbo, surveying the bare interior of the castle. “Just imagine what has gone on inside these walls, plus all the battles that have been waged and won.”

“Or lost,” Ulyssa’s mother interjects.

“You think too much about what is in the loss column of life,” Aunt Mina replies. “Think about the plus side of the ledger once in a while. This isn’t a castle that’s half-ruined, this is a castle that’s half-standing.”

Ulyssa looks at the castle walls, then at the sky. This castle does not even have a roof, she thinks, as her eyes follow crows – or, maybe they are ravens – swooping and circling high overhead. In this impoverished version of a castle, she thinks, there is not even the suggestion of a prop for playing house with.

In her disappointment, she tosses her stick on the ground and is about to walk over to her mother, to be consoled by her, when out of the corner of her eye she catches sight of a bearded man in a dark suit. A light straw hat shades his eyes. A stretched canvas is tucked under his right arm and there is a crude wooden pack on his back; she assumes at once that the man is an artist. An easel leaning against the stone wall confirms her observation.

But where has he come from? Ulyssa knows he was not there when they entered the castle. He smiles at Ulyssa and turns to walk toward the doorway of the castle, picking up the easel along the way. Ulyssa’s mother turns to look, too. “What are you seeing, Ulyssa?”

Ulyssa realizes, as the man dissolves in the light of the doorway, that she must have been in some sort of reverie. “Nothing,” she says, having learned that it is better not to discuss such matters. “Nothing at all.”

“You’re fibbing, Ulyssa. Please tell me.” Her mother’s voice verges on being shrill with concern.

“It was nothing – really. I was looking at the way the shadows were playing with the light on the wall, that’s all.”

The sky outside Ulyssa’s window is no longer spilling forth thick snowflakes. Elephant Mountain has a festive look – like some gigantic chocolate torte, the icing cracked along the sides, the top laden with a gen-

erous dollop of crunchy meringue. And yet, the blue and cloudless sky over Elephant Mountain could easily fool one into thinking it was July.

Ulyssa has a vivid memory of the first hot July day in the new millennium, when she received the letter bearing the stamp that she subsequently tore off and placed on Green Tara's shrine.

Every single detail in the tiny alpine scene depicted on that stamp calls out to her: Yes, this is Switzerland! The stamp bears the country's Latin name, *Helvetia*, and the mysterious inscription, *Giovanni Segantini, 1858 – 1899*. This must be a commemorative stamp. It marks the one hundredth anniversary of someone's death, she thinks. But who was this Giovanni Segantini?

She recognizes Maria Teresa's handwriting on the envelope. These must be the wedding pictures, she thinks, as she impatiently tears open the envelope. Maria Teresa's son has recently married a young woman from Poland, and the ceremony, Ulyssa was told, would be taking place in the local village church in Switzerland.

However, when she looks inside the envelope, she finds no colorful photographs, only a sober piece of printed stationary. What, a death announcement, in the middle of summer? But, that's impossible! How can death take place in a season when everything is in bloom?

"Rosina Parietti," she reads, "has left this earthly plane of existence at the age of seventy-nine. Please join us in prayers to honor her life and passage."

She may have left this earthly plane, but first and foremost she has left me, and she has also left her daughter, are Ulyssa's immediate thoughts. Grief begins to tug at her. She feels bereft all of a sudden. Then she starts crying – first for her cousin, then for herself, and then for her favorite aunt.

"All those we love, we must one day leave behind," Aunt Rosina had said in Riom, when it was time for Maria Teresa to say goodbye to Peter, the goatherd.

"Just the same, it hurts to say goodbye," Maria Teresa had wailed.

"I wish we would never have to say goodbye. I wish we could stay here, in Riom, forever," Ulyssa had added, in an attempt to console her cousin. "I wish these holidays would never end – I really do!"

Upon receiving the death announcement, Ulyssa places a vase of Immortelles on Green Tara's shrine. The flowers remind her of Aunt Rosina on the day when she had spotted them growing near a garden fence on the outskirts of Riom.

“Oh, look at these flowers!” Aunt Rosina had exclaimed. “They have been given such a captivating name, these Immortelles, don’t you agree? But the name seems paradoxical, implying, as it does, that these flowers are immortal, that they never die.”

“That’s probably why we like to call them straw flowers. Isn’t that right, Ulyssa?” Her mother had spontaneously reached out and drawn her closer to her side. “Straw flowers, that’s their common name. And just as the name implies, once these flowers reach the blooming stage, they never lose their color, nor do they ever wilt.”

“I wish the same was true for all of us, don’t you?” Aunt Rosina had said, looking to Aunt Mina for confirmation.

“You mean, you’d like us to bloom on and on, interminably – for all eternity?” Aunt Mina had asked, at first taken aback. “But, that’s absurd! We all know that whatever lives must of necessity pass away.” It was obvious to Ulyssa that Aunt Mina was enjoying the possibility of a philosophical debate with her sisters, because of the way she pressed her hands against her hips, much like a schoolmistress, Ulyssa thought.

“Perhaps, what needs to be remembered is that permanence exists only in the mind,” Aunt Rosina had replied.

Aunt Mina felt that now the time had come to issue a more definitive statement. “I must confess that I love the scientific name of these flowers, *helichrysum*, best. The root of the word,” she said with the authority of someone who had done all her research, “is derived from the Greek, *helios*, meaning, the sun. As such, Immortelles could be said to be a symbol of male energy.”

“Are you implying that the sun is male, and that it is immortal, too?” Ulyssa’s mother had asked incredulously.

“Of course, I am,” Aunt Mina had replied. “We all know that the sun will never die, although, paradoxically, it seems to die each day.”

She had addressed this latter remark mainly to Maria Teresa, hoping to impart some lasting teachings to someone of the younger generation.

“And by the same token,” Maria Teresa had been quick to respond, showing signs of having caught the general drift of the conversation, “one could also say that the sun is born anew each day.”

Ulyssa said nothing. She listened, instead, to the sound of a myriad little bells tinkling in the distance. Together with the urgent sound of trampling feet, it soon enveloped her. The sharp whistling sound characteristic of Peter, the goatherd, filled the air, along with a cloud of thick dust that whirled around her, spreading an acrid taste across her tongue. The combined sensations of bleating, trampling, tinkling and shuffling made her feel as though she might suffocate or lose her mind or else, faint dead away.

“Watch out!” she heard Maria Teresa call to her.

Before Ulyssa had time to think, with the urgency of someone trying to save her life, she jumped off the road and into the ditch. Phew, at

least I'm out of harm's way, she thought, relieved. A strange, wet sensation crept into her canvas shoes, causing her toes to suddenly feel cool.

"Hot head, cool feet!" Maria Teresa called out in a mocking voice. "Didn't you notice the brook running in the ditch?"

Ulyssa did not let on how foolish and annoyed she felt. A bunch of goats is nothing to be afraid of, really, she told herself and resolutely climbed the side of the ditch to rejoin her cousin on the road.

Maria Teresa stood next to Peter and laughed at her, surrounded by the intemperate goats. Ulyssa watched as her cousin helped herself to handful after handful of salt from the paper bag that Peter held out to her. She offered the salt to the goats on her outstretched palm, with the result that the eager animals crowded in all the more tightly around her.

Peter proffered the paper bag so Ulyssa could help herself to a handful of the salt, also, but she declined. She could not fathom the reason for the blissful smile on her cousin's lips. She herself had always experienced the rough tickle of a goat's tongue as mildly distasteful. She shuddered, thinking of the slobber that their licking of salt always left behind on one's palm.

## 9

"There they are, the very same sheep I once saw grazing in the alpine meadows above Riom," Ulyssa mutters to herself as she looks at the stamp on Green Tara's shrine.

It occurs to her that the stamp is like a miniature window that allows her access to a world she thought was forgotten, a landscape which seems oddly familiar. The stamp depicts a shepherdess whose forget-me-not blue dress reverberates with the saturated color of the sky, while the hue of her apron reminds Ulyssa of sweet violets in the woods. Beside the shepherdess, on the path that gives way to a rocky incline, a flock of newly-shorn sheep graze on the sparse growth of vegetation. The sheep, Ulyssa remembers now, could be seen everywhere that day, flocking together in the pastures of the upper valleys.

"Today we will ascend to the alpine meadow of Radons," Aunt Mina had decreed as soon as everyone was awake in the morning. "We'll have a firsthand look at the alpine plateau, and see for ourselves how accurately Giovanni Segantini managed to capture it in his paintings."

"Giovanni Segantini – is he a relative of ours?" Ulyssa wanted to ask Aunt Mina. She seldom missed what was being said, which was probably one of the reasons why her father – her real father, not her second father – affectionately called her Elephant Ears.

"Giovanni Segantini," Ulyssa's mother said, as though pondering the name. "He was a famous architect in Zürich, was he not?" She

called to Ulyssa: “Come here, Squirrel Cheeks. I want to brush your hair.”

Ulyssa obeyed without the least resistance. She adored the attention her mother was lavishing on her now that there was ample time, now that they were on holidays, now that they were both away from that dreadful, new husband of her mother’s, the one Ulyssa had been forced to compete with for her mother’s attention ever since he had moved in with them the year before.

The hairbrush gently stroked her hair. Her curls, which had been knitted into knots during sleep, were first untangled, then brushed smooth, then brushed an additional hundred strokes, following a long-established tradition in her family. The strands were lifted high above each ear and tightly gathered into ponytails. As a final touch, her mother added two gigantic, white silk ribbon bows.

“Giovanni Segantini was a painter,” Aunt Mina said from across the room, amidst the busy clattering of bowls and spoons. “He is now dead, of course – in fact, he died some fifty years ago – but I’ve seen examples of his work at the Segantini Museum in St. Moritz and in catalogues of art museums. His work is highly respected, in fact.”

“What’s so extraordinary about it?” Ulyssa’s mother wanted to know.

“Well, for one thing, he was the forerunner of a technique known as Divisionism.”

“There are so many *isms* in the world. It’s all too abstract for me to relate to,” Ulyssa’s mother said.

“Sometimes I feel the same way you do, when I try to understand complex ideas,” Aunt Mina admitted. “However, ideas can magnify our appreciation, so they do have a place in the overall scheme of things.”

“Take, for example, the pear,” Aunt Rosina said. “For us to truly know a pear, we must bite into it. To hear someone describe the taste is not enough, no matter how eloquent the description.”

“So, what are Segantini’s paintings like?” Ulyssa’s mother asked.

“Sublime,” Aunt Mina said. “No other painter has been able to capture stillness, air and light the way he was able to. His paintings have a luminous quality. They take us back to the end of the nineteenth century, when the inhabitants of the Upper Engadine still lived in harmony with their animals, in accordance with the seasons.”

“I love his paintings,” Aunt Rosina told Aunt Mina, “in particular, the one called *Mary Crossing the Lake*. It has some nice, religious overtones.”

“*Religious* is not the right word,” Aunt Mina set her sister straight. “The word *numinous* would be more appropriate. *Numinous* captures the supernatural way the lake mirrors the light of the sky. For Segantini, life was a passage that took place between heaven and earth; he imbued

that passage with an unforgettable radiance. Just to see that radiance fills the viewer with awe.”

“Yes, there certainly is much to be grateful for,” Aunt Rosina said, seemingly out of the blue.

“Did Giovanni Segantini have a beard?” Ulyssa asked.

“Yes, as a matter of fact, he did,” Aunt Rosina said. “Why do you want to know?”

Ulyssa shrugged. “I was just wondering. Is he a relative of ours? He has the same last name.”

“I don’t think he’s related to us, my dear, but who can say for sure? Family names go back for many generations, and nearly always they have some sort of connection. Family matters are family matters, after all,” Aunt Rosina said. “I say we have breakfast. I’m ravenous, I’ve got to eat. I have a baby on the way,” she added, proudly stroking her belly. She pushed the milk jug across the table. “Here, put some goat’s milk on your oats,” she told Ulyssa’s mother. “You could use some strengthening, some fattening up. You’re still as slender as a reed. You don’t show nearly enough for someone who’s only two months behind me in her pregnancy.”

“Why don’t we pack some extra food to take with us on the hike?” Ulyssa’s mother said. “Who knows, we might be gone for much longer than we think.”

## 10

The last patches of morning fog are dissipating as they leave the wide gravel road and begin their ascent along the narrow, winding trail up to the higher pastures. Ulyssa points out the slender church steeple of Savognin, now visible far below in the distance.

“That’s the church I want to get married in,” Maria Teresa confides to Ulyssa. “Savognin would be such a pretty place for a wedding, don’t you think?”

Aunt Mina takes a photograph of the church for posterity’s sake and then joins Aunt Rosina who has stopped to look at a stand of pink yarrow. They walk on in silence for a while. “Did you know that Segantini came from Italy in 1886 to settle with his family in Switzerland, after completing the final version of *Mary Crossing the Lake*?”

Aunt Rosina stops to catch her breath. She flattens her palms against her lower back, which has begun to ache. “That must have been a watershed year for him,” she says, “one that benefited both his family and his career. He won a gold medal for the work he exhibited in Amsterdam, four years earlier, didn’t he?”

The climb up the path seems to have invigorated Aunt Mina; she is now in fine lecturing form. “Just imagine, Segantini was married and had four children by the time he came to live in Savognin with his wife, Bice. According to his biography, he painted over one hundred masterpieces during the eight years he lived in Savognin.”

“Bee-Chay,” Ulyssa’s mother coos. “Isn’t that a charming name? It has a lovely, humming sound. He must have felt a lot of affection for her.”

“I don’t know if affection is the right term. Her actual name was Beatrice Bugatti. She bore him three sons and a daughter. Whether he thought of her as his muse, I don’t really know.” Aunt Rosina fans herself with her straw hat and takes a moment to brush some of the strands of loose black hair away from her temples. She feels suffused with the day’s rising heat, and walks at a considerably slower pace. “From what I’ve heard, Segantini met his wife in Italy, very early on in his career as a painter, when he was barely twenty-two.”

“Yes, and his favorite way of painting was *en plein air*,” Aunt Mina relates, pronouncing the words in her exaggerated French. “Under the open sky,” she translates, for Ulyssa’s benefit. “For him, it was the only way to capture the true essence of the landscape – the alpine soil, the mountain range, the sky.”

Ulyssa’s mother, who still remembers some French from Grade Eight, corrects her. “If I remember right, the phrase *en plein air* actually means *in the fresh air* or else, it could mean *out of doors*.”

“Same difference,” Ulyssa tells them, feeling compelled to play the referee.

“In the end, what matters most is whether the artist lived a happy life, don’t you think?” Aunt Rosina tugs at the collar of her violet-blue cotton dress, as though anxious to bring the conversation to a close.

“Giovanni Segantini did not have a happy childhood,” Aunt Mina says. “He was orphaned when he was quite young. By the time he was five his mother had died from complications having to do with his birth. Then, when he was seven, his father left him with some Italian relatives and took off for America.”

“I can’t imagine being left behind by my parents,” Ulyssa confides to Maria Teresa. “I felt terrible when Papa went away. I cried all last winter because he wasn’t there to read to me or to tuck me into bed at night. Mamma stopped singing me to sleep, too. I don’t know why.”

“Remember when you came to visit me in Lugano, after we moved into our new apartment on Segantini Street?” Maria Teresa says, trying to distract Ulyssa. “That street has the same name as you. Isn’t that amazing? Mamma took a picture of us in our matching, brand-new dresses, the hand-knitted ones with the long sleeves. She took us outside and made us stand next to each other beside that lilac bush.”



Ulyssa remembers the photograph only too well; she isn't fond of it in the least. Maria Teresa is pictured holding a small bouquet of flowers, whereas Ulyssa stands there empty-handed, her arms hanging uselessly by her sides. She holds her shoulders stiffly in a shrug, her neck is tilted to the left and her eyes peer straight into the stark rays of the Easter sun. Tears seem to glint in her eyes.

Was the sun to blame for her tears? Ulyssa does not remember much about the visit, except for Aunt Rosina's gentle, healing hands as they massaged eucalyptus ointment into her upper chest – to help disperse the dampness in her lungs. Her asthma had gotten worse after her Papa had left. She remembers that she often sighed, despite herself.

Aunt Rosina is now walking in between Ulyssa and Maria Teresa. "If there's one thing I've learned from all my years of mountaineering, it is this," she tells the girls. "When you ascend to higher altitudes, it's best to lighten your load by discarding all the burdens you've been carrying. That way you can breathe a lot easier. This is no place to have a heavy heart. Come on, girls, now is the time to be footloose and fancy-free!"

Aunt Mina is still in lecturing mode. "Even though Segantini's life started out full of misfortune, it didn't stay that way. Soon he began to work in his uncle's photography shop in Italy, and later, in the mountains of the light-filled Engadine, he found a haven for his creativity. Word has it that he reveled in the sheer physicality of these mountains. For him, they were like massive bones. The diagonal upward sweep of the snow-covered peaks reminded him of giant, craggy spines."

"From the way you talk, you must have known him quite intimately," Ulyssa's mother teases her. "Hey, look at this. Here's a fair-sized chunk of dinosaur spine, lying right here beside the road."

Maria Teresa and Ulyssa clamber up onto the huge rock and wave down at them.

"That type of rock is called a moraine," Aunt Mina tells the girls, declining their invitation to come up and join them. Instead, she snaps a picture from below. "It shows evidence of the amazing force of glacial activity in this region. Indeed, that rock was probably left behind by the glacier that retreated from this valley."

Further up the footpath, the girls discover a mountain stream tumbling down the slope. They throw off their socks and shoes, first to wade among the boulders in the cool water that glints like diamonds in the sun, and then to walk back and forth across a narrow bridge made from a single log. Ulyssa stares in amazement as her mother takes off her blouse and drenches it in the stream. Her mother stands there in full view – in her bra and skirt. The waistband is stretched awfully tight, the ends held together by a safety pin. Ulyssa notices an unmistakable plumpness around her mother's tummy, and realizes with a sudden pang

of regret that it won't be long now before her time as an only child will come to an end.

"Mamma, you're almost naked!" she calls out with a sudden bout of intense longing, her voice carrying a hint of disapproval. Her mother, however, simply looks at her, smiling gently from across the stream.

"We're all among family here," she assures Ulyssa, visibly enjoying the cool sensation of the wet blouse as she puts it on again. "Ah, I feel so much better now," she sighs. "Just smell this fabulous mountain air, and look at those towering glaciers all around!"

Ulyssa's attention is now drawn to where Aunt Rosina has sat down in the half-shade of a tree, her left hand resting lightly on a walking stick. The color of her black hair is offset by the pleasing, olive-golden tones of her cheeks. The sunlight falling across the brim of her straw hat casts a soft, lilac-tinged shadow over her eyes. Immersed in her own thoughts, Aunt Rosina's attention seems drawn inside herself. She is beautiful, like a woman in a painting, Ulyssa thinks.

Aunt Mina snaps a picture of the girls playing near the water's edge. Her skirt pulled high above her knees, she cups her hands together and drinks deeply from the stream. "Here, do have a drink," she tells them. "Who knows? It might be a long while before we come across another source of water."

"Let's continue up the trail," Ulyssa's mother yells to Aunt Mina from across the stream. Together, the two of them walk on ahead at a rigorous pace. Ulyssa, walking behind them, hears their voices ring out with clarion sharpness. It's a familiar tune she has always loved, a song about spring. A young boy wearing a wreath of flowers on his head melts the snow with his bright presence and so chases King Winter away. Ulyssa listens to the lilting voices as they weave together, separate, and finally entwine again.

"Listen to those two songbirds!" Aunt Rosina tells the girls. "You know," she says, speaking softly to Ulyssa, "your mother has a very pretty voice. I am very fond of it. I didn't realize that until today."

