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a Novel by Dan K. Sigurd



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Another fateful journey

Sid approached the machine the mechanical woman had told him to use and touched its screen. After scrolling through endless pages of access information he finally found some special ticket that seemed to work in his case. He chose it, hoping that it would actually be valid.

When the train appeared he got in, nervously looking to his left and right trying to figure out if his fellow passengers would be gentle to a freak like him.

He did not have a clean shirt anymore and so he wore nothing but his jacket, exposing his painted brown chest. He looked at his reflection in the window across from him and realized that his long, black, unkempt hair was slowly turning into thicker and thicker strands.

The first station where he'd have to change approached fast and Sid got out and hasted towards the platform the sheet of paper in his hand told him to go to.

He got himself something to eat and ran up the stairs and down the platform toward the edge where he could smoke. But he did not reach it because suddenly a voice proclaimed his train was arriving.

Sid quickly grabbed his pipe, telling himself that there would be no paranoia since he actually did possess a ticket.

As he lit his pipe he suddenly saw a policeman sitting in the smokers area across from him.

When he saw him he just waved over, apparently assuming he was greeting a fellow tobacco addict and letting it slide gracefully.

Sid nodded back with an honest smile and got into the train. He kicked himself through the crowded wagons in the desperate search for a place to sit. The faces that came towards him seemed just as nervous and relieved at the same time. Finally getting out of the metropolis that lay in the east of the country, getting towards the southwest through beautiful landscapes that began to rush by.

Sid finally found a seat and dropped down to enjoy the sinking sun that was setting beyond deep green fields which were only intermittently disrupted by spots of grey.

Suddenly he felt the desperate urge to write

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As soon as he was alone again, in his own little cell in the bathroom down the hallway, he felt his mind unwind except for the memory of his laptop that he had left back in his seat...Would someone use the opportunity to steal it?
So he returned and sat down in front of it in order to write and calm down his mind that way:

this torn out machine
in front of me
is not treating me kind
I don't mind
I tell myself
that that's the way it goes
and maybe one day
we'll be able
to work it out
who knows
maybe I'm about



to produce a work of art
on this machine
and its small and supposedly smart successors
and iron predecessors
all of them attack me at times
but somehow I still manage
to find rhymes
but what will they look like
when another machine
spits them out in the end
will that one be another friend
or another mortal enemy
promising me
something I could never be

Sid packed his laptop into his backpack and returned to the restroom where he looked at himself in the mirror for a while. The music from the machine in his ears proclaimed: "Insane on a train..." and Sid wondered if travelling had always been this strange, slightly unnerving experience. In former times you might have been able to travel in a balloon towards you destination. Maybe he actually had travelled like that in a former life

Sid somehow managed to leave the bathroom again, just in time to get out at the station the plan in his hand guided him to.

He ran down some stairs through a dark hallway with broken lights and up another staircase, behind a couple of people who tried to heave their packed bikes up the stairs.

They ran toward the train to their left and Sid followed them until he noticed a second train to his right, looked down on his plan and decided to try that one first. The bikers apparently had to take the same train as him since they hasted over beside him, past a few men and women in green uniforms that laughed at them telling them that all they had to do was read the screen above displaying some numbers and names that seemed unfamiliar to Sid. So he went up to the woman with a somewhat forced smile and asked: "Could I make sure anyway and ask: Is this... this?" He pointed at the plan in his hand and then at the train before him and the woman gave him an amused and condescending look and said: "Yes..."



As soon as Sid had gotten down on a chair at one end of the train she was back beside him and said: "Well then I'm gonna want to see the tickets around here already now..."

Sid was quite happy he had not decided on hiding in the restroom the entire ride without a ticket, and got out the little card he had bought earlier.

His paranoia that it might not be the right validation for his existence in this space passed when the woman let the little machine in her hand send out a blue light above it that sounded off a silent beep of approval.

"You're also sitting in first class."

"Sid looked at her with an innocent expression and said: "So that's what the marble armrests are for: Rich folk!"

"Well I guess I'll let you stay here now..."; The woman, who had gotten much more friendly since he had shown her his ticket, answered.

When it was time to change into yet another train she even approached him and said: "You'll have to change at the next stop!"

Sid hastened down and up some stairs again, behind the bikers who seemed to drop half their equipment which he took up and handed to them as they arrived at the station where they would all have to change into the next train that would take them further south.

A screen at the otherwise abandoned station proclaimed: "Train arrives about 5 minutes later today"

Sid felt paranoia surging inside him again looking down at his plan, wondering if he would be able to make it...

A storm seemed to brew above this part of the country which did seem to be neither France nor Germany, and Sid wondered how far the clouds above extended.

But then he decided that he didn't care about the weather and got into the train that was rolling in before him.

When he sat down he slowly began to feel tired and suddenly he asked himself if he had slept the last few hours, or days, or weeks.

Sid slowly felt how he was drifting away into dreams but he told himself to stay awake in order to change at the next station, resulting in some strange state of in-between in which he kept running up and down stairs and jumping in and out of trains...



Finally the land around him seemed to turn into something a little more familiar. The air around him was filled with some melodic mixture of the language. The language of the borderlands where cultures met and tried to adapt their ways, failing in the end since they became more and more the same standardized human beings, both loosing everything that resembled culture, art or emotion in their lives, in the process.

Or was that just some paranoid thought that had been planted into his head by his politics seminars that demonized the Union these states were slowly handing their rights over to even though it seemed to crumble more and more.

Sid looked up into the window, behind which the scenery was slowly turning dark, exposing the reflection of his face. As he looked into his four eyes the mirror showed him since it was carved that way. Sid realized that he was writing

[REDACTED]

Sid gave up trying to figure out what all of this meant and turned to his laptop again:

I am lost
On a train that seems to be heading north
Although it should take me south
I'm lonely and exhausted
Have a dried up mouth
My shirt is gone
I write with a bare chest full of symbols
And the passengers around me
Seem to see
I'm not one of them



But I don't care
The only thing I cannot bear

[REDACTED]

A few gnomes appeared from the seat behind him. At first he could only hear their sound because they hid when he turned around. But then he saw them, as they got more curious and jumped into his field of vision with ice cold precision. He got out his little black book and drew a monster inside. The next time they peaked over his shoulder he showed it to them, before they could hide. Then he handed out papers and they suddenly started drawing with pride. When they got out their tired mother thanked him for entertaining them and gave him a big smile. Finally he stopped at the last scenery of changing trains and got into the giant glass bubble that had been erected around an old grey building that housed the train station and a few stores that were filled with travellers. He went past the numerous screens that now spoke to him in an even more cryptic way. He found the train that would lead him to his destination where he would have to change yet again, this time into a different vehicle though.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Afterwards he looked up into the dark outside and wondered what time it might be. It seemed like everything was just fine though, since the time his touchwriter displayed matched the color of the sky outside that was now stormy and strangely cold for this time of day. Sid looked down at his music machine that seemed to repeat the same album over and over again and told himself: "I'll escape the *collective timewarp!*" as he turned off the loop function. Once again he had to think of Lev Manovich's theories about the language of new media and how things that might be seen as technical limitations can actually bring about a new form of perception and understanding of time. Sid looked up at the screen in front of him that kept repeating the same colorful images of happy travellers over and over again until he could no longer bear it, feeling as if he was going insane. Suddenly a man in a uniform appeared next to him and spoke to him in a beautiful, strange and yet familiar language. Sid handed him his ticket and asked: "Do you speak English?" The man nodded and said something Sid didn't understand, smiled and handed him his ticket back after he scanned it with a little machine that made a beeping sound when it scanned the receipt Sid had gotten from the ticket machine instead of a valid ticket. "This is the receipt", he said, smiled again and walked on. Sid looked at him with confusion but before being able to grasp what had just happened he noticed that the train was entering his station...



Sid jumped up and slammed the laptop he had just started to write on, shut. The doors before him opened and exposed the young man that called himself his 'old friend' in his letters. He greeted him with the words: "Lets go and get out of this town!" and they went on to his car that stood on the small parking lot beside the station. Sid threw his backpack into the trunk and sat down beside Theo who started some music first and then turned the key, making the old vehicle growl in agony. But even though some strange sound seemed to come out of the engine, the car set in motion and they drove off to the sounds of some old Blues musician, singing about killing his wife. "Can you hand me one of these beers from the back-seat?", Theo asked and Sid reached behind him to search around in the mess. Finally he found a cold bottle and after handing it to Theo he stretched out in his seat and fell asleep. When he awoke again they were in the Netherlands.

During the evening he kept scribbling into his little black book, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] When he was not writing poems or stories, eating with the others, being thought how to roll a spliff or walking through the little ghost town in the Netherlands they stayed in, he wrote [REDACTED]:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dreams

The theory that's generally accepted is
that you relive your day, the time
before your dream
but this time you do everything
until the end, live life like it should have been



Happiness and uncertainty go hand in hand
which is why true, clear happiness can probably never be achieved
maybe only the dream of it exists
or maybe the opposite just has to be believed

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

By the time he had finished these lines it was long past midnight, everybody else had gone to sleep and Sid was wondering if he should do the same... Tomorrow they'd go to Amsterdam. He just didn't know if he should keep on writing or go to bed as well...

If he wanted to continue [REDACTED] he

needed to make space on his touchwriter, so he got out his PC to download some older pictures.

He started his computer, which actually survived the trip so far, although it had taken some hits and a screen told him it needed to make some important repairs before it let Sid use it again...

While he was sitting there, waiting, hoping, praying for the PC to work he listened to the music coming from the big old looking speakers behind him:



You're such a beautiful freak
I wish there were more just like you
You're not like all of the others
and that is why
I love you
Beautiful freak, beautiful freak

[REDACTED]

My beloved monster is tough
if she wants she will destroy you
but if you lay her down for a kiss
her little heart it could explode

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

He sent the mail, finally ending this all too familiar battle with modern life, and went to bed...

There he was all of the sudden, sitting next to a river, enjoying the sunset over Amsterdam. Finally he found some rest here, for a while as he was waiting for Theo to get his Jacket from the Van they had had to park somewhere in a place a little further from the center, where you did not have to pay as much for parking – but still pretty much. All in all he had the feeling in this town as if he was loosing money with every minute, as if he was not welcome in most places if he did not consume. At first that feeling had almost overwhelmed him, but then he remembered he actually had a couple of dutch friends who might be able to help him out. So he contacted them and asked for interesting places in town where you did not feel like the drunk tourist who gets stoned and spills the bong water. His friend Pepito told him to go to a coffee shop in the center and ask for a man called Je., claiming he'd take care of them... It took them several hours during which they undertook an epic odyssey through the flashy, colorful city center in order to find a place to eat at with decent prices; an impossible task as it soon turned out.



After Ol. offered to pay for their food they gave in to the fist woman that called out to them , after they had made sure they were not in the red light district, being offered a different kind of meat from the stakes that were being served to a bunch of Germans, British and French by a few grim looking waiters here.

Sid felt even more uncomfortable even though he knew his meal was being paid for. Or maybe just because of it? Maybe on some level he felt indebted to Ol. now, as if he was expected to wash the other hand... The fact that Ol. definitely had more income than the 2 of them combined made moving through this town together somewhat strange as he stopped every once in a while to suggest doing things that were advertised around them. But Theo seemed not to think too much about any of this and just dug in.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Afterwards they set out on yet another journey to find the mysterious Je. who was supposed to open the city for them.

When they arrived at the little Coffee Shop he worked at he directed them to a place called *The last Waterhole*, after Theo had asked him if Rock n' Roll was still alive in this town . . .

After a couple of spliffs which Ol. had been supplying them with continuously all day and yet another journey through town they found the place and after some hesitation and consideration they paid the entrance fee and got in. There was a band playing cover versions of various Rock songs of the past few decades. Sid could not decide what to make of it all, the various posters of bands and alcohol brands on the walls, the rock and roll paraphernalia, guitars, postcards and T-shirts to buy and remind you of the experience. He stood in the crowd of stoned and drunken foreigners anyway and tried to get into the music. But it was hard since he had the feeling the



band was only replaying the songs, trying to make them sound as similar to the original as possible. They did not try to interpret the songs in a new way and they did not seem to put any feeling into them whatsoever, as if there was no connection to the riffs they were playing and the words they were singing.

The slogans the lead singer released onto the crowd therefore sounded shallow. Why did he tell this mob to "wake up" and "rise", when it was clear all they had come here for was fun.

Apart from various drugs they tried to get their kicks by hooking up with each other and as Sid watched the scenery unfold around him; the people getting increasingly drunk and more willing to become what was considered "loose" and "crazy" by them, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He had consumed quite a lot of weed today that was considered to be "very good stuff", but he was not *high*. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

They left the place and strolled through the night.

They went past an old, wrinkled man who was wearing a bunny shaped hat and a puppet on his right hand while maniacally blowing into a pipe, producing only one menacing tone. As Sid gave him a little change in appreciation of his determination he looked up, raised his right arm



and pointed at the vacancy next to him. "Take Photo?", he asked with a deranged grin on his face. Sid declined but as he walked on he wondered if that was all the man was actually doing: Dressing up and acting strangely so tourists could take a picture with the freak to show to friends and family at home later on.

"Look that's Amsterdam, that's what drugs do to you!"

They also passed two guys sitting on the doorstep in a dark entrance gate, sniffing a white substance. As they passed the two men one of them extended his bare forearm to them and pleaded: "Heroin! Do you have some heroin?"

They slept in the Van that was still parked in a corner street just a little bit outside the city center.

When they had arrived, Ol. wanted to go to the nearest café to get breakfast but as Sid saw the chic design and the prices he decided to go find a supermarket while the other 2 were eating. Once again he somehow felt like a bum as he walked down the street in search of a cheaper meal.

He could have let Ol. invite him again, he'd even been able to pay for the overpriced croissants and coffee himself, but he would not have been able to truly enjoy it. Once again he seemed to identify with stereotypical old Jewish men like Harvey Pekar, or Mark Rothko, who had once said he found paying more than 5 bucks for a meal unethical.

He entered the bright, sterile isles of the nearest supermarket searching for some cheap bread and found a whole bakery at one side of the store. He asked the woman behind the counter who wore a uniform with the store's logo, and a tired expression on her face, the same thing he had been asking in every bakery they had passed on their journey: "Do you have old bread from the day before at half price?"

It was the same as it had been at all those chains at train stations and highway stops they had passed, where tired and discouraged service personnel had told him: "No we don't, they're forcing us to throw it away at the end of the day."

What was wrong with the human mind that it would decide throwing away food was a reasonable thing to do, all over the continent?



OI. had told him that he had once worked on a giant farm in the north of France, where it had been his job to spray poison over tons and tons of food that had been declared worthless because it did not fulfill a certain norm in size, color or shape.

Sid did not really mind the fact that he had to pay a little more for his bread now, but he had read once that although there had always been food shortages and starvation, especially since the population of the planet had quadrupled in the last century in the course of the industrial revolution, the last year had been a turning point because it marked the first time when humanity was not even able anymore to produce enough to feed everyone in theory, not considering all the food that was wasted on the way from production to consumer.

Sid wondered if the human race was somehow determined to drive itself to extinction. Was this feeling of impending doom just an illusion or was there more to it? He did not know.

He only knew one thing; it was time to get out of this town!

He returned to the Van and they finally set out to reach the Sea.

They drove through the countryside and over one of the gigantic levees they had built to keep this part of the country from being swallowed by the Sea that apparently was rising and thereby threatening the land that was already below sea level.

They parked at the gates of some kind of newly erected village of summer homes, took some towels and food with them and walked into it, since the map had told them there was a beach lying somewhere behind all those big, bright, mostly vacant bungalows. They passed rows of little red brick houses that all looked exactly the same, apart from the numbers on the doors, followed by a street full of very modern looking, box-like structures in bright colors and a street with one little house with thatched roof, in vintage design, after the other.

Finally they arrived at the beach that was almost completely vacated and sat down behind a little concrete wall to take shelter from the wind that blew hard and cold across the sand.

OI. rolled a spliff as Sid undressed and handed it over to him with the words: "You need a little courage?"

Sid sucked in the intense, stinging taste of dutch weed and tobacco and gazed over the waves toward the horizon. He did not know what it was about the sight of this ocean but it somehow felt grave and overwhelming. Maybe it was the fact that for miles and miles into this direction there was practically no one out there. In his head he recalled the lyrics to a song by *The Who*:

The beach is a place where a man can feel
He's the only soul in the world that's real



He took one more hit from the joint, turned around and as Jim Morrison proclaimed: "The future is uncertain and the end is always near", in the music playing nearby, he threw the towel off his shoulders and ran through the cold wind that stung his bare chest, into the sea.

Since the water was still damp he had to keep moving for what seemed to take forever.

The water before him slowly got deeper as he moved further and further away from the shore until he finally lost his patience and jumped in.

The water was still barely deep enough to swim and he almost hit his nose on the ground when he plunged into the waves.

But he did not really run into the ocean to swim but rather just to feel alive and have the icy water wake up his body and mind.

And it did.

He walked back to the shore, sat down and wrote while the other two were trying to start a fire in a hole in the sand. It felt good to be outside of the mean city, to have escaped the claws of all those shops and drunken mobs.

He even filmed a little, something he had not been able to do in Amsterdam.

Life is good, he thought as he watched the sun set in the sea in front of him.

They awoke to a slow Sunday evening. Over breakfast Ol. suggested they could drive to nearby towns in the Netherlands, or cross the border and visit a city in Germany, like Münster. Sid realized that his former flatmate Marie. had moved back there and so he wrote her a text, asking if they could meet. It felt a little strange since they barely had had contact since she moved out. Once again he wondered if he should use that dreadful social network a little more actively.

Apart from that, their relationship had always been somewhat ambivalent. When they still lived together she often brought him down with a simple irritated look at him or a reproachful question. Sid recalled how they had met for the first time and she had seemed so open and understanding with her talk of poetry slams, theatre and her red hair. But when she moved in she changed her ways fast, shaved her hair and dyed it blonde. Only on parties she'd display the character Sid got to meet that late summer almost 2 years ago.



In the end it turned out to be a pleasant time they spent together. After visiting the harbour where Sid went to an art exhibition while the other 2 had a beer, they drove to her place and she took them to a park where they sat down beside a lake. They talked a little, she told him about her internship as a nurse in the nearby hospital and he gave her the latest news about life in Berlin. Later they were joined by her boyfriend and as the others drank beer in the sun, Sid went down to the lake

[REDACTED]

He spent the next morning sitting in the window, writing [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We did go out eventually but ended up in a Pub pretty soon since Ol. was not really into my idea to see one of the famous dutch windmills and climb on top of one... He had also been freaked out by the fact that I suddenly climbed a tree when we walked through Amsterdam. In the Bar he bought me a beer without warning and since he said it was really good and expensive I kind of felt obligated to drink it. On the way to yet another Bar we passed an abandoned building and I wanted to go in but once again Ol. just shook his head with a sarcastic smile and told me I did not have to go there since he owns an apartment. I looked at him with sad eyes and said: "You just don't get it, do you?" He replied that he used to, and he looked at the shop he now worked in, lost in thought. I wondered if he was thinking about the job that had sent him to a place in the middle of nowhere and to which he had to return early on monday morning... But when I asked him what had happened he replied with a renewed grin full of irony: "Now I've got an apartment!".

Still my comment must have affected him in some way because on the way back



home we passed a park that was still under construction and he asked if we should go in, even though we had to climb a fence. While the other two were somewhere in the bushes, relieving their bladders I sat down on a giant white ball that was standing in the middle of the unfinished ground among a couple of other smaller balls. I looked up into the stars that are so much more plentiful here than in a big city that infects the sky with it's light, and suddenly I saw a shooting star that lasted for several seconds and spread across half of the sky above.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid got tired of waiting and started killing time by surfing the internet. He watched the latest news about regional elections and the annual drug report by the federal government that declared that the weed you could find on the market had gotten stronger and should no longer be considered a soft drug. After reading a little about the upcoming elections in the US he turned to movie reviews and the latest trailers.

He found one for an upcoming adaptation of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. As he watched it Sid was torn inside. He feared the fact that Hollywood had finally gotten its hands on that book made their journey seem even more like a cliché. He recalled how Theo had called him back in December during those dreadful Christmas days and told him how he had reread that book, how much it had ignited that urge burning inside him to move again, how he had felt like Dean Moriarty, calling out to Sal to get back on the road. . .

And now they weren't even getting their 'kicks', were they?
Kerouac had found God in the sweat on Neal Cassady's forehead, what had Sid found so far?



But then he remembered what he had said to Theo last night.

"There is still a lot of road ahead"

The afternoon came and [REDACTED] they went to pick up Ol. from his work. He showed them around the piano shop he was working in, finished his repairs on one of the impressive instruments and then they went off to a nearby lake. It was a beautiful scenery and so Sid wondered if he should have a hit from the spliff Ol. had rolled as soon as they had gotten there. Maybe in this environment it would get him the inspiration he yearned for?

Then he saw a platform in the middle of the lake and decided to swim there, holding joint and fire over the surface of the water in order to smoke there.

He ran into the water and it seemed even colder than the sea. He started to swim with one arm in the air, but he barely came forward. The freezing cold water soon began to feel like millions of small needles penetrating his skin and the platform was still far away. But he kept going even though his body started shaking uncontrollably on the last stretch.

Finally he reached the platform, climbed on, sat down cross legged and lit the joint.

It felt good.

He let his glance wander across the beach before him, the sun slowly sinking into the lake, birds flying over his head, emitting strange cries that sounded like mad laughter, a swan slowly swimming past him and he thought to himself: 'Life is alright!'

He still held on to that belief after he had swum back through the icy water and sat there shivering next to Ol. who tried to bury Theo in sand from the waist down.

Life always bore the possibility to be beautiful, you just had to act out every once in a while and listen to your heart!

So that's what he did; he kept life beautiful! After they had driven across the border where Ol. insisted on inviting them once more to a restaurant where Sid ate way too much of the all you can eat salad bar and the only vegetarian dish they offered, they drove back to Ol.'s place where he and Theo smoked a few more spliffs before Ol. went to bed. Sid got pretty tired as well and when Theo said they were locked in since Ol. had the keys he almost went to bed. But just to make sure he checked in the pocket of Ol.'s Jacket and actually found the keys there.