Her aunt's compliment fills Ulyssa with happiness. She feels suddenly buoyant and full of energy. I want to hop and skip beside Aunt Rosina forever and ever, she tells herself. I enjoy being in her company so much!

Ulyssa catches up to her mother and Aunt Mina just as the song comes to an end. The path, narrowing beneath their feet, curves around the shoulder of the hill. It wends its way past a cluster of primitive alpine huts before depositing them at the edge of an alpine meadow in full bloom. The meadow is ringed by mountains that rise steeply from the plateau. Ulyssa feels diminished by the towering presence of the peaks. Higher still, two blackbirds circle in the blue ether. Then, quite swiftly, they are gone. Ulyssa feels hushed by the silence all around her. For the briefest moment, she has the impression that time has stopped,

that she has become part of a vast and luminous tableau. The stillness is that of a painting. Then, all of a sudden, a single cowbell breaks the silence.

“Hooray! Hurrah!” Maria Teresa and Ulyssa throw off their socks and shoes and tumble in the crisp meadow grass. Maria Teresa cartwheels across the meadow while Ulyssa somersaults down a gentle slope toward a stand of conifers.

“They’re behaving like new-born lambs,” Aunt Rosina remarks, laying apples, bread and cheese on a small checkered cloth on the grass. “I’m ravenous. I certainly hope I’m not the only one.”

“Just look at that panorama!” Ulyssa’s mother sighs as she lies back on the grass, using Aunt Rosina’s backpack as a pillow.

“It is even more spectacular than I remember from Segantini’s *Triptych of Nature*,” Aunt Mina says as she pulls the Museum’s brochure out of her satchel and adds a Toblerone to the items on the checkered cloth. “My favorite treat,” she says. “It’s guaranteed to make Maria Teresa and Ulyssa jump for joy.”

“They seem to be doing that, already,” Ulyssa’s mother replies, a new-found certainty ringing in her voice. “How exuberant and ecstatic they are! It must be all this sunshine and fresh mountain air.”

“This landscape, with its mountain peaks and glacial troughs, would present quite a challenge for an artist,” Aunt Rosina says. “Can you imagine trying to capture the many moods of the sky – from sunrise to sunset, and throughout the seasons? Just think how daunting the task would be.”

“But that’s precisely what Segantini tried to do,” Aunt Mina says, never one to miss a chance to elaborate. “He was an idealist, an artist in love with dizzying heights. It says here, in the brochure, that he always strove to attain what was most lofty. He set his goals very high, so high the material plane of existence would, at such an altitude, be in danger of being snuffed out.”

“Do you mean snuffed out the way a candle flame is snuffed out?” Ulyssa’s mother says. “Or, do you mean he wanted to elevate what he saw to such a great height, the thinness of the atmosphere would cause the flame to go out?”

“It says ‘snuffed out’ here in the brochure.”

“Here, let me see that.”

Aunt Mina passes the brochure to her.

“You’re right. It does say ‘snuffed out’. What an odd, baffling thing to say.”

Aunt Rosina cuts up an apple with her Swiss Army knife and hands the pieces all around. “Maybe what the brochure is trying to say is that Segantini was the only painter working up here among the mountain peaks and the clouds, and that the air was so thin it affected the way he saw the world. Maybe that’s it.”

Ulyssa has wandered off by herself to the edge of the meadow. She feels dizzy from all the running and tumbling about. She sees tiny flecks of light in the translucent air and on the emerald-green meadow beneath her bare feet. Next to one of the alpine huts, beside a water trough made from a hollowed-out log where several cows have gathered to drink, she spots an elderberry bush with berries glinting in the sunshine. She allows herself to be carried over to it, as though in a trance. Near a wooden fence, just a short distance away, she notices a man standing in front of an easel. He holds a palette in his left hand. Who is he? His straw hat and his gleaming white, long-sleeved linen shirt are in stark contrast to the violet-blue sheen of his vest and his dark pants. A woman wearing a somber, old-fashioned taffeta dress and an attractive, matching bonnet is seated on a rock beside him.

The man waves and the woman gestures, too, inviting Ulyssa to approach. Ulyssa looks behind her to see if they are waving to someone else. But no one else is in sight. She wanders over to them. By now, the man has put down his palette and taken off his straw hat, which he deposits on top of the paint box at his feet. She knows instantly that this is her father’s face, that this is her father’s curly hair. She walks toward his arms that are flung wide open to embrace her. Then, she runs – like a long lost child.

“Papa!” she hears herself call out to him. He catches her body, lifts her swiftly off her feet and holds her high above his head as she squeals with delight. She grabs his tousled mop of curly, dark hair, feeling herself being spun around and around. Below, in the periphery of her vision, she catches sight of a large bouquet of meadow daisies that the woman is holding up to her, but she is too dizzy to grab it. Looking down, she sees her father’s laughing face, floating amidst a dazzling array of dancing color-filaments – azure blue and emerald-green, silver-white, and yellow gold.

“Ulyssa!” Maria Teresa’s distant voice brings Ulyssa back to her senses. The twirling motion has stopped; she hears the sound of a cowbell ringing nearby. She reaches for the bouquet of meadow daisies lying at her feet and stumbles up the slope toward the sound of Maria Teresa’s voice.

“You look like you’ve just seen a saint,” Ulyssa’s cousin says.

“I have, I have. Believe me, I actually have.”

“You know what they say about people who’ve seen a saint, don’t you?”

“No. What?”

“They say they’re touched,” Maria Teresa says. “Touched in the head,” she adds, twirling her index finger around her ear.

Ulyssa shrugs. “Come on, I’ll race you back to where our mothers are.”

Looking up from the Museum’s brochure, Ulyssa’s mother watches the girls race up the slope. “I wish I was still that light on my feet,” she observes. “It must be so much fun to twirl and dance and run across the meadow!”

“Young lambs,” Aunt Rosina says, shifting her body so she can sit more comfortably. “Young lambs, not yet weighted down by wool.”

“Unlike us older ewes, you mean,” Aunt Mina says, training her camera on a particularly jagged mountain peak that towers above Aunt Rosina’s head. “It’s such a gorgeous view, well worth the trek up here, I say.”

The girls fall breathlessly on the grass beside them.

“Ulyssa, what has happened to you?” Her mother’s voice sounds alarmed. “Your hair is all disheveled, your cheeks are flaming red, and you’ve lost one of your white hair ribbons.”

Ulyssa refrains from saying anything. She helps herself to a piece of Toblerone on the checkered cloth and hands a piece to Maria Teresa, who is still out of breath. She munches it thoughtfully. “Now I understand why every piece of chocolate is shaped like a triangle,” she tells Aunt Rosina, holding her piece up against the sky. “It’s supposed to remind you of a mountain peak – a delicious mountain peak that you can eat!”

Aunt Rosina smiles at her.

“Don’t be too concerned about losing your hair ribbon,” she says. “I can always give you the present of another one.”

“That’s no excuse for being careless, though,” Ulyssa’s mother says.

Aunt Rosina munches on a piece of cheese. “Yes, I agree, but sometimes such things happen to us, especially when we’re overjoyed by what we’ve seen and done. I know, because I’ve lost a few things while hiking up in the mountains. Usually, I think of them as offerings, as things you leave behind with gratitude – a gift of thanks to the guardian spirits of a place.”

“I know somebody else who made a practice of leaving offerings behind, but they happened to be paintings.” Aunt Mina winks at Ulyssa. “You might even know his name!”

Ulyssa catches the twinkle in her aunt’s eye. “I bet his name was Segantini,” she says, looking off across the meadow toward the alpine

hut where earlier she had spotted the painter at his easel. A shudder of recognition passes down her spine.

“Yes, there is much to be grateful for,” Aunt Rosina reminds everyone. “Let’s eat!”

Upon their return from the alpine meadows of Radons, Aunt Mina uncorks a bottle of Italian red wine in celebration of a day well spent. On the stove simmers the best tomato sauce Aunt Rosina has ever made. Ulyssa’s mother is busy grating a large chunk of parmesan cheese. She has given Ulyssa permission to use the large bread knife in the cupboard to cut a fresh loaf of crusty white bread into slices.

“Today has been a thirsty day,” Ulyssa’s mother says as she ladles water from the large bucket into a glass jug which she carries to the table.

“Look at what Peter just gave to us!” Maria Teresa announces as she ceremoniously carries a ceramic bowl with blue polka dots to the table. “It’s a gift from *Fräulein* Jannutin, he told me.”

In the bowl sits a generous lump of freshly churned butter. Ulyssa is famished. Her mouth waters at the thought of eating buttered slices of bread. “My favorite food,” she informs everyone, although they already know that.

“Do you know that Giovanni Segantini’s death was probably due to eating bread?” Aunt Mina fills her sisters’ wine glasses, then her own. “He had retreated to a stone hut in a place called *Schafberg* – literally, Sheep Mountain – high up above Maloja, the village he had moved to with his family when he left Savognin. By that time he was forty-one. Think of it, only forty-one. He was working on his masterpiece, that magnificent triptych which he hoped would embody the most sublime qualities of the Upper Engadine...”

“I don’t see how the task of painting a triptych could lead to anyone’s death,” Ulyssa’s mother says, interrupting Aunt Mina’s train of thought.

Ignoring her sister’s remark, Aunt Mina raises her glass. “None of my books actually tell me how he came down with peritonitis,” she says.

“If it’s anything like tonsillitis,” Ulyssa says, “it must have been very painful.”

“Peritonitis, as far as I know, is an inflammation of the stomach lining,” Aunt Mina explains. “I suspect the bread he ate was stale or moldy. I’ve read that stale bread can cause such bacterial infections. At least it does in pigeons. If the infection isn’t treated, it can be fatal.”

“I bet the infection was due to fresh bread,” Aunt Rosina says. “After a week or so in that stone hut, he would have been famished. Then, when he finally managed to get some fresh bread, he ate it in one fell swoop!”

“By the way, this spaghetti sauce is fabulous.” Ulyssa’s mother dabs her bread in the sauce, shooting a glance across the table at Ulyssa. “We know only too well what sort of tummy aches come from eating bread, don’t we? Especially when the bread happens to be fresh out of the oven and still warm.”

Ulyssa has eaten all three buttered slices of bread on her plate.

“What happened to Segantini’s stomach is anybody’s guess. Your story is little more than conjecture,” Ulyssa’s mother tells her sisters. “You shouldn’t be telling the girls such fairy tales. The only conclusion I would draw is that death caught up to him in the middle of his life.”

Aunt Rosina refills her sister’s glasses, then her own. “It’s odd that you would say that because, at the time, he was working on the panel called *Life*.”

“Well then, *Salute!*” Ulyssa’s mother raises her glass, toasting her sisters, “and three cheers to Segantini’s final work!”

“From what I’ve read, he was working on the panel called *Death*,” Aunt Mina says, “in which case the artist’s death might be seen as a case of self-fulfilling prophesy.”

Aunt Rosina sips her wine. “I’ve come to realize that we’ll never know everything. I like the mystery surrounding his death. It adds a lot more mystery to his life.”

Maria Teresa has been fingering the tiny goat-bell pendant on her necklace and acting fidgety for some time now. “I know something none of you know,” she says.

Ulyssa twirls her fork in her pasta. “Please, do tell us,” she says, shoving spaghetti into her mouth.

“Yes, tell us. It’s not a secret, is it?” Aunt Mina says.

“No, not exactly. At least, Peter didn’t say it was. I have to warn you that you might lose your appetite, though.”

“Okay, what did you hear from Peter?” Aunt Mina says. “You’re holding us all in suspense.”

“Apparently, *Fräulein* Jannutin lost her teeth today, and she lost them in the most peculiar way.”

“Oh, do go on,” Aunt Mina says. “The suspense is killing us.”

A sudden picture rises in Ulyssa’s mind – of short-sighted Miss Jannutin without teeth, grinning a toothless baby’s grin, drool spilling from her pink gums onto a bib. The image strikes her as funny and she starts to giggle.

“Oh, my,” she splutters, unable to stop herself. Under her mother’s reprimanding gaze, Ulyssa coughs up an entire mouthful of half-chewed spaghetti.

“It looks to me like Ulyssa could use the Heimlich manoeuvre,” Aunt Mina jokes.

“I think it’s a little late for that,” Ulyssa’s mother replies.

Ulyssa giggles uncontrollably. “Has Miss Jannutin put her teeth back in yet?”

“No, they still haven’t been returned to her mouth,” Maria Teresa tells her.

“For goodness’ sake, why not?” Aunt Mina is appalled.

“Because they got swallowed up by the crapper,” Maria Teresa announces with obvious delight.

“The crapper!” Aunt Rosina blurts out.

“Yes, they fell right into all that you-know-what down below. Apparently, Miss Jannutin couldn’t believe her eyes when she saw what had happened.”

“Oh, my, how distasteful!” Ulyssa’s mother shrieks.

Aunt Mina pours more wine into Aunt Rosina’s glass and then fills up her own. Ulyssa’s mother declines with an energetic nod, reaching for the water jug instead.

“It doesn’t surprise me one bit that she couldn’t believe her eyes,” Ulyssa says. “You know how short-sighted Miss Jannutin is.”

“It must’ve been awful for the poor woman, simply awful!” Aunt Rosina stifles a sudden urge to hiccup. “How would you like to be in the position of losing your teeth like that? It makes me shudder just to think about it.”

“And now,” Ulyssa’s mother says, always on the lookout for a swift, but happy conclusion to any story, “has Miss Jannutin found her teeth yet?”

“That’s just it.” Wrinkling her nose, Maria Teresa squeezes her nostrils shut with thumb and forefinger. “Peter told me he has yet to fish them out.”

“What!” Ulyssa’s mother winces. “You mean, they’re still down there!”

“Can I go see?” Ulyssa asks.

Before anyone can respond, Ulyssa and Maria Teresa have bolted out the door. Seconds later, they are both leaning over the guardrail of the stairway, watching Peter remove rocks and boards from around the base of the outhouse.

“What do you think he’s going to do?” Maria Teresa whispers to Ulyssa.

“I’m not too sure, but I think he’s going to crawl inside.”

“Jeepers, Creepers! How disgusting. You’d never catch me doing that.”

Miss Jannutin stands a few feet away from Peter, wiping her hands on her apron, acting restless and distraught. She says something to him



in Romansch that causes him to look up at the girls. “Miss Jannutin wonders if she might borrow a sieve,” he translates.

The girls run back up the stairs to the kitchen, only too happy to oblige. They hand the large spaghetti sieve over to Peter, whereupon he crawls partway through the opening he has created in the foundation of the outhouse. His left hand holds desperately onto the outside wall while his legs stiffly counterbalance his upper body. “Oh, my God, he’s gone right in there,” Ulyssa says, covering her mouth.

“Come on,” Maria Teresas says. “Let’s go look down through the hole in the toilet seat.”

They rush up the stairs to where the rickety outhouse seat has each day kept them from falling into the muck far below. They stare down into the darkness, pinching their nostrils shut. Once their eyes have adjusted to the lack of light down in the pit, they are able to make out Peter, straining to catch Miss Jannutin’s dentures in the basket of the sieve.

“Ugh, it must really stink down there.”

“Look, he’s almost got them,” Maria Teresea says.

“I hope he doesn’t fall in. Would you kiss him if he fell in?”

“Get out of here! Not in a million years!”

“Look, he’s got them in the sieve.”

The girls run back down the stairs to watch as Peter drags himself out of the opening in the foundation of the outhouse. His face looks as though it has been squeezed into an ugly lump. His breath whooshes out of his chest, followed by several desperate in-breaths of fresh air.

Miss Jannutin’s dentures lie in some fecal matter in the sieve. To Ulyssa they look like an unsightly, pink crustacean that is laughing at a private joke.

Miss Jannutin shrieks something in Romansch.

“Please, don’t look,” Peter tells the girls. “She’s embarrassed.”

Miss Jannutin snatches the sieve and disappears with it into the house.

“Do you think she’ll boil them in a pan?” Maria Teresa asks.

Ulyssa shudders. “I haven’t a clue.” She can’t imagine how Miss Jannutin’s teeth will ever find their way back into the poor woman’s mouth.

“Let’s go tell our mothers,” Maria Teresa says.

“Just as long as I don’t have to do the talking,” Ulyssa tells her.

They run up the stairs once more.

“So, what’s the scoop?” Ulyssa’s mother says as soon as they are seated at the table.

Ulyssa is too weak to answer. She does not like the squirming sensation in the pit of her stomach.

Maria Teresa looks at the mound of left-over spaghetti on her plate, wrinkling her nose in disgust. “Peter managed to fish them out,” she volunteers, “with the spaghetti sieve.”

“You mean our very own spaghetti sieve?” Ulyssa mother says. “The one we’ve been using all this time? Ugh!”

“I bet you five francs, those teeth were clamped down on a piece of bratwurst, too,” Aunt Rosina says.

“To swallow, or to be swallowed up – that’s the question,” Aunt Mina chortles, pouring the last few drops of wine into her glass. “I wonder how on earth Miss Jannutin managed to lose her teeth down there.”

Ulyssa watches her mother and aunts eating dinner. Suddenly, she envisions their teeth falling out of their mouths and onto their plates of spaghetti. They grin ghoulishly, their heads now skulls that continue to talk, continue to eat. It’s a horrifying vision. Ulyssa has to shake her head to get rid of it

“What’s the matter, Squirrel Cheeks?” her mother says. “Aren’t you feeling well?”

“I bet you’re imagining what I’m imagining,” Aunt Mina chuckles, bringing Ulyssa back to reality, “that Miss Jannutin must have looked down into the abyss, saw something she thought was especially savory, drooled and, plunk, out came her teeth!”

Ulyssa giggles hysterically. Soon everyone else is giggling, too.

“I wonder what really happened,” Aunt Rosina says.

“I bet when it came time for Miss Jannutin to take out her teeth last night, she put them in her chamber pot by mistake,” Ulyssa’s mother says. “Then, in the morning, when she emptied it, out went her teeth, along with her turd.”

“And the rest,” Aunt Mina says, “is history.”

Ulyssa’s mother fingers the pearl necklace she usually reserves for festive occasions. “Should such a misfortune ever befall me, please, don’t lower me down by a rope, head first into the abyss, to retrieve my pearly whites from all that you-know-what. I would rather die than suffer that fate.”

They begin to laugh all over again.

A great thaw is underway. Elephant Mountain seems to be glistening. Ulyssa lights a small candle among the offering bowls on Green Tara’s shrine. “Homage to Tara, the Swift One, who liberates us from all fears,” she intones rhythmically. So much to do, so little time. Nearly

all the water in the offering bowls has evaporated while I've been away, she thinks.

From the shrine room under the eaves she listens to the drip, drip, drip of melting icicles on the gravel bed below. Muffled and far away, the sound transports her four decades back into the past, to the grandfather clock in her father's bedroom. The pendulum had swung back and forth, marking time that her father had ceased to be part of. He was laid out on the bed in preparation for his funeral. His gaunt face, yellowed by jaundice, resembled the color of the spring sunshine that glinted on the brass disk of the pendulum.

On the day of her father's funeral, Ulyssa had felt disembodied, aware only of the warmth of Aunt Rosina's arms around her shoulders. "All those who love us, we must one day leave behind," her aunt had said.

"And those whom we have loved, we must one day leave behind," Ulyssa replied. "But just the same, it hurts to say goodbye."

"Your father was much too young to have died," she heard Aunt Mina say. Ulyssa felt as though her chest was going to heave, that at any moment it might give rise to a sob so great she would be carried off as on a tidal wave.

Later, much later, her Aunt Mina would say, "You know, both Giovanni Segantini and your father died of stomach-related illnesses. Oddly enough, they were both forty-one, too."

Ulyssa remembered hearing the church bells in the village. Suddenly, she was lifted up into the spring sunshine where she floated above the funeral procession, looking down from a great height at the villagers dressed in black as they followed behind the horse-drawn carriage that transported her father's casket. It all seemed to take place without her, somehow.

"We do survive such hurts," Aunt Rosina said, bringing Ulyssa back down to earth, back into her body, so she could feel herself walking once again with measured steps beside her aunt. She looked down at her feet in the black suede shoes with the brass buckles, a gift she had received from her father only weeks before.

Death amidst so much sunshine – how strange, Ulyssa thought. The sound of icicles dripping from every roof along the street was amplified tenfold. The roofs seemed to be crying tears on her behalf, because she herself could not shed any tears.

"We continue to go on living, regardless of death," Aunt Rosina had said, trying to console Ulyssa after a long illness of her own. "Just to prove my point," she had told Ulyssa's mother, "I'm going to appear to you after I'm dead."

"Oh, please don't do that. You'd frighten me to death!" Ulyssa's mother had told her. "I don't like ghosts. Sometimes, even memories

are like ghosts. They come to haunt you. I want to think of what is past as dead and buried. Why drag it out into the light of day?"

"But the past, in fact, gives rise to the future," Ulyssa wants to argue as she lights a stick of incense and glances out the shrine room window.

"The past gives rise to the future, the future gives rise to the past," Ulyssa can hear Aunt Mina's whisper across the chasm of time, on that memorable trip to Graubünden. "Giovanni Segantini's *Triptych of Nature* shows us that time is a beginningless round of birth and death."

"Arising, abiding, and passing away," Ulyssa hears her mother intone. "For the most part, I hope life will consist of abiding."

"We are here to exist, and to firmly endure," Aunt Rosina says, "like the sun and the mountains and the clear blue sky."

Ulyssa's gaze has come to rest on the postage stamp on Green Tara's shrine. There she is, Aunt Rosina, the shepherdess, making an impromptu appearance in the painting by Giovanni Segantini. She is at one with the rarefied, cool air of Graubünden. Her feet are firmly planted on alpine soil, and behind her head is a chiseled range of snow-capped peaks. "And thus we have come full circle," she seems to say.

"You mean, like the sun, like the mountains, like the clear blue sky over Savognin?" Ulyssa asks.

Aunt Rosina nods. Always the trail blazer, with walking stick in hand, she has gone on ahead, up the mountain path, above which two crows, like enigmatic squiggles of a calligrapher's brush, flap their wings in the endlessly blue expanse.

Aunt Rosina seems to have taken a breather. She looks back over the valleys whence she has come. "I may have gone ahead," her forget-me-not blue presence conveys to Ulyssa, "but soon you will catch up to me."

Some day, Ulyssa imagines, she will take hold of Aunt Rosina's hand, and together they will walk along the steep, rough trail, clamber up the rubble and the scree, past the ridge of moraine and higher still, where they will reach those lofty, dizzying heights where nothing can come between them and the ethereal, blue vault.

HERBERT MEIER was born in 1928 in Solothurn, Switzerland. He studied literature and history in Basle, Vienna, Paris and Fribourg. He also trained as an actor and dramaturge. Since 1955 he has lived as a freelance writer in Zürich. In 1986 he was writer in residence at the University of Southern California. He is perhaps the outstanding representative of the generation of Swiss writers that followed Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

MICHAEL BULLOCK translated Meier's play, *Mythenspiel*, for a Swiss Government publication celebrating the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the *Eidgenossenschaft*. He has translated over 200 books from the French, Italian and German.

## Physicists Don't Bark

Herbert Meier

[Translated by Michael Bullock]

AT THAT TIME little or nothing was known about the magnetosphere that circulates around the earth. But one man, Rudolf E. Nau, a physicist, still young and an inveterate loner, had made up his mind to clarify the whole matter by the end of his life. He couldn't stand anything, in science or in life, that was to be considered merely probable. He wanted certainty; he scoffed at the improbable.

During the day he occupied a leading position at the Institute of Theoretical Physics. He worked in the new block of the University that had been built on the unoccupied hillside outside the city. The windows had been set immovably in the outer walls. They could not be opened and from outside they were blind. They mirrored sunsets that hardly anyone inside noticed. Nau valued such things.

The physicist toiled deep into the night, up in his garret in the Herrengasse, at his telematic passion. He buried himself in data and formulae, in new configurations and deductions which he conjured up from around the globe. He was in the habit of going to bed at about one, and skimming through the sporting section of the newspaper until his usual strong sleeping tablet closed his eyes.

But this untroubled alternation of day and night was suddenly disturbed. Several people had noticed Nau was growing visibly more taciturn. Whereas in the past he had freely discussed his activities, he now confined himself to the most commonplace utterances like good morning and the obligatory please and thank you. He limited the exchange of scientific information to scribbled notes. Some believed him to be ex-

cessively preoccupied with new investigations. Others thought he was suffering from depression. That there had been a death in the family, a break with a lover or a friend.

And then one morning a sound not normally employed to express human feelings startled the Institute. Nau had presented a new series of experiments to a Docent and had been severely reproved by the latter. The Docent had uttered no more than five words: "That simply can't be proved." Nau stared into space in confusion, seeing nothing but a gray void. Then he barked. He barked three times, to the horror of those present. Yapping would have been the best word for it, since the sounds came out in a furious staccato.

Nau is barking, people said in the canteen at noon. He barks like the little French bulldog, commented a Senior Assistant. He had been an earwitness to this barking and possessed some knowledge of dogs. The striking things about this small dog were its bat ears, he said.

Bat ears! exulted Rina, the Docent's secretary. She had always wanted to touch a bat's ears. Well, joked the Assistant, if Nau goes on barking like that perhaps he'll grow bat's ears.

At that moment Nau came over to the table, greeted everyone and sat down. Everyone quietly spooned up their soup, secretly watching to see if he would bark. The unusual silence confused Nau. He began to talk eagerly about soccer and the unexpected transfer of an expensive but valuable player. People listened to him, but the conversation was labored. They all seemed to be waiting for him to bark. Only Rina, for whom he had a secret affection, seemed to him to have other things on her mind. The fact that the Docent's right hand was obviously not listening to his impassioned speech humiliated Nau for the second time. He put down his knife and fork, and walked to the door, leaving quite a large slice of meat on his plate. And then it happened. In the wide-open door he turned around and barked three times. His bark drowned all other sounds. For a second there was dead silence. Then the Docent, who was eating alone at a separate table, stood up and yelled: Get that dog out of here! He was quite right, of course. Because dogs were not allowed inside the University. He obviously hadn't noticed it was Nau who had barked.

"I'm leaving!" Nau shouted back.

Dejected over what had just happened, he went outside. He walked diagonally across the freshly planted area of grass to the hillside where all kinds of dog lovers congregated. There were driftblocks lying at the side of the path. Nau sat down on one, clasped his knees, and leaned back. He longed to vanish from the face of the earth.

The worst thing was that Nau couldn't help barking at night too. His barking penetrated the walls of the houses in the Herrengasse. Night after night he woke the inhabitants from their sleep. There were quarrels between dog-owners. They all swore at each other, claiming that some-

one else's dog had disturbed the peace. Police officers recorded the barking of the local dogs on tape but the source of the disturbance was not among them. The report stated that it must have been an alien bark.

On one occasion, it was getting on toward one o'clock. After a violent bark that had shaken him from head to foot, Nau noticed a lot of excitement outside. A radio patrol had turned into the street and was scattering the people. After a while his doorbell rang. Two officers asked politely if they could come in. It was just a routine enquiry. They were looking for a dog that was disturbing the sleep of people in the Herrengasse. Nau replied that he didn't have a dog.

"Then what was barking in your apartment?"

Nau maintained an embarrassed silence.

"It wasn't you yourself, surely?"

"Yes, it was me," admitted Nau.

"Then show us."

"I can't do it to order."

"Then do it voluntarily."

"Not voluntarily either."

"When, then?" asked the officers.

"Involuntarily. It comes involuntarily."

The officers said: "Call us when you feel it coming on." And they stamped loudly down the spiral staircase.

Nau knew that everyone now looked upon him as a bit of a nutcase. Moreover he no longer felt at home in the Herrengasse. Through the open window he had heard the ironmonger saying that the barking dog in the building had turned out to be called Dr. Nau. He felt compelled to leave, but where could he go? They wouldn't put up with him in any apartment house. Most rental contracts forbid dogs on the premises.

The fact that Nau uttered canine noises in the Physics Institute every now and then no longer attracted much attention. As soon as a bark got underway, he stuffed a piece of cloth in his mouth – his barking cloth, which he always had with him. A bark like the one that had shaken him from head to foot that night only came over him one more time, but that was in the presence of Rina, the Docent's secretary, and he regarded it as a real disaster. But she felt sorry for him and slapped him hard on the back, as if he merely had something stuck in his throat. And would you believe it, this feminine ruse worked wonders. And he at last made up his mind to invite Rina out to dinner.

So they were sitting in the warm wood-paneled room at the inn, drinking a white wine from the banks of Lake Geneva and eating salmon hors d'oeuvres. For the first time, Nau noticed how green the woman's eyes were. He said to himself: It's now or never. He would thank her again for the curative slap on the back and then raise his glass and confess that he loved her more than anything in the world. So he raised his glass and ... Then the vocal cords in his throat and mouth contract-

ed. He swallowed repeatedly, twisting his head from side to side. His hand began to tremble; he spilled his wine and said:

“I have to bark.”

“Please don’t,” said Rina.

But he went red in the face. And he barked loudly three times. The guests looked up from their plates in alarm. Nau wiped his mouth with his barking cloth and mopped up the wine he had spilled. Rina smiled to herself in embarrassment. The waiter passed and glanced reproachfully under the table.

Nau asked emphatically: “The bill please.”

The waiter cleared away the salmon plate and asked, somewhat surprised, if he was not to serve the chopped lamb.

“No, we’re leaving,” said Nau. “We’re not feeling well.”

Outside under the old lantern on the housefront, Rina looked long into the eyes of the unhappy man. Nau, abashed by her gaze, ran as fast as he could around the next corner. There he barked and wept bitterly. As so often after he had barked, nothing came to him but his tears. He tried to think of something to say to Rina. Not a syllable occurred to him.

Someone must have informed the authorities about this barking. He guessed it was the Chief Assistant. For some time he had been dancing attendance on Rina for everyone to see. She had not concealed her growing affection for Nau. Thus Nau was doubly in the Chief Assistant’s way: as the object of the Docent’s secretary’s affections, and as a man high up on the ladder. In any case, one morning Nau was called into the Chancellor’s office.

“Nau, I hear you bark from time to time.”

“Yes, Chancellor.”

“But we can’t have that.”

“I know, Chancellor.”

“You must have it removed.”

“Removed? How?”

“Surgically.”

“Can that be done?”

“It can. I’ve made enquiries.”

Nau stared into space and said nothing.

“Have the operation,” insisted the Chancellor. “Otherwise I shall have to let you go. Physicists don’t bark.”

Sunk in gloomy thoughts after hearing this decree, Nau walked along the gravel path leading up to the tall old oak. He uttered a quick, despairing bark. A flock of crows flew cawing from the top of the oak overhead. He had sat down on the wooden bench against its trunk and was lost in despondent thought. No, he wouldn’t submit to a surgical operation on his brain. If a knife working on one of his nerves were to slip he might lose his memory. No, I’d rather kill myself, he thought,



even dogs don't bark in the grave and a man certainly wouldn't. The midday sun passed over his face, warming his cheek, and he fell asleep. And all his fears were submerged in sleep.

Then a wild yelping broke out behind him. Out of low huts, at the end of chains, dogs leapt out into a clearing. They snarled at this big dog that walked on two legs, a gigantic wolfhound. "Now or never," Nau said to himself and leapt into the ring. Then the wolfhound struck out at the physicist with his walking stick. The physicist dodged the blows, picked up a large stone and hurled it into the dog's jaws. In agonizing pain, the victim dove into a thorn hedge and disappeared. Nau was about to give vent to a yelp of satisfaction when he heard a gentle whisper in his ear.

"Don't bark, Rudi."

And he obeyed. When he woke up he flailed his arms about and found himself looking into a woman's eyes. They glowed with an underwater gleam that lit up sea-green depths. He had never before plunged so deeply into a face. And he recognized the face. Rina's face.

From that moment on, Nau was cured of his barking. And he gradually began – in science as in life – to respect the improbable.

EVELINE HASLER has won several major literary prizes. Many of her books, among them the better-known novels *Die Wachsflyegelfrau* and *Die Vogelmacherin*, have been translated into other languages. She studied psychology and history in Fribourg and Paris and currently resides in the Ticino, the Italian part of Switzerland, where she writes for adults and children. Chapters 1, 5 & 8 of *Aline and the Invention of Love* appear by permission of Verlag Nagel & Kimche AG of Zürich, the original publishers of *Aline und die Erfindung der Liebe*, 2000.

MARGRITH SCHRANER is the Associate Editor of *The New Orphic Review* and In-house Editor of New Orphic Publishers. See page 9.

## **Aline and the Invention of Love**

Eveline Hasler

[Translated by Margrith Schraner]

### **Chapter One**

One morning, toward the end of his childhood, Luca discovered in his mountain village, at 1100 meters above sea level, a stranded ship.

Alongside the ship's rail and behind the portholes he thought he could see some foreign-looking faces, and in the belly of the steamer he fancied a labyrinth of corridors, with doors leading to rooms and lounges, an entire city in fact.

That very same day he shared his discovery with his friend Paolo, older than him by ten years. The latter grabbed the young boy by the shoulders and shook him. "Luca, have you been dreaming all this time? It has always been there, the *palazzo* named La Barca! Don't you know I've been giving Italian lessons to the new owner, who has been living there for two or three years now?"

"I'm rather short for my age, I haven't been able to see over the high wall. Only recently have I grown," Luca tried to explain, but Paolo waved him off.

"It probably isn't a matter of height. Our field of vision suddenly expands; it's much like growing up, it happens in fits and starts. How old are you now?"

"Thirteen."

The wall next to the stairs leading steeply past the church to the houses further up the slope had a few rocks missing, so Luca's feet

could catch hold in the gaps. He climbed up to the top and, shielded by the branches of the chestnut tree, looked in the direction of the Barca.

There, on the patio surrounding the square tower, stood a young woman. Shielding her eyes with one hand to protect them from the glinting sunshine, she gazed down into the valley. The wind caused the back of her bright, sleeveless linen dress to billow out like a sail and her dark, shoulder-length hair to flutter in the breeze. Her shoulders were softly rounded and sun-tanned.

Even during the summer, it was customary for women in the mountain village to wear clothing that covered them in a light wool material, mostly in shades of brown or lilac. There were practical reasons for this; it protected them while they were working in the fields, and it made them appear less attractive. Their husbands were away for months at a time and apparently no one would desire them in such apparel.



Aline Rosenbaum was the name of the new proprietress of the Barca. Later on, when she started writing, she would be remembered by her pseudonym, Aline Valangin. In the village, the new owners were referred to as Sciori, probably a variation derived from the Ticino dialect, of the term Signori.

Aline Rosenbaum had discovered the real estate advertisement for the property in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*; the small sketch of the little manor house had piqued her interest. Together with her husband, a successful Jewish lawyer, she had for some time envisioned such a villa as a possible place to retreat. On the following Saturday, they set out by car on the dusty road across the Gotthard, following the endless curves up along the Onsernone, until they reached the second-highest village in the valley. In Comologno, they had parked the car near the first houses. In the narrow street of the village, Aline inquired of a young girl who was leading a goat by a rope: “Where is the *palazzo* they call La Barca?”

“You are standing in front of it, Sciora.” The girl giggled self-consciously.

“Here?” Puzzled, the newcomer looked up at the wall, which was close to ten meters in height, constructed from natural rock, as though to dam up a mountain stream. Tilting back her head, she was able to see the uppermost part of the tower with its metal weather-vane. Later on, she would find out about the history of the Barca from the man who had been instructed by the owner to show them the building and its surroundings. A young man from Comologno, of the Remonda family, had made his fortune in France during the eighteenth century. At the Paris stock exchange, it was possible to acquire ships which had not arrived in the harbor on time and were considered lost at sea. If, contrary to

expectation, the ship turned up nevertheless, it became, together with its cargo, the property of the buyer at the auction. Remonda's ship, which arrived in the harbor several weeks late, was loaded chock-full of silk fabrics. Remonda sold the fabrics to wealthy ladies, made a fortune and arranged for a *palazzo* to be built in his village in the Savoyan style. He named it La Barca, the boat.

Aline and Vladimir Rosenbaum barely finished looking at the little manor house, when they committed themselves to buying it. Written below the contract was the year, 1929.



The summer when Luca first laid eyes on the Barca was unusually hot. The houses slumbered behind half-closed window shutters that looked like lazy eyelids, the days crept stealthily forward with a deceptive silence. The village appeared empty, as if scrubbed clean. The men were working abroad as bricklayers and plasterers, and the women who were still agile enough moved with their cows and goats up to the alpine huts; the children were needed for various tasks in the spring pastures.

Only Luca, the grammar school student, was on vacation – a word that was pronounced with scorn in the village, as eyes glittered enviously and voices hissed behind his back. *Rich people's boy, idle one*, they said. But now the mockers had cleared out of the village. Luca did not occupy himself with the younger children, who had remained in the valley with their grandparents. He had ample time to roam about, to read and to cocoon himself in fantasies. Fortunately, Paolo, an emigrant originally from Florence, was still around, but in the company of the younger boy he acted reserved: he needed to spend a lot of time by himself, he said, he was busy writing a book.

“What are you writing about, Paolo?”

“About my experiences with the fascists and about the imprisonment of my brother, Ernesto.”

Paolo Rossi had fought against the rise of fascism in Italy, and had eventually been forced to leave the country with his mother. Like most of those pursued by the fascists, they had arrived in Zürich and had subsequently found asylum in Comologno, through the mediation of Rosenbaum. In the village, the emigrants were admired, if only because of the pronounced softness of their language. Luca, accustomed to the local dialect, was also enchanted by the magic of the Tuscan inflection. In the granite rock environs of the Onsernone valley, the indigenous dialect tended to have a metallic, stunted sound that lacked the more melodious end syllables of the written language.

It was this peculiarity of the language that allowed Paolo, the only one from the village, to gain access to the Barca. Language served as a key to a closed-in world.

“It’s a house resembling an ark,” Paolo had described it. “A ship with a labyrinth of corridors, chambers and saloons, inhabited by people who have received refuge here from the flood.”

“The flood? What flood?” Luca had asked, amazed.

“The one that is flooding the North and the South simultaneously – Germany and Italy, where fascism now reigns.

“Were you really put in prison?”

“Many times, but only for short periods. My brother Ernesto, on the other hand, received a sentence of twenty years because of some articles that appeared in anti-fascist newspapers.”

“Tell me more,” Luca urged him.

But the lips of the older one remained sealed. He was, after all, writing it all down, as Luca could plainly see.

Paolo Rossi was seated on a small stone wall below the church, in the last rays of evening sunshine; on his knees were some loose sheets of paper covered by pencil writing.

“I am writing it all down, because language has a memory,” he muttered, his gaze fixed on the sheets of paper.