Next to the lake they had been at today, there had been a windmill, as Ol. pointed out, who still did not really believe that Sid actually wanted to climb it. But there had been people around since it was still daytime and so that wish could not be fulfilled.

Now it was dark outside, though. All decent dutch citizens had gone to bed and so Sid proposed returning there to Theo. After Theo had stuttered a number of excuses Sid suggested to go to the



abandoned building with the broken windows and the graffiti of Elvis on it instead, that they had seen across from Ol's shop. Again Theo ducked around, proclaiming he was not really in the mood and so Sid got out alone before his resolve could be weakened.

Once he got there he realized how quiet it was in this small Dutch town and that the people in the house next door, which was not abandoned, could hear him if he did not keep very still. Carefully he climbed a fence, fought his way through some bushes and lifted himself onto the roof from where he could enter through the window. As he walked through the dark halls of the empty house he could feel the adrenaline pump through his veins. Somehow the image of that junkie they had met on the streets of Amsterdam crept back into his mind, followed by more primal pictures of undefined dark creatures lurking in the shadows. Sid shook them out of his head and just enjoyed the kick he got out of the experience. 'Maybe the fear of dangerous, deranged drug users hasn't been all that illusionary', he thought as he entered a room that reeked of hash and other undefined substances. There was a pile of wooden boards leaning against the wall and Sid realized as he approached them, that they were covered in Graffiti. Sid skipped through them and soon he realized that they were quite good. Maybe if circumstances had been slightly different these could be hanging on the walls of Ol's apartment today, instead of the paintings by the infamous dutch rock'n'roll junkie Herman Brood. Unfortunately they were way too big to take them with him and so Sid got out with nothing but the impressions they had left in his mind. He sat down beneath the stars on the roof that once must have been a nice terrace but now had plants growing on it, and started to write, ducking every once in a while so the passing neighbors wouldn't notice that shady character with the dark glasses on the roof next to their house.

They got up and started packing. Around noon Ol. came over on his lunch break to say goodbye. They stood around a little inept and Theo joked around about how they'd all start crying now. As Ol. responded with a big grin on his face Sid suddenly remembered how they had gone to his shop yesterday. When they had arrived in front of the door they called him, like he had told them to, but he did not answer and it took some time until he came to the front and opened up. When they walked in, it looked to Sid as if Ol. covertly wiped a tear out of the corner of his left



eye. This was not the kind of situation in which you'd ask someone you had practically just met if he had been crying, though. And Sid knew how uncertain his interpretations of other peoples body language and behavior was. Maybe Ol. had just gotten something into his eye while working!

When the end of Ol.'s lunch break had come they bid farewell with a simple firm handshake and he returned to his work, to his life in a foreign land where he lived on his own in a small apartment in choice design, making "a good living".

Sid and Theo finished packing and left the flat as well. As Sid turned around to take one last look at the small living room that had been their home for the past few days he felt a grain stuck underneath his eyelid and some tear fluid piled up in the corner of his eye...

Then they were off to Liege in Belgium, where Theo had another friend who would give them a home for the night. He knew her since they were 15 years old and at one point they had been pretty close, but they had actually never met in person, since they only corresponded over the internet...

While they were driving South Theo handed Sid *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* by William Blake again and Sid got lost in its beautiful visions until they arrived.

They met C. at the stairs of the giant modern train station made of glass, that shimmered in rainbow colors behind Sid's 3-D glasses. It took her and Theo some time to recognise each other but when they did they greeted each other like old friends. But when Theo told her Sid only spoke German she looked at him almost as if he had personally insulted her and kept talking in French. Sid had already gotten used to that behavior. There had to be something about that language that made french speakers stick to it no matter what. But Sid did not mind. It was actually quite pleasant not to be forced to make the usual small talk but instead being able to simply sit idly by, writing into his little black book. And that was what he did when they went to a nearby Pub while Theo and C. had a few drinks and talked about the good old times they had shared in the virtual world.

When Theo went to the restroom C. did condescend to talking in English to Sid when he told her he had read that there had been some kind of rampage in this city a few months ago and asked how she had experienced the situation. She told him that the incident had had an impact like a bomb in peoples daily lives and that she would have been right at the place where a young man had started shooting randomly into the crowd, had she only taken a bus earlier.

When Sid asked if she knew anything about the motivations behind the attack she shook her head and said: "Nobody knows, he had no reasons! He was just stupid!"



Sid looked at her pensively and said: "These kind of things seem to happen more and more!" After a short pause he added: "...then again maybe you just hear about it more over the media. I mean mankind has always been violent."

"No I think it's something about this time we live in", she replied, "It really seems to happen all around!"

When it started to get dark outside a band began to play in the tiny crowded pub.

The music they played was fast, hard and loud and the band members who wore freakish red and black masks on their faces kept plunging into the cheering crowd.

Sid took off his jacket and made his way to the front in order to dance.

Maybe he should not have gone all the way into the front row though, because when he got there the big sweaty lead guitarist grabbed his head and pushed it to his chest, trying to get him to suck his exposed hairy nipple.

Shortly thereafter another guitarist jumped into the people next to him, who spilled their beer over his shirt. All in all it was promising to be a great night.

Apparently C. did not enjoy the brain wrenching music quite as much and so they went back to the car in order to drive to 'the square', where the nightlife supposedly was unfolding. On the way there Sid ate the rest of the gigantic meal from yesterday he had taken with him in a doggy-bag. It tasted great.

When they arrived at 'the square' a surrealistic scenery unfolded in front of them. The first person they encountered was wearing rabbit ears and had a painted face, and the further they went through the small passages the more strange creatures began to appear out of the dark before them.

There were all kinds of animals, video game characters and people dressed in fashions of past centuries.

They sat down outside of a bar that was located next to a wall which, as C. explained, had become the place to piss, puke and shit at by night and day. As she said that a guy stumbled toward the wall and threw up a golden stream of vomit while a man dressed as a bag of French fries peed next to him.

Theo pointed to the steps in front of the closed down shop across the street and said to Sid: "Do you know those pointy thingys they put on top of buildings so pigeons can't sit and shit on them?"

Sid looked over and saw similar spears installed on the steps.

"They have the same thing here for people!"



When a limping girl dressed as a mouse walked by C. explained that they were students celebrating that they only had a hundred days left till graduation. A cowboy walked up to their table, looking like he wanted to challenge Theo to a duel, but he was stopped by a couple of zebras that pulled him back into the drunken mob he had broken out of, where they started a speaking chorus proclaiming: "Free Tibet" A couple of guys in their late twenties gathered close to them and eyed them like a couple of predators watching their prey. More and more dressed up figures joined the crowd and suddenly it started to march toward their table, still yelling in incoherent French and performing some kind of strange dance. A part of the weird parade crashed into the metal chairs next to their table and a couple of lions fell down. But eventually they got up again and hastened to get back to their herd. They sat there for a couple more hours and watched the scenery before they returned to the car and drove to C.'s apartment. When they arrived C. started to realize that she would have to get up and go to work in a few hours. While she sat at the kitchen table wrecking her mind about what she should do now, Sid unrolled his sleeping bag on the couch next to it and wished them a good night.

When he awoke the next morning he realized that he had had the room to himself since Theo had apparently spent the night in C.'s room. Sid got up and made himself some of his instant coffee and peanut butter sandwiches. He sat down in one of the windows in order to eat, watched the life in the streets below for a while and finally started scribbling into his little black book. Suddenly the sound of the door behind him ripped him out of his thoughts and a young woman walked into the kitchen. She did not seem to recognize him at first, but when she did she let out a silent scream and her facial expression turned sour. Sid got up, walked towards her, extended a hand and introduced himself. Hesitantly she shook his hand and asked him where C. was. When he told her that she had left for work early this morning she seemed as if she was about to panic and told him he had to leave. She cursed C., him and the world and started rambling something about a guy that had stayed at their flat once and who had apparently wrecked the place because he was stoned and drunk. As she bemoaned the fact that he had pissed on her towels and repeated that they'd have to leave, a wrecked and tired looking Theo walked in.



He started talking to the girl in French and eventually he convinced her with his charm that they could stay until C. would return on her lunch break in half an hour. They sat down at the kitchen table and since Theo had apparently normalized the situation, Sid continued writing while the other two kept talking in French.

C. came home about an hour later and after she and her roommate had yelled at each other in French for a few minutes she told them, that they'd better move.

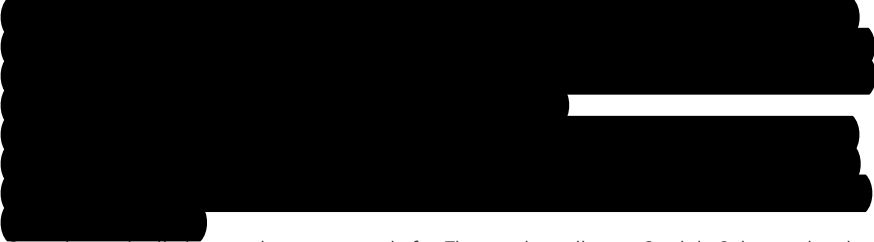
After stopping at the nearest supermarket where they stocked up on food for the road, they drove to the foot of a mountain with a church on top, that towered over the city. They ascended the mountain and sat down in the grass beside the church. Next to them a tower arose into the sky that was surrounded by a fence and construction workers with heavy machinery. Sid could not tell from the architecture whether they were in the process of erecting it or if they were just renovating. Either way, the fact that it was fenced in tempted his restless soul and so he went around the building to a place where he was out of sight and climbed the barrier.

He landed on a large plaza, surrounded by columns and as he walked to the balcony at the edge of the mountain, he passed a number of giant soldiers made of bronze that had apparently been placed there to commemorate the nations that had helped liberate Belgium in the war.

He got to the end of the square and gazed over the city that unfolded beneath him.

He stood there and took in the impressions of this grey but beautiful town, all those small roofs of apartment buildings, train stations and churches and the vibrant sounds of life, rushing cars and subways and sirens filled the air.

Let all he could think of was *her!*



Soon the road called out to them again and after Theo said goodbye to C. while Sid waited in the car, they took the highway down south to Luxemburg.

They stopped halfway and made a little detour to a nearby lake at which's shore they wanted to camp for the night.



After they searched the area for a place to put up a tent they decided they'd just make a fire beside the lake and sleep in the car.

After they had gathered some wood Theo set up the fire while Sid once again went swimming. And once again it was a cold but cleansing experience for body and mind, but this time he did not stay in quite as long and since he could warm his bones beside the fire afterwards he stopped shivering soon.

After they had roasted some food over the flames they took one of the canoes that lay around, pushed it into the water and got in. There were no paddles in the boat so Sid used a large stick to stir instead. As they drifted into the middle of the lake Theo lit a spliff and recited William Blake: "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is – infinite." Sid reached for the moon that reflected in the water beside him and set the stars in motion when his fingers touched the surface.

They stayed out there for some time, floating down with the stream enjoying this small moment of freedom that they had traveled so far for.

Sid took a deep breath and let out a loud howling sound that echoed back from the hills that surrounded them. At one point they tried standing up, which almost made the canoe turn over. This did not keep them from trying to stand up on just one foot though, and again they did not fall into the water but got a little wet.

Behind them Sid could hear the rushing of waterfalls and the sound of a few passing birds that sounded like mad laughter.

He wondered whether this sense of impending doom was just the product of his paranoid head, but he couldn't shake the feeling like there would be some unpleasant news awaiting him.

Things went good, too smoothly, were almost boring, so he felt safe.



He felt like he should use this grave place in time for some meaningful philosophic conversation with Theo, [REDACTED] they returned to the shore and went back to the car soon where they went to sleep on the folded backseats.

Sid wasn't entirely sure what it had been that woke him up the next morning; The fact that the ground he was sleeping on was hard as concrete, Theo snoring beside him, or the freezing cold. As he got up he recalled the dream he had had: He had gone to the airport in order to pick up someone [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In his dream they actually got on quite alright and for some reason Sid brought him to his flat that somehow had turned into a youth hostel. . .

At that point his memory of these images and feelings of the past night became somewhat hazy. . .

He pushed these memories of events that had never actually happened out of his mind and focused on getting some warmth back into his body and cleansing the cars windows that had actually frozen overnight!

They decided to drive into the sun and eventually just kept going south until they finally, after some stops along the road and a temporary loss of orientation, arrived in the small French town where Theo's old friend and former bandmate lived at. He used to play the drums and live at a squat together with Theo, until he got a girlfriend that told him he should get his act together and make something out of his life. . .

They drove up in front of his apartment and the first thing that came up in Sid's mind as he caught a glimpse of Ma. through the window was: "Another one who cut his hair and grew up, eh?"

Ol. had told them that the first time he had gone to the Netherlands he had been stopped by police on the way because he had long hair and drove a van.

When Sid met him he had a haircut that was short and looked trustworthy, professional, normal. . .



Theo rang the doorbell and when Ma. opened he greeted him like a long lost brother. Sid introduced himself and they entered the flat. It was small, spartanic and rather impersonal but as Sid went through the door he noticed the sound of *The Doors* greeting him.

After unloading their backpacks at the apartment they went shopping to buy some syrup to sweeten up Sid's beer and juice to mix drinks with... Theo had prepared him for tonight throughout the entire trip as the day he would break his usual abstinence from alcohol and drink, since that seemed to be an important aspect of the relationship he had with Ma. and which he wanted to share with him...

So as soon as they had gotten the necessary utensils and returned to the apartment, Sid found himself holding his first beer, clinking glasses with Theo and Ma.. He was still uncertain whether he wanted to follow this path that had been laid out for him, until the end. Actually he was more concerned with the question whether he could use Ma's internet access

He waited as long as he could in order to be at least somewhat polite, until he could no longer bear the pressure that had built up inside him and asked if he could log into his wireless connection.

After Ma. had set everything up for him Sid hastily opened his mail account and nervously waited for it to load

Sid's world collapsed, as it had so many times before. So that had been it!

Had he seen it coming? His unconscious might have had, Sid realized when he remembered his dream from the night before!



What was his reaction? What did he feel? He could not really tell, maybe it was the alcohol that already clouded his mind. . .

While Sid sat there silently his glass was steadily being refilled by Theo and Ma. who vividly talked to each other in French about the good old days. Meanwhile Sid began to wreck his brain over the question when and how he could return to Berlin.

He did not know whether Theo had planned anything else for their trip, but they had pretty much arrived in the area they had started from and if Sid wanted to return without spending all of the money he had left, he would have to hope that he could find people on the internet who were taking the same route to Berlin some time this weekend, so they could share the price of that special offer train ticket. It would be an exhausting trip that would start early in the morning and last all day and Sid was afraid that when he would finally reach Berlin he would be a nervous wreck, even more so under the altered circumstances. He felt like this first day was somehow crucial.

Shortly after this thought had crossed his mind a sad chuckle escaped his mouth and he shook his head abstractedly as the other two stared at him inquiring. There had always been something that made it seem fragile and alterable, something that demanded from you that you fought and kept your mind alert. But that was what he needed in his life, in order to stay focused, keep writing and simply feeling, perceiving – living! Or at least that was what he told himself. . .

Sid looked down at his glass and realized he had emptied it as these thoughts were chasing through his head. He decided to fill it with water so that it could not be refilled, and switched to drinking absinth instead, so he could control the dosage himself and in order to gain some inspiration instead of numbing his mind.

But when they ate he caught himself drinking wine again, since Theo had told him that it matched the food and the sensual experience would not be the same without it.

After dinner they smoked a joint and Sid started drawing on the empty pizza boxes that lay around him.

He drew a head with intervening faces instead of hair, that were all saying something in small speech bubbles,



As the evening progressed Sid could feel the tiredness that had been towering over him all day slowly gaining control and so he convinced the others to go outside so he wouldn't fall asleep. They went to a nearby garden that belonged to the premises of an old palace and was therefore closed at night, which did not stop them from entering. . .

After they jumped the fence they walked past a compound and as Sid approached it he could make out a deer staring at him from the dark. In the trees above there seemed to be dozens of birds they could not see but which made their presence heard by strange screams that sounded unlike anything Sid had ever heard before.

They approached an imposing fountain in the center of the park that was spewing water into the night-sky, for no one to see but them. Theo sat down at it's edge and rolled another spliff and they smoked it devoutly, listening to the sounds that surrounded them. Then they went on to a nearby playground where they ascended a wooden tower. Sid gazed over the garden to their feet, the lit up palace in the distance, the river that ran to their right.

The feathered creatures in the trees screamed and Sid cried back, croaking from the bottom of his heart.

On their way back outside they passed a huge memorial with the French flag waving in the wind and Theo and Ma. stopped in front of it in order to sing the national anthem, with their hands on their hearts.

When they returned back home Sid prepared himself a place to sleep, lay down and scribbled into his black book until he fell asleep while Theo and Ma. kept drinking till sunrise



[REDACTED]

When he awoke the second time he started searching the internet for a way back to Berlin and once he found a possibility he told Theo he would be leaving soon and asked whether he could sleep at his aunts place near the German border tomorrow night, in order to make the journey on Sunday.

Theo replied they would leave for Sarrebourg soon and that he could call them once they were there. They started packing and also loaded some of Ma.'s stuff into the trunk, who was apparently moving back to his parents house, and then the three of them drove off.

First they dropped off Ma. and his belongings at his parents home and ate something at the big dinner table together with his family who had lively conversations in French while Sid smiled silently and scribbled into his black book.

Afterwards they drove to the house of Theo's grandmother where the scene repeated itself. Suddenly the sound of his phone ripped Sid out of his trance. It was a girl he had contacted earlier about the train ticket for his ride back. She told him they were not going since there was supposed to be a strike and it was unlikely you could go anywhere by train in the next few days. Sid thanked her, hung up and went back to the table where he silently sat down and stared into nothingness while the conversation around him went on. It seemed like the rocky framework he had tried to built for himself to ensure that he wouldn't collapse under the pressure, had collapsed right on him.

The way back had already been a source of stress for him before, but now that it turned out he would not even be able to take the way he had planned. . . .

Did he still have the energy to search the internet for other options? Did he have a choice?



He considered [REDACTED] just going on, leaving this retreat behind since it was apparently no longer sufficient and moving further. The south of France maybe, Spain, Portugal . . .

But then he turned to Theo and told him he'd have to get internet access to find a new way home. Theo responded he would quickly go somewhere for about 10 minutes and then they'd drive to his place where he could get on his computer.

So he left and Sid kept scribbling into his little black book. The other family members left as well one by one until Sid was alone with Theo's grandmother who took the chance to speak German and started a conversation with him. Soon 10 minutes had turned into 45 and Theo hadn't returned.

As Sid talked to his grandma about modern architecture and rising prices he could feel his smiling facade crumble. He called Theo but no one picked up and so he did not really have any other option than sitting around and waiting.

When Theo finally returned with an apologetic smile on his face Sid did not do anything except silently dragging him to the car.

At his flat Sid stormed to the PC and checked his remaining options. They were few, they were expensive and they all required him to leave on Saturday already, if he did not want to spend another week in this town . . .

At first he considered taking an offer for a high-speed train that would not be hit by the strike. He had planned to work [REDACTED] in the train, which included drawing, something that was rather difficult in a cramped backseat, should he carpool.

They had stopped at two different stores on the way in order to get the right utensils [REDACTED] and Sid hated doing things in vain. But in the end the high speed train fell through as well because the booking required extra credit card information he did not have here with him and so he had to take a car ride the next morning as his last resort [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid called the guy and they [REDACTED] arranged the ride [REDACTED]

Theo stuck his head through the door and asked him where things stood and if they would still have some time left tonight.

Sid replied he would be done right away and suggested they could go to that nearby lake they had swum in a year ago and where they had also spent his last evening in town the last time he had been here.



[REDACTED] they left the flat. As they walked through the quiet streets of the little French town he asked Theo what his plans looked like for the upcoming days, weeks, months. . .

After a few moments of silence he replied: "I have the feeling that if I don't take some time this year to sort and structure all my writings it may just die. . ."

The expression on his face was one of deep concern and it looked as if he was driven by something inside him. A feeling Sid knew himself only too well.

"But for that I would need a place where I can be alone", Theo continued, "Maybe I'll get myself some kind of shed alongside the British coast. . ."

They arrived at the lake and gazed over the silvery water before them as they walked to a place where they could sit down and smoke the last few crumbs of weed Sid had left.

The wind carried over the sound of music and laughter from the other side of the lake.

"There is a camp of Sinti or Roma over there.", Theo explained. "I once had a barbecue here with Ma. and as we heard the music I suggested we go over there and join the party. He called me crazy and said they would probably rob us. So I waited till he had gone home and then went there by myself. It was great! They gave me drinks and delicious food and we partied all night. But at one point a girl went up to me and asked if I wasn't afraid of coming to a Gipsy camp on my own. After all they might rob me. . ."

"You know there are many big memorials all over Berlin for the Jewish people that were killed by the Nazis, there are a few for gay people now, but first prominent one for the thousands of Sinti and Roma that died in the Holocaust still isn't finished.", Sid said and looked over at the dancing lights of the camp that reflected in the water.

"At least they haven't thrown these guys out of the country yet. Although the next election is coming up. . ."

Both got lost in their own thoughts for a while and just sat there, listening to the music. Sid got out his little black book as he had done so many times throughout their journey and began to fill the last pages with more beautiful words in ugly handwriting.

Soon the wind that kept blowing over the water got too cold and so they returned to the flat where they sat in the kitchen for a little while, listened to music and talked. But since Sid would have to get up early the next morning and he did not want to be a tired, nervous wreck [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he went to Theo's room soon and made himself a bed.



[REDACTED]

V

[REDACTED]

V

Life

Once again he found himself crying on the floor, huddled up to a ball, shaken by sudden shivers, unable to move.

He tried to recollect the events that had led up to this, but it all seemed intermingled in his mind. He had come back from his journey through Europe a week ago.

He remembered that the next day had been filled with many beautiful moments.

He spent the evening watching a movie.

His mother called in order to plan the Easter holidays. She told him that his uncle had cheated on his aunt and would not be present at their family get-together this year. This took Sid completely by surprise and he tried to sort his emotions.