Luca spent the long summer, like all the other summers of his childhood, at his father’s house. His mother had died, his father worked as a government official in Locarno, returning only occasionally on weekends. His great-aunt Serafina, having remained single, looked after the household. His great-aunt had lived through some hard times and was quite taciturn. Luca, left to his own devices, would spend evenings up on one of the wooden galleries – called *lobbia*, in the Onsernone – where his ancestors had once dried ribbons for straw hats, prior to the competition that came from abroad, which made this enterprise seem unprofitable. There he would sketch pictures of his future. These pictures became suffused with the colors of twilight encroaching from the forested ravine. The pictures resembled out-of-focus, sepia-colored photographs: Luca, grown up, studying languages at a university. Luca at the editor’s desk of a newspaper office. Luca in Florence where, having taken the precautionary measure of leading the fascists away in handcuffs, he became adept at conversing in the Language of Dante, just like Paolo Rossi. Later on, there appeared before his inner eye the saloon of the *Barca*, which he had in reality never set eyes upon. He conjured it up magnificently, to look like one of the lounges of the *Titanic*. Slipping into Rossi’s role, he initiated the beautiful Signora into the secrets of the language, while his feet detected the vibration of the ship’s motors below deck, and the lampshades of colored glass, together with the figurines in the display cases, jingled softly.

A trembling, unstable world.

But the woman, around whom he spun his web of sentences, listened to him with rapt attention.



“The Sciora, she is often alone.”

These words were spoken by Violetta in the cavernous interior of her general store, which resembled an enormous edible mussel. She was handing a pound of rice across the counter. The woman who received the paper bag noticed a cunning smile above Violetta’s pointed chin.

“Her? Alone?” was her reply. “On the contrary, ever since living at the *palazzo*, she has been receiving a constant stream of visitors: emigrants, artists, even a Chinese scholar...”

Violetta pocketed the money with a faintly acerbic smile. “Yes, indeed, she is performing many virtuous actions. It is said that the Sciora of the Barca shares her food, as well as her bed, with the emigrants...” She let out a half-suppressed giggle.

Spotting the adolescent Luca among the waiting customers, she changed the subject.



The young woman, who appeared now and again among the box-trees and rose bushes in the garden of the Barca, could be seen stroking her aching back. Her efforts had paid off: the garden beds, which had run wild only a couple of years before, were well cared for, the display of summer flowers and rose blossoms were at the peak of perfection. She reached for her garden shears and snipped off a wild shoot here and there. She did not notice the observer up in the boughs of the chestnut tree.

But just the same, as often happened while she worked in the garden, she had the impression that someone was observing her from the upper floor of the *palazzo*, where, behind half-closed shutters, the Terza woman occupied a tenebrous domain. Upon acquisition of the little manor house, she had, in a manner of speaking, taken possession of the Terza woman as well. Her friends were of the opinion that there was no need to adhere to the old grandfather clause to let the old woman stay on, but this did not agree with Aline’s sense of justice: the old maid who had been employed as a servant for five decades would simply remain part of the inventory, *basta*, and that was that.

The previous owner, an impoverished descendant of the original lord and master of the house – and a misanthrope as well – had sequestered himself in the house for some twenty years. He had let the shrubs grow up around the windows, and in the dining room, he had kept a

cow. Everyone in the village knew the tale. The Terza woman herself had told the Sciora how she had had to use a hatchet to free the walls and the floor from encrustations of manure.

The fact that in the eyes of the previous owner the Terza woman was more than a simple servant was something the Sciora had heard about from other people in the village. The Terza woman, they told her, had been allowed to wield the scepter like a *padrona*. Because the owner had been unable to pay her wages, he had promised to sign the property over to her upon his death. After the *padrone* had died, the Terza woman searched every nook and cranny for his last will and testament, but to no avail. Meanwhile, the man's nieces and nephews elbowed their way in, in hopes of getting their share of the inheritance.

At last, in one of the drawers, a scrap of paper with the *padrone's* handwriting was found. It declared that the Terza woman was to receive an apartment in the *palazzo* until the time of her death. The young relatives, who eventually ended up with the inheritance, had no use for the house and sold it to the Rosenbaum couple.

The Terza woman would have much preferred to live in the *palazzo* all by herself. The day on which Aline Rosenbaum occupied the Barca, the old woman had said to her: "Ah, so you have chosen the room with the painted red roses as your bedroom? It is the very room in which the previous six *padroni* have died!"

Aline was unperturbed by the comment. "A chamber suitable for dying in is most certainly a room suitable for resting in," she answered, laughing.

The Terza woman resorted to other methods to make the Sciora dislike the house: In the morning, Aline would find newly flowering branches snapped off. And upstairs, above the Sciora's bedroom, where the Terza woman had her realm, one often heard butter being churned at night. During the summer, she would even occasionally store her smelly cheese in the butter urn.

The Terza woman made no secret of the fact that she was waiting for the time when the new occupant would be carried feet first out of the room with the painted red roses. The servant did not take her own advanced years into consideration. On Sundays, dressed in the old *padrona's* taffeta clothing, she would go to church where she was greeted quite respectfully: she was a tall, robust figure. Beneath her fringed headscarf rose an arrogant chin. Nothing seemed to escape her. Two cunning elephant eyes gazed out from deep eye sockets.

Eventually, however, the Terza woman must have detected shared interests which, in turn, must have placated her. The manner in which the Sciora attended to the house and garden demonstrated her ardent love for the Barca, she had to admit.



Footsteps were quickly approaching from the village road and startled the observer up in the chestnut tree. Looking down, Luca discovered Rossi turning the corner, about to climb the flight of steps. From a bird's eye view, Rossi appeared to be short and squat, with fidgety legs sticking out. Coming up the stairs, he quickened his pace. Something was urging him on, whipping him up the hill. Finally, he came to a stop in front of the garden gate of the *palazzo*.

Luca waited to hear the sound of the doorbell. Instead, he heard the sound of grating metal, a key being turned and the old lock giving way with a creak.

The Sciora, he assumed, must have entered the house in the meantime, for he heard her strike a few piano chords, as if attempting to attune herself to the music of Rossi's language. The little tune that came skipping toward Luca was abruptly broken off. Now Rossi must be with her. The lesson can begin, thought Luca. The ensuing silence imparted to him a feeling of exclusion that pained him.

He resolved to grow up as quickly as possible so he could put the feeling behind him. Growing up, however, had something to do with the passage of time, and time was passing only very slowly that summer. Infuriatingly so.

He climbed down from the stonewall and prowled around the graveyard below the church. Two small boys who had remained in the village with their grandparents were lugging an iron watering can around and spilling water on the flowers of the graves. Catching sight of him, they joyously beckoned: "Come, play with us!" They were throwing pebbles at the birds below the churchyard. Luca obliged them. His pebbles missed the intended targets and pattered like rain on the dense foliage of the ashtrees.

An hour later, he sauntered back to his observation post. Paolo Rossi was just now coming along the garden path and approaching the gate. Luca, rushing toward him, posed the question: "What did she study today?"

"Conjugations," grumbled Rossi. But then, catching sight of the youngster's inquisitive look, he added, "Grammar is necessary, too."

Rossi turned the weighty key in the lock, as if to lock out of the garden of paradise all those who were unauthorized to enter it.

"Is she alone?" Luca asked.

A hint of disapproval overshadowed Rossi's face. "Her husband is only able to come on weekends, he has a successful law practice, a world full of telephones, legal documents and secretaries."

"Does he earn a lot of money, Mr. Rosenbaum?"

"Sacks of money!" chuckled Rossi.



At the house, the piano playing had started again. “Fugues by Bach,” said Rossi.

As a young girl, the Signora had prepared herself for a career as a pianist. But following an accident, her thumb had become rigid and she had had to give up on her plans.

## Chapter Five

And thus, life, threatened by the menace of war, seemed more intense in Zürich than elsewhere.

“Steady! We’re still alive,” Toller would write during the twenties, the thunder of canons still echoing in his ears.

Rosenbaum arrived in Zürich at the end of March, 1917, in time for the opening of the Dada gallery; since Stehlin had begun seeing Dr. Jung, Aline no longer needed to feel apprehensive about the two rivals running into each other.

Displayed on the gallery walls were modern art works by Kandinsky, Klee, Segal and others, in addition to tapestries of large proportions by Sophie Taeuber, based on Arp’s designs. Even when still a student without money, Rosenbaum was excited about this new direction in the arts. He agreed with Corray, the curator of the exhibition and the director of the school: “What is hanging on the walls of the Dada gallery, in the building that houses the Sprüngli confectioner’s shop at Bahnhofstrasse 19, no longer functions as an imitation of reality. It *is* reality!”

At the opening of the show, Arp read for the first time from his collection of poems entitled *Die Wolkenpumpe*:

*An allen enden  
stehen jetzt dadaisten auf (–)  
sie ahmen den zungenschlag und das zungenzucken  
der wolkenpumpe nach  
ein fürchterliches mene tekel zeppelin wird ihnen  
bereitet werden...*

Dancers from the Laban School moved to the amplified music of Chants de nègres. Taeuber, wearing a shamanic costume, danced to the sound poem, *Die Karawane*, by Ball. Since receiving the reprimand that teachers in Zürich were not allowed to appear on stage, she hid behind a pseudonym and a terrifying mask by Janco. After her performance, Ball, wearing an unwieldy cardboard costume, let himself be carried onto the stage. One striking detail was the huge, stiff collar of

his coat which, by lifting and lowering his arms, could be made to move like wings.

He was going to read some sound poems without words! Because language had been ruined by journalists, it was now a matter of pushing on ahead to the inner alchemy of communication!

The listeners respond ecstatically to the poem, *Seepferdchen und Flugfische*, rising from their chairs and moving like fish to the sounds of the syllables.

*tressli bessli nebogen leila  
flutsch kata  
ballubasch  
zack hitti zopp*

And then, once more, Sophie Taeuber. In this dance she embodied a goldfish, who in captivity was losing its gold scales. Swimming back and forth in an aquarium, she bumped desperately into the glass walls. An uneasy silence ensued: many of the spectators were reminded, in those oppressive times, of their own lives that were in peril.

Years later, Hugo Ball wrote of that particular evening: *Oh, the days when Hans Arp read his poems, his ‘Wolkenpumpe’ for the first time, and when Sophie Taeuber danced among the paintings of Kandinsky! Oh, those were enchanted evenings – when, on a daily basis, innovative ideas followed each other helter-skelter...*



Rosenbaum, the part-time student without money, stands, excited, facing Arp’s compositions. Later on, he will insist that he was the first one to spend his money on one of those novel creations.

“How much do you want for that, Arp?”

“Five Swiss francs.”

“I will give you a hundred.”

Rosenbaum does not have the hundred francs, but the artist from the Alsace feels understood; he asks Rosenbaum and Aline to join him at a café after the performance.

To the *Terrasse* or the *Odeon*?

To the *Odeon*, they decide, and together they get ready to go. Sophie has changed her clothes in the improvised dressing-room and is wearing a mauve spring costume she has tailored herself. On the bridge, in the breeze off the lake, she clasps the jacket over her breasts. The daringly short skirt allows a view of her legs below knee level.

Beneath the café’s chandeliers, on a marble-topped oval table, the pearl-embroidered purse belonging to Emmy Hennings. Aline tests the

firmness and luster of the little pearls with her fingertips, then admires the embroidered letter *E*. “Who still has time these days for such pains-taking work?”

“Who? Sophie, of course!” Hennings laughs.

“A purse like the ones commonly carried by ladies who work the street,” Rosenbaum remarks with unabashed directness.

“Oh, but I did, in fact, work the streets in Cologne,” Emmy exclaims. She resembles an angel with her dark-blond pageboy haircut and her lips painted in a heart shape. Everyone is laughing. They take it to be mere pleantry.

Hugo Ball, however, puts his arm around her shoulders. “As a matter of fact, Emmy would have died of starvation otherwise!”

Philosophizing now, he defends the ethics of the demi-monde. Rosenbaum counters with a quick, verbal comeback, which ends in laughter all around the table. People stare at them from the adjacent table, attempting to classify the six lively individuals: Arp, whose elegant suit reminds one of a banker’s, were it not for the clown-like face. Next to him, the Tauber woman, an irritating mixture of homeliness and extravagance. Rosenbaum, the brilliant speaker, his eyes beneath the elongated lids as though lying in wait for something. His girlfriend, Aline Ducommun, a striking beauty: tall, an aristocratic woman with dark, expressive eyes. And last, Ball and Emmy Hennings: a monk next to a honky-tonk princess.

They give the impression of being carefree, as if there were no war! Those at the neighboring table regard them with misgivings, shaking their heads, until someone points out: “They are emigrants. That young woman, her name is Hennings. I’ve heard her sing at the Spiegelgasse, her chalk-white face a death mask, her lips all painted up. Her song sent shivers through me, for its melody was based on the old March of Des-sau:

*And thus we die, and thus we die,  
and thus we die each day,  
because it is so comfortable to die!”*

The *Odeon*, meanwhile, has filled up with café visitors; in the din of voices are only a few who speak the indigenous dialect. Those who have been displaced by the war in Europe arrange to meet each other here. New ideas are being hatched at the *Odeon*, plans are being made. In the venue, at the back, a scrawny man sits writing at a small table. Seldom does he look up from his sheets of paper; the thick lenses of his glasses are gleaming in the light of the chandeliers. Ball nods in the direction of the short-sighted writer without being noticed by him. Eventually, he gets up and exchanges a few words with the writer. “That was James Joyce,” he later tells his friends, “an author from

whom we can expect much.” Years later, at the Baumwollhof, Aline will meet the Irishman again, and will praise his ingenious sense of humor; he will be among the guests at the Rosenbaum’s cultural evenings, along with Joseph Roth, Robert Musil, Elias Canetti.

The three pairs of friends get together that evening, but in the spirit of conversation and in the fireworks of new ideas resonates an existential fear. Sophie, the least talkative among them, is the only one with a regular income.

“Arp is hopefully supporting you by praying that you will keep up your strength to work,” Ball jokes; they all know that he sticks it out by starving himself. Sophie laughs, amused; she never gives voice to the worries that haunt her, too, at times. Sophie, Emmy and Aline. Even in the context of the *Odeon*, they attract attention: Self-confident women, not bound by convention. They have their own lives and are therefore in no hurry to tie the knot with their partners. Three modern couples, three completely new manifestations of love. Like all things new, they tend to give rise to insecurities. “Switzerland is a place of refuge for all who are envisioning new patterns,” Ball writes in his notes at the end of the day.



But the evening is still young.

Would they like to go out dancing, Sophie asks. Her sister has organized an evening of dance at the Psychological Club. Aline, Emmy and Arp agree enthusiastically, Rosenbaum and Ball join in only because they do not wish to spoil the fun of the others.

Erika Schlegel is pleased that new guests have arrived. Jung had apparently advocated such evenings for purposes of general relaxation and she, Erika, not wanting to miss the opportunity, had summoned the best dance instructor in the city! A Spaniard. He demonstrated the latest dance steps: the one-step, the foxtrot and, as the crowning event, the tango.

They dance to the sounds of a record player donated by Rockefeller’s daughter. How nice that Max Pfister, a student of architecture and a member of the Psychology Club, has also joined them. Of delicate build, he is also studying dance at the Laban School, with Perrotet. Dance will bring about the transformation of his life; under his new name, Max Terpis, he will later embark on a career and become the choreographer at the Opera House in Berlin.

Rosenbaum dances clumsily and somewhat reluctantly. Across his shoulder, Aline observes how Arp glides across the room with Sophie. They have given themselves up to the rhythm; the pair moves in harmony with a choreography all their own.



“Pasting, sawing, weaving, to subdue the spirit of unrest,” is how Arp describes his and Sophie’s activities in the apartment that they share. When Aline visits, she observes a multitude of objects hanging on the walls and standing about the rooms; but everything has been beautifully arranged by Sophie’s hand. Attached to the wall, colored sashes, behind which Sophie has tucked rare finds: bird feathers, pine cones, dried seed pods from trees. Rocks on shelves, arranged according to color and shape. Cans, painted indigo-blue, containing tubes of paint and brushes. Nets filled with colorful balls of wool. Wooden planks with reels of gold thread, placed in front of a wall painted mignonette-green.

Aline has come with the intention of looking at Sophie’s loom, but after an evening spent at the gallery, it is perhaps Sophie herself who is the reason for the visit. Her silence, her mysterious, unfathomable smile, which the students at the art school refer to as her Mona Lisa smile, are for Aline both attractive and irritating.

Sophie says she is alone, that Arp has not yet returned from one of his exploratory outings.

“But he is standing right here, your Arp!” Aline points to the wooden hat stand in the entrance hall. A long, wooden pole, with a head, well-turned, the contours polished smooth. Just the vigorous wedge of a nose. And an ear, growing exuberantly, cactus-like.

Arp’s ear, Arp’s pear-shaped head.

“That way you can always keep him by your side,” Aline remarks, laughing, and thinks: How on earth had Sophie come up with the joke, to parody the head of her beloved as a hat rack? While, at the same time, she exhibits more than mere reverence toward Arp. Was it not Ball who had, with barely concealed envy, made the observation that the Taeuber woman had taken over every aspect of practical responsibility for that lovable imbecile who thrived on chaos! And with near jealousy, he had recounted the services that she rendered for Arp:

Sophie packs the travel bag for Hans,

Sophie consults the timetable for Hans,

Sophie corresponds with the revenue office on behalf of Hans,

Sophie earns the money for his apartment rent,

Sophie does the laundry, the ironing, the cooking, and all this in addition to her work as a teacher! And worst of all: Sophie has renounced a brilliant career as a dancer!

Aline confronts Sophie with the last of Ball’s complaints. “Me, a dancer? No, I primarily conceive of myself as someone who works in the plastic arts,” Sophie replies, as she shows Aline around the two-room apartment. In the studio shared by the two artists, things are crammed into every available space, but Sophie, in conversation, opens up invisible rooms. Aline responds by attempting to be more open herself, tentatively counters Sophie’s clarity with misgivings, doubts and diffuse plans.

Sophie listens with gentleness, does not pass judgment, allows human beings and objects to have their own secrets.

Weaving, yes, it would indeed prove liberating for Aline. But she, Sophie, has no time to familiarize Aline with the craft; she will, however, provide her with the address of an accomplished Scandinavian woman.

Arp, now back from his outing to the lake, empties his bulging pockets. He tells Sophie about the found treasures as he places them on the table – how the bizarre pieces of wood, the stones and the feathers could be used.

While she is waiting for the tea water to boil, Arp's girlfriend sorts through the found objects, praises most of them as useful, holds the sepia-colored fruit of a magnolia tree with red kernels in her hand for a long time. Arp has installed himself at a table in the adjacent room, he can be heard snipping paper with his scissors.

Would he like some tea? No, he had already stopped for tea in town.

While Sophie pours the tea into the cube-shaped cups she has sculpted and painted herself, Aline notices on the opposite wall a picture with squares and triangles.

"This rhythmical composition, this vividness of color!" she calls out in surprise. "A new Arp?"

"No, the picture is one of mine," Sophie answers. "I would like to work the motif into a weaving, later on."

"You are even more talented than Arp," Aline calls out in an audibly provocative manner; she wants Arp to hear her. "Sophie, why are you so modest? Don't you ever exhibit any work of your own?"

"Modesty? We're finished with that now," Arp calls out from the other room. "Sophie will be having her own exhibition next year in Basel, and the triangle painting will be her masterpiece." No sooner said, and he continues with his scissoring.

Sophie adds: "In fact, it is the intent of the *Werkbund Neues Leben* to transcend, with this exhibition, the duality between art and life. Education toward the development of an aesthetic sense that will inform an entire way of life... I agree fundamentally with these principles. My task as a teacher has led me to ever greater experimentation with textiles, primarily. Of course, since the time of William Morris, none of the applied arts should be considered as inferior."

"Art is no longer elitist, it will be entering into every sphere of life," the voice joins in from the other room.