Afterwards they went to the *Drugstore*, the friendly squat around the corner, to get something to eat. Sid had been wondering whether he should get up on the open stage again and sing but it took some time before other musicians got up there and by the time they did he was too tired. He did not really know where this tiredness had come from; it could not have been from too little sleep since he had plenty of that the night before.

They returned home and went to bed.



[REDACTED]

Once again he wondered if he could still uphold the romantic view of love he had had for so long. A view that he had ironically almost given up on.

[REDACTED]

∨



He went to a punk concert at the *Potse*, the bar beside the *Drugstore*, where a guy his flat-mate A. had met the week before, was playing.

It was a manic evening fueled by violence. When they arrived they were greeted by a man whom's face was splattered with blood from his nose which he had apparently broken in a fight. But instead of sitting down and accepting help he preferred standing tall, proclaiming that the other guy should not assume he had won just because he broke his face...

They proceeded inwards and Sid entered a moshpit filled with a bunch of giant bold headed men and people wearing shimmering body armor. He jumped into them and they kept shoving him back, catapulting him into the crowd circling them. People kept collapsing right and left but were immediately met by helping hands who put them back upon their feet so they could continue their lunatic dance. Until suddenly a huge, heavy Punk hit the ground beside Sid and could not get up again. Sid put his arm around his shoulders and together with two others tried to carry him into the other room without being smothered underneath him. He placed him on a chair beside the bar, the two others took care of him and so Sid immediately returned to the ruckus in front of the stage.

After the first band was done they went into the hallway and after Sid had painted the walls a little brighter he joined the conversation.

In the spirit of the night he continued his little social experiment and tried to persuade A. to hit him in the stomach with all her force.

Sid tried the good old rhetorical question, asking her what one can ever really know about himself if one has never been involved in any kind of violent confrontation.

When she kept resisting their friend Maa. joined in his chant, rallying her to violence by showing her how easy it was to punch Sid, but still they remained unsuccessful until some neuronc cross-fire in Maa's brain triggered him to make the ultimate argument by banging his head against the wall. Due to the impulsiveness of his action his skull approached the wall in accelerated speed and made an uncomfortably loud, gut wrenching sound when it hit the concrete. He buried his



head in his hands in laughter and when he looked up his grin was stained by the stream of blood running down the canyons of his face from a rigid scar on his bold head. Even Sid's towel which he had held under the running cold water of a broken faucet in the bathroom, could not stop the bleeding which soon covered its dark blue color with light yellow spots.

After they had gone to these lengths with their pledges to A. she was no longer able to decline and when Sid ordered her to punch him once more she swung out her fist and buried it deep in his intestines. Grasping for air he sank down besides Maa., thinking that this would probably be his last social experiment for a while.

A little while later he sat down on the ground, just in sight of the camera he had set up and started writing. Since it was just for the camera and he did not seem to have any idea left in his skull he just typed:

Alright just act as if you're writing for one minute!

That's all I need, maybe 2...

Next to this wonderful drunk guy. This beautiful scene of breakdown and despair!

Lets hope no one trashes my camera in this time.

hmmm this should already be enough I guess.

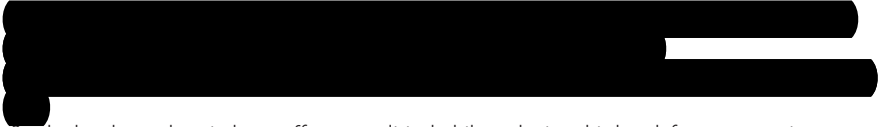
2 minutes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He was about to surrender to the black void [REDACTED] but suddenly the lines of some poem or song crossed his mind which he had thought of before in a situation like this and which seemed nonsensical and paradox but made all the more sense because of it. He needed a twisted logic, a twisted mind in order to deal with this creature of breathing and spitting irony.



hold me tight and you'll never get me and will never be happy
let me loose and I will love you just like that



On the bus home he tried to stuff some political philosophy into his head, for an upcoming exam which had been keeping his head hostage for the past few weeks and at times had worn him down enough to let thoughts of desperation and despair creep into his mind, infect his brain and gain control of his body, rendering him almost motionless. Whenever this happened he also became painfully aware of all the other obstacles, trials and tribulations in his life, in his present and future. He took out his little black book and scribbled some lines into it, trying to capture the situation in the hope of taking control of it that way:

*I can barely see
the sun
rising behind a distant horizon
a time of happiness and fun
which awaits me
if I can only get there
but I'm so painfully aware
of all the obstacles in my way
I can't say
if I'll be able to make it there*

When he arrived home he was greeted by a strange girl standing in the hall and starring into the mirror before her, as if she was searching for something in the reflection. Flickering lights and loud music swept out of the blue room and when he entered he was met by his flatmates who told him they were about to leave for a club, pleading for him to accompany them. Suddenly confronted with a decision like this his head was immediately flushed with a



wave of doubts, pros and cons, possible, potentially disastrous outcomes. He had felt the urge to break free from the pressure for some time now and the night he had spent at the theater and in dark streets yesterday, somehow did not quite achieve the feeling he needed. Then again maybe a simple night at a club would not be drastic enough either.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Then again, would he really be able to enjoy? It was hard enough these days and every inch of his body seemed to scream for him to just collapse in desperation.

[REDACTED] The hardest hitting factor of all was the fact that he had never been to the club they were about to go to. Whenever he had read about it on the online network that told him where to go to, he had mistaken its name for an error in the script. //about blank... But he had heard about it

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So he went along to the club and when they finally arrived and entered into the rhythm of the beat he felt finally at ease again. After a few minutes of dancing his head started to fill with ideas and somehow the strength to pursue these plans returned and cast away the doubts and depression. So he sat down on the ground next to the speakers, got out his touchwriter and began to write these lines...



He got up to go see that psychiatrist again, that seemed to be in love with the sound of her own voice and who liked to attribute all his problems to his marijuana consumption. She had told him to stay off the weed for a month until today, and report back to her about the changes. If he still had depressed phases, followed by times of manic activity.

He had been pretty down for a couple of times, mainly because studying for the exams at the end of this semester had forced him to focus on that part of his life, his career, his future...

Whenever he got to that topic his thoughts were caught in a downward spiral and he envisioned himself as a bum, living on the streets, a social outcast with no financial security and a bag full of unfulfilled dreams.

Did he still have manic phases in the past few weeks? That question was answered by his reflection in the mirror as he brushed his teeth, grinning back out of a face that was still covered completely in paint, the remains from yesterday night that now began to crumble.

He did not have time to wash it off and he did not want to. He kept it as a memento to his love of living life to the fullest, in the way that was most fulfilling to him, even if it might look deranged from the outside.

The power to do so rested in himself, within his own mind and he could achieve this state of happiness without the aid of drugs.

That was why staying away from his pipe had not really been hard. The fact that he had carried a little bottle of Absinth in the pocket next to his chest instead had probably helped though... It still seemed quite absurd to him that that shrink had said drinking alcohol would be completely unobjectionable. But after all it was perfectly legal to be an alcoholic in this country, wasn't it? Looking back now he felt quite good about the last few weeks and his life in general, although that might only be due to the fact that he was still riding yesterdays high.



[REDACTED]

V

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block] But he liked weird!

He spent his whole life looking for the strange, trying to integrate as much of the unusual into it as possible, hoping for it to take him out of the regular frame, to shift his senses and alter his perception of the world around him.

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]



[REDACTED]

V

[REDACTED]

*my friends all show their concern
ask me if I don't see the danger
but they don't seem to understand:*

[REDACTED]

*and whatever doesn't kill you
just makes you stranger*

[REDACTED]

*I'll never get lazy
I guess I like to be crazy...*

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

V

[REDACTED]

V

[REDACTED]

He was awoken by electronic music coming through the walls from Franz's room. After a few failed attempts of blocking out the noise with pillows Sid gave up and turned on his mp3-player in order to listen to *The Beatles* or something similar to get himself into a better mood. But unfortunately he could not see what he turned on when he pressed the play button of the mp3-player he had bought just a few weeks ago at a big electronics chain, after the expensive brand-name product he had used before had exceeded the life span after which you were expected to have bought their latest product anyway.

The screen of his new player had broken about two weeks after he had bought it and so it played something that did not sound like Lennon inviting him to the Magical Mystery tour but rather like a dirty old man talking about the misery of everyday life. Sid lay there and listened to the Bukowski audio book he had gotten from Theo the last time he had visited him, unable to move as he heard the rough, rasping sound of the writer's voice. Sometimes the fact that he reminded him that others felt this way too helped Sid, but this time it just seemed to depress him even more. Finally he did get up and the drunken voice that came from the speakers next to his bed said: "Sometimes you climb out of bed in the morning and you think, I'm not going to make it, but you laugh inside — remembering all the times you've felt that way."

After showering and eating some cereal Sid realized that he could not show up [REDACTED] today as tired and depressed as he was. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. He remembered that there were some exhibitions of "urban" or "pop" or "street" art in the center of the city and decided to go there, hoping they might inspire him and get him into a better mood.

They did not, or barely, and so all Sid could think as he walked through the halls filled with sten-



cils, digital animations and other pictures of replications, was how empty all of this was and that Walter Benjamin had been right when he had said that these kinds of work lacked a certain aura.

As he walked down graffiti covered staircases to leave the last gallery he encountered a woman who bathed the hall in flashing lights as she took pictures while she said to her friend how pretty all this looked. Her friend replied in a thick British accent: "You're right! I wonder why all this looks so great here. In England it would smell like piss and there would be needles lying around everywhere..."

Sid left the gallery which's gift shop was bigger than the exhibition hall and went to the nearby tram station. On the way there he suddenly stopped beneath a bridge as he saw something among the graffiti and street poster art. Almost indistinguishable from the other street art there was the poster of a man climbing a ladder next to a small QR-Code and a tagline of what Sid recognized as the name of a new videogame. Bewildered Sid moved closer and realized that this was another form of guerilla marketing, that new trend in the advertising industry to promote products in unconventional forms...

Sid remembered how he had walked past a facade in his neighborhood a few months ago, that like so many buildings in this city had been exposed because the house that once stood next to it had been destroyed during the war, leaving an empty space and a blank wall that now was no longer blank but had a giant white rectangle of plaster on it, with holes that formed the contour of a face. One of the two French couchsurfers he had been with pointed at a slogan in the lower left corner proclaiming "go forth!" and said: "That seems familiar!". When they got home Sid goggled the slogan and the internet presented him with a video that showed how the mural had been made: A Portuguese street artist had attached explosives on the plaster and once he blew them up the face appeared.

Sid and his guests watched the rest of the video in amazement. But their enthusiasm was broken when the slogan "go forth" appeared on the screen again, followed by the logo of a well known manufacturer of blue jeans. Suddenly one of the couch surfers exclaimed: "Now I know why those words sounded familiar! That's the slogan of an ad campaign we got back home. They make regular billboards and TV-commercials with that slogan in France! Don't you have it here too?"

Since that day, whenever he passed it Sid wondered whether the main purpose of that beautiful piece of street art was to take hold in the subconscious of unsuspecting tourists, so they would buy pants once they returned from their vacation.



And now that he encountered yet another example of this new advertising trend he wondered even more if he was secretly being brainwashed. Regular advertising was bad enough. He did not own a TV, so he was safe from advertising spots. He had heard people claim: "Ah I don't even notice them", but wasn't that even more dangerous? He had come across the topic of propaganda in his studies and knew how powerful the medium of film could be. Some of the examples they had discussed at the university bore some striking resemblance to these images that were flickering on the screens of millions of homes every night, not in their messages but in the means they used to sell them effectively.

Sid knew that he had been shaped by those spots, even though he did not watch them anymore, the damage was done. But he could not escape the commercials that were spread all over the city in the form of flashing billboards and screens on the side of buildings and in the subway, following him with every step he took.



Swansong to Romantic Love

There he was, sitting on the giant scaffold [REDACTED] looking down at a couple of police cars gathering on the street below. How did he get here? He couldn't tell anymore. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] somehow it seemed worse than all those nights before. Why had he come up here? Was it actually what it looked like?

He glanced into the abyss to his feet and looked at the policemen that had assembled to search the facade with flashlights. He ducked behind a piece of wood and got out his camera. Somehow the only thing that seemed to matter to him at this point was to get some good material out of the situation. But soon he realized that he would not only have to leave his cover in order to get a good shot of the situation, he also would not get very good film on the harddrive of this strange machine he had labeled "soulcatcher" with a piece of tape glued to its side...

About 12 hours later he found himself in a black void that matched the empty feeling he had in his chest

*this place is designed to drive you insane
I thought as I realized
that the chairs in the hall
were there for a reason
and no reason at all*

*suddenly I was lost in this emporium of strange
with a racing mind
and the feeling like there was someone unkind
waiting behind every corner*

He s ran out of the dark hall he was in, hoping that seeing the sun would enable him to leave the dark halls of his brain as well.



*'I have to get a lawyer as a friend'
I thought
as two dark man appeared
out of the translucent shadows before me*

*I sat there and panicked
remembering the night before
the policemen who got me down from that scaffold
in front of my house
I realized I was afraid
of too many things to even list
in these few lines as well as in my mind*

He wrote after sitting down on a bench outside and calling his friend Nathan with whom he was supposed to meet in a few hours in order to tell him he might not make it. Then he went back into the Modern Art museum near the Central Station and the closer he came the more he wondered whether this place was actually designed in order to drive people into a state of mind that might be considered crazy by the majority, or if that was just a paranoid product of his brain that was being tortured by a house designed to drive you insane...

*I had entered
and felt the urge to live here
grow inside me
but could I afford it?
afford the price they took for their service?
Of driving the minds of the strange
and the normal alike
to be overflowed
with ideas and twisted thoughts?
I decided to ask at the counter*



The old lady there
did not look me in the eye
and again I wondered
wether they only hired people
who could show years of experience
in the field of insanity
gathered in some of the finest
mental asylums of the country
as patients

'If not, that would be a nice thing to do', he thought as he had found some corner that was vaguely familiar, since he had read something about the artist who was being presented in this wing of the building. Even though he still hat no clue what a *Fettwinkel* was he felt safer around it because he had heard of it before. Just the same concept as brand recognition in the advertising industry, he thought.

But when one of those former mental patients and trained insanity-makers approached him he felt cornered and his last escape was to switch to his little black book in order to convince the grim looking creature that he did not mean any harm and just wanted to write.

So he sent of these very words and continued writing in the new book he had gotten in the tiny box-formed supply center next to the cafeteria at his university.

He wrote on the pages between the black covers and the man, Sid did not seem to be able to store in a defined box in his head, turned around in search of a new target.

But Sid could still not manage to calm down his brain and so he turned around the page of the new little book, that was unfortunately not as handy to write on as his last one, since it had lines instead of blank paper and a floppy cover that moved every time his pen penetrated the pages.

I ran outside again
and sat down on the stairs
but I could not stay for long
There was something inside
driving me further
I did not know where it came from
all I knew was; It was strong



*and so I ran through the streets of the city
the further I got into it's pulsating center
the more I got lost
and my search for temporary shelter
at low cost
only brought me deeper into the maze*

*In the end I had to surrender
after I had denied myself access
to every place I found*

When he finally arrived at his house he met his flatmate Camille who was standing in front of the door, searching for her key in the depths of her handbag. He opened the door for her and they started to talk. When she asked where he had been he told her that he had been running around [REDACTED]. After some hesitation he added with a broken grin on his face: "The police had to get me down from a scaffold [REDACTED]. She did not notice his sarcastic tone right away and started complaining about the police instead. But when Sid added that he came down once he saw a fire-truck approaching she gave him a concerned look and asked: "But you weren't planning on jumping down from there or anything like that, were you?"

They had arrived at the fifth floor and Sid got out his key to open the door to their flat while he said: "Naaah. Don't worry. I don't...I don't think so." They entered and went into the kitchen where Camille picked up a sheet of paper from the table and handed it to Sid with the words: "We could all go to group therapy I guess.". Sid looked down on the little yellow paper and read: "Diagnosis: major Depression". After a few moments he looked up again, from the little paper that held so much meaning and glanced at Camille who said: "Hey lets sit down and have a zig and a spliff, shall we?"

A few hours later he sat in a small movie theatre, still staring at the blank screen after the credits had rolled and everyone else had left.

The film he had just seen dealt with the way corporations were trying to shape their workers. It mainly consisted of people working in fields like "human resources" who addressed the camera and talked in strange terms that hid visions that would have sounded crazy otherwise.



The efficient and cold way they talked bore similarities to futuristic texts and were Orwellian in their simplicity. It was like seeing a dystopia in which language had been transformed in a way that was only designed with the goal to process information as quickly and effective as possible, leaving no room for thoughts or emotions that did not aim at the omnipresent goal of heightened productivity.

A man representing a firm that worked to increase companies gross profit proclaimed he wanted to bring about a cultural change while a woman that starred into the camera with stinging eyes proclaimed she wanted to engrave the change into the workers DNA.

In addition there were scenes showing architects who designed the giant futuristic buildings in which this change should be brought about and job interviews with people trying as hard as they could to present themselves as the superhuman beings the interviewers wanted them to be. A few glitches in the concrete facade that was their facial expression were the only thing left that distinguished them from robots.

Sid left the cinema with the feeling that something was going horribly wrong in this world and returned home where he sat down in the blue room, turned on some music and stared into the nothingness before him.

When Camille joined him to smoke a cigarette the music switched to an album by Edith Piaf and she started to sing along with closed eyes in a voice full of emotion. Moved by this sudden exhibition of grace and beauty Sid started drawing her and when he asked her what she was singing about Camille started to translate parts of the lyrics to him.

She talked about seeing *life in pink* and regretting *nothing...noting at all* and Sid could feel a single tear roll down his cheek.

Sid starred at a giant gate-like structure that was ornamented with statues of elephants and undefinable composite beings. Then his gaze wandered to the pipe that lay on the table before him.

He had just sat through a psychology seminar that dealt with the topic of prevention and intervention of drug use, with the substances he had inhaled last night still flowing through his veins and a vague sweet smell emanating from his cloths.

Afterwards he had fled to one of the places that he had determined as his new place of refuge:

The museum close to his university to which he now had access at all time thanks to the student-



discounted annual season ticket he had bought yesterday. After he had sat down in the cafe in its backyard in order to at least have the possibility to smoke his pipe he started writing but was suddenly ripped out of his concentration when his touchwriter started vibrating, signalling a call.

[REDACTED]

Now he fought with himself, trying to decide whether he should smoke and go inside to look at the artifacts of sunken civilizations like he had planned.

A saying from one of those cultures appeared in his mind:

“In the words of the ancients, one should make his decision within the space of seven breaths. It is a matter of being determined and having the spirit to break through to the other side.”

Maybe he should stop thinking and live by that resolution. Then again this philosophy had been picked up by Japanese kamikaze fighters in the second world war and also enjoyed popularity in the German propaganda of that time...

Or was that thought just part of the very problem this saying tried to help you to overcome?

Maybe the answer lay somewhere inside the building behind him...

Sid picked up his pipe, filled it with a few green crumbs and inhaled. Then he got up and entered the museum in search for answers to all those questions and problems that were tormenting him.

The first thing I did

once I had entered

Was appeasing the guards

That seemed to look at me with insane eyes here as well

I hoped they would have a place in their minds and hearts

For a man with a notebook and a pen

But I soon realized that I had lost my little black book

Somewhere on the way

Hoping that it was still in his flat he got out a piece of paper instead.



The exhibition he went to proclaimed "Asia" above its translucent doors behind which he could see another guard, protecting little statues that lay behind glass as well. He entered and walked past the statues, vases and murals around him, towards something that appeared like a dark hole in the wall before him. Suddenly he heard the words "Hotels and caves" in his headphones and wondered whether Carl Jung had been right when he proclaimed that there was no such thing as coincidence.

A few hours later he found himself on a train heading east. His flatmates and 2 others were going to a club with him after they had played a game at their flat that involved drinking the oldest beverage they could find in their fridge, calling the eleventh person in the contact list of their cell phone and telling them you loved them or headbanging for two minutes before walking ten steps without falling down.

It had sent them down a strange path they were still following when they left the flat. Sid got up and hang upside down from one of the handles above. The train started moving and the motion went over into his body that began to swing forth and back.

Shortly after they arrived at their destination and entered the club. After going to the bathroom together they went outside again and stepped into a green wonderland in search of a bed they could lie down in. After passing an old caravan they found some hammocks, sat down and stared into the treetops above. Sid felt as if he was lost on some tropical island, a wish that had been implanted in his mind for as long as he could think back.

He let his gaze wander and saw some structure that resembled an old army bunker next to a comfortable looking double bed in which a couple of fellow lost islanders stared into the sky behind the leaves as well.

He was ripped out of his thoughts by his friend Ja. who lamented the fact that the girl she had taken with her to their flat was no longer with her since she met up with some other friend who had promised her drugs, shortly before they entered the club. Now she had called and informed Ja. that they were not joining them since they had gone somewhere else instead. Ja. who had just ended her long term relationship with her boyfriend in order to explore another side of herself was devastated by those news since she had apparently been hoping to get closer to that girl she was miraculously drawn to all of the sudden.

When Sid saw the agony she was in, cursing the emotions that she was driven by at this point and which he knew only too well he proclaimed: "Every single human being is alone! People go to concerts or clubs or other gatherings in the hope of melting with the crowd around them,



but in reality they are still alone! They spent the night together and hope that they will become one in joined orgasm. But in reality they are experiencing that orgasm each for themselves and for themselves only! In reality they are still alone! The key is to accommodate yourself with that constant state of loneliness and find happiness within it!"

He did not know whether he believed in those words himself. He had once heard them from an old bearded singer who sat on a graveyard on his screen.

But it felt like these words might help Ja. cope with the situation, and after all wasn't that what was expected from you in human interaction, telling someone else what you thought?

[REDACTED] all the people he met seemed to have that desire to inform him about their view on the situation. Maybe they assumed he needed to hear it and that their words would lead him to decisions that would make him happy eventually. But all they did was making him doubt the beautiful phantasies and flashing illusions he had constructed around him in order to bear the circumstances. He saw his life through their eyes and the world that opened up before him seemed grey, with pain and agony lurking behind every corner.