"Sophie, you have already put that idea into practice. I love the clothes you have designed for yourself, and the unique everyday objects: the hat stand, the cubist teacups," Aline is on the verge of calling out, when she overhears Arp swearing in French.

Sophie jumps up, the wind in the adjacent room has pushed open the window and swept Arp's paper snippets from the table. The artist, in-

furiated just moments earlier, is now staring at the floor, spellbound; he is completely ecstatic about the manner in which chance has arranged his snippets of paper. In harmony with the principle of chance, he will paste them onto a black sheet of paper at once!

He presents it to Sophie. Allows her to congratulate him. Rubs his hands together gleefully, like a child, while he contemplates his collage. Ends up drinking tea with the ladies, after all. Answers in response to Aline's question that yes, his sound poems, too, are created in accordance with the principle of chance. The typesetter, barely able to decipher his handwriting, would usually end up changing the entire text, thus giving the piece its final polish, so to speak. In other words, there was method in randomness, after all, wasn't there?



Later, when she is alone with Sophie, Aline tells her about the group of people who meet to discuss psychology with Jung's substitute, Herbert Oczeret. Apparently Jung, who is frequently absent doing military service because of the war, has put his analysands in the care of the young doctor from Siebenbürgen. Psychoanalysis, for Oczeret, signified a revolution from within, Aline tells Sophie; it was bringing about changes, because it was so liberating – it liberated one's erotic, social and creative powers by helping one get in touch with the self...



The meetings took place at Oczeret's private residence, a generous, bright apartment on the ground floor, at Böcklinstrasse 37. On Wednesdays, the attendees would arrive in large numbers, for it had become fashionable to occupy oneself with one's own psyche. And Oczeret knew how to be captivating. Before long, Oczeret began to diverge from Jung's material. His ideas, having been freshly formulated and tending toward the practical, were documented in his book, *Nervousness as a problem of the modern individual*, published in 1918 by Orell Füssli.

Oczeret's wife, too, was as dedicated to the profession as was her husband; she was an analyst and, like him, had a busy practice. Separated from her previous husband and their four children, she now had two daughters with Oczeret. The couple, by focusing on the problems of those present in the circle, exposed in a humorous fashion the secret desires of the good men and women of Zürich - most of which turned out to be tricky entanglements in the domain of sexuality. One lady of high society, a certain Mrs. Escher, related that often in her dreams she tended to travel. In actual fact, for over two years, she had not ventured

beyond Lake Zürich, because there was a war going on and the borders had been closed.

Interpreting her own dream, she suggested that she most likely had been traveling inwardly, exploring new territory there. The analysts accepted this explanation with utmost glee, although they were inclined to interpret the dream as the bottled-up sexual desires of a woman tied down to a boring marriage.

Aline raised the objection that she considered Mrs. Escher's interpretation to be more realistic. Oczeret then countered by saying that Aline, who no doubt herself had a penchant for digression, was as out of touch and prudish as a governess – in short *someone from Bern!*

The expression, *someone from Bern*, had been dropped many times before, and on this occasion, too, Aline contradicted him. Her own roots were not in the Federation's capital; her ancestors had come from the South of France and from the French part of Switzerland. Oczeret, however, stuck to his point and acted as if he were confronting just precisely such an elderly aunt from the citizenry. Aline eventually joined in the round of laughter. The hearty laugh of the handsome analyst, and his refreshing, easygoing attitude, were contagious: *The strong blond quality of these two individuals exerted a definite influence on others, their extroverted optimism frequently working miracles. All fastidiousness on the mental as well as the sexual plane was laughed off in that manner.*

Afterwards, as they were having their tea, the subject of Jung came up. Mrs. Oczeret hinted that, contrary to what they generally assumed, Jung was not doing military service, but that he had, together with his secretary, retreated to a tower for purposes of dream analysis!

Some of those present had begun to mock Jung's dream analysis. Oczeret regarded his colleague's theories as presumptuous. Jung was probably repressed himself, and would hopefully learn something from collaborating with his attractive secretary!

Aline argued against him once more, stating that Jung would end up making history with his new theories, yes indeed, Oczeret would live to see it with his own eyes! Oczeret, in a tone of mild sarcasm, replied that she, Aline Ducommun, might be considered slightly pretentious – in short, *someone from Bern!*

A marriage, as quickly as possible, Oczeret advised her. Yes, getting married to Rosenbaum, naturally!

Precisely because her family would reject him as a proper candidate, due to him having no money, such a union would help her throw off conventional ties and, in the end, help her find her way back to herself.

Alone with Oczeret during her session of analysis, she stared at him in utter amazement.

Did she not love that man, after all?

Yes, she did love him.



Why, then, was she hesitating?

His lack of decorum was a threat to her.

“Ah,” Oczeret exclaimed, as if he had just caught her unawares, “would you be more specific about that point, please!”

“Well ... I dream occasionally that ‘Ro’ shows up in public without any clothes on! Or, that he spits cherry stones from the balcony onto churchgoers below. Or...”

Oczeret interrupted her with a gesture. Then asked, barely able to conceal a smile: “Is this not, after all, beneficial for someone like you? For someone from Bern?”

“Yes, it might be refreshing,” she conceded, laughing. But sometimes it seemed to her that Rosenbaum did not care one bit about tradition: His way of heading straight toward a goal instilled fear in her.



In defiance of all objections from the family, the couple got married on November 3, 1917. The wedding of the Russian student to the bourgeois daughter was staged without pomp or ceremony. Mary Anne Stehlin and the bride’s father acted as witnesses to the ceremony, while the mother punished the newly-weds with her absence.

## Chapter Eight

A sensuous love: the painter Walter Helbig.

They became acquainted in 1920, when the Rosenbaums spent their first holidays in the Ticino. They were still impecunious at the time and Bryks, a Polish friend of theirs, had advised them of the affordability of Ascona. They would be making the acquaintance of interesting people – artists, mostly. They were able to rent a room from Hermann Hesse’s wife; she lived alone with her three boys, now that the poet had left his family.

There was very little of the sunny south to be enjoyed that Fall, it rained for days on end. At the wharf, the lake was overflowing; to get from one house to the next necessitated the use of boats.

When the sky finally cleared, Bryks invited his friends to a garden party at the Helbigs. The painter, having grown up in Dresden, now worked part of the year in Küsnacht on Lake Zürich. Rosenbaum was immediately taken with Helbig’s paintings, he perceived the expressionist technique and the sensuous, mystical colors as quite innovative. Aline attributed the magical effect of the paintings to the painter him-

self. From the very beginning, there existed between them a certain agreement that did not necessitate the use of words.

He was a man of average height, with delicate, attractive features, taciturn and compassionate. His wife, a valkyrie, considerably larger than he and heavier, endeavored to look after the guest's needs with a tremendous display of food and drink.

In the garden, which Helbig had planted himself, he confided to Aline his preference for flowers with blue blossoms, as he escorted her around the garden beds and herbaceous shrubs. Eventually, he led her to a remote section where, behind a green wall of cherry laurel, hydrangeas blossomed in rare, almost violet hues of blue. She was full of admiration. She, too, had a love of plants and longed very much for a garden. And that color, unbelievable for a flower! Would he be willing to share the secret with her? He smiled. Copper had to be mixed into the soil, so that the blossoms would not prematurely tip over into red. He placed his hand gently on her naked arm.

Suddenly, the shrubbery parted and Helbig's valkyrian wife broke through the boughs. She handed them two umbrellas, for it had started to rain again. In fact, the two had been so absorbed, they hadn't even noticed the drops. Walter Helbig removed his hand from Aline's arm. Under their umbrellas, they followed the large woman back to the covered veranda for coffee and cake.

She is the one in charge of everything, Bryks would comment later on. That painter of hers, he is an aesthete, his passions are easily inflamed. Helbig's wife is a capable woman. Without her he would barely be able to master life's practicalities, and what she lacks in eroticism, she more than makes up for with finances. Even when Helbig was a student painting at the academy, she was supporting him.



Months went by. Only toward spring did Aline finally pay a visit to Helbig's studio in Küsnacht, which she had promised to do in the fall. The painter asked her to be his model. While she was disrobing in his studio, he mixed the paints without raising his eyes.

He worked silently, in a flying hurry. Sketching. Then erasing. Then drawing new outlines. Then applying color in part with a brush, in part with a spatula.

They did not have much time at their disposal. Downstairs in the living room, the spouse was already setting the table for tea.

Not a word was exchanged between them. Clouds of scent permeated the room. From where she was standing, Aline contemplated the blue hyacinths which Helbig was cultivating in tinted glass containers behind the windows.

The work is done. He casts one last scrutinizing glance at his painting and mutters: "Some mystery must always remain."

She starts to put her clothes back on, when all of a sudden he stands beside her and embraces her. She offers no resistance. Their bodies have been desiring each other far too long. Among the paintings placed on easels, they make love in complete silence.

There is very little available space. Downstairs, the table is already set for tea. In spite of the encumbrances, they tumble together beyond space and time, only to find their way back to reality in the living room. Under the wife's stern gaze, Aline silently offers her apologies. The husband, who in Ascona had been described as *molto infiamabile*, is all of a sudden fully present, tells stories, cracks jokes and personally serves the Chinese tea.



They meet seldom enough.

Helbig, a sensuous man, a tender, passionate lover. *He was utterly affectionate, unequivocally propelled by passion, sophisticated in his desires.* In the slim volume of her diaries, Aline reveals that she is opening herself for the first time to the pleasure of the senses. When she caresses the penis of the beloved beneath the bedclothes, she feels slightly wicked. But she senses that the sparkling radiance of their love does not depend on technique. This love moves something deep inside her, has a transformative power.

And so, the morning following a night of lovemaking possesses the freshness of the very first day of the Creation:

*The entire room was filled with joyous commotion. Life! Life! (...) How exquisitely pure and clean is the morning air that gushes through the window, how much I enjoy tasting this air! (...) In essence, an eroticism of breath!*

*And why not? Breath is life and life is eroticism. We are not nearly erotic enough, we do not know how to live life.*



Martin Buber's series of lectures on the subject of marriage and fidelity at the Baumwollhof are the antithesis to the sexual confusion of the times – the mixed salad, as it was called in the Zürich of the twenties.

The Rosenbaums had made the acquaintance of the Jewish philosopher, born in Vienna in 1878, through the mediation of Bryks at *Pelzmayers* in Zürich: the scholar happened to be sitting across from Aline during an evening meal.

The way he articulated his ideas impressed her. Also, the way he emphasized them with the tone of his voice and his dark, expressive

eyes. The Rosenbaums took the risk of inviting him to give a series of lectures. Buber, who was already well-known at the time, agreed. He selected as his topic *The Cooperative Individual*.

They managed to quickly call together twenty friends willing to meet with Buber twice a week. Among them were members of the Psychology Club and Oczeret's former analysands. During that time, Buber stayed with the Rosenbaums at the *Baumwollhof*. Aline maintains that he was a modest guest. Only one thing had offended her a little: When she had sat down to play the piano in the afternoon, the guest had asked her to stop. Apparently, he found it intolerable. Did they not, in the context of social relations, owe each other unflinching honesty!



On the occasion of his first lecture, Buber asked for the same brand of honesty from the marriage partners who attended.

The partners must reveal to each other the "thou," rather than the "I". Always, a relationship is characterized by the presence of an implicit third party. Monogamy was the embodiment of a union at its greatest intensity. Monogamy within marriage superseded the immature individual's instinctual need for constant variety. In short, marital fidelity as the path and the goal!

The ears of Oczeret's former disciples were unaccustomed to this unusual, almost exotic-sounding message. They would listen with interest, even contemplate certain points, but in the back of their minds they would already be juggling the dates for encounters with secondary and tertiary partners.

During the discussion, Carl Jung, who was seated among the listeners, objected to Buber's concept of fidelity. The ideas of the theologian and the depth psychologist refused to be brought into alignment. At the time Buber was preparing his book, *I and Thou*, for publication. Soon afterward, he secured a professorship in Frankfurt and managed to exert an influence despite his controversial theses. Friends of the Rosenbaums asked him to teach a course the following summer in Ascona.

This time, Buber was to speak about Lao Tsu.

The task fell upon Aline Rosenbaum to prepare everything. She traveled to Ascona and found *Monte Verità*, the Mountain of Truth, perfectly suited for Buber's course. But the small cabins of the nature lovers seemed to be in poor shape. The four new owners from Belgium lacked sufficient money for renovations. Consequently, Aline rented a few additional rooms at the *Hotel Semiramis*. On the grounds, now only sparsely populated, a few vegetarians indulged in sunbathing, while others were working, covered simply with loin cloths, cultivating the field.

Buber arrived on the day prior to the start of his course. He appeared pale and under the weather. One of his disciples gently broke the news to Aline that the Master had a boil in a most delicate spot and would be unable to sit, his physician having ordered bed rest.

In the meantime, the course participants had arrived in Ascona. The following morning, when the lecture was to take place, everyone assembled around the lecturer's bed. Half propped up, with his dark, wavy philosopher's beard resting on the bed sheet, Buber spoke about the Chinese wisdom of all-inclusiveness.

The days were hot. One listened while perspiring, hurried down to the lake in the afternoon for a swim. A few individuals fell passionately in love with each other: *Tragedies ensued, married couples wanted to go their separate ways, women were crying, in short, all that wisdom brought to light much foolishness, which was surely how it was all supposed to happen*, Aline writes in one of her recollections.

The participants requested that the course be repeated, and Buber agreed to teach the course the following summer, in Aline's favorite holiday spot – namely in Poveromo, on the Ligurian Coast. Once more, Aline traveled ahead to make preparations. On the morning of the day on which Buber was expected to arrive in the company of his wife and daughter, Aline got stung by a fish in the ocean. This particular fish was greatly feared on the coast. The sting of the three spikes on its back could result in paralysis. The pain was horrendous. Aline staggered out of the water and fell onto the sand. Young people from the village came running and said there was only one remedy for the cramps, namely to drink copious amounts of red wine. A young boy was sent out, and returned with a *fiasco*, a large wine flask with raffia knotted around its wide girth.

The cramping eventually subsided. By that time, Aline was rather tipsy. Because she was barely able to walk, she had to be heaved onto a bicycle and pushed with much laughter to her destination. The last section of the road ended up merging with the beach. The young boy offered to carry the injured woman. Clasping her arms around his neck, she now and then attempted to take a few steps. In this manner they arrived at the small hotel, staggering, laughing uproariously, just as the Bubers were descending from their carriage. The new arrivals witnessed the spectacle with indignation. Aline attempted to explain, but lapsed into mere babble and had to be taken up to her room.

During the days that followed, relations continued to be strained. Mrs. Buber in particular met Aline with an icy demeanor. She began to usurp the task of organizing. *She was setting the tone, and it was harsh.*

Aline was offended by the fact that Buber, in order not to cross his wife, spoke disparagingly, if not untruthfully, about her. The Rosenbaums – Vladimir having arrived in the interim – brought their stay to a premature close.

On the occasion of their last meal together, the village dogs romped around at the guests' feet. Aline, having been schooled by Jung, perceived the duplicity of appearances. The dogs had, in the place of those present, taken it upon themselves to act out the feelings of the guests. Her account of the final meeting with Buber ends thus: *From that time on I thought about him with disgruntlement, or more precisely, I harbored the secret desire to just for once be able to shave off his wonderful disguise of a beard, so that everyone could see who he was in reality.*

Later on, in a letter, Aline would ask forgiveness of Buber: *Because of the change in your attitude toward us, I have inwardly quarreled with you. After Ascona, this should not have happened. I should have understood the change in the context of your situation, the way I understand it now, and should have simply endured it...*

The letter, written in the Fall of 1924, was apparently never sent.

BRUNO WIDLER was born in Frauenfeld, Switzerland in 1953 and moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1978, where he now works as a chef at a major hotel. “The Captive Bears of Bern” comes from a work in progress entitled *My Home is Now a Mystery*.

## The Captive Bears of Bern

Bruno Widler

IRMA AND HER dear friend Philipp, a sculptor who had once been far more than a confidant and sounding board to her, would meet every third month or so at *Der Freundliche Ofen*, located on a less well-trodden street of Zürich.

Over wine and an exquisite, piping hot meal prepared in the proprietor’s brick oven, they would discuss recent events in their lives. Philipp had never married, but had had a series of monogamous relationships that had lasted anywhere from a few months to a few years. Irma, who at one time had been a lover of his – albeit when both of them were considerably younger – now felt only a friendly regard for her childhood beau, whom she had gone to school with in the village of Ottenbach.

Philipp, however, was an incorrigible romantic and enjoyed tormenting himself with feelings of affection for Irma, feelings that were no longer reciprocated in any shape or form, except for the occasional pat on the back of his hand.

The sculptor was never able to fully understand how Irma had been able to leave him for her rather commonplace husband, Karl, an inventor of electronic gadgets at Siemens. Karl was the sort of man who exaggerated his importance by referring to himself as a Design Engineer, but in fact he was little more than a cog in a monstrously large industrial gear.

Intellectually, of course, Philipp could fathom Irma’s desertion. When they were in their mid-twenties, Karl had had a tangible career

ahead of him, and Irma, despite a short-lived flirtation with things bohemian, had been in her heart of hearts a woman who wanted a secure material existence. She was a woman who had wanted her future to be mapped out for her, and Karl had been able to provide that map.

It irritated Philipp to think that he continued to desire Irma. After all, what did such a desire say about him? Did it mean, deep down inside his soul, that he too yearned for the solid, straightforward life of an engineer of security devices? He remembered in his early twenties how he had kneaded Irma's flesh, not unlike the way he would have kneaded a large mound of clay in his studio. Every now and then, the itch to re-acquaint himself with her flesh would make his palms tingle with desire.

The feeling repulsed him, and yet he could not help feeling it.

Today, when Philipp had glimpsed Irma coming down the street toward the restaurant, he had realized she was in an agitated state. Her brows were knitted together, her jaw was set far too rigidly, and there was a preoccupied look in her eyes.

"So, what is troubling you?" he asked her over wine.

"My daughter, Ursi."

"What seems to be the difficulty?"

"Everything," she said cryptically.

"Ah, that means there is a new man in her life, one who is causing you some concern."

"It's worse than that, Philipp. Far worse."

"You mean, she has come out of the closet and now professes to have a woman in her life?" he asked her – not seriously – simply to tease his old flame.

"No, definitely not that. She is quite normal in that regard."

"Then, what seems to be the problem?"

Irma sipped from her wine glass. "As you well know, Karl and I sent her to Canada to learn English two years ago. However, what I didn't explain to you was the fact that she fell in love with her instructor."

"Oh, my, that sounds like a match made in heaven."

"In hell, if you ask me."

"So, how did this affair progress?"

"To its ultimate conclusion, I fear."

"Do you mean to say, their love was consummated?"

"I'm quite sure it was, judging from the way she behaved upon coming back to Switzerland."

"How exactly did she behave?"

"Like a cat that has eaten the family budgie."

Philipp chuckled.

Irma went on, "She didn't exactly make me privy to the gory details, mind you, but a mother can sense these things."



By that time, the waiter had set their meals before them. Philipp unfurled his cloth serviette and smoothed it over his lap.

“This man she fell in love with – what is he like?”

“A rogue.”

“Other than that, what is he like?”

“He’s old – as old as you and I.” Tears welled up in Irma’s brown eyes, her chin quivered, she put her face in her hands and wept.

Philipp glanced around the restaurant to see whether any of the other patrons were watching them. He felt helpless, as though he was to blame for her tears. And yet, the itch to console her nonetheless began to tingle in his palms.

Some of the other noon-hour guests began to surreptitiously glance at them. Philipp raised his shoulders and let them drop, as if to explain to onlookers that Irma’s tears had nothing to do with him – that he was not the guilty party.

“I am so sorry for you,” he said, “and for her,” he added as an afterthought.

Irma removed a tissue from her purse, dabbed at her eyes and blew her nose in a lady-like manner. “I’m sorry I was overcome by tears just now. The stress has been so great these past few weeks. I can’t help thinking that Karl and I have done something to cause her to rebel in this fashion, that we have failed to provide her with the proper loving atmosphere and guidance.”

“Sometimes people simply fall in love, Irma, no matter how mismatched they might be. Have you ever considered that as an explanation?”

Irma unfolded her cloth serviette and spread it on her lap. “Have you ever fallen in love with one of *your* students, Philipp?”

Her look was sharp, like the point of a knife.

“You know I have, my dear. However, I would describe it as falling in lust more than in love. That theory is borne out by the fact that they soon leave me for – how shall I put this? – for greener pastures.”

“You’re a rogue, too, then!”

“Not a rogue, my dear. I would call myself a lonely, older man without any gifts for forming a lasting relationship. It’s the fate of many of us artists. The women in our lives feel second-bested by our main mistress – art.”

“That’s the most pompous, self-serving thing I’ve ever heard you say.”

Philipp blushed. “Do you suspect your daughter’s much older lover of being driven by the same self-serving pomposity?”

“He has two sons, Philipp, not much younger than my daughter.”

“Oh, so your daughter has gotten herself mixed up with a married man, has she?”

“A divorced man, actually.”

“So what is the problem, then?”

His question annoyed her. She took a bite of her meal and then dabbed at the corners of her mouth with the cloth serviette, despite the fact that no food lingered there. “The problem is simple. She’s been deceived. No, she has allowed herself to be deceived – by him.”

“In what manner has she allowed herself to be deceived?”

“In every manner.”

“That’s a rather broad brush stroke, my dear. What can you possibly mean by it?”

“Karl and I had hoped that she would get herself established in the hotel business – on the management side of things, of course – but now she insists on isolating herself in her room and reading – reading one book after another – many of them in English.”

“Did you not want her to learn English?”

“That’s not the point, Philipp. The point is, well, she is taking it far too seriously.”

“Taking what too seriously?”

“Literature – of every description! Foreign and Swiss authors alike. Authors of every kind, in fact.”

“That, in your view, isn’t a healthy preoccupation?”

“Karl and I fear it is going to lead her astray, Philipp. Vastly astray.”

“In what manner will it do that?”

“The other day while she was out working, I went into her room – you know, to change the sheets on her bed, because she is too indolent to change them herself. On her desk was a large ring binder that was almost entirely filled up with scribblings.”

“Scribblings?”

“Yes, scribblings – as if she were trying to write a book.”

“Oh, my, what a crime!” Philipp drank from his wine glass and re-filled it from the bottle.

“It’s just one further sign of this man’s, this Canadian instructor’s grip on her, Philipp.”

“Is it, now?”

“Yes, it is. It’s gotten to the point where Karl and I have come to expect the absolute worst!”

“The absolute worst? What could that be, pray tell?”

“We fear she will give up the hotel trade, that she will desert us altogether, that she will marry this man and run off to Canada with him. I weep every time I think about the possibility of that happening.”

“Have you never heard the expression: *Our children are the gift we give to the world*? You can’t hold onto your gift and give it away, too, Irma. It doesn’t work that way.”

“You’ve never had any children, Philipp! How would you know?”

“Well, it makes sense, doesn’t it?”

Irma's brows pressed together so an ugly bulge of flesh appeared above her nose. "Ursi is so thin, Philipp. So thin."

Philipp gave a shake of his head. "What, precisely, does that have to do with anything?"

"Sometimes she strikes me as quite male – the way she holds herself – her bearing, you know. That is how she displays her annoyance with me, I've come to think."

Irma's contention seemed irrational to Philipp. "I'm sorry, but I don't see the connection."

"She keeps herself as thin as a stick so she won't have a period, Philipp. She's in denial of her femininity. The money she could spend on food she chooses to spend on books – because of *that* man's influence – *that* teacher of English!"

"I'm sorry, Irma. I must be a little dense or something. I don't quite understand what you're saying."

"I don't think she intends to bear any children, Philipp. That's what I'm trying to say."

Philipp now understood her concern. "Oh, I see. I see, now. You're afraid you won't have any grandchildren to bounce on your knee. I see, I see."

And he laughed.

"We have tried to be civil, Philipp – *so* civil – *so* understanding – but it hasn't worked, I'm afraid," she said, totally ignoring his laughter.

"How do you mean, you have tried to be *so* civil?"

"Ursi invited this man over to Switzerland – to meet us. Furthermore, they slept in the same bed."

"The same bed?"

"Yes, right under our own roof."

"Yes, how civil of you. How civil, indeed."

"He has nothing but contempt for this country, Philipp."

Philipp swallowed the food in his mouth. "By the way, what is the name of this fellow?"

"Steve. Steve Mercer. He's a minor, very minor writer over in his country. I think he has two books to his credit, or something like that."

"Stop! I'm beginning to like him already."

"Stop joking about this, Philipp. I'm being quite serious. He has nothing but contempt for this country – for Switzerland!"

"How can you be so sure of that?"

"He said there was nothing wild over here. He said everything was so well groomed it had become a stereotype of itself. We went for a hike in the mountains and he made the observation that he thought the Alps had been raked right up to the snowline. He said the country was too well cultivated for his liking. Everything was cut back – trimmed – tamed."

"There was nothing at all that he liked about the country?"

“Yes, there were a few things. He liked the museums and the art galleries and going to the cafés with our daughter, but that seemed to be about it.”

“Is he gone now?”

“Yes, just last week.”

“Too bad. I would have liked to meet this Steve.”

“He is too old for her, Philipp. Too old and too wizened.”

“What’s the matter – are you afraid his sperm has reached its expiry date?”

“No, I’m afraid my daughter will have a sick, old man on her hands by the time she is thirty, that’s what.”

Philipp had begun to feel distinctly uneasy. Devitalized. Old. “Perhaps, their affair will have a natural culmination point, then.”

Irma seemed to ignore his remark. “We were *so* incensed by his assertion that there were no wild animals in Switzerland, we took him on a train trip to Bern to show him we had some bears in this country. Do you know what he said when he saw them in the moat?”

“No, what?”

“Do you call those bears?” he laughed. “Those aren’t bears. Those are tamed, furry pigs.” I was so incensed, Philipp. So incensed!”

“Did you tell him how incensed you were?”

“No, but I was wearing a pin in my hat. I tried to stop myself from doing it; however, I was so annoyed by his remark I grabbed the pin and tried to put out his eye.”

“No, you didn’t!” Philipp found it difficult to believe that Irma was capable of such an act of passion. His palms began to itch quite fiercely with the desire to mold her flesh. He wiped them on his serviette, out of sight below the table.

“Yes! I’m afraid I did, Philipp. I’m afraid I did do that.”

“Well, were you successful at putting out his eye?”

“No. My daughter threw up her arm to stop me and I ended up stabbing her in the forearm.”

“You did?”

“Yes, I did. It was truly very horrible. Very horrible. I’m afraid I’ve driven her away – that she will never forgive me!”

Again, Irma began to weep.

“Just out of curiosity,” Philipp said, taking some food onto his fork, “did they bring a charge of assault against you?”

“No. At the hospital, my daughter said it was a self-inflicted wound, that she had been in a dissociated state all day and had done it to prove to herself that she still existed.”

“Well, I don’t know what to say,” Philipp told her. “I wouldn’t have suspected you of such unreasonable passion.”

“I fear sometimes that I am losing my grip on reality, Philipp. Now and then, I’m possessed by impulses I don’t quite understand.”

“You are in your fifties, my dear. I hear that sometimes happens to women in their fifties.”

“On my way over here today, I caught myself thinking: I feel like dispensing with it all. I feel like throwing it all away – far, far away.”

“What, in particular?”

“Everything, just everything.”

Philipp reached across the table and put his hand on hers. “I think the captive bears of Bern suddenly became a symbol for something deep down in your soul, Irma, something unrequited even to this very day. After we’ve eaten lunch, would you care to come by my studio and see some of my recent work?”

Irma’s eyebrows shot up nearly into her hair. “What are you trying to suggest, Philipp – that I should be unfaithful to my husband?”

“No, that you should be wild with me – one last time.”

There was a moment’s hesitation while Irma dabbed at her lips with the serviette. “No, I couldn’t possibly do that, Philipp.”

“Then, you had better let your daughter be wild on your behalf. That is the only thing left for you, now.”

She looked at him uncomprehendingly, and he knew of a sudden that her fate had been sealed – truly sealed.

EDUARDO MORELLI was born in Bellinzona, Switzerland in 1978. He is now attending the London School of Economics. This story appears with his permission.

## Death In Other Words

Eduardo Morelli

TWO ELDERLY, well regarded writers, one somewhat better regarded than the other, were in the habit of meeting at the Ristorante Pirandello every other Thursday, and there they would discuss small matters that had to do with their respective lives. Each was so familiar with the details of the other's life he felt he knew it as well as he knew his own and so neither had much to say to the other, for fear of boring him with an already thrice-told story.

The discussions were becoming very boring really, and the two writers would have willingly given up meeting at the Ristorante Pirandello, except for the fact that it had become an old habit and at their advanced age it was difficult to give up old habits, even though, if the truth be known, they had come to mildly detest each other.

The better regarded writer, Italo Salvatore, detested the less well regarded writer because of his ability to churn out a book every four to six months, and the less well regarded writer, Giovanni Machiavelli, detested the other because of his renown, which included having won nearly every top literary prize offered by the nation, despite the fact that he hadn't published a book in over ten – count them – ten years!

One day as they were sitting on the terrace of the ristorante, wondering what to say to each other now that they had eaten a meal and were indulging in liqueurs, the better regarded writer, Italo Salvatore, having taken out his newspaper and begun to read what was contained therein, said: "Wasn't the writer, Luigi Mascotti, a close friend of yours?"

“Yes, as close as you, my friend. I would dine with him every other Tuesday afternoon.”

“Is that so?” Snapping the pages of the newspaper, Italo Salvatore proceeded to fold them into a neat, tight, rectangular bundle. “In that case, this should be of interest to you.”

“Is there an article about him in today’s newspaper?”

“Yes, and listen to what it has to say:

Luigi Mascotti, believing he was being pursued by hounds, had acted in an erratic manner all day Wednesday. ‘He came back from the library in a very agitated state of mind,’ said his daughter and literary executor, Sofia Filippelli. ‘On his way home he said he went around a street corner into a very narrow lane and there he was confronted by a pack of dogs.’

The acclaimed author fled in the opposite direction down the narrow lane and was saved from certain destruction by a streetcar that was passing by and which he managed to board.

‘However, when he descended at our street,’ Sofia reported, ‘he was again confronted by the very same dogs and had to flee all the way home. For the rest of that day, he acted restless and paranoid – too afraid to go outside, even into the enclosed courtyard.’

According to reports, he awakened in the middle of the night, in the grip of a dream in which he was being attacked by hounds, and his condition was such that he had to be taken to hospital, where he later died of a heart attack.”

“An interesting piece of reportage,” said the less well regarded writer, Giovanni Machiavelli, giving a cluck of his tongue. “It reminds me of the books he was once so famous for, but which have since gone out of style. Too bad. I guess it only gives credence to the notion that one should be careful about what one commits to the printed page, for it might come back to haunt one.”

The better regarded writer, Italo Salvatore, was taken aback by his friend’s callous remark. “You were never much of a fan of his writing, were you?”

“I felt neither one way nor the other. However, I was inclined to think that he was given too much praise for a very insignificant body of work and, in the end, that might have ruined him.”

“You didn’t like his stories?”

“I thought them too minimalist. His minimalism worked for him while it was in vogue several decades ago, but now it is passé.” Giovanni Machiavelli sipped at his liqueur. As he lowered the glass, the middle finger of the hand which was clutching the drink shot out like a gnarled stick and pointed at the newspaper. “That account you read to me moments ago came out his novel, *The Hounds of the Underworld*. Good riddance to bad rubbish, I say.”

Italo Salvatore arched his right eyebrow in total disbelief at what he had just heard come out of the less well regarded writer’s mouth. “You sound envious to the point of murder, Giovanni.”

“Envious!” his friend exclaimed. “Of that inconsequential little pipsqueak! Hardly! He was a mere puffer.” Giovanni Machiavelli tapped his temple with his middle finger. “One thing, however, is for certain. His death will put him out of the running for the Lifetime Achievement Award to be handed out later on this year. He won’t be eligible for that, now that he is no longer willing with us.”

“A literary allusion,” Italo Salvatore observed, anxious now to get up and leave, due to his friend’s venomous mood. “I didn’t think you were capable of such things,” he added, and quickly followed his rebuff with a dismissive chortle.

“You postmodernist windbags are all alike,” the less well regarded writer countered. “A lot of words that add up to nothing,” and here he concentrated the full force of his convictions on the watery brown eyes of the better regarded writer, as if to pierce his very soul. “Take, for instance, the climax of your novel, *The Postmodern Whirlpool*, in which your character drowns in a flood of words. Who in his right mind would entertain such a thing as possible – huh?”

“The critics applauded my inventiveness and the nation responded by giving me the annual literary prize, so there must have been some merit to it, my friend.”

“Sure, the postmodern critics applauded it – they, and the postmodern adjudicators of the annual literary prize – but in the people’s press it was debunked as the outpouring of a bourgeois mind that had nothing better to do than contemplate its own navel.”

The hand that was holding the glass of liqueur had again sent out its gnarled middle finger and was wagging it back and forth in a hypnotic manner at the better regarded writer.

“If I were you, Italo Salvatore, I would be careful not to succumb to the same fate as our late literary friend, Luigi Mascotti.”

“What exactly do you mean by that?” the better regarded writer asked, a shudder causing his shoulders to writhe.



Giovanni Machiavelli continued to wag his middle finger. Italo Salvatore found it difficult not to concentrate on it, for a rather large gold ring had slid down that finger and was about to fall off the tip. It was a minor miracle that the ring hadn't already precipitated onto the table where the two friends were sitting.

"Would you not agree that we are all governed by our thoughts – by what we let our minds believe?"

"Would you be willing to elaborate on that?"

"Yes, I would be more than willing to elaborate on that," Giovanni Machiavelli replied. "You see, the mind is like a photographic plate. The light that comes through the lens of a camera and strikes a photographic plate makes an indelible impression, which can later be verified when the plate is developed and printed. Would you not agree with that observation?"

"Certainly. Go on."

"With great pleasure, my friend, with great pleasure; but, please, you mustn't let your eyelids droop like that. You must concentrate on my argument."

"Yes, and that is?"

"That is this: The thoughts we allow ourselves to entertain are like the light that falls on a photographic plate. Those thoughts make indelible impressions on the soft tissue in our skulls, and those impressions can later come back to haunt us. Take, for instance, the flood of words in your own novel, *The Postmodern Whirlpool*. They carry the main character out to sea where he eventually drowns in a maelstrom of words. It was the last book you ever published and your fame rests largely on that; however, what if you and your fame ended up becoming victims of a similar maelstrom – what then? That is very likely to occur, you know, and very soon, too – in fact, as soon as you get tired of sitting here at this table and get up to leave."

The better regarded writer's eyes had completely closed. The less well regarded writer now snapped his fingers in order to bring the other writer around.

"Sorry," Italo Salvatore said, "I must have dropped off for a second. What were you saying?"

"Nothing of any consequence, my friend."

The better regarded writer consulted his wristwatch. "It's getting rather late in the afternoon. I think I shall have to leave soon."

"Please, do. Don't let me detain you. However, you must allow me the pleasure of picking up the check."

Again, Italo Salvatore arched his right eyebrow. "You surprise me, Giovanni. You haven't picked up the check in over thirty years."

"Well, there is always a first time. Please take advantage of it."

"I don't know what to say."

“Wish me the best of luck, when it comes to winning the Lifetime Achievement Award later on this year.”

“Over my dead body,” his friend said, and flung back his head in laughter.



The next day, Giovanni Machiavelli was again dining with an elderly writer friend at the Ristorante Pirandello. They had now gotten to the stage where they were indulging in liqueurs and were beginning to bore each other. At that point, Alberto Pieraccini snapped open the newspaper and began to peruse it. Soon he began to mutter, “How extraordinary, how extraordinary.”

“What do you find so terribly extraordinary, my friend?”

“The writer, Italo Salvatore, committed suicide yesterday afternoon.”

“How remarkable! How did it occur?”

“According to this article, he marched right out to the end of the local pier and jumped straight into the bay. The odd thing was, he didn’t even thrash his arms around in an attempt to prevent himself from drowning.”

“How peculiar.”

“Yes, how peculiar.” Alberto Pieraccini sipped at his glass of liqueur. “He was a close friend of yours, was he not?”

“As close as you, my friend, as close as you, although I didn’t think too much of the postmodern hobby horse he had ridden to so much wealth and fame.”

“It looks now as though he will be taken off the short list for this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award.”

“Yes, the field has narrowed considerably. Now only you and I are in the running for that award.”

HEINRICH MÜLLER grew up in Bremgarten, went through seminary school in Fribourg, and then attended the University of Zürich, specializing in German, French and History. He moved to Toronto in 1971 and there he has worked as a cab driver for twenty-some years. "As a writer, I am not taken seriously by the Swiss because I have lived most of my life abroad, and in Canada, my themes are too Swiss to be taken seriously by Canadians," he says. "In other words, I'm in intellectual exile."

## **Exhuming Carl Jung** a burlesque

Heinrich Müller

### **Characters**

#### **Urs**

The leader, of medium height, in his early fifties, black leather jacket over black clothes. Phosphorescent tape is affixed to his clothing which, under the proper lights, will make him look like a skeleton.

#### **Sepp**

A big fellow, in his mid-thirties, a former student of Urs's, black clothing and a backpack.

#### **Vreni**

(pronounced *Frainey*)

Sepp's sweetheart, in her mid-thirties, black clothing and a backpack.

#### **Bruno**

In his early twenties, slight but wiry, a first-year psychology student, red clothing and a backpack.

#### **Untermann**

An old military codger who lives in the tunnel system, white hair and mustache, round spectacles, should resemble Carl Jung in his old age.

#### **Two Female Dancers**

Festooned with scarves, they should suggest phantasmagoric memories.

## Scene One

*[The stage lies in semi-darkness. Backdrops suggest a system of tunnels. Four extension ladders rise at different angles up into the fly gallery. We hear a metal clanking noise reminiscent of a manhole cover being lifted and set back down again. This will occur a number of times. Each time we hear the rough clanking sound, a shaft of light will fall down the length of one of the ladders and a character will descend. One character, Bruno, will be quite late. The other characters will be impatient for him to make his appearance in the underground.]*

### Urs

*[Descending a ladder to the stage, he shines a flashlight around and begins to pace back and forth, flapping his hands against his upper arms in an attempt to stay warm. Finally, he shines the flashlight on his Swiss Army watch.]*

My God, where are they? I told them eleven hundred hours sharp – no earlier, and no later.

*[pacing and flapping his arms]*

I should have known better than to work with amateurs. Serves me right.

*[pacing]*

God, but it's bloody cold down here. Dank, too. I could wind up with a good case of gout, just waiting for them.

*[pacing]*

Where are they, for God's sake? What's keeping them?

*[Again, we hear the rough metal clanking sound, at two intervals about ten seconds apart. Vreni and Sepp climb down separate ladders. Urs shines his flashlight up at them.]*

Vreni. Sepp. It's about time you got here.