But maybe his plan of fleeing into the world of the museums that were spread all across this city was working because he felt as if he could shake those outside influences and view life through the colorful rainbows of his 3 D glasses.

The only nagging thought that still held on to him tightly was the fear that it was not so much the museums but rather the weed he had smoked before entering...

Still he was able to view life like it was just another picture in an exhibition after he left the holy halls of art and science, even when he got back into the company of others. And even though the effects of the drugs started to disappear with the time that went by...

He was still confident he could look at every situation presented to him and paint it in beautiful colors before the images could be transmitted into his consciousness.

He sat next to the speakers in the small run down cellar that had become a dancefloor for thousands of people in history's strange course. [REDACTED]

"Maybe a part of me jumped from the scaffold that night. A part that the police officers could not persuade to get down...

Or maybe I'm just being melodramatic here. Maybe it's just that urge that lies within my mind to frame everything in poetic terms, shape my memory of the past in ways that appease my sense of aesthetics. But maybe the only way for me to say something that could be considered the



truth is speaking in prose. Freud claimed that this was a direct way towards the subconscious, a dangerous path though, that walked close to the edge of insanity since it let subconscious desires and pictures into the conscious part of the mind. The only thing that kept the artist from being a lunatic was the appreciation he received for his work from other human beings who could detect a sense of truth in his works since they touched a place in their subconscious they had in common. I rarely show my work to anyone so I'm left with the fear that they are just the crazy scribbles of a mad man."

After paying a visit to the friendly salesman that stood in the bushes of a nearby park. Sid drove the subway north to yet another museum.

He fled those thoughts and sought refuge once again in a museum down the street that showed the works of Gerhard Richter.

He sat down in front of one of the artworks his flatmate T. had told him about last night. Like many of Richter's works the name was simple but true - *the mirror*.

And that was what it was, a big mirror on a wall near the entrance, next to photorealism and abstract paintings. Sid sat down opposite to it and looked at the images this artwork presented.

Most people just passed it by unassuming, regarding it as what it was - a mirror. Some looked at it with quick glances, checking their appearance and adjusting their wardrobe or their hair.

Others took pictures of it - of themselves, with their digital cameras and phones, like they took pictures of everything.



Suddenly one of the guards with those stinging lunatic eyes appeared in the mirror and approached Sid's reflection. He pointed at something outside of the frame and asked: "Is that your wheelchair there in the corner?" When Sid told him no he added: "Oh, well because you were sitting here on the floor I thought you were handicapped. But you're not...luckily!"

Sid took a look at the watch and realized that he would have to return to his flat soon to sit down with his roommates and talk about the current situation that had been shaped by the party the week before, which Franz had held for his birthday. T. and A. were mad at his behavior towards them when he declared it beforehand as *his* party alone, to which *he* would invite the majority of guests. The cops had come and put their whole flat in danger of eviction since none of them had a valid contract.

So Sid took one quick stroll through the rest of the exhibition and left to catch the bus back home.

They sat down and talked everything through. Sid tried to negotiate between the fronts, drew a new cleaning plan for the flat and called the repair service of their landlord company to plead them once more to repair their broken plumbing under the sink and the broken toilet tank and check the fungus that was spreading on the walls of their bathroom again.

Afterwards he was exhausted. He could feel himself crashing down in free fall

he sank down on the floor and remained there, motionless and with closed eyes until A. entered the blue room and asked him if he wanted to come along to the theatre performance of a friend of hers.

He came along. Afterwards, while the crowd was cheering and the actors bowing Sid left the theater alone and started strolling through the giant dark park next to it. Again shady figures appeared out of the shadows left and right and asked him if he needed something, anything.

Sid ignored their luring voices and went deeper into the darkness. It began to rain and the cold sharp wind brought sounds of music and screams to his ears. Sid decided to follow the sounds and as he walked across a green field a giant, colorful tower started rising behind the trees in front of him.

He continued to approach it and found some kind of carnival taking place on the ground below it.



The sight of the few wet and worn visitors to this hidden attraction and the penetrating sounds of the flashing fairground booths drove Sid to continue onward to the exit of the park and enter the subway.

He got off again at a station close to his flat and decided to walk home across the wasteland that was now being transformed by giant machines into a desert filled with giant hills of sand. Sid walked across the traintracks on the bridge made of a few metal carriers holding a signal light.

[REDACTED]

Sid awoke with an all too familiar feeling of despair and anxiety. He felt as if he would not be able to face this day and all its potential dangers. These fears came from the strange dreams he had had over the course of the night, of failing and falling into black voids, in dreamworlds that bore a painful resemblance to the reality he was awaking to now.



Paradoxically his first instinct was to return to these dreams, in order to escape this world just a little while longer. But instead he decided to go to his new destination for escaping reality and so he got up and after a quick breakfast and shower he drove the bus a few stops down the road to the Richter exhibition again.

Sid entered and leaned back against the wall opposite the mirror again and a strange sound rang in his ears.

He leaned forward again to get his little black book out of the back pocket of his pants when a horde of other visitors entered from the left side of the mirror and assembled around the reflection of the painting next to Sid, until they blocked his view completely.

Sid looked up and saw a man with a receding hairline and a card hanging on a chain around his neck, labelling him as an authority on everything you could see here. The man started telling the group what they saw in the simple metallic frame before them.

When he lead his flock further to tell them what they should see in the next picture of a roll of toilet paper, Sid leaned back again and once more he heard a loud, shrill sound emanating from the wall behind him.

He leaned forward again and the sound stopped, he leaned back and it went off again. Sid turned his head and looked into the unforgiving eyes of another member of this mysterious league of minions whose job Sid just could not seem to figure out.

Where they just here to protect the artwork or were they here to guide and inform the visitors as well? Somehow he just could not shake the feeling that they held another function they probably were not even aware of themselves.

Although he was no longer as paranoid as he had been in the last few days some part of him still suspected that they were here to alter the visitors behavior in a way that seemed insane in his eyes. The man raised his voice and yelled at Sid in a tone just as shrill as the sound of the alarm: "When will you learn that you're not allowed to lean against the wall?"

Sid retracted his tail like Pavlov's dog and sat down cross-legged so his back wouldn't touch the wall again. He knew that it was probably considered a sign of a narcissistic personality disorder to attribute everything that happened around you to yourself, but he was pretty sure this alarm had not been here yesterday. Could it be that they had installed it just because of him?

Another horde of tourists appeared in front of him and a second guide told them what they saw. With amazement Sid realized that her instructions were completely different from those of her predecessor. One of the tourists pointed at the painting and redrew his finger with a look on his face as if he had been burned when the shrill sound went off again.



The guard turned around and gave Sid a look full of hatred. He seemed as if he was about to jump at Sid in order to sink his teeth into his neck.
Sid got up and fled this madhouse with a big grin on his face in order to meet up with his friend Nathan who was supposed to show up at his flat in half an hour.
Nathan came late, but this time he actually did show up and a couple of hours later Sid found himself stork hunting. . . .

*Slowly I approached the grey beast
that was being distracted from the other side of the lake
for my souls sake
I could not find rest until it was deceased
my friends told me that in the Asian cuisine
stork was considered a delicacy
maybe the knowledge of the Far East
on killing birds in order to feast
on their corpses would at least
be increased
if I studied the artefacts
of the ancient Asian culture
I did not know why
but I knew I would do anything
to kill the vulture*

But for now he had to put the stork hunt on a hold since the museum of ancient cultures had already closed for the night.
Instead he followed his flatmates to meet Maa. at a squat at the other end of town where he would DJ tonight.
But when they arrived Sid was exhausted by the ride in the subway during which they had been forced to stand since the entire train, just like the bus, the stations and streets, was crammed with groups of people dressed in yellow uniforms and groups in red, that seemed to be in some kind of rivalry and that filled the air with thick tension.



Sid wondered whether he could start a fight between the two groups if he pushed a yellow man and blamed it on a red one. Especially the red liege seemed like it was easily provoked and the color of their cloths in turn provoked Sid. Especially a certain woman's bright cloths and stockings were like a red cloth in his bulls eyes and he wondered what it might take to get her to beat him up.

Maybe a few words about how much he despised red and loved yellow would be enough. The women in the streets of his neighbourhood would probably demand a lot more for the same service. But A. convinced Sid not to go through with his plan, telling him he was going to theatre group for that purpose.

Last Thursday their instructor had told him to demand from the youngest and sweetest girl of their group to hit him. He ordered a punch in the face and she acted as if she sank her fist in his face, stopping it only inches apart from his nose. He stayed in character and told her she would have to establish actual physical contact in order to please him. After she gave him a little slap on the cheek another girl told her that there was a special technique of hitting someone in theatre and film that looked real but only hurt for a second.

She added something about relaxing the cheek and the next hit he received was much harder. But when she asked him if it hurt he told her to hit harder. So she hit him again and he told her to hit harder. She hit him again. . .

The slaps echoed from the walls of the empty practising room

When they entered the squat and sat down on a couch in the cellar he let his gaze wander through the room and he saw a woman with clean shaved head and cats whiskers drawn on her cheeks.

He collapsed on the sofa and closed his eyes. But he couldn't help it.

But when he opened his eyes again the damp but friendly room reappeared around him with the installation of dissembled TV's and other electronics behind which a man with a mohawk and a friendly smile served beer and other beverages.



[REDACTED]

Sid got up, took a shower, got dressed and left to catch the subway to the museums down south. He needed to go to the Asia section of the halls of ancient artifacts in order to find something in the teachings of Japanese samurai that would help him in his struggle to kill the stork. Somehow he felt like that was the only thing that mattered anymore. He was determined to have it become his new obsession to hunt down that vulture that lived in the nearby park! 'A man needs a mission', he thought. Something to give his life meaning. A steady center his life could revolve around. And since he felt like the old center of his life was slowly slipping away, it was about time to find a new focus, a new goal that was easier to achieve than the vague and unobtainable wishes of love and reliability he had had before. Sid got into the train and started to write:

*In the morning I awoke
in the ruins of my life
that I did not want to face
my mind still in a haze
and I felt lost in a maze
unable to find a way out
she tried to find me at a place*

[REDACTED]
*we had ever had
but I had been lending
my heart and attention to a friend that night*



*who put up quite a fight
when I tried getting him down from traintracks
and stopping his attacks
on the things around us
and himself*

Sid arrived at the museum and stormed into the Japanese section of arts and crafts. He found a lot of pots and other cooking utensils that might have been used to prepare the stork once it had been slain. But Sid had no intention of swallowing the bird. It symbolized all that grey, twisted matter that was already inside him and that he wanted to get rid of by killing the vulture. In the next room there were pictures of birds, but they were small and insignificant to him. Maybe the signs on the scrolls on the wall bore information, but he was not able to decipher them.

There was nothing around that would help him. Nothing of great enough importance to occupy his mind.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Afterwards he continued his search and when he entered the section of eastern oriental nature depictions his gaze suddenly fell on a book with two big white birds on the cover.

With nervous anticipation he skimmed through the pages and finally found the picture in the middle of the book with a descriptive text next to it, written by a promoted biologist. It talked about how true bonding between partners among birds and mammals alike required that individuals knew one another and communicate through body language and sound. It claimed that life-long bonding between mating partners has been observed time and again among cranes, storks and different goose species but that so far there has not been done enough research to establish whether egrets and herons bond for the duration of just one breeding-season or beyond... Nothing about killing those magnificent birds!

Why had he wanted to kill this poor creature, that only wanted to share the rest of his life with the female it loved?



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He had a certain romantic and probably illusive view on love and he was not going to give it up just because it did not go along with reality!

[REDACTED]

Sid arrived at his destination and went to the park [REDACTED] He sat down among the muses to Schiller's feet and waited [REDACTED] Someone had painted the faces of the greek goddesses white and drawn black circles around their eyes. An old couple walked by and after they asked whether he belonged to the statue they started complaining about the graffiti.

"Now they look like vampires!", the old woman moaned and when Sid asked why she did not like vampires she replied they weren't real. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Music was flowing through the open windows of the blue room. It came from a big evening gala that was being held in the building across the avenue. Their otherwise run down street had been transformed by palm trees in flowerpots and a red carpet over which doll-like creatures walked into the opera house, where a big orchestra performed tonight.

Sid focused on the music again that led his mind wonder inside the opera where he sat down among the exquisite guests and listened to the violinists that held the stage. Their faces were distorted by concentration to absurd grimaces as they tried to duplicate the works of some long gone master. Sid looked around into the visages of the guests that seemed to thrive on bloodlust, only waiting until the finest dissonance would give them an excuse to jump onto the stage and lynch the poor musicians. Suddenly Sid heard a cell-phone ring and with terror he realized that it was his own. The crowd turned towards him and he could see the insanity twinkle in their eyes now that they had finally found a victim, whom's crime was so harsh that it deserved an especially hard and painful punishment!

Trembling in trepidation Sid tried to find his phone in the depths of his pocket in the hope that he might be able to appease the art lovers. But he could not seem to find it. He tried to retrace his tracks in order to remember where he had last seen it and realized he had left it next to his bed and with racing heart and mind he opened his eyes and awoke.

He found himself inside his bed in the blue room. Through the open windows the sun was shining in and with it entered the soft sound of the violin of the music teacher across the street who apparently had invited others to play their favorite pieces this morning.

The music was disrupted by the sound of his phone that had ripped him out of his dream.



[REDACTED]

Sid felt great!
He got up and left the house with a big grin on his face. He rode the subway north toward the island of museums and entered one impressive old building that was dedicated entirely to one fallen Mediterranean empire.

After fighting with two guards over his right to sit on the floor he starred at the gleaming white statue before him.

It showed two naked men fighting. One of them was standing tall, his sword proudly raised into the air, with long concrete hair moving motionless in the Persian wind, his foot resting on the chest of the other man who was lying on the floor, curled up in defeat. Sid remained in front of the statue for some time and he could not help but to feel sympathy for the defeated marble figure on the ground.

But when he finally approached the stature, he saw that the curled up creature was holding a dagger in its hand that was slightly raised and close to the Archilles' heel of his unassuming rival.

Sid got up and returned to one of his safe havens; the gallery down the street displaying modern art from the middle of the last century.

He should never have left the museum yesterday afternoon, he thought. When he went to the subway station to get to university his train left right before his eyes and after he had waited for some time a shrill voice from the speakers above him informed the passengers that the next one was 10 minutes late. But these trials and tribulations of everyday life were still bearable and Sid remained optimistic

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] explore the abandoned attraction park in the woods of



the east where Sid had considered camping and living for a while, or at least filming how he did, living out his fantasies on the silver screen instead. So the next morning he decided to take his tent and camera with him. [REDACTED]

As he got out of the bus and walked towards the museum he felt his spirits rise again. He entered and got down in front of a giant, colorful picture in order to write. From a display of the yellow submarine in the next room came the soothing voice of John Lennon proclaiming "All you need is love". Sid felt his mind unwind and started to write. But suddenly the sound of his phone ripped him out of his trance again. [REDACTED] He left the museum so he would not upset the guard, that had already, yet again, yelled at him for leaning against the wall. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid looked up into the darkened sky above and wondered whether it would rain today, then he returned to the parallel world he had created for himself, where he always had shelter from bad weather and eruptions in his stormy life.

[REDACTED] thrown out by a horde of guards [REDACTED] Sid asked whom the grounds belonged to at the moment.

"I don't know, I don't have to know!", he replied, "All I know is that I have the assignment to guard this place and that's what I do! The boss knows whom this ground belongs to, that's enough!"

[REDACTED] I know for sure the place does not belong to you, so get the hell off it before I get out my little book and take down your personal information!" [REDACTED]





Sid rode the subway south in the hope to find shelter in another one of the museums his annual card granted him access to. He needed to put things back out of perspective again and the exhibition of prints by artists like Francisco de Goya titled *On the Edge of Reason* sounded promising. Sid strolled through the exhibition but somehow the pictures of monkeys, donkeys and other creatures in human poses did not have the desired effect on his mind. Maybe it was because they were too small, or because they were black and white.

Sid sat down in front of *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* barely able to make out the winged critters that towered over the head of the tormented artist, from his position.

Was this a cautionary tale?

He had he come here with the very intention to send his sanity to sleep, but why exactly? What was it again that he was hoping to find? Did he actually yearn for a visitation of monstrous products of a sick mind? Or were these birds and bats just a necessary evil on his path toward something greater? Why was he walking down this path anyway? Just because great men like Goya had done it before and now hung in museums as humanities abject attempt to portray itself as cultured, civilized and considerate?

Sid realized that these questions that clouded his brain probably bore the answer within them. *They* were the real monsters that held his mind hostage and compared to them the monstrous bird he had been hunting last week seemed pleasant and poetic...



Once again he ran for shelter.

He sat in the bus, headed toward the gallery of modern art down the street and wondered how his life had gotten so painful that he had to warp his perception in order to bear it, so soon again. He got out, crossed the street and descended the staircase that lead beneath a bridge where he sat down on the sparse green spot next to the muddy waters while trying to recollect what had happened the day before.

After an exhausting seminar about Psychoanalysis that had stretched out over the entire day

[REDACTED]

Sid stared at the sunlight that was reflected by the water and danced on the walls of the bridge and with a heavy heart he grasped for the pocket of his jacket and got out his pipe as he realized that he had been fighting a monster the past few days whom's defeat had held the promise of a fairytale-like happily-ever-after... But now as he had rammed a dagger through the beasts heart or at least cast it out of town with garlic and silver crosses he realized that the happy ending was just an illusion.

He was still left with a [REDACTED] creature that sucked the life out of him at regular intervals.

He filled the pipe with a few tiny crumbs, telling himself that it had been more than a week and more than enough of a pause since he had last smoked this dreadful herb. Suddenly a boat filled



with tourists passed by on the river before him and the masses, that were crammed together on its sun deck turned their burned pink necks towards him. A man with a captains hat and silvery sunglasses pointed at Sid and proclaimed: "To your left you can see the New National Gallery and to your right you see one of Berlin's famous failed-artists-turned-junkies. They are an ugly by-product of the majors plan to repay the city's massive debts by instituting a lucrative Creative-economy!"

The tourists got out their expensive cameras and phones that had entered the English language with the prefix 'smart' due to the push by experts hired by the companies that produced them. Sid remembered how his friend Maa. had once told him that he was repeatedly photographed by tourists when he found himself in the city that had been erected in the harbor of Sid's former hometown, after a sleepless night on LSD.

He gave the tourists an ugly forced grin and waved at the lenses that passed by, trying to capture his soul, while walking backwards toward the staircase. Abruptly he turned around and headed up the stairs, aiming to calm down his paranoia with the installation of Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club band singing "All you need is love" in the catacombs of the modern building across the street.

Sid got out his annual ticket and walked toward the guard that stood before the entrance and gave him a grim look when he extended his hand with the plastic card, he hoped would calm her down. But instead she only seemed to get angrier and Sid got nervous. Fearing for his life he searched his brain for any ways to appease the young woman before him. What was wrong with his behavior, what unwritten code of conduct or what written law of this establishment, this city or this state was he breaking now? And why was this question always somewhere in the back of his head? How was he supposed to breathe freely in this town?

Sid quickly turned around and decided to make one last desperate attempt to get the guard to smile again, who seemed to get madder and madder the closer he came.

So he hastened over to the counter where he waved his pass at another woman in uniform and demanded a ticket. The woman uttered something like: "You have to get a ticket today because it's not that full anymore since the Richter exhibition closed during which they decided it would save money and paper when you don't get a ticket but now they adjusted that rule again and you have to get a ticket first because it has to be scanned by the machines they hold in their hands which are now programmed again to capture every visitor in their data base for statistics which they did not have to do during the Richter exhibition but now they are doing it again so they can at least gather some information which is why you'll need to get a ticket with your card and



show it to that woman over there at the gates so she can scan it..“

Sid ripped the ticket out of her slowly extending hand and backed up again.

He did not get the guard at the door to smile but at least she let him pass with the words: “So ist’s *RECHT*” in a sharp German tone and with special emphasis on the last word which made Sid wonder which of its multiple meanings the woman had intended.

In desperate distress Sid ran past her and toward the calming voice of George Harrison’s alter ego who was just proclaiming: “It’s all in the mind!”, from the other end of the room.

Sid came to a halt in front of the small screen displaying colorful uniforms and blue, hand-shaped creatures.

At the sight of another guard who suddenly appeared around a corner Sid got out his little black book, even though he wondered whether he had caught the glimpse of a smile underneath the man’s big moustache that seemed somewhat similar to the beard of a certain member of a fictional band.

He felt more secure with pencil and paper in his hand and an analytic look at the screen that he hoped would make him look like the film student he actually was. And didn’t he have the right as that person to sit on the floor in front of this art piece in order to take notes? He was a Gonzo journalist, a film critic that was writing a column. The only problem was that this column would probably never be printed and that no one was paying him for this. And wasn’t that the only circumstance legitimizing your actions around these parts of the world?

If someone paid you for them?

His security was shattered even more when a sudden shrill sound penetrated his ears. Sid who had already been through some hours of aversion therapy during his previous visits to this museum reacted the way the alarm was supposed to make him react. The words ‘Do not stand too close to the walls!’, appeared in his head and he felt the urge to back up inside himself that could not be silenced by the pleas of reason, that someone else had triggered the sensors of the little machines on the ceiling and that there was nothing to move back from. The guard with the moustache appeared again and Sid wondered once again whether he had seen a smile on his face before he had escaped his field of vision. But then he felt the eyes of the guard, that had stopped behind his back, in his neck and wondered whether that facial expression was really expressing joy and a good will or whether it was the mask of another mentally insane player in a work of performance art.

Sid pushed that paranoid association out of his mind but still he wondered how many times this man must have heard the shrill alarm going off since he began working at the museum. How



many times per minute, per hour, per day, per week, per month, how many times a year? Did he have the same impulse as Sid or did the fact that he was wearing a uniform change his reaction? Was he part of the group that was implementing these electric shots to the ear rather than part of the group who received it?

And what did this illusive power do with him? Had the sound turned him crazy out of frustration or mad and obsessed with might?

Sid winced when the warden suddenly whistled at him. Slowly he turned around and looked into his big friendly grin. The guard was gesturing towards him with an almost conspiratorial seeming movement of his hand that seemed to say: "Come here, I've got something to show you. . . But hush hush!"

Covertly he pushed a button on the wall and pointed at the picture of Mao beside him. Suddenly the face began to dissolve and instead a red star appeared. When Sid took a closer look he realized that the picture was made up of rows of colorful little painted 2 dimensional figures that were now slowly being covered up by red figures.

Why did the man with the friendly moustache want to show him this?

Why did he think it might amuse Sid to see the rise of Maoist China wrapped up in fast motion? While Sid was still unsure if he agreed with the sentence someone had once sprayed beneath the statue of Marx and Engels at Alexanderplatz claiming: 'We are innocent', he was definitely unable to grant Mao the benefit of the doubt. Not even from the standpoint that he was just a product of his genes and his environment. . . There was something inside him that gave him the feeling that something was simply inherently evil about the person in the picture before him. Maybe it was his moral compass, sounding off alarm, if there was such a thing, or maybe it was just the way he had been thought to look at this man back in history class, when he had still been young and impressionable.

Sid turned around and sat back down in front of the little screen again at which he starred, desperately trying to believe John Lennon as he proclaimed: "All you need is love!"

A few hours later he found himself in front of a big black loudspeaker from which a deep dark sound was emanating

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Suddenly the whole day seemed like a disaster. And there was no way to escape it! It was already 9 o'clock which meant that the museums had closed quite some time ago! Where else would he find shelter, be able to lose himself in other worlds created by like-minded souls?

Maybe here? He did not have a little plastic card granting him the right to let himself be inspired by the surroundings, but he did not need one either!

Sid sat down next to the dark speakers and tried to relax his mind, slow down all memories and fears that lingered in the back of his head and simply send his thoughts on a journey...

He closed his eyes and tried to see something in the darkness before him.

'I have to work on the old fashioned tradition of day dreaming!', he told himself. Maybe images would appear in his mind that might bring him inspiration for a short story or at least a poem...

Sid sat there for some time in the lotus seat, breathing slowly and rhythmically, with his arms in his lap, but all his mind produced were some vague associations of machines or marching cyborgs that lingered on the verge of the picturesque. Apart from that all that flooded the curves of his brain were words. Long, twisted sentences chasing their own tale and racing in a speed that was way too fast to follow.

[REDACTED]

But why did he want to think that way anyway? Was it really all that important to daydream? And if he did who told him if he would still be able to switch back to words he could pin down on a piece of paper to form a story? Why was he looking for pictures inside his head anyway when he had a beautiful scenery right in front of him, if he simply opened his eyes?!

He got up and walked toward the speakers again. He passed the shady figures that moved ecstatically to the music emanating from the altar of sounds before them and came to a halt in front of it, when it caught him in rays of light that came out of a little machine hanging in the tree above.

Sid grasped into his pocket and got out his other pair of 3 D glasses that had been used before film had become digital and therefore still consisted of green and a red plastic lenses. He put them on and looked directly into the light. In the darkened surroundings he could no longer make out the people around him, but he still felt their presence and their movements that seemed to move the air around them, the ground beneath their feet and captured Sid as well



in their common trance. When he looked up he no longer saw the machines that produced the mesmerizing sounds and sights, or the people behind them, but simply the colors that moved in the treetops above. They looked like dragons chasing each other in long luminescent lines and colorful circles. When the projector above suddenly started to glow in a deep red and took the shape of an ants head, Sid realized he had found the pictures he had been looking for!

Suddenly he noticed a dark, calming voice repeating the word “mushrooms, mushrooms, mushrooms...”, over and over again and when he recognized it as the voice of the caterpillar in the Disney adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* he asked himself wether he had managed to turn his life into a portal fantasy somehow.

Moments later an actual portal opened up in front of him, when images began to appear in the darkness of the trees before him. Somewhere in the back of his head the nagging thought that they had probably installed a projector appeared, but Sid pushed this last remainder of reason away and tried to loose himself in the abstract colors and shapes.

Last night he had not been able to sleep. He rolled around in his bed, unable to stop the stream of thoughts that ran through his head and made it impossible for his mind to unwind. He finally fell asleep when the first rays of the sunrise fell into the blue room, but soon thereafter he was ripped out of his soothing nightmares again, by the sound of his phone that informed him of a long awaited call by the janitor. After they had made out that he would come over in a few hours in order to fix the broken sink, Sid tried to go back to oblivion but he was unable to rest his mind and fall back asleep. The fears that always crept around in the back of his head pushed forward and demanded attention and so Sid began to worry that the janitor might find out that they were living in this flat illegally.

But his worries disappeared when the man in the blue boilersuit rang his doorbell at noon. Sid let him in and they sat down on the bathroom floor where they started to chat while he was exchanging the old corrosive pipe under the sink with a new one that was shining in the sunlight as if it was made of silver. In a thick Berlin accent he told Sid that he had recently been sold by the landlord company to another firm, for which he now had to take care of 140 households. After lamenting the loss of the days when every house had it's own janitor instead of just another employee of a faceless firm, he began to tell Sid what it had been like growing up in this town. When he found out that Sid studied film he started raving about the films that he watched every



night, comforting him after a long day of scampering from one house to the next. But they were not the kind of escapism you might have expected, but rather esthetically and intellectually original movies with depth.

He was just talking about going to the movie theater with his friends on LSD, to watch Kubric's *Space Odyssey* for the first time, when he went over to take a look at the toilet tank that had broken during last years New Years party. When he realized that the entire thing had to be redone he said he would take care of the matter and tell yet another firm he had to contact that the damages had come about independent of negligence.

After they had talked for about an hour he had to leave for the next household so Sid walked him to the door and extended his hand to say goodbye. But the janitor abruptly turned around again and said: "Do you have any idea how I can get my hands on the movie *Brazil*?"

Sid said he didn't know since he had seen the film at a friends house.

As the man in the boilersuit ascended the stairs Sid was reminded of the movies sole hero; a renegade artificer who helps the main character to fix his air conditioning without being ground up by the teeth of bureaucracy. A real human being, a hero of everyday life. One of the few that seemed to be left...

Sid left for university and decided to finally go to sleep as soon as he returned home.

But when he did, once again, he could not stop his thoughts.

Instead he stayed up for hours, rolling around in bed and inside his head.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Sid rode the train back into town from his grandparents garden house where he had spent the last 2 days trying to write and to take care of things he had to do for university. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he was stuck since a thunderstorm had begun to shake the little wooden cabin. Sid cursed fate and himself for staying out here for so long. But his only way back into the city involved riding a bike for half an hour and if he did not want to be struck by lightning he had no chance but to wait for the rain to stop. So he waited.

He waited until he could not bear it anymore. He looked through the rain towards the horizon and when he saw a few rays break through the darkened sky, he could not hold himself back any longer and jumped onto his grandmothers old bicycle he had come to pick up in the first place. He began to ride down the small roads and in a matter of minutes he was soaked to his skin. But when he raised his eyes from the muddy path before him he saw that the sunlight was breaking in a million prisms of raindrops and forming a rainbow before him. Sid had always asked people why they weren't pausing to enjoy this wonder of nature, instead of chasing the pot of gold that supposedly was at its end. And now he was doing exactly the same...

The next day Sid found his way once again into the ethnological museum close to his university where he sat down among relicts from native tribes of Southeastasia. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] finally went to bed around 2 o'clock, since Sid had to get up early tomorrow and hold a presentation about Engel's and Lenin's concept of 'truth' in his politics seminar. He lay there exhausted from all those sleepless nights.

[REDACTED] He closed his eyes and his mind started to fade away.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] had actually made it to his grandparents little garden house [REDACTED] just in time to go swimming as the sun set in the nearby lake.



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] began the next day with swimming as well. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Sid was on his own, trying to make sense of it all by scribbling into his little black book:

*I'm just lying around in the grass for hours
the sun shining above
bluebirds singing as if they are in love
bees humming in the colorful flowers
it's the beginning of a beautiful day
and yet somehow everything seems grey
because in the dark shades of the garden shed*

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

After he had finished writing he remained on the ground and stared into the stainless blue above until he had finally gathered enough energy to get up.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Sid looked up from the script for an adaptation of Michael Ende's *Never Ending Story* he was writing, when he suddenly saw lights moving on the soft skin of the tent he used to call his home, when he had erected it on the roof of his building last summer. But this time he did not have a sky spoiled by city lights above him. Instead he could see treetops through the little rectangle of translucent fiber at the ceiling of the tent, behind which lay a vast clear sky full of stars. After a while he realized that there had to be a source the light was emanating from, so he turned toward the opening next to him and stuck out his head. Once again he was struck by the pure beauty of this place. Sid had stumbled upon some time in the late afternoon just before the sun had disappeared behind the trees at the other shore of the lake. Now the moon was sinking into the dark waters and with astonishment Sid realized that it was yellow, orange, almost red as blood. When he lowered his gaze a tiny spot of light on the surface of the water caught his attention and he wondered whether the light was getting bigger or closer. Next to it, the fog was illuminated and crept over the lake like the ghost of some giant being that once inhabited it. The tiny light kept growing or approaching, though and suddenly Sid found himself wondering whether this meant trouble? Was it maybe an approaching boat like the one Sid had seen before, coming from the same direction straight at him?

When that one had arrived he had recognized the old man inside, as the guy he had exchanged a friendly wave with when he was fishing close to their shore earlier. This time his face looked more grim as he told Sid [REDACTED] that it was illegal to make campfires so close to trees [REDACTED]

Sid feared that the man might call the authorities [REDACTED]

But instead the man gave him a friendly look that seemed as if it was lost in memories of a time when he had been young and had done the same. "You're lucky the water-police has not seen you yet! They would not just have ended your fire but your whole stay at this beautiful lake! I know fire keeps the mosquitoes away and keeps you warm, [REDACTED]...", the man said, turned around and floated back across the water where he had come from.

This incident had allowed Sid the illusion that he was safe in this place, as long as he did not do something that would seem alarming and dangerous from the other side of the lake.

And so now when the small light on the surface of the water kept approaching and he realized that it actually was a boat, he was able to shake off the nagging fear that it was steered by people who were coming for him. And indeed the boat made a turn and found its way into the



close-by harbour instead.

Sid looked down at the scribbled notes before him again and tried to continue to outline the skeleton of a script for the book he had read [REDACTED] earlier, [REDACTED]

The concept seemed simple, but intriguing: What if a child of today's world or one of a not so distant future was reading this book, that now no longer had the form of a bound book with cover and pages but rather that of a screen of an electronic device? And what if the words that were written on this screen were conceived as the child read the story, by someone who was watching him? Could that omnipotent narrator make the child actually believe it had just entered a world that was subject to his own will?

Sid toyed with the idea for a while, to use the movie that had previously been made out of this story, as found footage he could use to reassemble around scenes he recorded himself.

He could eradicate that movies terrible ending this way, that had revealed that the expansion of nothingness over fantasy the book was describing, had spread so far that it had even reached the very people who tried to adapt it into a film.

Maybe his reedited version could open the eyes of at least a few people to the actual message of creativity! But then doubts once again clouded Sid's mind when he realized that this plan would require him to spend a lot of time in front of a machine, editing everything, and more importantly: He would not be able to show his work to a greater number of people since it would be an act of copyright infringement!

So Sid turned the page of his little black book and condemned it to join the other pages of scribbled notes that were swept away by the stream of abandoned ideas.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

V

[REDACTED]

V

[REDACTED]

V

The Decision to Write Gonzo

“Smoke weed!”, Nathan had once told him in a crowded club somewhere along the Spree.

“Why now? It’s cool and you will meet people, that’s why...”

Sid still could not figure out how much sarcasm had been sown into his words, but it had been the truth back then and it seemed to be true now.

Sid sat in an arena in the woods of the eastern part of town, lit his pipe again and looked up into the sky.

One of the fellow people dressed in uniform, next to him asked: “Could I have another hit?”

He was wearing a shirt with the emblem of a club that had been formed around the one common circumstance that they all loved, or liked, worshiped or adored the band that was supposed to stand on the nearby stage soon.

That band had just regained the attention of the public with a new song in which they asked the question: ‘Don’t you have anything better to do than listening to us?’ and Sid wondered how the guy that was just trying to light the pipe next to him had reacted when he first heard that song, wether he had noticed the irony of the situation or just the sarcasm of the lyrics? Only then he realized that the clothes *he* was wearing today were not his usual, but actually bore the symbol of a gagged skull as well.

How had *he* reacted when he had first heard that song? Had it left a bad taste in his mouth?

Maybe he had asked himself that question already, maybe he had forgotten it already but now...

Sid was ripped out of his thoughts when the crowd that had by now stood up around him suddenly screamed in joined ecstasy as the newest member of the band appeared on the stage. But instead of picking up his bass guitar he raised the microphone in his hand and after he had told the crowd to welcome four people he described as Salafists and terrorists, masked figures in camouflage appeared from the other side. When Sid noticed that they were holding some kind of weaponry they were already aiming and shooting at the crowd. Some kind of grey smoke came out of the guns.

After they took off their masks they sang a song that left the soft taste of bitter memories on Sid’s tongue. A song he had often heard when he was at his lowest because someone he knew back then had put it on, but which he had never know the origins of.

When they told the crowd to start moshing to their aggressive music the punks that had gathered here to see something else, did what they were told and Sid joined in as well. The last



words Sid heard came from a young man wearing a shirt that did not display the logo the rest of the crowd seemed to wear but one with a sun and a moon, the cover of a solo album by one of the bandmates.

He tried to say: "It's not quite my kind of mu..." to the guy next to him as he was suddenly hit by a wave of people driven by the streams of screams the band spat into their microphones...

A few seconds after the young man hit the floor the wave swept over Sid as well, who tried to jump up above its surface to catch some air. When he landed his jaw hit the shoulder of the man in front of him and he could hear his front teeth clash together.

When the song was over and the crowd cooled down Sid landed back on his feet and spat out a few white particles that seemed to be part of his front teeth, although he did not perceive any pain...

Sid did not have any time to think about it because the main act of the evening appeared on the stage and he let himself get lost in their unique show, the performance of wonders they offered the thankful crowd, Sid had become a part of.

Every once in a while he grasped for his little black book and tried to write down a few lines without being swept away by the crowd:

*Suddenly he realized
the tragic double meaning
of the song he just heard
when the microphone of the drummer
caught his silent "yes"
as the guitarist imitated his parents
and asked:*

*"Do you want us to die?"
he had never heard these words
from anyone
and yet he wondered
what he would reply
had he thought this thought before
he was tempted to tell himself
that the answer was no
at least not lately*



not for a year or so
not anymore...

and when he heard him sing
of a man who's not the punk
he seems to be
but looks like he's dying
although he lives forever
he was reminded of a friend of his
he had not seen
for much more than a day
by now
and the last words
he had heard him say
'I was supposed to play in the evening tonight
instead I'll now play in the morning
although I'm already yawning
I got this stuff from a dealer
a few days ago
he told me it's speed
but by now I think
it might be Crystal Meth
I had too much to drink
I would just fall asleep
So I decided to take just a tiny hit
and that's the end of it!
Just for this special occasion
I'm using it responsibly
you see?

Somehow he suddenly started to write manifestos under the title:



Manifesto of a Gonzo filmcritic

I tell the story of a man
who goes to the movie theater
and watches a film.
Can I make a living out of it
or do I have to disguise it for that?
Hide the character
or show him?
or claim that he's omnipotent,
all-knowing?
change the mode of narration
the moral of the tale
in order to appease a sceptic nation
A crowd used to dying,
old papers of ink
that tried to make their readers think
that the opposite side was lying
Or a crowd used to reading
on screens they thought they controlled
with the touch of their hand
at least that was what they were told
would they understand?
and if so;
why do I want to make a living out of his story
in the first place?



Manifesto of an Avant-garde Filmmaker:

Death to linear narration
long live the loop
long live spartial montage

...he wrote in a sudden moment of consciousness, when he saw the monitors beside the stage. Earlier today in one of his film seminars that had the seemingly absurd subtitle: 'What does Psychoanalysis know about digital cinema?', he had read a text by Lev Manovich who, according to Sid's Professor, tried to put forth the proposition, that breaking the domination of linear narration, with techniques that are developed mostly in the underground, far away from the black box, could bring about a new way of perceiving the world.

And now Sid saw a few of these techniques in the moving images beside the stage.

He forgot all the nagging thoughts, all despair and all rage.

And just felt free.

Sid regained something that might be described as consciousness a few hours later when the band left the stage for the last time and imported music began to play.

Sid sat down and watched the crowd he had just been a part of leave, until he was thrown out by one of the guards dressed in orange.

After asking for the shortest path to the Spree he walked through the dark woods for a while.

There are better things to do, than listening to this band all the time, he said to himself when the music that crept into his ears, which found their way through some half-broken headphones he had found in his room this morning, changed from their album to the soundtrack of the first film they had tried to make out of the life of the writer Hunter S. Thompson.

He reached the river, turned up the music in his head and began to write.

But soon the cold night of the seemingly less and less reliable summer drove him away from the shore of the Spree and back home where it was supposedly warm. A place to return to, where you can rest your bones beside the fire, wasn't it?

When he finally arrived home the loop function of his cheap new music machine played the album he had been listening to earlier once again. Sid ascended the stairs and was about to put his keys into the door when he heard a voice demand a *home on the range, where the deer and the buffalo roam...*



Instead of opening the door to his flat Sid walked up the stairs one story higher, to sit down in front of a door that was now locked, but behind which had once lain the access to the roof on which he had spent his nights inside a little green tent. There he remained for some time and continued writing. Somewhere in the back of his head he still had the nagging thought that he would have to get up early the next morning in order to go to his film-seminar. But he forgot about it as he got lost in the stream of words that flew out of him.

Sid awoke on the floor at the end of the hallway from something you can barely call sleep. He had come here a few hours ago to numb down his mind and kill the ideas that kept spewing out of him in the blue room, because of the seminar he would have to attend soon and where he should probably not fall asleep right in front of his professor. He had not been able to climb into his loft bed in the dark vestibule since it was occupied by some visitor, so he returned where he had spent his nights once, before he had built the bed. He lay down at the end of the hallway, in front of the door behind which Maa. used to live, who had regularly awoken him in the morning with loud, gut wrenching techno or gabber sounds. But now A. and T. shared that room and since it was a Saturday neither of them came out of there at this early hour. Instead Sid had been thrown out of the twilight he had been in, when a certain memory became too strong to still be incorporated into the dreamlike stream of consciousness that had been brewing beneath the surface and allowed at least some rest. . . Sid put on his glasses and stared down the hallway with a crooked grin as he remembered that he had made the decision to write his term paper for the film critique seminar, about the adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson's *Rum Diary*, in the form of Gonzo journalism! It felt like a defining moment in his life and he was overtaken with a sense of purpose as if he had found his calling. Maybe he would be able to find a paper or some other kind of venue that would publish his text... Before he could be thrown off his cloud by doubts and what if's he got up and began the day with a bath.



When he searched the kitchen for something containing caffeine he finally found the textile marker he had been desperately looking for last night. He went into the blue room and kneeled down beside the cloths he had painted in the early morning.

He checked whether the layers of acrylic paint he had drawn over every logo he could find on his shirts and pants had dried.

Afterwards he moved to one of his white shirts which now bore the words "No Logo" across the chest. After putting on *Kid A* by Radiohead he added the words: "Might soon become a popular logo. . ."

He put on his newly individualized shirt and after the fortunate realization that he felt comfortable in it he left for university.

In the lunch break Sid walked down the street to find refuge in the nearby museum with Bruce Springsteen's American-born voice ringing in his ears.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Now the break had come...

But Sid barely had time to get himself something to eat in the half hour of freedom they had granted him.

He had actually planned to get himself some of Hunter S. Thompson's books from the library of the Campus named after Kennedy, but of course it was closed today, so at least that was off his mind, at least for the moment.

He sat down in the grass in front of the museum and decided he did not have the time for long consideration.

[REDACTED]

Sid hastened back to his seminar and sat down to watch an animated Japanese movie about farming.

When the film was over and the room was lit up again Sid began to notice that he had not slept for more than 30 hours. He felt the pain in his worn out body, the scar on his forehead, the bruises all across his skin and the rough spot on his lower front teeth.

[REDACTED]

He still had to sit through three more hours of seminar first though.

After an excruciating wait for the end it was finally over and he left the building and headed for the subway station. On the way he got out his touchwriter.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he collapsed
fell to the ground



he got up again
and ran
to the subway
he got in
but it was too crowded
he got out again
waited for the train in the other direction
he wanted to plunge into the lake at the end of the line
then went up again to go to the bus
when he noticed that he was trapped
unable to decide
where to go
he went down to the tracks
but they looked too tempting
so he went up again
and saw the bus leaving
in front of his eyes
he ran and he screamed
at the man behind the wheel
who was intimidated by his appearance
of rage
and stopped
He got in
and called out for help
Got out again
and ran
to the subway
he headed home
he did not know why
suddenly he heard words in his ears
proclaiming a "lust for life"
and he realized
that he would have to move on



just keep going
until he would burn
maybe it would take long
but considering his current stage
he was about to fall apart
with a giant black hole gaping in the place
that used to be his heart
the only way out
is art
He had to keep writing
after all he owed it to
his nonexistent readers
he was a Gonzo reporter
his new topic was heartbreak
and he would go to the cause
keep writing
just keep writing
it's what keeps you alive right now
somehow
he told himself
over and over again
it occupied his hands
and kept them from destroying
everything in their reach
destroying himself
he got out and ran again
the first thing he did
once he had entered the house
was swallowing a bottle of absinth
he noticed his flatmate in the kitchen
who gave him a concerned look
He said "help"
then he went into the blue room again



where he put up a camera
and a tv
maybe he had prepared it for this situation
with a target sign on the screen
he got a metal pipe
and aimed at the apparatus
after he was done with it
he lay down behind the shattered glass
keep writing he thought
then he noticed the concerned looks of his friends again
who had gathered to watch the spectacle
"I don't need no drugs to calm me"
the voice in the music proclaimed
double negative
he thought
and got up to call his flatmate
to ask her if she had something in her room
to numb the pain
she replied that the other girl in the house knew
so he went to her and she told him he would get some
if he talked
he had no chance but to agree to her proposal
when he stopped coughing he began to talk
the first reply he got was:
"Is that it?"
"It shouldn't be the end of the world"
"I agree"

[REDACTED]

he was interrupted again



see you later
he said
famous last words
he thought
when she told him

they talked
he recorded
keep writing
he thought
I will never
put this into words
I think we should smoke another pipe
and shut up
quit

please stop talking he thought
why is this distraction in front of me
what do I see
Is it true

Don't you feel kind of relieved?
When you think about it?

he should not have
gone for the help of others
a more than fatal plan
'I need to do more than...'
His mind was racing too fast
he had to take hold of himself!
keep writing
just keep writing



he told himself
this is the birth of a writer
he thought
not the birth of a future mental patient
I need to reach a museum

a vow of silence will be necessary
he thought

[REDACTED]

I will stand my man
I need to keep hunting stork
I need to still enter the machine
I'm going down
the voice in his head proclaimed

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The ending to the tale
he knew he had to leave it behind
become someone new
move on
the end can also be the beginning

[REDACTED]

now it was his time to leave...

he felt trapped
so horribly trapped

so he decided to break free
he would go on a journey south
he said to himself
and started packing

[REDACTED]

he needed to go stork hunting
he knew
but did they have storks at the lake
that he was going to

'I have to leave behind the madness! Why am I playing this song?', he thought.