**Vreni**

*[reaching the bottom, she shines a flashlight around]*

Sorry. We took in Max Freiburg's opening and completely forgot about the time.

**Urs**

Does that mean Max won't be joining us?

**Sepp**

*[having descended to the stage]*

You know Max – it's always a toss-up between his artistic career and the C.J.L.F. They're equally big commitments – for him.

**Urs**

*[in disgust]*

Surrealists. They're all words and no action.

**Vreni**

In his case, it's all art and no action.

**Urs**

Doesn't he realize how important this is? Doesn't he realize we're about to liberate the Swiss unconscious once and for all, and that in itself is an artistic statement?

**Vreni**

He said he might be able to make it later on.

**Urs**

How will he find us down here in this maze of tunnels? How will he know which way to go?

**Sepp**

Perhaps, we should unwind a ball of string?

**Urs**

I don't have a ball of string on me. Do you?

**Sepp**

No, not even a strand.

**Urs**

[*to Vreni*]

How about you?

**Vreni**

No, but I could go buy some. It wouldn't take me all that long.

**Urs**

No, stay here. We're not going to be separated – not at this juncture.

[*shining the flashlight on his wristwatch*]

I wonder what's taking Bruno so long?

**Sepp**

He had to pass by the Gymnasium to talk to Herr Professor Klein. He told me he would be here, though – for sure.

**Urs**

Herr Professor Klein! I spit on the shadow of that rat-running little behaviorist. He doesn't know the first thing about psychology – let alone the unconscious.

**Vreni**

For him, the unconscious doesn't even exist.

**Urs**

Doesn't exist! What an absurd notion.

**Sepp**

Didn't you claim in one of your lectures that the Swiss deny the unconscious with so much fervor, it might as well *not* exist?

**Urs**

[*sentimentally*]

You remember my lecture of '99, do you?

**Sepp**

With fondness, Urs. With fondness.

**Vreni**

So do I, Urs. Your lecture opened my eyes to what the Swiss are really like. It changed my life forever.

**Urs**

Yes, but unfortunately, my lecture was ridiculed from one end of the country to the other. I was called a radical – an incendiary fool! The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* claimed I was an obnoxious weed in the otherwise cultivated garden of Jungian thought.

**Vreni**

We ached for you when we read that, Urs. Really, we did. Isn't that right, Sepp?

**Sepp**

You bet we did. We cringed every bit as much as you must have cringed.

**Urs**

*[spitting on the ground]*

Switzerland is such a nation of surface swimmers! We are asked to live on the surface of things – in the world of earthly reward and punishment – the world of Herr Professor Klein and his small-minded ilk! But the Carl Jung Liberation Front is about to change all of that. Yes, siree. If Expo.02 is remembered for anything, it will be remembered for the return of our collective shadow. No two ways about it.

**Sepp**

*[as though in an aside]*

I hope Bruno isn't going to spill his guts.

**Urs**

*[alarmed]*

Spill his guts! What do you mean by that?

**Sepp**

To the Herr Professor Kleins of this world. That's what I mean.

**Urs**

Do you think there's any chance he'll do that – seriously?

**Sepp**

He's been acting a little odd of late.

**Urs**

In what manner has he been acting a little odd?

*[Sepp and Vreni exchange a significant glance.]*

**Sepp**

You tell him, Vreni.

**Vreni**

No, you tell him. You brought it up.

**Sepp**

Not long ago, we were sitting in a café – you know, having an aperitif. Bruno came along and, well...

**Urs**

Yes. Go on.

**Sepp**

Well, he made this rather odd comment – in an offhanded manner, you know. It registered with me because it was so completely out of context, I guess.

**Urs**

What sort of comment was it, exactly? Come on, spit it out, my friend.

*[Sepp and Vreni exchange another significant glance.]*

**Sepp**

You tell him, Vreni. You remember it better than I do.

**Vreni**

He asked us where our fearless leader was? ‘Our fearless leader?’ I said – because, you see, I didn’t realize he was referring to you.

**Urs**

*[impatiently]*

Yes, yes...

**Vreni**

‘You know who I’m talking about,’ Bruno went on. ‘Our Jungian Groofy friend. Urs. I haven’t been able to reach him on his handy.’<sup>1</sup>

**Urs**

*[taken aback, hurt]*

He called me a Jungian Groofy. He actually said that?

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<sup>1</sup> Handy – the Swiss term for cellular phone



**Sepp**

We couldn't decide whether to tell you, Urs. He said it in jest – full of camaraderie, you know – but nonetheless, it made us wonder, you know.

**Urs**

*[shaking his head]*

This changes the complexion of things – entirely. I'm not sure he can be trusted, now.

**Vreni**

That's what we were thinking, too. Can Bruno be trusted? Given the right amount of pressure, he might end up betraying us. But it was too late to do anything, Urs. We had already agreed to meet down here.

*[We hear the blast of a distant Alp horn. It should echo.]*

**Vreni**

*[deeply alarmed]*

Oh, my God. What was that?

**Urs**

*[pulling a small horn out of his coat pocket]*

Untermann. He's looking for us.

*[Urs gives three short blasts on a horn that should be recognizable as an actual bull's horn.]*

**Sepp**

Who's Untermann?

**Urs**

A sympathizer. He lives down here. An old codger. Ancient. Nearly mythical, after all these years. Rumor has it he went astray during a military exercise some forty years ago. He found the tunnel system so much to his liking, he decided to stay.

**Sepp**

An odd fellow, for sure.

**Urs**

He's the closest thing to a living archetype I've ever run into. One of these days I'd like to get him on my psychiatrist's couch – to find out what makes him tick.

**Vreni**

*[tapping her right temple]*

He can't be all that well up here – not if he has spent most of his life in these tunnels.

*[gesturing to indicate the tunnel system]*

This place would give me a permanent case of the creeps.

*[We hear a less distant blast of the Alp horn, followed by two short answering blasts by Urs.]*

**Urs**

He'll be along, momentarily.

*[Another loud metal clanking sound occurs. A shaft of light extends down one of the ladders, followed by another clanking sound that seems to extinguish the light. Urs, Sepp and Vreni shine flashlights on the descending figure of Bruno.]*

**Vreni**

It's about time, Bruno.

**Bruno**

I told Sepp I would be a little bit late. Didn't he tell you?

**Urs**

*[shining the flashlight on his wristwatch]*

A little bit late! You were supposed to be here thirty minutes ago.

**Bruno**

I had an errand to run.

**Urs**

So Sepp informs me.

**Bruno**

It was important, Urs. I had to get a recommendation from one of my instructors.

**Urs**

From that little rat-running behaviorist, Herr Professor Klein, don't you mean? What's got into you, my young Compostee? Have you turned against us? Are you now on the side of the maze-mongers? Or, perhaps, you were hard at work betraying us. Huh – which was it?

**Bruno**

*[suitably intimidated]*

None of the above. I had to get his signature – that’s all – to take a certain class.

**Urs**

Has Klein’s signature suddenly become more valuable than mine?

**Bruno**

No, of course not, Urs. I would much prefer to have yours. However, you’re no longer employed by the university, and that makes all the difference in the world, especially when it comes to getting into certain classes.

**Urs**

Did Herr Professor Klein ask after me, by any chance?

**Bruno**

Why would he ask after you?

**Urs**

Oh, I don’t know. Perhaps he’s interested in what I’m up to? Or perhaps, you’re keeping him informed – up to the minute, as a matter of fact?

**Bruno**

I would never do anything like that. Never.

**Urs**

*[advancing toward him]*

You’re lying.

**Bruno**

I’m not lying ... Promise ... Cross my heart and hope to die.

*[We hear another blast of the Alp horn – very nearby. Urs reaches for his bull’s horn and gives a less than successful blast, one that sounds shriveled and squeaky. Untermann makes his appearance. He is extremely old. Dressed in an ancient military uniform and cap, his hair and mustache are white. A rifle is draped over one shoulder. He is dragging an Alp horn behind him, by the narrow end; two small wheels are affixed to the bend of the Alp horn and allow it to be moved quite easily. Now and then, Untermann will use the Alp horn as a hearing device. Sepp, Vreni, Urs and Bruno*

*train their flashlights on Untermann. He responds by shielding his eyes.]*

**Urs**

Untermann. You're here – at last! I knew I could count on you.

**Untermann**

Your flashlights. They're blinding me. Extinguish them, please.

*[The stage lights cut to near-darkness. An eerie blue glow might exist. The phosphorescent tape on Urs's clothing should make him stand out like a skeleton. The audience must be able to see this quite clearly.]*

That's better. Much better. I have eyes like a mole, you see. They work best at night – in the dark.

**Urs**

Yes, but how will *we* be able to see?

**Untermann**

What's that? Speak into the Alp horn so I can hear you.

**Urs**

*[cupping his hands and shouting into the Alp horn while Untermann listens at the narrow end]*

I said, how will *we* be able to see where *we're* going?

**Untermann**

You won't need to. My eyes will guide the bunch of us.

**Urs**

*[still shouting into the Alp horn]*

Yes, but we'll stumble about. We'll lose track of you down here in the dark.

**Untermann**

Not if you follow close behind me, you won't. I'll lead you straight to where you have to go. You see, I've got everything mapped out in my head – every tunnel in Switzerland – even a few that the authorities don't know anything about.

**Urs**

Just as long as one of those tunnels will take us to the cemetery where Carl Jung is buried, we'll be in business.

**Untermann**

Hmmmm. I'll have to consider that request. Do any of you have a cigarette, perchance?

**Vreni**

*[shrugging immensely]*

Not I.

**Sepp**

*[holding out his hands]*

Nor I.

**Bruno**

*[in disgust]*

I wouldn't dream of smoking. It's bad for the health.

**Urs**

*[sarcastically]*

This younger generation. You can't trust them to have a smoke tucked away in a pocket somewhere. Not nowadays. They're afraid of dying – from the tar and nicotine. Here, have one of mine.

*[Urs lights two cigarettes and passes one to Untermann. The stage lights come up to half-light. We see them smoking.]*

**Untermann**

*[thoroughly appreciating his cigarette]*

Let me see now – the tunnel to Carl Jung's grave. I've got it here in my head, somewhere. It'll come to me in a minute or two. Just give me some time. I shall dredge it up for you.

*[looking at Urs]*

By the way, how are you fixed for smokes?

**Urs**

Don't worry. I've got enough of them to get us through the day.

**Untermann**

Good man. I can't tell you how pleased I am to be part of this undertaking. Now, let me see. Where is Carl Jung's grave? I've got it here in my noggin, somewhere. Just give me a moment to resurrect it.

**Urs**

His ashes are entombed – in the family plot in Küsnacht – if that's any help to you.

**Untermann**

[*annoyed*]

I know where the great man's ashes are entombed, Herr Doktor Wald.

**Urs**

Good. That will save us some time, then.

**Untermann**

Time is relative – down here in the underground. Day is night, and night is day.

**Urs**

I fancy you must be right about that.

**Untermann**

Of course, I am.

**Urs**

By the way, how did you come to know my last name?

**Untermann**

There isn't much that remains a secret – not down here. Everything is revealed, sooner or later.

**Urs**

Like the whereabouts of Carl Jung's grave, for instance.

**Untermann**

Don't worry. I'm working on that, Herr Doktor. It's up here in my noggin, somewhere. Just give me a little time and I'll recover it for you.

**Urs**

If possible, we would like to have things completed by the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month, just in time for the opening of Expo.02.

**Untermann**

Of course, of course. I understand how urgent things are for you. Now, which tunnel do we take? Ah, yes, it's starting to come to me. It's about to make itself known. Ah, yes. Ah, yes. There it is – a bright visage rising in a dark pond of uncertainty.

*[Suddenly, his expression changes to one of vast disappointment.]*

Whoops, it's gone. Got away from me. Just like that. You wouldn't have a little something with which to lubricate the mental gears, now, would you?

**Urs**

*[taking a flask out of his jacket pocket]*

A little schnapps, perhaps?

**Untermann**

*[regarding the bottle with appreciation]*

That should do it. Yes, that should work quite nicely.

*[The lights go out.]*

## Scene Two

*[The stage lies in semi-darkness. It is bare except for backdrops suggesting a system of tunnels. Untermann makes his appearance stage right, pulling the Alp horn by the narrow end, his rifle strapped across his back. Vreni is linked by a rope to the large end of the Alp horn. That rope, in turn, travels back to Sepp, Bruno and Urs. Vreni, Sepp and Bruno are carrying large urns that they must wrap their arms around. Urs glances nervously around, as though watching for goblins. Special lighting should allow us to glimpse the skeleton pattern on Urs's clothing, but only for a moment. The way the characters arrive on stage should suggest the blind leading the blind.]*

**Bruno**

This urn is getting heavy. I need to take a rest.

**Sepp**

Yeah, I could use a rest, too. A rest and a good meal.

**Vreni**

Me, I could use a massage. My shoulders and neck are beginning to cramp.

**Urs**

Halt, Untermann. The troops are beginning to balk – again!

**Bruno**

You would, too, if you had to carry one of these.

**Urs**

When I was your age I was lugging around things that were a lot heavier than that urn, my young Compostee.

**Bruno**

Yeah, tell us all about it, you old Groofy. Tell us how you carried the entire Swiss unconscious around on your back – over mountains, across rivers, through valleys and beyond the beyond.

**Urs**

There's no reason to exaggerate in such a ludicrous fashion, young man. None whatsoever.

**Bruno**

In what fashion would you have me exaggerate, then?

**Urs**

Well, if you must exaggerate, exaggerate how light your present burden is.

**Bruno**

*[groaning as he sets down the urn]*

I'll do that as soon as I see you lend a hand with one of these urns.

**Urs**

Believe me, I would very much like to do that, but the tendinitis in my elbow prevents me from lifting anything that's the least bit heavy.

**Sepp**

*[groaning as he sets down his urn]*

Tell us, Urs, how did you – a psychoanalyst – manage to get tendinitis in your elbow?

**Urs**

Are you cracking a joke – at my expense?

**Sepp**

No, I'm curious, is all. I'd really like to know. How did you manage to get tendinitis in your elbow?



**Urs**

*[arrogantly]*

By jotting down too many dreams dreamt by too many patients. That's how.

**Sepp**

They must've been awfully heavy, those dreams.

**Urs**

Heavy and unwieldy. Just ask my patients – if you don't believe me.

*[By now, Bruno and Sepp have seated themselves on their respective urns. Vreni stands beside hers.]*

**Urs**

*[to Bruno and Sepp]*

Come on, fellows, let's have a little respect for the dead. Carl has no desire to be peering at the crack in your backsides. Up and off of those.

**Bruno**

You'll have to beat me to get me to stand up again.

**Sepp**

Me, too. I'm exhausted.

**Urs**

*[gesturing to Vreni]*

Vreni's a woman, and you don't see her sitting down on the job.

**Bruno**

Vreni has a lot less Jung in her urn. Ours are filled right to the brim.

**Sepp**

Yes, and besides, who's to say which urn might contain his eyeballs and his brain. For all I know, I could be sitting on *his* backside.

**Bruno**

*[jokingly]*

Or worse, you could be sitting on his oh-so-sacred subconscious.

**Sepp**

*[picking up on the joke]*

A scary thought, that. It would be a lot safer than sitting on his oh-so-deep unconscious, though.

**Bruno**

Do you think so?

**Sepp**

Oh, yeah. His unconscious was a real quagmire – judging from what I've read, anyway. An unsuspecting person could get himself sucked right under.

**Bruno**

I'm sure if old Carl were to see anyone floundering like that, his shadow would be more than willing to lend a hand.

**Sepp**

How would his shadow manage to do that, exactly?

**Bruno**

By reaching down and grabbing whoever-it-was by the hair, I suppose.

**Sepp**

He'd have to have a pretty formidable shadow – to do something like that.

**Bruno**

By all reports, he did. A monstrosously large shadow. As big as the Swiss Alps, I hear.

**Sepp**

*[in a mock serious tone]*

Do you have any idea how many patients Carl Jung was actually able to help in his lifetime?

**Bruno**

No, how many?

**Sepp**

*[slapping his knee]*

None – because they weren't patient enough.

**Bruno**

*[patting Sepp on the back]*

Good one, Sepp. That was a good one.

**Urs**

You guys should be exhibiting a lot more respect than you are. Jung was a great man. A genuine Swiss hero. He charted territory that had never been charted before.

**Bruno**

*[laughingly]*

Yeah, by using a Ouija board and a crystal ball.

**Urs**

Jung never resorted to using a Ouija board. Never.

**Bruno**

He might as well have, given his interest in magic, alchemy and the like. To tell you the truth, I think his delusions strung him along most of the time.

**Urs**

Okay, get up off that urn. You haven't earned the right to sit at the great man's feet, let alone on his remains.

**Bruno**

Make me, you old Groofy.

**Urs**

I will, you little Red Scoundrel.

**Vreni**

*[coming between them]*

Come on, guys. This sort of arguing isn't getting us anywhere. In fact, it's making things a lot more difficult.

**Sepp**

*[attempting to divert things]*

Where exactly are we, anyway? Has anybody got any idea?

**Urs**

*[turning aside in a near sulk]*

Ask Untermann. He's the authority on things down here.

**Sepp**

Tell us, Untermann, where are we and how much further do we have to go?

**Untermann**

*[who has been enjoying a smoke]*

I beg your pardon? I couldn't quite hear you.

*[He sticks his ear up to the narrow end of the Alp horn.]*

**Vreni**

*[cupping her hands and yelling into the large end of the Alp horn]*

Sepp would like to know where we are and how much further we have to go.

**Untermann**

Hmmmm. Let me see now. We left Küsnacht about twelve hours ago. We've been traveling at about four kilometers an hour, I suppose. Plus, we've had some breaks along the way.

**Urs**

Seven breaks, to be precise.

**Untermann**

Yes, at about twenty minutes per break. That would reduce our traveling time by two and a half hours, leaving us with a grand total of nine and a half hours.

**Urs**

Don't forget the nap we took. That was at least three hours long.

**Vreni**

One and a half hours long.

**Urs**

Are you certain of that?

**Vreni**

Yes. While the rest of you were snoring your heads off, I was wide awake counting every minute.

**Urs**

You'd be sure to know, then.

**Untermann**

If my calculations are right, that means we've been traveling for approximately eight hours, then.

**Sepp**

Only eight hours! I seems like several lifetimes to me.

**Vreni**

It's dark down here. The dark has a way of disorienting you.

**Bruno**

So, if we've been traveling four kilometers an hour and we've been at it for eight hours, that means we've gone something like thirty-two kilometers – hopefully in a southwesterly direction. So, where would that put us, Untermann?

**Untermann**

[*listening into the Alp horn*]

I beg your pardon?

**Vreni**

[*shouting into the wide end of the Alp horn*]

Where would thirty-two kilometers put us on the map?

**Untermann**

[*smoking gallantly*]

If we haven't taken any wrong turns along the way, I'd say we were halfway between Gontenschwil and Reitnau.<sup>2</sup> The first is behind us, the latter is coming up.

**Sepp**

What is Reitnau like? Is anyone familiar with it?

**Bruno**

My aunt used to live there. It's a small town, but decent.

**Sepp**

Does it have a restaurant, a cabaret and the like?

**Bruno**

From what I can remember, yes.

**Sepp**

Great. What do you say we head up to the surface when we get there? Myself, I could use a good meal. I'm tired of eating crackers and cheese. A Bratwurst, a Röstli and a big bottle of beer are just what I need.

**Vreni**

I wish we were there right now, to tell you the truth.

**Urs**

We'll lose too much time if we stop there. I say we press on. Otherwise, we won't get to Biel on time for the opening of Expo.02.

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<sup>2</sup> Reitnau is pronounced *right-now*. It becomes a play on words.