'How much of a masochist have I become? One I used to be before? Keep writing. . . keep writing!', he repeated in his head.

'This town is spewing with aggression tonight', he thought.
Then an old man approached and gave him a friendly nod as he sat down beside him.
Sid looked up to the screen that told him to wait for his train toward freedom.
Was he up to the task?

He entered the subway and felt
Like the old man he had once seen
That he had once witnessed scream
At two young girls
Gesturing with his hands
At a little black book
It was all it took
To turn the two women insane
Temporarily
Since they just could not stand to see
This exhibit of insanity
"This can't be
Happening right in front of me!"

'Keep writing, just keep writing'
He thought
'Explore the situation
For the sake of this nation
Or for the sake of your sanity
Just describe what you see!'

There was a woman sitting across from him, trying not to stare him in the eye
He wondered why
'I have to get away from these strange creatures
That call themselves human beings



All those broken people
Inhabiting this town
And so he drove west
To take a bus into the
East
West from his destination
How could he ever appease this nation
All he could do was leave
Paranoia roamed in his mind
No one around
He would consider kind

But the more he left the city
The more he relaxed
He was no longer
In proximity of
The loft inhabited by his secret assassin
Less and less possibilities for a duel
With every movement out west

something somewhere
had gone horribly wrong
how would he be able
to remain strong
keep writing
just keep on wiring
he wrote
that's all that will ever be
of value
a cautionary tale to follow
and explanation of the ascent
into insanity
He noticed again



that he went further away
from the place where he had thought
he would be forced to stay
away
away
keep writing
keep writing
keep stork hunting
you have to swim to the moon!
you will reach your destination soon

Sid got out at the final destination of the subway and changed into the green bus, that would hopefully lead him outside of this town, into the nearby trees.

████████████████████
he asked himself
just a freak
a stranger
a creep
but had he not been
the same

████████████████████
████████████████████
What did Freud say about the “Wiederholungszwang”, as he had called it? The desperate urge to repeat painful episodes in your life over and over again because you had something that lay beyond the principle of lust?

A desire that lay
in the psyche
of every
human being
although not even Freud had exactly known why



people seemed to bear
the wish to die
Sid had once been cheated on
back in a far away land
and since then
he would choose a woman that would hurt him
again and again and again...

Sid realized that it was the last bus going out
He realized that he was about
to spent the night inside these woods
Soon he should aim for the sea
and just let everything else be
but for now his last refuge would be
this place of no more misery
where he would finally feel free

[REDACTED]

Lunatic that he was
he stared into the moon
and soon
he began to feel a sense of relief
he decided to make himself a bed
with the few utensils that he had
on the balcony of another building
right underneath the star-filled sky

had he escaped the undead?
[REDACTED]
or had he been too slow



had he just not noticed when
he had become one of them

Sid wrote and looked up into the stars again to cool down his head. The painful memories and nagging thoughts disappeared out of his mind just like the clouds that went by, until there was nothing left but the star sign of the great bear.

where was he heading?
into an abyss?
the bus just kept going
deeper

there are people out there
that will try to hurt you
for seemingly
no reason at all

I need to write
I need to write
I need to write
everything is going to be alright

Sid lay down on top of the highest building he could reach and began to stare into the sky.

I need to end this chapter
before it kills me

████████████████████
██████████████████
██████████

, he wrote and turned around in his bed beneath the stars to finally find some long wanted rest.



Sid was awoken by the scream of a bird next to his tent. When he left it and walked out onto the balcony he saw a giant grey scavenger sitting on a stone column on the other side. They eyed each other for a few moments before the creature stuck out its bony wings and raised itself into the sky with unsteady movements.

Sid was left alone on the stage of stone above the entrance of the futuristic building. He stared down into the woods for a while, unable to decide whether he should think about what had happened yesterday, or simply bury it somewhere within?

Somehow destroying something seemed like the healthy thing to do.

he was about to turn around to start looking for something he could smash

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sid jumped up and jammed his body against the stone column in front of him, tilting it and making it drop over the edge. When it hit the ground the sounds echoed through the abandoned buildings around, startling its inhabitants that came out of the window next to him with cries of agony and anger. As the swarm of scavengers passed, Sid noticed that he was surrounded by pieces of glass. Before he could give in to the idea of taking one of the sharp edged objects in order to use it [REDACTED] Sid grasped for a brick instead, that he catapulted into one of the few windows that had remained intact until now. He saw his reflection shatter and fall into pieces.



Sid hid his backpack behind a crumbled wall from greedy or nosy people that might roam around these parts. He suddenly remembered that they had found a heart in a jar here once, someone had left on the mantelpiece of a chimney in the building beside him. He still wondered what twisted mind might have placed it there, and why.

And who had to die in order to extract and relocate the heart like that?

Sid decided to find out whether the jar was still here. If someone else had found it by now. Or if it had been joined by other organs. Or maybe it had been eaten by now. After all even a heart in a jar does not stay fresh for ever.

But when Sid entered the dark halls next to the ballroom there was nothing there on the mantelpiece below the scraped out eagle.

And so Sid went on, onto the roof where he sat down and tried to calm his mind with the view of the beautiful scenery before him.

But on the horizon he could see the grey scavenger roaming around, slowly approaching. From the distance it looked to Sid as if it had two sets of wings and two crooked backs, tangled up inside each other, but as the creature came closer he realized that it also had two heads and did in fact consist of two separate birds that had flown close together, but now now drifted apart again. Sid jumped up and walked across the roof, toward the scavenger birds but as he approached they turned around and flew back into the direction they had come from.

Once again their bodies seemed to merge and become one in front of his eyes...

Apparently he would need weaponry in order to hunt down this creature...

Sid turned around as well to flee from the beast with the two backs his mind made him see.

He went back to his tent in order to eat some of the rice Camille had made for him when he had announced that he would go camping in the middle of the past night.

On his way back across the deserted tennis field he encountered other birds. The air was filled with the sound of their song, the rushing of their feathers.

Some of them exhibited intense colors that seemed almost tropical.

As he watched the creatures that flew through the air around him Sid wondered whether he was already in possession of the appropriate weapon for a proper stork hunt.

Maybe he would be able to capture the scavenger with the soulcatcher he carried on his shoulder.

Maybe if he caught the creature on film it would lose its powers. . .

Sid liked that idea, especially because it enabled him to continue to hunt without starting a massacre in the little park beside his flat.



That was where the bird had flown off to now, and that was where he would have to return to as well, eventually.

But right now he wasn't on duty.

He had more important matters to take care of, than an illusive incorporation of his fears.

He had to write down the phone number on the sign in front of the few buildings of the area they had turned into flats.

He would move out of the city eventually, maybe into his tent, maybe into one of these houses. . . .

But he would move out!

He also had to prepare for his film critique seminar next Monday, where he wanted to ask his professor if it would be possible to write his term paper about *The Rum Diary* in the appropriate form of Gonzo journalism.

Sid wondered what it took to convince the man that had been teaching him the art and craft of criticism for the last year. Maybe he should send him a message on that internet forum his university tried to implement, even though no one seemed to be able to use it, proposing a text they could discuss for their upcoming session on Wes Anderson: The letter of intervention W. Becker and D. Fagen of the band Steely Sid had sent Anderson after *The Life Aquatic*.

But as Sid tried to outline his reasoning why he thought that this text might be interesting to discuss in their course he got lost more and more in the depths of the German language. Unsure if this might alter his Professors perception of him in a positive or negative way, he sent off the message and got up to take down the tent and pack his things.

He went toward the little row of houses that lay behind the walls of the former army base, and wrote down the number on the sign that proclaimed that there were flats to rent.

Sid was back on track!

But when he took the bus south he once again saw the scavenger through the dirty window that was covered with graffiti and tags. The further they moved into the city that lay in the outskirts of the metropolis Sid called his home, the more people entered the bus and Sid felt increasingly cornered. In addition to that he had the problem that his machines had all died, one after the other due to a lack of energy. And worse of all: He no longer had a pen that could write. . . .

When he arrived at the central station he bought a new one and tried to find ways out of his misery with it:



[REDACTED]

How could I not have seen
what had been
so obvious from the beginning
how could we not that

[REDACTED]

The sound of his phone ripped him out of his thoughts:

[REDACTED]



He grasped for the flower he had put into the buttonhole of his jacket earlier. He had wanted to place it on top of the box of her things when he would place it in front of her door. But how would he get her to notice it? He could call Juan and tell him to open the door so he could roll the bike into the cellar. Sid once again was reminded of the fact that he would have to postpone the editing of his film until she would move out of Juan's flat, where the machine was located he was using for it. . .

'More time to gather material!', he thought

'Life is just gathering material for me anyway. . .'

And with new found resolve Sid got out of the subway and walked toward the museum that was named after the train station of his former hometown. . .

He entered the darkened hall behind the entrance and got out his little black book.

But in this black void he could not see what he was writing.

Still he felt like he needed the safety of the dark and so he stayed there for a few minutes before he could no longer bear not to write.

Sid walked out of the black hall and passed the white chairs he had seen the last time he was here.

They were assembled in a different order this time and after some hesitation Sid walked up to the guard standing next to them. Was he protecting them or was he here to instruct you? Or was his role here actually to make you think and do things that might be seen as crazy?

Sid remembered the words of the ancients, made his decision within the cause of 8 breaths and broke through to the other side.

"Are these chairs an art piece or are you allowed to sit on them?", he asked the old man in uniform before him.

"You can sit on them, but they are a piece of art!", the man responded. It sounded somewhat static, as if he had learned it by heart.

Sid gave him a thankful smile, to which he responded with a silent stare, and sat down in front of a video in which the architect of the giant dark hall to Sid's right talked about his work: ". . . they become incomprehensible, and so I quickly realized that simple lines were more effective. . . these works sit between sculpture and cinema. Cinema because the pieces are themselves slowly changing repeatedly in time, so time is the fundamental medium perhaps. . ."

Sid went on into the next room and watched a looped film in which a woman tried to convince her daughter over and over again, that even though she could no longer be with her man, life went on, and so on.



Sid was reminded of the attempts of the people he called his friends, who had given more or less the same arguments, and almost driven Sid to do something he was sure he would have regretted later on.

Sid left the museum and got into the bus that drove into his neighborhood.

He looked up just before entering and saw the scavenger again, flying across the sky, into the direction Sid was heading.

"We'll meet again soon!"; Sid whispered under his breath. He knew where he was headed now: the little park the feathered creature called it's home . . .

But first he would have to return to his flat in order to recharge his weapon of choice. The bus passed the building made up of facade, at Potsdamer Platz that was decorated with a new, giant billboard displaying a man that stared at the breasts of the woman next to him as they clinked glasses in front of the skyline of some foreign city. "Experience more", it said above him in giant letters.

The first thing he did at his flat, after plugging in his various machines, was heading for the bathroom. The sleep deprivation had put his bowels into an uproar.

He noticed blood on the toilet paper

In the crooked drawer board he had built with Franz a white bridal veil caught his eye,

He took one last look over the shoulder to see how much longer his camera would need to recharge and promised himself to go stork hunting once he returned.

Before he could close the door behind himself Franz asked whether he was alright. Earlier Sid had wondered whether he should use tactics of positive reinforcement he had learned in a Psychology lecture a few semesters ago. When Franz had stopped in the hallway to answer Sid, who had interrupted his galling, manic roaming through the flat with the question what the hell the word "lässig" was supposed to mean, Sid offered him some chocolate, just like in the clip of some American sitcom his professor had played for the crowded auditorium back then. Franz was somewhat irritated by the question since he could not remember anymore that he had just jelled out this word when he saw Sid enter...

Now Franz was standing in the kitchen, trying to put his dirty plates and silverware into a dishwasher full of clean dishes.

Sid wondered whether he should spray cold water at Franz for some "Punishment



by contingent stimulation' when he added that he'd have to be an asshole now [REDACTED]

But instead Sid asked with a sad tone in his voice: "How come lately everyone seems to be telling me what I have to do?"

When Franz told him that he was there for him and he was offered to take some time to sit down and 'chill' with him, Sid offered him another piece of chocolate, turned around and went into the cellar to get the bike.

[REDACTED]

As he rolled out of the elevator he spotted two men in Uniform who starred at him and slowly came approaching. Was there something in his behavior that could enrage them, Sid wondered. But the train arrived and he got in, sat down, and began to write on his touchwriter:

[REDACTED]

The train crossed the bridge beside the little park and Sid stared out of the window, looking for a trace of the scavenger. "Enjoy your last moments of peace you feathered beast!" he said.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] when he got out he remembered once again how he had been on top of that shopping center about a week ago...

Sid ascended the stairs and walked out into the rain that had apparently just began to pour down.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Sid was sitting in the rain on top of the nearby shopping center, beside him there was still the bottle [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

It disturbed him a little, how little this seemed to disturb him. He remembered the words of the woman he had talked to when he tried to find out whether his psyche was in danger. "When you smoke weed you might feel, but you distance yourself from those feelings." He took up the bottle and looked at it. Then, with a sudden scream, he threw it in the direction of the empty parking deck where it burst.



'Anger is a feeling, isn't it?', he thought. One of those stages of grief that aren't really stages that follow each other but rather motions that appear and reappear again and again until you have finally reached some kind of closure. But was there really such a thing?

_____ he had never gotten over any of the women he used to love.

The way he talked about it was still filled with so much pain when he remembered his first and second and third love, that were all long lost now.

Sid got up and walked to the elevator with which he returned to even ground where the possibility of a 7 story drop was not just a few footsteps away.

He drove home, but quickly he was driven out again.

Away from all those people, from all the distractions.

Instead he finally went where he should have gone all along. He went to the park around the corner, in order to go stork-hunting. When Sid spotted the scavenger he suddenly wondered why he had called it a stork-hunt back then. What he saw in front of him now was not a stork, but a grey heron! Just like these Japanese pictures in the ethnological museum. . .

'What is this bird to me?', Sid asked himself. 'A manifestation of my fears. . . But what fears?'

When Sid had filmed enough of the grey beast he got on his bike and rode down the street to Arletty's place. She welcomed him and they began to talk for a while.

"You're so pessimistic!", Arletty said after she had claimed: "Love is the best healer!", and Sid had asked: "Did you say killer?"

'Keep writing!'; Sid said to himself.

He left Arletty's flat to pick up O. at the nearby subway station.

She was standing in the rain together with a number of other people who were waiting in line for one of the cities most famous sausages. You could also wait for half an hour or more to get a kebab with vegetables next door.

Sid had often wondered what it was that drove people to stand in the rain for such a long time, just to get a dish you could get for about the same price and quality just a little further down the street.

It was probably some kind of group dynamic that drove these people who were visiting or had just moved to this part of town, to eat somewhere they were told to eat at because it was 'the thing to do'.

Then again, these faces in the rain looked somewhat happy. . .

Sid embraced O. who began to talk about her miseries as they walked through the rain.



They found shelter in a nearby church where they witnessed a priest holding a sermon in front of a giant blue mural that was surprisingly abstract for a catholic church.

They left the church an hour later and Sid decided that he did not want to condemn something without witnessing it first hand. So they entered the long line of wet but happy people, waiting for a vegetable kebab. As they stood there O. told him:

"lets say everyone is born with a white piece of cloth

On mine are only a few black stains so far

although you might say

that it has been tinged grey

even before I was born"

Sid was fascinated and moved by her words, but at the same time he felt the desperate urge to write, burning inside him:

Keep writing!

Keep writing!

But she did not

stop talking

O. looked at him and said: "I never talked!

When I talked to others, I let them talk...I only nodded. When it came to me I said it's complicated"

Sid just nodded and O. went on.

I need to write

Where will I sleep tonight?

, he wrote as the train O. had just boarded left the station.

What now? He could go back to Arletty, he still had his bike in her backyard. . .

He just knew he could not end up back home if he did not want to feel terribly alone.

So he went to Arletty's place and she welcomed him with open arms.



They sat down on her bed and she showed him some pictures from her stay in Istanbul a few months ago. Sid noticed the poster on the wall of the movie 'Les Enfants du Paradis', bearing the main character standing on a pedestal like a marble stature. Arletty had told Sid to watch that movie, since she had been named after it's protagonist. . . . It was the last thing he saw before he drifted off into dreams.

Sid awoke early in the morning on a strange mattress, without a blanket covering his shivering body. He looked up, saw an old movie poster with a woman white as marble, standing on a plateau like a statue and remembered that he was at Arletty's place. He had fallen asleep here last night when Arletty went out to meet some friends. Sid got up and put on a few more cloths, but he was still shivering. He put on some music and sat down again, trying to write himself awake. Suddenly the voice in his ears told him:

**When I woke up this morning, I got myself a beer,
the future is uncertain
and the end is always near.**

Sid grasped into the backpack next to him and took a sip of the absinth he was carrying around with him. Usually he did not drink, but whenever he heard the song that was just playing, especially in the morning, he did as he was told..

The green liquid burned its way down and warmed him from the inside. But still he was shivering.

He decided not to listen to the things his body was telling him and went into the kitchen to get his shoes.

From the loft bed there the American visitor, he had been introduced to last night, peeked out. Sid apologized for making such a ruckus, but the young man told him that he had been awake anyway since he was still jetlagged.

"Well I guess I'm always living in a different time zone.", Sid told him and went down the hallway.

He stopped in front of a closet, opened it and took out the baggage inside, blocking his way to



the door that lay in the wall behind it.

He opened this secret portal and stepped into the empty staircase behind it. As he ascended the stairs he wondered whether people were living behind the doors to his left and right. But he could not make out any names next to the dusty bells. When he arrived at the end of the staircase he passed through the door with the broken lock and entered a big attic from where he took the ladder that led to the roof.

He sat down in front of the beautiful scenery to his knees and began to write.

He was still shivering but he tried desperately to ignore the fact that even though it was almost the beginning of summer, the sky was clouded and grey. The cold wind blew into his face and all he could hold against it was a crooked grin.

What would he do now? Hadn't he planned to escape it all by going camping?

Maybe the weather was better in the east, across the border. Or maybe it would already be bearable in the south of the city, beside the lakes close to his university.

But then he realized that he had left his bike in the streaming rain last night, with tent, mattress and sleeping bag still on its rack.

He might have to return home to clean and dry them, before he would be able to use them again...

But his number one priority for the day was making it to his filmcritique seminar, where he would try to convince his Professor to accept a term paper in Gonzo journalism...

Sid feared that he might not make the best impression in his current condition, as he looked down at himself and saw the stains on his jacket that covered his worn out body.

Sid asked his machine at what time the library of the Campus of American studies opened, that held the books by Hunter S. Thompson and found out that he still had 2 hours.

He needed a plan!

He decided to return to his flat first in order to stuff his sleeping bag into the washing machine and take a shower. Afterwards he would go to the university library and get the books he needed, read them until the seminar began, talk to his professor, afterwards return home and in case that his camping equipment was still usable, pack it all together again and leave for some lakeside where he could spend the night!

It sounded reasonable inside his head. He could only wait and see how it all would unfold in reality.



Sid returned downstairs in order to put his plans into action. Before he left, he placed a short note next to the bed, in which Arletty was still sleeping peacefully.

*Thank you for giving me shelter in this storm of my mind,
Sid*

As soon as he was in the backyard he was in doubt again, about the sense in his plan when he saw that his equipment was somewhat wet but still seemed to be usable. He decided to go to the nearby bakery, which seemed to be one of the few places left, that was not just part of a chain. So when he asked whether they were offering bread from the day before at half price, the woman with the colorful headscarf nodded with a friendly smile instead of informing him that they were forced to burn it, like he had been told so many times before. Sid sat down at a table facing the window and watched the people going by. When he saw a couple walking past him he wondered why he did not seem to feel anything, why he did not break down and cry as the memories flooded his head. He was apparently still in *Denial*...

But what would happen when he left that state of ignorance and bliss?

Sid tried to remember the other 4 stages of grief the *Kübler-Ross-model* described:

Anger should be next and indeed he had already been experiencing sudden fits of rage. So far it had been reasonably mild and more or less controllable, though.

What he feared more was the stage that was supposed to follow: *Bargaining*

The stage that followed was just as bleak, but he was even more accustomed to it: *Depression*... When would he end up in front of the screen, in the grips of American television series, unable to move for hours or days?

The last stage of *Acceptance* still seemed to be far away...

Sid got up and rode his bike underneath the endless tunnel of bridges to the closest subway station from which he would take the train to university.

As Sid passed the bridges he looked at the colorful posters on the wall, telling him about the latest products. He had just asked himself the question whether the new beverage of some ice



cream manufacturer was indeed “ice cream or coffee?”, when he was ripped out of his mindless staring by the poster that followed. In amazement Sid looked at the black and white image of the mutilated, naked body of a woman. Beside her was a figure, wrapping another worn body into wrapping paper. Sid went on, so disturbed and confused by what he had just seen, that he did not notice when the row of advertisements was interrupted once again, this time by the picture of numerous colorful hearts.