**Bruno**

I say we vote on it. Who's in favor of going up to the surface to have a bite to eat?

*[Vreni, Sepp and Bruno raise their hands.]*

**Urs**

Only eight hours into this venture, and already the troops are bent upon deserting the cause. That isn't very Swiss of you, you young Compostees. You know that, don't you?

**Bruno**

You can stay down here with Untermann, if you want to. When we hit Reitnau, we're going up to the surface for some rest and relaxation.

**Vreni**

How will we know when we get there?

**Sepp**

*[loudly, in the direction of the Alp horn]*

Yes, Untermann, how will we know when we get to Reitnau?

**Untermann**

We'll hear the River Suhr rushing by overhead. The next big junction after that will be Reitnau.

**Vreni**

*[into the horn]*

How much further do you think that will be?

**Untermann**

By the way the crow flies or by the way the worm wiggles?

**Vreni**

By the way the worm wiggles, of course.

**Untermann**

A half an hour should do it – give or take ten minutes.

**Sepp**

Give or take ten minutes! I was under the impression you knew these tunnels like the back of your hand?

**Untermann**

My hands have gotten rather old. Rather old and rather arthritic. Could be, I've mistaken a bump for a curve, my boy.

**Bruno**

*[sarcastically]*

I thought these tunnels were mapped out in your head – not on the back of your hand.

**Untermann**

What's that?

**Vreni**

*[shouting]*

Bruno thought you had the tunnels mapped out in your head.

**Untermann**

I do. I do. However, do you have any idea how many tunnels there are in Switzerland?

**Bruno**

*[shouting]*

No, how many?

**Untermann**

Hundreds. Nay, thousands. Sometimes it is difficult to keep them all straight up here in my noggin.

**Bruno**

*[to Sepp]*

His noggin must be as holey as Swiss cheese – what with that many tunnels in it.

**Sepp**

Yeah, and I bet they were made by Mad Cow's disease, too.

**Urs**

Don't talk about the old boy that way. He might take offense. Then where will we be? Our plans will be kaput.

**Sepp**

*[standing up]*

I say we get up and get going. My belly's anxious to get to Reitnau.

**Bruno**

So is mine.

**Urs**

Okay, let's get going, Untermann. The troops are anxious to press on. They want to get to Reitnau, right now.

**Untermann**

Huh? What did you say?

**Vreni**

*[shouting into the Alp horn]*

Urs said to press on – to lead the way.

**Untermann**

Where to, exactly?

**Vreni**

To Reitnau – to have a good meal.

**Untermann**

But I thought you wanted to go to Biel?

**Sepp**

Biel can wait. Our stomachs can't.

*[As they prepare to leave, the lights go out.]*

## Scene Three

*[One ladder extends up into the fly gallery. A single globe dangles by a long cord. The characters have assembled below it. The urns are sitting on the ground. Everyone except Untermann is looking up the ladder into the fly gallery. Untermann is wearing a pair of round-rimmed glasses with dark flip-up lenses; the dark lenses are lowered to protect his light-sensitive eyes.]*

**Sepp**

Nice of them to have installed a light.



**Bruno**

Can you make out what those letters say up there?

**Vreni**

It's the name of the town, I think.

**Bruno**

Yes, but is it Reitnau? That's what we want to know.

**Sepp**

Whatever it is, I say we go up to the surface and have ourselves a good meal.

**Vreni**

Are you sure you won't join us, Urs?

**Urs**

No thanks. I'll stay down here with the urns – just to be on the safe side.

**Vreni**

Can we bring anything back for you?

**Urs**

Sure, how about an instant Knorr soup.

**Untermann**

And me? How about me? Have I been forgotten in your mad rush to get back to the surface?

**Sepp**

Suddenly, the old boy has grown a pair of ears, it seems.

**Bruno**

Yes, pretty acute hearing for an old fellow who uses a horn most of the time.

**Untermann**

*[ignoring them]*

Well, *am* I to be forgotten – in your mad rush to get back to the real world?

**Vreni**

*[soothingly]*

Of course not, Untermann. Is there anything you'd like us to bring back for you?

**Untermann**

I could use some more smokes.

**Sepp**

Anything else?

**Untermann**

My brain could use a little lubricating, too – if that isn't a problem?

*[Sepp, Bruno and Vreni stare at Urs.]*

**Urs**

Get him a bottle of the hard stuff. Make it a big bottle, this time.

**Untermann**

You're very kind to look after my needs, Herr Doktor Wald.

**Urs**

There's no need to call me Herr Doktor all the time. Urs will do quite nicely.

**Untermann**

Urs. How intimate of you. Things were a lot more formal, in my time.

**Urs**

I'm sure they were.

*[Sepp, Vreni and Bruno untie themselves from the rope and prepare to head up the ladder.]*

**Sepp**

We'll see you later on, Urs.

**Urs**

How much later?

**Bruno**

As long as it takes to wolf down a meal and to kick up our heels at the nearest cabaret.

**Urs**

Don't have so much fun you forget about our mission. We have to have everything set up and ready to go in...

[consulting his Swiss Army watch]

in a little under eighteen hours.

**Vreni**

Give us three hours, max. That should do it.

**Urs**

Three hours it is, then.

*[Sepp, Bruno and Vreni head up the ladder. There is a loud metal clanking noise. It is followed by the musical refrains of an accordion and a tuba. Also, we should hear shrill laughter and loud voices indicating that those up above are having a jolly good time. The noise is extinguished by another heavy metal clanking sound.]*

**Untermann**

Young people, today. They're so frenetic, so full of appetites and desires, so much a part of the light-world above.

**Urs**

Unlike us old codgers, you mean?

**Untermann**

You're not exactly old, Herr Doktor Wald. Old is when you get to be my age.

**Urs**

Exactly how old are you, old fellow?

**Untermann**

Hmmm. Let me see, now. I took up residence down here in June of 1961 – on the 6<sup>th</sup>, to be precise. I was eight-five at the time, so I guess that would make me something like a hundred and twenty-six years old.

**Urs**

Come on, now. No one lives to be the age of a hundred and twenty-six – except, of course, the prophets of old.

**Untermann**

I was once referred to as a prophet.

**Urs**

You don't say.

**Untermann**

I do say. What is even more baffling is the fact that I was called that by a Protestant pastor.

**Urs**

A Protestant pastor?

**Untermann**

Yes. He said I was a prophet who had stemmed the flood of rationalism and had given man the courage to have a soul again.

**Urs**

*[his attention vastly piqued]*

I know of only one man who has had that said of him and that man was Carl Jung.

**Untermann**

*[flipping up the dark lenses that cover his round-rimmed glasses]*

You don't recognize me in this disguise, Herr Doktor?

**Urs**

*[dismissively]*

My dear fellow – Jung is stuck in these urns here. He can't possibly be walking around in the underground, no matter how much you'd like me to think so.

**Untermann**

But I am! I'm right here in front of you – as large as life – as plain as the nose on your face, in fact.

**Urs**

What I meant to say is, you can't possibly be Carl Jung. No way. His remains are here in these urns. He is as dead as dead can be.

**Untermann**

Hmmm. That presents a problem, now, doesn't it?

**Urs**

For you, it does. For me, it's no problem at all – because, you see, I deal with these sort of mental disturbances all of the time. It's my line of work, you see. Just sit back against one of these urns, old fellow, and we'll get to the bottom of what is bothering you – that is, what makes you think you are Carl Jung.

**Untermann**

Have you not read my *Seven Sermons to the Dead*?

**Urs**

I've read Jung's *Seven Sermons to the Dead*, but I'm afraid I haven't read yours.

**Untermann**

Those *Seven Sermons* are *my Seven Sermons*. In them, the dead appeared to me as though they were alive – as *I* am appearing to you right now.

**Urs**

You know, I always found it rather difficult to swallow the *Seven Sermons*. They seemed pretty farfetched to me. Mind you, Jung was going through some pretty turbulent times, just then. He couldn't be counted on to be in his right mind.

**Untermann**

But I *was* in my right mind, Herr Doktor.

**Urs**

Okay, let's assume – for the moment, anyway – that your reality is the correct one. Let's pretend you are who you say you are – the Penultimate Jungian Archetype.

**Untermann**

Not the Penultimate! The Ultimate!

**Urs**

Okay, the Ultimate Jungian Archetype, then. Where exactly does that get us, anyway?

**Untermann**

You're a frustrating individual, Herr Doktor Wald. Very frustrating.

**Urs**

Why do you say that – because I'm not inclined to believe you're the Ultimate Jungian Archetype?

**Untermann**

No, because you are so dead set on denying the obvious – that we are here in the underground together and that I am willing to give you the same sort of sermon I gave to the other dead souls.

[*putting his hand to his ear*]

Hark! Methinks I am about to hear a catalytic exteriorization phenomenon...

[*Offstage, there is a loud explosion.*]

**Urs**

Oh, yes, the famous poltergeist episode that occurred during your argument with Freud. That was a good piece of sleight of hand, that. How did you manage to pull it off, anyway?

**Untermann**

That *wasn't* a piece of sleight of hand, I'll have you know. It was an actual phenomenon – dictated by circumstances and by the heating of my diaphragm.

**Urs**

[*teasingly*]

No little cap gun, or anything like that, timed to go off at the appropriate moment?

**Untermann**

How dare you suggest such a thing! You have no right to refer to yourself as a Jungian analyst. None, whatsoever.

**Urs**

[*dismissively*]

Yes, well, there are Jungians, and then there are Jungians, now, aren't there?

**Untermann**

[*reciting from the Seven Sermons*]

In *this* world is man, Abraxas, the creator and destroyer of his own world.

**Urs**

[*applauding*]

Very good, old man. You know the text awfully well.

**Untermann**

I should know it well. I wrote it.

**Urs**

Read it, don't you mean?

**Untermann**

*[taking off his cap and pulling his hair]*

What must I do to get through to this mortal? He's as dense as dirt, it would seem.

**Urs**

You know, I'm really enjoying your high rhetoric, your bombast.

**Untermann**

Sometimes we archetypes have to resort to such language – to gain the ear of men like you.

**Urs**

Try a few more parlor tricks, why don't you? I might be inclined to believe you are who you say you are.

**Untermann**

I shall, I shall....

*[Untermann points at the light bulb, which instantly goes out. Mist rolls from the wings out onto the stage and is highlighted by an eerie blue-green light. Two ghostly female dancers swoop, pirouette and float about the stage as lightning and thunder go off overhead, accompanied by torturous violin music. At the completion of the dance, the light bulb comes back on, restoring normalcy.]*

There, how was that, Herr Doktor Wald? Do you believe me now?

**Urs**

Toni Wolff and Sabina Spielrein. The former collaborated with Jung in the most intimate manner possible – much to his wife's chagrin, I might add – and the latter wanted to have Jung's baby.

**Untermann**

You've got a good eye, Herr Doktor.

**Urs**

Jung had a good eye, too – a wandering eye, by all accounts.

**Untermann**

A wandering eye? What exactly are you trying to infer by that?

**Urs**

Wasn't Jung in the habit of sizing his female clients up – you know, with the idea of performing a little jiggy-jiggy with them somewhere down the road? Pure play, wasn't it – I mean that episode with Sabina Spielrein?<sup>3</sup>

**Untermann**

You vex me – vex me to high heavens! – but I think you're beginning to believe me, too.

**Urs**

Hardly. Not one iota. You're as phony as they come, Untermann.

**Untermann**

How dare you insult me like that! How dare you!

**Urs**

It was one of your favorite tricks, wasn't it? – when everything else had failed – to insult your clients, I mean.

**Untermann**

Herr Doktor Wald, you have no right to call yourself a Jungian. I shall do everything I can to get you removed from the Society.

**Urs**

Yes, and you have no right to pretend you're the Ultimate Jungian Archetype! So there!

**Untermann**

But I am!

**Urs**

You're not!

**Untermann**

I am. I'm the Lord of the Underworld, and you provoke me at your peril!

**Urs**

Balderdash! You're the worst kind of fake!

**Untermann**

I'm not!

---

<sup>3</sup> Spielrein means, quite literally, *play-pure*.



**Urs**

You are. You were a fake from the word go. In fact, you were a fake from the very beginning, when the Word was first made Flesh!

**Untermann**

I shall bring a plague down on your head for this, Herr Doktor Wald. You shall be doomed – forevermore!

*[Reaching toward the heavens, Untermann seems to command the Fates. There is a huge lightning strike, followed by thunder. The lights go out on stage.]*

## Scene Four

*[There is a loud metal clanking sound in the fly gallery. Accordion music suggests that a good time is being had up in the real world. The music is abruptly extinguished by a second loud clanking sound. Vreni, Sepp and Bruno descend the ladder to the stage. They seem to be in a hurry. Sepp has a newspaper rolled up in his right hand. Urs gets up off the urn he's been sitting on.]*

**Vreni**

It smells like ozone down here. What caused that?

**Urs**

A methane explosion ... further down the tunnel.

**Sepp**

A methane explosion wouldn't smell like that. It would smell toxic.

**Urs**

*[shrugging]*

Perhaps, it was caused by a bolt of lightning, then.

**Sepp**

*[pointing heavenward]*

The night sky was absolutely clear, up there. No sign of a thundercloud, anywhere.

**Urs**

Who's to say, then.

**Bruno**

*[looking around]*

What's become of the old codger?

**Urs**

He got tired of waiting around. He said he'd meet us in Biel.

**Vreni**

He left his Alp horn behind.

**Urs**

He told me we might need it ... in case we got lost.

**Bruno**

He took off with some haste, did he?

**Urs**

Yes, some overwhelming haste, in fact.

**Sepp**

Did he leave you with any instructions? Did he tell you which way we were supposed to go?

**Urs**

*[looking about for a likely tunnel]*

That tunnel, I believe it was. Yes, that one.

**Bruno**

You're sure it was that one?

**Urs**

Positive. Couldn't be any other one.

*[Sepp, Vreni and Bruno exchange significant glances.]*

**Vreni**

Who's going to tell him?

**Bruno**

You do it.

**Vreni**

No, you do it. You're the one who realized we weren't anywhere near Reitnau.

**Sepp**

*[stepping forward]*

Here, let me do it. After all, I picked up the newspaper.

**Urs**

What are you youngsters going on about, anyway?

**Sepp**

*[handing him the rolled up newspaper]*

Here, read all about it. It's all over the front page.

**Urs**

*[snapping open the newspaper and reading aloud]*

Vandals rob Jung's grave. "It was the oddest thing," said the cemetery official. "One of the gardeners noticed that Jung's gravestone was sinking into the ground. When he went over to inspect it more closely, the earth fell in. It looks to me as though somebody dug a tunnel up from below."

*[looking up]*

Makes us sound like a pack of moles, doesn't it?

**Bruno**

Read on. You haven't gotten to the best part, yet.

**Urs**

Police say it might be the work of dedicated professionals intent upon selling Jung's ashes on the black market. "Nowadays, there's a market for just about anything you can imagine," said Police Inspector Martin Adler – no relation, by the way, to the psychiatrist, Alfred Adler, who introduced the concept of the inferiority complex to psychology. "I suspect there are all sorts of people who would buy the great man's ashes," he continued. "They would probably sell pretty fast."

Police are now conducting a thorough search of what appears to be a system of tunnels lying beneath Künsnacht.

*[looking up again]*

They're onto us. We'll have to proceed post-haste to Biel.

**Sepp**

I don't think we should go through with our plans. The police are probably tracking us down right now.

**Urs**

So what! We've got a good head start on them – thirty-two kilometers, in fact.

*[The young people exchange glances.]*

**Sepp**

You tell him, Vreni. I don't have the heart to.

**Bruno**

Neither do I. He'll think it was all my fault.

**Urs**

What are you young folks talking about, anyway? Spit it out, for God's sake.

**Vreni**

I don't know how to break this to you, Urs.

**Urs**

Break what to me?

**Vreni**

We don't have a head start of thirty-two kilometers. Untermann has been leading us around in circles. In fact – indeed – we are still in Küsnacht.

**Urs**

In Küsnacht! That's impossible. We can't be in Küsnacht.

**Vreni**

That's why we came back so soon – to fill you in on things – to let you know what has happened.

**Urs**

I shouldn't have trusted that old Groofy. I should have known better.

*[In the distance, we hear the barking of police dogs.]*

**Vreni**

My God! When I became a member of the C.J.L.F., I didn't think I'd have to flee like a common criminal.

**Sepp**

They're hunting us down, with the help of police dogs.

**Bruno**

Oh, no. I'll never get my doctorate – not now – not at this rate.

**Urs**

Quick. Grab the urns and run.

**Vreni**

Where to?

**Urs**

*[pointing toward the audience]*

Down that tunnel over there.

**Sepp**

Not me. I'm heading up to the surface. I'm going to mix with the fun-loving revelers up above.

**Urs**

Coward! Turncoat!

**Bruno**

I'm with Sepp. I'm all for getting out of here – before those dogs chew us up alive.

**Urs**

Wait! Wait! Those dogs aren't real. They can't be.

**Sepp**

They sound awfully real to me, Urs.

**Urs**

But they aren't. Don't you get it? Don't you see what is happening here?

**Sepp**

No, what?

**Urs**

We're being tested. We're being made to think those dogs are real – when, in fact, they are simply figments of our collective imagination.

*[Ferocious, loud barking is heard.]*

**Bruno**

What sort of figments bark like that?

**Urs**

Figments whose purpose it is to guard the Collective Unconscious.

**Vreni**

I'm not going to bet *my* life on that. I'm going to head up to the surface – with Sepp and Bruno.

**Urs**

No, come back. Come back here. This is simply a bad dream. That's all it is. It'll be over in a few moments.

**Sepp**

*[climbing the ladder]*

It's real enough for us, Urs. We're getting out of here. See your around – that is, if nothing untoward happens to you.

**Urs**

But what about the urns? What about the great man's ashes?

**Bruno**

*[also climbing the ladder]*

Leave them. They're not worth spending any time in jail – not for me, anyway.

**Vreni**

*[climbing the ladder]*

Nor me.

*[Sepp, Bruno and Vreni climb the ladder up into the fly gallery. Urs is left alone with the urns. The barking of the dogs is getting louder and closer. There is a deep, demonic-sounding belly laugh amplified by a sound system. Urs grabs an urn and runs off into the wings – only to back up again onto the stage, one reluctant step at a time. Untermann advances with a rifle pointed squarely at Urs*

*and, incidentally, at the urn in his arms. Untermann is now wearing a black cape over his military uniform.]*

**Untermann**

Thought you could get away with it, did you?

**Urs**

I meant no harm, Untermann. I simply wanted to expose everything to the light. I simply wanted to show the nation up for what it is – a nation of surface swimmers too afraid to delve into anything that’s the least bit dark or uncomfortable. That’s all, that’s all.

**Untermann**

Put down that urn, Herr Doktor.

**Urs**

*[setting down the urn]*

Certainly. Of course.

**Untermann**

What is dead and buried is dead and buried. What is past is past. There will be no delving into it ever again. It shall remain here in the Underworld – forever!

*[Approaching the Alp horn, Untermann gives a loud, heralding blast. The barking becomes louder and more ferocious. We see animated shadows identifiable as police dogs, yanking and tugging at chains, heading directly for Urs.]*

**Urs**

No, no. This can’t be happening. This can’t be happening. This is nothing but a bad dream. I’ll wake up from it any moment now.

*[There is another amplified belly laugh, followed by lightning, thunder and a general blackout on stage. We see the phosphorescent tape on Urs’s clothes – it makes him look like a skeleton – then we hear the murderous sound of dogs attacking and ripping him apart. He screams as though in the grip of a nightmare.]*

**The End**