He stopped at the entrance to the newly built park, entered and climbed one of the fences in order to get access to one of the bridges. He remembered the policeman who had gotten him down from the scaffold [REDACTED] that one fateful night. He had told him to film somewhere else instead and besides the devils mountain he had advised him to film the sunrise above these bridges... It seemed somewhat ironic that those places he had recommended were all illegal ground as well...

Nevertheless Sid filmed there.

Then he went on to the subway to drive to university.

The inhabitants of this city seemed to be humane and friendly this morning.

When he struggled to get his bike up the stairs at the station a woman walked up to him and asked whether she could help. After they had carried the packed bicycle up together they had a few minutes of friendly conversation.

When Sid sat down and gave the woman next to him his lighter so she could light the cigarette she called her breakfast, the scene repeated itself.

How could it be that these instances of human contact in an environment like this, seemed like something so much out of the ordinary?

As Sid headed south in the train he wondered whether he should just drive further and visit his aunt. She was in divorce because her husband had met his high-school sweetheart at some reunification and had felt the urge to reunite with her.

Maybe he would go there tomorrow or later on, for now he had more important tasks to master. He rode his bike to the main campus and entered the closest restroom where he took a few sips from the tab.

Afterwards he tried to wash the remains of his war paint from his face, but the pen he had used for it had apparently been stronger than suspected. When he took off his shirt and began to wash his chest with some foam from the soap dispenser the door beside him suddenly opened and a man appeared who stared at him for a few moments and then abruptly turned around again, gesturing as if he had forgotten something.



Sid looked into the mirror and saw some kind of freakish creature grinning back at him. He had to make it to the library, even though the campus of the American faculty seemed as far away as the actual country by now. . .

He got dressed, gathered his things back together and left the bathroom.

But he made a wrong turn and suddenly he found himself on a lawn in some backyard of the strange rusted building. He sat down and closed his eyes for a moment.

After listening to the promise of some far away buffalo land by *Moriarty* had made him wonder whether their song was a reference to Hunter S. Thompson, Sid got up and hasted to his bike in order to finally get to the library.

But on the way he realized that his body might not be up to the task without some aid. Something inside him screamed for caffeine.

Suddenly the sign "Keep calm and have a cup of coffee" appeared in front of him. He followed it and realized that it was the first of a series of yellow signs that all bore the same slogan beneath the picture of a crown .

Finally he got to the promised coffee and sank down on a couch where he got out his little black book.

It was full.

Every page covered with the scribbled lines that made up his handwriting... So were the loose pieces of paper he also had in his back pocket. He realized that he would have to photograph all of this if he did not want to loose parts of it. But his machine was out of battery and out of disk space...

He was doomed.

'Get to the damn library!'; he told himself, 'everything will figure itself out once you get there!'

He got there.

'Everything will figure itself out, everything will be alright!'; he repeated when he started to mail himself the texts he had photographed out of his little black book [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He left it behind and began to sort his scribbled notes.

As the first pack was being sent from his touchwriter to his laptop he searched the register for books by Thompson. He found a lot, although many were currently conferred to others, or simply marked as 'lost'.



Maybe you should expect that if you decide to give away books whom's author had said things like: "I hate to advocate drugs, alcohol, violence or insanity to anyone, but they have always worked for me"

Sid looked at the stack of books he wanted to take with him today and wondered where they would be a month from now...

When his friend Ni. called and asked whether he wanted to come over to the cafeteria to have lunch with her, Sid disrupted his work and took the subway to the politics campus at the other part of the district.

He had planned to tell her about his plans for the filmcritique term paper, but when he asked her if she knew the movie *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, she began to rant: "I hated that movie! Such a load of wannabe art! It's just disturbing!"

It felt like a slap in the face to Sid and he was temporarily so astonished that he could no longer talk...

But when Ni. turned to the other people sitting at the table, and began talking about their upcoming lecture, Sid told himself: "Keep writing!"; and soon realized that this was a perfect opportunity to explore the reception of Thompson's work, or rather, what had been made out of it... He turned to Ni. and asked: "What did you call *Fear and Loathing* again? 'Wannabe art...crap?'"

"Ehm, yeah it really annoyed me I...mean..."

She gave him an inquiring look when she noticed that he was writing down what she was saying. "Well I mean...I watched the first 10 minutes and then I just couldn't stand it anymore...I mean you decide in the first 10 minutes if you like what the movie is going to be and I just knew that this was crap!"

"Thank you", Sid said and bid her farewell before returning to the American campus to finish his work.

After another hour of sorting his notes he packed his things in order to go to the fateful filmcritique seminar.

Before he left he checked his mails one more time and opened a message from his flatmate who told him that the neighbor from underneath who had already complained to her when he had filmed himself destroying another TV screen, wanted to talk to him again.

And again he felt like a criminal.



But then he looked at the search engine that was still opened on his laptop which he had just used to find a quote by Thompson. He had not found what he had been looking for, instead he had found this:

"If you're going to be crazy, you have to get paid for it or else you're going to be locked up"

Or maybe there was another way... Maybe you did not have to get paid for it necessarily, maybe if you were doing it for your university you were somewhat accepted as well. A legitimate part of society..

And Sid was. After the seminar his Professor had said he could write a critique about *The Rum Diary* in the form of Gonzo journalism. Sid was officially a Gonzo journalist now!

Euphorically he drove down to the subway station where he was supposed to meet Nathan! But he wasn't there..

He found him a bit later after a homeless man who was standing in front of the subway station had approached him.

With a wooden stick he pointed at the wooden sun-necklace Sid was wearing above his chest in order to remind himself to stay positive and true from the heart.

It was missing 3 of its wooden rays. One he had lost in his former hometown, the other two at some point in the past few days. [REDACTED]

"Be careful!", the homeless man said, handed him the wooden stick and walked away.

With a thankful look Sid watched him until Nathan suddenly appeared in his field of vision.

They had to finish the film for their theatre project so they left for his flat.

Sid did not really want to return there for various reasons but he figured out something that seemed like a solution.

He would wear his T-shirt proclaiming that he was under a vow of silence and in the end return to Nathan's place to sleep.

Sid arrived at his house and the first thing he had to take care of was the black cloud hanging over his head.

He rang his neighbors doorbell and asked if they had time to talk. The man with the canyons



under his eyes said “No we’re eating...” and started to talk.
After his rant was over and he had threatened Sid to inform the landlord company at the smallest movement he heard, he shut the door in front of his face.
Sid went up to his flat with a broken smile on his face.

...he needed to write, probably more than ever.
He sat on the cage made of strings behind the squat that called itself *‘Rote Insel’*, a name that had once been the label for the entire district...
Everything seemed to be falling apart and yet Sid did not seem all that worried. And that worried him.
Why did everything seem to happen at once?
He looked up and heard A. talk on the phone: “How are you..
...What do you mean by that... ?
...what happened... what you mean because of your weed consumption... ?
...well if you say you don’t do it your therapy will be over...”
Apparently it was still happening. The voice that came out of the machine in his lap proclaimed:

This is the end...
My only friend
the end...

When he had entered the flat earlier he had been greeted by T. with the words: “I’ve been accepted at the university!”
After she had added some remarks of sympathy about Sid’s situation she said: “So, I don’t know how to tell you but...I’m moving out... It’s just that living here was one of the best things that could have happened to me in that time but now that I’ll study I need a place with a little less chaos and uncertainty...”
Sid knew this made him sad...he just did not really feel it.
He could not show any kind of emotion, he just had the same broken grin on his face that had been there all day. Instead he said: “Well maybe we should all sit down together and have a talk...I’ve also been thinking about moving out.”
Camille who had already been shaken up by T.’s announcement was now completely falling apart.



Sid tried to calm her down and tell her that he had not meant it like that. They all sat down in the blue room and after T. had repeated her announcement Sid tried to explain: "I'm afraid the neighbors are not gonna tolerate us much longer. And you know we have the problem that I'm the only one in the contract, together with someone who does not live here anymore. And in this contract it specifically says that we're not allowed to make any subleases... so we're all living here illegally. So maybe, now that T. is moving out it might be a good idea to think about when we might eliminate the contract and move. I guess it will have to happen sometime..."

When Sid looked into Camille's tearfilled eyes he added hastily: "I'm talking about something like half a year from now or so...I would do it at a date when it would fit best for all of us remaining here..."

After they had somewhat settled that matter, a broken up T. screamed up because her phone would not stop ringing.

It was her boyfriend who had apparently sensed that she was about to break up with him.

When she finally picked up he told her that he was on his way.

She left to meet him at the subway station and Sid and A. followed and waited for her on top of the jungle gym behind it.

When T. showed up she was crying and Sid wondered once again why he had not shed a tear yet.

It began to rain and so they went over to the *Drugstore* to get some warmth and food into their bodies.

Sid almost broke down when he realized that the place was crowded with French girls who were apparently on some excursion from university.

One of them approached him and began a conversation about cinema, since she was apparently studying film as well. Suddenly another girl appeared beside her, but Sid barely took note of her similar haircut and skin that was just a little darker than his but about the same as that of the girl he had just talked to.

After he had greeted her and kept talking the girl said: "She's my twin by the way!"

Sid looked back and forth and suddenly realized that they were an almost identical mirror image of each other. Why hadn't he noticed this before?

What was happening to him?

Was he losing his sanity, or his insanity or just his ability to sense the world around him?

Was he finally crashing?



Apparently he looked like it because the man behind the counter turned toward him and said in his high pitched, friendly voice: "What's wrong? You look depressed! You know we've been worried about you. . ."

He began to give him a few words of wisdom that seemed heartfelt and profound, unfortunately the French girls had entered the stage and began to play music that was so loud that Sid could no longer perceive what he was saying. He watched his lips move and tried to read them, watched his facial expression and tried to understand.

In between songs Sid heard him say: ". . . and that's the most important point, you should always keep that in mind!"

Sid left and walked towards the bus stop, beneath the bridge of the subway that had long stopped going. To his left and his right women were standing in the rain, wearing short skirts and many layers of make-up, taking shelter beneath small umbrellas. He walked past rows of parked cars with copulating couples inside and he felt as if he was being tested by some higher entity, to see just how much more he could bear.

He arrived at the station from which the nightbus would take him into the direction he used to take ██████████. But now he had a date with a single rancid mattress in a pale cold room.

When the bus passed the golden statue of the winged woman that was not an angel, Sid tried to capture her on film. But all he got in the end were the raindrops on the window.

Broken and beat he grasped for the pocket of his jacket in which he kept *The Rum Diary* and began to read.

He arrived shortly thereafter and once again he walked through the rain. Everything seemed painfully familiar ██████████

Sid arrived at the street with the African name and entered the house Nathan used to live at. The last time he had been here, the place had been in complete chaos.

Dishes piling in the sink and the shower and newspapers, DVDs and most prominently books, scattered all over the place.

Now it was almost completely empty, only a few remains of its former inhabitant were left in the corners, here and there.

It looked like the energy had already been turned off, since the light switches Sid pushed did not have any effect.



He used his touchwriter for light and entered the main room of the small apartment where he could make out a grey mattress in the darkness that surrounded him. Sid lay down and using his jacket as a blanket and a few worn T-shirts as a pillow, he tried to numb down the thoughts in his head in order to finally fall asleep.

Once again Sid awoke from a restless night, early in the morning, shivering all over. He got up, splashed some water into his face, made himself some coffee in the otherwise empty kitchen and got to work. It took him until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, until he had finally sorted all his notes. He just remembered that they still had to finish the film for theater on Thursday. When Nathan called and told him that he would come over in a few hours and pick him up. He mentioned that he was at Juan's flat at the moment. He mentioned that he was at Juan's flat at the moment in that building that only lay a few minutes away from the one Sid was calling his home since last night...

Sid leaned back and decided to flee to Puerto Rico by reading more of *The Rum Diary*. After a few pages he got up again and started to draw for the animation of their Utopia theater project.

He was ripped out of his working process by the ring of the bell. Nathan and Juan appeared in the door and Nathan told him to pack his things so they could go to Nathan's new flat and have dinner. They left and Juan began to talk about movies. He went on and on about the Polanski film he had seen recently, while Nathan made some cynical remarks intermittently. Sid did not know what to think of it all. They kept walking.

When they arrived at Nathan's place Sid plunged himself back into the work while Nathan cooked.

After they had eaten Nathan joined in and they silently sat at the small kitchen table, listened to



music and drew utopic sceneries.

Sid could feel himself crashing... He drew pictures of happiness and hope but inside him there was utter darkness.

Since they did not have all the equipment at Nathan's place Sid had to return to his flat in order to finish the film.

In the subway the darkness inside him grew.

Sid got out of the subway and returned home in order to finish the film. But then Juan wrote him and asked whether he wanted to come to the birthday party of E., a girl they had made a film with together. Sid decided to ride his bike down to her place, with his camping equipment strapped onto the back.

Juan waited for Sid at the corner and after he had locked his bike he was led into the place that was described by Juan as "they call it a flatshare but it has more the feeling of a trailer park..."

Sid passed through a gate and ascended a few stairs. At their end E. greeted him and asked if he wanted to see a few new-born kittens.

She quickly pointed to a campfire to her right, then she led him inside a house where they sat down in a big kitchen full of sofas.

Sid was offered something to eat and when they had sat down Juan began to tell Sid that he was moving out of his flat and into the woods of the east. He would live in a tent at the Kesselberg, another abandoned soviet army base that had been squatted.

Juan had visited a friend of his, a painter that was doing some kind of performance art there, together with a French clown.

The place was more or less its own little community, although most people had come there to escape society and were convinced misanthropes. They had some kind of plenum there every once in a while but only a few people would show up.



"In addition to that many people there have a drug problem.," Juan said, "You have these guys left and right screaming for speed."

Still he wanted to live there until October, when he would start a new flat share in the place his parents had bought now, because the prices were just beginning to rise, but at which they would not live for another 10 years.

Sid wondered whether that might be a place for him . . .

The girl next to Sid announced that she was going to play some music beside the fire and so Sid followed her in the hope that her songs might soothe his soul.

But instead they just seemed to hurt more . . .

At least he was able to feel again, although right now he would have given everything to return to the sweet oblivion he had been in the past days.

Sid hid behind his dark glasses and looked up into the sky.

When he lowered his gaze again he saw that the building in front of him wasn't a building at all but rather a railway carriage. When he looked down further he realized that the campfire was located in the middle of old train tracks. He leaned back, closed his eyes and listened to the soft sounds of two guitars and a violin harmonizing with each other.

But he could not find rest

someone suddenly got up and proclaimed that he'd have to leave to catch the last subway, reminding almost everyone else to do the same.

Sid was left alone with one guitar player that kept playing just for him.

Again he wondered where he would sleep tonight. One of the people that inhabited this beautiful refuge from the otherwise giant and grey city had told Juan earlier that they always had a free couch for visitors.

But even though the people here were more than kind, Sid realized he had to get away from people, had to fall asleep and awake in a place where he was all by himself. No distractions! That meant he still couldn't return home, either. . .



Instead he decided to ride down to the lakes of the west and erect his tent beside the water. It would get cold once he'd move away from the campfire, but maybe the sight of the water would calm his weary mind. Maybe he'd even try to swim to the moon.

So Sid bid farewell to the guitarist, packed his things and began to ride west. After about 10 minutes he was beginning to regret his decision. . .

The old rusty bike and his worn out body did not seem to be up to the task. Still he kept going since he did not really have any other option anyway by now.

But when he passed his university he brought his bike to a sudden hold and turned right into an overgrown driveway. Behind it lay the ruins of an old building in which the minds of many impressionable men and women had been formed once. Now all that assembled in its abandoned auditorium was dust, mice and graffiti artists that tried to bring some color back into the grey emptiness.

Sid locked his bike to the lectern from which professors had once looked down upon their subjects, took off his tent and sleeping bag and passed the empty rows on his way up upon the roof. There he pitched his tent and as he looked up though the translucent opening at the ceiling, into a star-filled sky, he felt at home. . .

The next morning he once again awoke way too early from twisted dreams, but at least this time he was not shivering all over!

Even though he had slept under an open sky and not somewhere inside like the days before, he was warm since his body was covered with a sleeping bag that was designed for temperatures that came close to arctic conditions.

Sid got up, lay down underneath a clouded white sky and began to write.

When he looked up from his new little book that was colorful and ruled this time, he saw two men in white lab coats staring at him from the building across the street that had not been abandoned by the university's administration yet. Sid waved and they hesitantly waved back at him as if they were looking at an equation that did not seem to make sense to them.

Sid wondered whether they would inform the cops that a strange creature had erected a tent on top of the building across the road. He shrugged it off. He was a fellow student, just that his studies were a little more strange and incomprehensible than quantum-mechanics. . .



Sid got out his laptop and set out to finish the film but suddenly realized that he accidentally downloaded the images onto his flash-drive that was still standing back at his flat. . . He had no choice but to return and finish his work there, otherwise the knowledge that he still had to take care of the film would continue to haunt him.

So he packed his things together and left the ruin that seemed so much more intact than the building he had called his home for the past two years, in which people were stacked up on top of each other and in the grips of a broken bureaucracy.

Or maybe he was the one who was broken and therefore felt the urge to equate his surroundings to the way he felt inside.

Before he left his new found home behind, with the intent to return as soon as possible, he decided to capture at least parts of the scenery on film.

Afterwards he rode to the subway station. As he waited on the platform he noticed that, in the search for the best angle he had cut his hand on a broken window where he tried to place his camera there. The wound was deeper than a simple scratch and blood ran down his hand and dropped onto the ground before him. Sid could not find a tissue and lacking a better option he licked his fingertips and sucked in the blood until it no longer flew in streams.

Sid was amazed that it had taken him so long to recognize the wound, and that he still did not perceive any pain.

'What have I become? Has [redacted] succeeded in turning me into a vampire?', he asked himself as he licked a few drops of blood off his lips...

He was ripped out of his thoughts by the appearance of the subway which's side was covered completely by a giant, colorful graffiti. It stretched out over the windows and when Sid entered he looked through them at a world in red and pink passing by.

When he arrived home he immediately got to work. The struggle with the editing machine took longer than expected and when he was finally finished he had to haste back to university where he had to fulfill his duty as an honorable Gonzo reporter, to investigate the current state of the 'revolution'.

An assembly was being held today in reaction to the plans by the administration to implement new regulations that sounded like they were designed to turn the university into an oppressive regime where free speech and thought were being prosecuted and every step out of line was punished with expulsion. At least that was the way it seemed to Sid when he read the flyer that had invited him to the assembly...

He arrived at his destination and rode his bike to the main campus where he locked it.



On his way to the auditorium he was attacked by a swarm of creatures that bombarded him with flyers about all the other things that were wrong with the world.

Sid fought his way through the crowd by silently smiling and shaking his head.

He finally reached the auditorium, out of breath but still in time. He looked up into the ranks and realized that the state of the revolution was apparently not in such a bad state as it was always being made out to be. The hall was packed with people that huddled together in the chairs and on the floor.

A shrill voice suddenly filled the air with feigned authority proclaiming:

“Attention please! This is the executive committee! We’re ex-matriculating all of you by force!”, followed by manic laughter.

The assembly was now officially in session and with terror Sid soon realized that he was not able to go through with his plan to write as the proceedings were taking place.

It was too much input for him to comprehend and simultaneously capture in a reasonable and reflected way that was more than strict repetition of the words that were being spoken. So instead he just took notes.

They gave out lists and Sid was confronted with the question whether he wanted to be part of a mailing list and give his signature on a petition against the new regulation.

Soon he stopped writing altogether. Instead he just sat there and let the arguments, the charming and eloquent young individuals on stage presented, trickle softly into his mind without thinking too much.

Suddenly he was ripped out of this state of abulic absorption by the vibration of his phone.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sid had to get out. He left the auditorium and the entire building in order to get to his bike. But as he hasted down the streets towards the place where he had locked it, he suddenly raised his eyes from the ground before him and looked into the sky above.

A giant heron was gliding by, in front of the clouds that by now seemed to be just as grey as his feathers. Sid turned around and went back into the safety of university. After all this was a just a regular bird his injured mind had made into some kind of metaphor for things that were just too painful, ugly and violent to bear and therefore had to be pushed back deep into his subconscious.



This wasn't a hallucination, it was just a regular and *real* bird that unfortunately reminded him of something unpleasant, and therefore it could not follow him inside the university...right? Sid wasn't sure anymore. What if the grey beast with the two backs he tried to bury in his subconscious was too strong to be held back by his ego and did in fact manifest in his physical reality?

He decided to search for refuge at the English cafe whom's reassuring royal order: "Keep calm and have a cup of coffee" had helped him out of his miseries the last time.

But he couldn't find it. The signs were no longer up and so Sid got lost more and more in the maze of modern architecture, on his desperate quest to relocate it.

When he found another cafe in the bowels of the building he decided to make a compromise and asked for liquid caffeine.

When the girl behind the counter replied that they were all out, Sid cried out in desperation and asked where else he would find the caffeine he needed so desperately in order to calm his anxieties and keep writing.

The girl said something he did not quite understand and so he turned around in the middle of her answer in order to make it on his own... Out of the corner of his eye he noticed the surprised look on the face of the woman who had stood next to him, that seemed to say: "what a junkie!" But finally he found his destination, the reassuring symbol of the British crown welcomed him and he got his coffee and sat down on one of the sofas to sort his thoughts, fears and objectives.

[REDACTED]



Sid wondered what he should do now. He would have to return to the abandoned university building down the street eventually to spend another night in its safety.

But before that it seemed like he had to take care of many more things. Maybe most prominently of all; he had to call his parents. He had told them that he had been camping the last few days and therefore unreachable via phone... A claim that lay somewhere between a lie and the truth. But now he was supposed to have returned and so he'd have to contact them eventually if he did not want them to worry too much. He decided to return to the abandoned auditorium for that purpose and to make it short.

He drove through the rain that had broken out of the grey clouds by now but at least there was not another sight of the scavenger.

When he arrived at the abandoned building there were people standing in front of the entrance. 'What were they doing there? Where did they come from? What were they up to? How long would they stay there?' Sid wondered as he turned his bike around and drove to the American campus instead where he sat down under a tree next to the entrance and called his parents house.

His father answered since he was home alone which turned out to be a blessing. Once Sid had recounted what had happened, his father told him that he knew how he felt.

_____ he had wallowed in sorrow for more than a year. It had gone to the extent that he did not allow himself a moment of happiness and felt guilty whenever he caught himself laughing. As if he was betraying his mourning.

He kept thinking about her around once a month until a class reunion a couple of years ago where he found out that she had gotten obese and obnoxious. Finally he could let it go.

It had taken long enough.

"It runs in the family," he said in a melancholy tone.

After the phone call Sid went into the JFK-library and sat down to read of yet another tale of heartbreak that had gravely changed a mans life.

When they closed for the night and threw him out Sid returned to his new refuge. The mysterious people that had been there earlier were gone, but the entrance door that used to be opened wide and welcoming was now locked.

What else had they done to the place?

Sid found a way in through the cellar and set up his tent in the middle of a hall next to the auditorium. It's windows were shattered and their glass covered the entire floor. Through them Sid could see a beautiful and strange structure made up of cloth, the wheel of a bike and a few



painted globes. "Phone home", someone had written on its side.

He unrolled his mattress and read an unauthorized biography on Hunter S. Thompson until the sun had set and he could no longer decipher the words. He got into the tent and tried to go to sleep, but somehow he did not feel quite as comfortable as he had on the roof last night. Suddenly he felt as if he heard footsteps approaching. He got out of the tent again and saw a light that seemed to illuminate some windows across the atrium.

Sid stood there for a while, stared at the light, and listened for more strange sounds. But all he could hear was the rain and a few birds singing and he decided that the sounds had been caused by something else. He dismissed the light as that of a street lamp and returned to his tent. Before he got back into his sleeping bag he bolted the doors, trying to ignore the fact that the room was still accessible through the broken windows around him.

He awoke. It was early, it was cold. His sleeping bag had ripped open alongside the broken zipper and now cold air streamed in when he made the slightest attempt to get into an upright position.

So he just kept lying there, unable to get up, until he could no longer take it and turned on some music to motivate him.

"Let it roll baby roll", Jim Morrison demanded and Sid jumped up and crept out of the tent.

He unrolled his mattress next to it and lay down again.

After some reading he sorted his notes, then he began to write again until it was time to go across the street to his Psychology seminar.

He had wanted to freshen up in one of the restrooms before entering the small room he would be locked in for the next 1 1/2 hours, but when he arrived the seminar had already begun.

The topic for today was depression.

How fitting, Sid thought.

The session would consist of a presentation held by two of his fellow students on the topic of Intervention for depression in adolescence.

Sid remembered how depressed he had been when this presentation had been assigned to them and he got stuck with the topic of social insecurity.



After they were done defining and classifying the term they went to the topic of epidemiology and pointed out, that depression was an enormous public health issue. They cited a recent study that indicated the costs for treating depression and the associated loss of productivity was 300 billion dollars per year

Sid was appalled and sickened. This claim seemed to pop up in every text he had read on the topic so far.

Apart from the fact that the figure was a wild guess at best he wondered why the hell this was made out to be so goddamn relevant? He felt disgusted and disturbed by the fact that he apparently lived in a society that could be so horribly cold to grasp human suffering strictly in statistics and numbers.

In his entire studies he had read a few bullet points on Power Point Presentations that briefly advised empathy and comprehension of the patients world were important, but there had never been any educational material on how these people actually felt, that went beyond:

“A person is classified as depressed when he complies with a certain number of symptoms like: gloom, loss of interest, and sleeplessness.”

It disgusted Sid what the once noble field of Psychology had become.

It's founding fathers like Freud and Jung might have made claims that were non-empirical and a little 'out there', but at least they still had an interest in their patients as fellow human beings, while they now seemed to be considered subjects by most of the professors and his fellow students. The presentation continued with the introduction of a prevention program for youth that bore a friendly sounding name which was an abbreviation for words that few of the adolescents this program had been designed for would have understood.

It was implemented in schools and meant to affect the social information processing of encoding, mental representation, reaction preparation, reaction evaluation, and reaction implementation, which was a fancy way of saying that it was designed to dramatically alter the way the young people felt, thought and behaved. Thoughts that were considered dysfunctional were supposed to be eradicated and productive and target-oriented behavior should be activated or generated...

In order to get to know the instruments of the program a little better, sheets that were being used in it were handed out on which you had to evaluate whether the examples that were written on them were either thoughts or feelings. It dealt mostly with a boy who does not want to do his homework...



The girl who was holding the presentation had once been in the same theater group as Sid and had found her way into the phone book on his cell phone this way, where she was listed as his eleventh contact. When Sid had played that fateful game about a month ago that had forced him to call that contact and confess his love to her, she had seemed somewhat disturbed...

Maybe that was why she now assigned Sid to demonstrate another tool of the Prevention program which required him to act out different emotions that had to be interpreted by his fellow students.

It was supposed to teach the kids to read feelings of others, but it reminded Sid of a poem he had written once:

*People can fool you
with their facial expressions
some better than others
but you can never be sure
how well the people in front of you
know how to wear their masks*

For the next example they were divided into two groups and Sid's team had to read a text about a man who hears a sound in the night and thinks its a burglar.

Again they were supposed to decide what his thoughts and actions might be.

The others thought of panicking and calling the police but Sid thought of his friend Y. who always slept with a baseball bat beneath his pillow. He wondered wether he might feel relieved and exited at the possibility to finally make use of it, and remembered how he had once told him of a night he had dreamed that his little sister was being kidnapped, that had seemed so real that he actually got up and ran into his sisters room, swinging the bat and screaming at the top of his voice....

When they presented their results afterwards it turned out that in the text of the other group the man had interpreted the sound as that of a falling vase.

This was supposed to show the kids who had to take part in this program, that if you think differently, you will feel and act differently.

What way of thinking and acting was the right way would be thought at the end of the program...



Sid wondered whether this program would have helped him back in school. It did seem to have some potential, but like so many things he had gotten to know during his studies, in the wrong hands it could be fatal.

And there seemed to be a lot of wrong hands out there.

It explicitly said in the manual for the so called 'Trainers' who exercised these programs, to read the instructions before implementing them. Apparently because most of the people who were doing these stressful, low cost jobs just did not bother...

After the seminar Sid finally went to the closest restroom where he quickly washed himself and brushed his teeth. Afterwards he drove down to the JFK-library where he buried himself in the work of Hunter S. Thompson once again. He read one of his very early articles called 'Security', which described the kind of life he never intended to live. Sid was not so sure about himself. At least some part of him had always seemed to be yearning for a secure life, trying to reach a state of no more worry, even though he knew that it was an illusion. That part had been strangely silent though, throughout the past few days and Sid had to say it was quite a relief. Maybe he had finally managed to stop worrying and learned to love the bomb.

As every Thursday, the early seminar had tired him quite a lot, but when Sid noticed how worn out he felt, he suddenly realized that he did not have anything to eat in quite some time...

He decided to ditch his next seminar and rode to the cafeteria instead where he filled his plate with as many noodles as possible.

He would not have to show up at his course on 'Historical Materialism from a Feminist perspective', since he had held his required presentation and regular attendance was not yet mandatory at this part of the university. He might still go there again though, since he liked the young man who led the seminar, although Sid felt that the things they discussed often bordered on the ridiculous. If you wanted to take a critical look at Marx and Engels you might want to focus a little more on the question, to which extent their theories were inherently authoritarian before wondering in which aspects these figures, who actually were at the forefront of feminism, were nevertheless still children of their time and used words like 'man' instead of 'human being'...

Sid stuffed down his noodles, but instead of feeling revitalized he just got more tired, especially when he looked at all the things he would still have to take care of today. He stretched out on a small patch of grass and just lay there for a while. Then he got out the Thompson biography again and continued reading, only to put the book down again appalled and confused, after a few pages.

The author had just described how Hunter had chased away homosexuals from the community



he had been living in back in the early 60s...

How could he read books by someone like that? How could he let his writing be influenced by this man's methods and views?

It was an unauthorized biography since Dr. Thompson was, according to a friend quoted in the preface, terribly afraid of them.

Maybe incidents like that were the reason... Things he had done and regretted later on. After all he too was a child of his time and more importantly of the state of Kentucky.

Sid did not have time to think about his terrible discovery any longer since he had to get to his lecture about experimental films.

He reached the small villa that housed the film and theater campus and quickly freshened up in one of the restrooms which's walls were covered with incomprehensible intellectual in-jokes.

'If you don't even understand the vulgar jokes in the toilet booths you know you have come to the right place', Sid thought.

He entered the auditorium and shortly after he had found himself a place in the back, Sa. walked in and sat down next to him.

"At least you still have Sa.!", Nathan had said a few days ago when Sid had told him that O. did not keep calling him because she wanted to 'fill the gap' [REDACTED]

Nathan had only met Sa. one time during a very short bus ride, so Sid wondered whether he was right in his evaluation of the situation. He also wondered how he saw her...

As the hall was darkened and the professor began talking, Sid watched Sa.'s profile in the twilight. He remembered that he had once secretly tried to draw her from a similar angle. Then she had left suddenly for a semester abroad and with her departure she also left his thoughts.

Sid turned his view away from her and toward the stage where his Professor had finally stopped talking.

This week he would not try once again to come up with complex theoretical terms, definitions and drawers into which he could place the indefinable films he showed them.

Instead two guests were holding a presentation about the British experimental film maker John Smith.

Sid barely paid attention to the lengthy monologue at the beginning in which a large older man struggled to perform the same impossible stunt while making use of excessive, gallant hand movements. After he was done with pointing out the differences and similarities of art and science, his partner began talking about the filmmaker himself and finally showed some examples of his work.



First she screened a black and white film that showed a street with people walking by and afterwards she tried to decipher it's twist, that Smith had just filmed a regular street and later on placed a voice-over of a director over it that told people to walk by, cars to pass and the clock to move it's little hand once every hour and it's big hand once every minute.

Sid had already come across the idea of taking reality and putting different layers above it, and it had intrigued him a lot...

According to the woman on the stage Smith had once claimed that he was interested in making films that would also interest and entertain people who did not know much about Avant-garde cinema. Primarily he tried to reel them in with humor.

Sid wondered how effective this method really was when he was reminded of the words of his former flatmates boyfriend who worked as a theater-director. "They just laugh everything off!", he had once complained about his audience, "you can try to bring any message across, it's no use, they just laugh it off!"

The last film she showed was that of a young man who seemed to be a monk saying "Ommm-mmm", until it turned out that the sound did not emanate from his lips but actually from an electric razor, shaving his head bold.

Suddenly he felt sick. Maybe it was due to the fact that he had spent the last nights out in the cold but the room around him began to spin as if he was in a feverish delirium.

Sid was sure that the seminar had officially ended by now, but the woman on the stage kept talking and so he ducked past her and hasted out of the building. Outside the sky had darkened and the grey clouds looked like they were about to erupt. Sid could barely hold himself upright, but somehow he made it to his bike and for some reason it was easier to ride it than walking had been. He tried to get to theater practise but somewhere he took a wrong turn and got lost in a maze of pretty houses with old women in front of them that gave him critical looks.

He shook off those insane thoughts and finally found the right road.

After locking his bike he entered the rehearsal rooms, sweating and slightly seeing double. They could not be considerate of his state, though since they had to film for their upcoming play to-



night. As Sid was trying to find a costume befitting his character he got a call from O. who told him that she was at the edge of sanity and needed to see him. Sid felt cornered and unable to bear this extra weight on his shoulders and told her that she might want to go to someone else for emotional support since he did not feel all that stable and reliable himself at the moment and asked if it would help if she wrote him what had happened.

After the call he presented the film he had prepared for today and into which their characters were supposed to be edited. For that they now began to film themselves flying through the air in front of a green screen. Sid let his already aching body plunge onto a few hard mattresses repeatedly until they finally had enough material.

Once theatre practise was over his friends who had become increasingly concerned by his appearance and behavior huddled around him and A. begged him not to sleep outside tonight. He had to promise her he would at least find shelter from the rain at Arletty's place.

So he called her and asked: "How are you? What are your plans for tonight? I think I'm getting sick from sleeping in the cold too often. Could I maybe crash at your place tonight?"

He did not really know why he had used the word 'crash', when actually his plan had been not to sleep at home in order to stay on the fragile but still hovering cloud he had been on until now.

She replied that she'd be home around 10 o'clock so he rode to the bridges near her flat where he filmed the sunset and kept reading the Hunter S. Thompson biography.

When she sent him a message that she would not be home before 11 p.m. Sid noticed how cold it had gotten once the sun had disappeared. He felt his fever surge and suddenly the stories about Thompson defying circumstances much worse than this, could no longer keep his mind occupied that yearned to lose itself in memories. He could make out shadowy figures moving in the dark bushes close by.

Arletty had written him that he could already show up at her place if he just explained the situation to her roommates. He replied:

I don't feel up to the task of explaining something I don't really understand myself so I guess I'll wait till 11! See you then, take your time!

He felt like a creep. A crazy figure of the dark. The kind of person people would talk about behind their hands, proclaiming what an unfortunate and dangerous creature he was... He feared he had already made that impression on Arletty's new flatmates when he had been there the last time. When she wrote him that she was standing in line for a kebab, Sid jumped up and hastened to his



bike. When he jumped the fence he ripped open his jacket. He cursed, tried to ignore the damage, jumped onto his bike and took a shortcut through the park. A fatal mistake as it turned out when he passed the windmill that had been taken down on some island in the Baltic sea to be reerected here.

Sid kept his eyes straight on the path before him, trying not to pay attention to the movements in the dark trees that grew on the train tracks to his left and right. He approached the corner with the kebab stand and could make out the line from far away, that seemed to have assembled here at prime time. He cursed the people in it as he drove by and finally found Arletty somewhere in the middle. She was together with Camille and her boyfriend who was visiting from France. It was pure agony to stand in this line for what seemed to border on eternity, knowing that you did not even get something to eat at the end. But Sid had already eaten today and decided he would no longer support this frivolous institution.

He tried to watch the people instead in order to keep his mind occupied. A young man was standing in front of him with a girl on each side, one small, one large. At one point he ducked down beside his small companion in order to take her perspective. He let out a sound of amazement when he looked up at the second girl that now seemed like a giant to him.

An old man with white hair walked by and mumbled something beneath his breath about "these damn tourists taking over my hometown..."

After an excruciating wait they finally went to Arletty's flat where Sid unrolled his sleeping-bag and tried to fall asleep while Arletty who apparently was not as tired as him, silently sang along to some french song.

Sid was awoken by Arletty's coughing. Apparently he had infected her, hopefully just with his cold and not any other kind of sickness.

He looked up towards the ceiling and remembered how he had been shaken by sudden shivers



all night, that were not caused by his fever but by memories that tried to creep into his dreams. At one point he had dreamed that the ceiling was collapsing. He had not sleepwalked in quite some time, but this night he had actually jumped out of bed in terror, trying to escape the illusive concrete that was about to smother him.

He had noticed with amazement that he did not wake up Arletty, nor any of the other people he believed to be in the room at that time.

Now Sid sat up in bed and wondered what he should do with the day. Keep writing, he told himself and tried to leave the bed without waking Arletty. He got dressed and went to the roof. It was a little windy but there were no signs of the thunderstorm left, that had raged during the night.

Sid got out *The Rum Diary* and continued reading.

He put the book down about an hour later and told himself that he'd have to reach a decision about what he would do today. Where could he find refuge, where would he be safe from the ghosts in his head?

He realized that he would have to return to his flat eventually to wash his cloths and probably himself. He did not really want to return there though, even though he could not really figure out why. Maybe he just could no longer breath freely there since his neighbors had told him they would contact the landlord company at the smallest noise. Or maybe he was afraid that he might sink down in front of the screen once he'd get there and get lost in the swamps of depression. Maybe he was afraid that his flatmates might all want to talk to him at once and keep him from writing.

Whatever it was, he felt the definite urge not to go there.

And yet he decided to climb down from the roof and ride his bike down the street to the place he had called home for the past two years.

Before he left he placed a little note beside the bed in which Arletty was still sleeping like a stone.

Once again I leave like a thief.

Thanks for the hospitality!

I hope I didn't infect you with my sickness...

Sid

Then he closed the door behind himself and rode his bike home.



After a quick stop at the supermarket where he bought 'food' like microwave pizza and cornflakes, that was supposed to nourish him for the next few weeks, he went upstairs and poured himself a bath.

Once the tub was full he undressed and let his aching body glide into the warm soothing water. He grasped for the book he had taken with him and began to read Thompson's horrible tales of his arch enemy Richard Nixon.

Once the water got too hot Sid put down the book and got out of the tub. When he left the bathroom he was confronted with the loud aggressive music of the rap-band that had cost him a tooth the last time he had heard them. He heard them sing about anal sex and it brought up even more painful associations than the last time. He went over to A. who was sitting in the kitchen and begged her with a suffering look on his face to change the music.

After she did A. asked whether he wanted to watch the movie *Zeitgeist-Adendum* with her. Her sister had showed it to her about a week ago and since then she kept talking about it, trying to convince everyone she met to watch it, with a strange shimmer in her eyes. Camille had already uttered her concern that she had fallen victim to some kind of sect and T. who had watched the movie with her declared it to be pure propaganda. Sid had decided not to judge before he hadn't seen it for himself and since he still had to wait for the washing machine to finish, he agreed. A. put up her laptop on the kitchen counter and they started to watch.

Except for a few irritating images of a pupil that changed its color the film started off like a regular documentary that tried to show the way the monetary system worked with the help of an explanatory voice-over, graphs and figures. Every once in a while there would be a quote of a famous figurehead like Martin Luther King or Goethe. It soon became evident that its primary goal was to expose the inherent corruption that was built into the system.

Sid had read about the topic every once in a while and had always been left with the vague feeling that something wasn't right.

But then the film showed someone who claimed that he had been an economic hitman for the US. When he began to list all the leaders of foreign countries that had been assassinated to ensure the interests of the States Sid began to get sceptical.

The man went on to say that we were all living in a 'corporatocracy', in which corporations were the emperors of our times while the politicians whom's campaigns they financed were merely their puppets.

The word 'globalization' fell, then he moved on to the world bank that according to him increased poverty and should be called the US bank instead since that country controlled it with the money



it had invested in it. Money that had been made out of thin air, as the previous scene had explained.

He moved on to terrorism and claimed that it was a made up scam to distract and scare people. The true terrorists were living on wall street...

"So what do we do?", the film went on to ask.

For the answer to that question the film presented a man who was, according to A. old enough to tell anecdotes about his conversations with Einstein whom he found interesting but frustratingly fixated on mathematics...

What followed took Sid by surprise. After dismissing money, politics and religion as false institutions he declared that the only thing that drove our lives forward was technology. While images of futuristic buildings and vehicles appeared on the screen the man painted the picture of an utopic Technocracy that would no longer be held back by the need for profit.

He had dubbed the movement that had been created to work toward the realization of this goal the *Venus Project*.

It was supposed to be a complete redesign of culture and society that would lead to a world in which machines were no longer mankind's enemy that took away their jobs but instead ensured that they no longer had to work at all.

It then got even stranger when the person that had been introduced as the former economic hit-man began to talk about the fact that all living beings were connected and that in the end we were all star dust...

Sid had always sympathized with the idea of some underlying connectivity, but in this context it just seemed absurd.

The movie neared its end and began to talk about 'actions for social transformation', the viewer could undertake to bring about the Utopia that had been described.

You should no longer support banks that were part of the so-called 'FED-Cartell', neither you nor any of your friends or family should ever join the military, you should reject the political system and boycott the energy companies.

In addition to that the film demanded you turn off the TV news and gather your information on the internet instead.

"the internet is our saviour", the voice-over proclaimed with a strange intonation.

The most important thing to do though was point number 6:

"Join the movement...create a critical mass...we must educate everyone", the voice-over proclaimed.



"The choice lies with you. You can continue to be a slave or be part of this revolution of consciousness."

The words were followed by a final scene which showed the Broadway with all of its billboards displaying grey static. At the sight of this people were falling to their knees, throwing away religious symbols and cell phones. The black and white scene was intercut repeatedly with the colorful pupil from the beginning, until a woman finally cried some colorful shimmering tears that fell to the floor and began to paint the entire world.

The movie ended and Sid sat there in silence, not knowing what to think or what to say...

When A. asked him what he thought he replied: "I don't know...I mean it really smells like pretty crass propaganda..."

"Yeah but it kind of makes sense, doesn't it?", A. replied with a firm voice.

"I just don't know if I would really want to live in this technological Utopia he has described there...besides I doubt that this will ever be realized. Didn't they call for the destruction of our current system so they could erect the new one in its ruins? I just feel like the breakdown of our society will more likely be followed by some apocalyptic hellscape or a system quite similar to the one we have now...Also T. told me that on the website you can donate money to the movement. Isn't that a little ironic?"

Sid tried to bring up a few more points he found critical but in the end A. still had this vacant glow in her eye...

Sid felt the urge to get out of their flat and after he had hastily bid farewell to A. he rode down to the southern part of town where he spent his time reading in a park until it was time to go to the nearby theater rehearsal where they would cut the film for their upcoming performance.

They spent the next two hours editing the scenes they had recorded the day before.

At one point A. asked him whether he wanted to go to the *Rote Insel* tonight where they were holding some kind of anniversary party

[REDACTED]

Did he really want to go back there tonight? He was afraid of what he might find there, what strange visions might await him.

Apart from that his body was still worn out and sick. When they went outside in order to color an umbrella with a few spray cans Sid began coughing heavily and A. took back her offer of going to



the squat party. Instead she once again made him promise not to sleep outside and offered him her bed, if he really could not bear sleeping in his.

The fumes from the spray cans had snuck up into his lungs and clouded his brain. When he sat down next to A. who smoked a cigarette he tried to explain to her that he was afraid he might not be able to get up again once he'd lie down.

"You have to stop eventually!", A replied with a determined tone.

In the end they worked until late in the night. When they were finally finished with the editing process Sid could barely hold himself in an upright position.

A. dragged him home and made him lie his shivering body to rest inside her bed.

"I won't let you destroy yourself!", she said.

Sid awoke with the desperate urge to return to his dreams

He pressed a pillow on his head in order to block out the sun and tried to fall asleep again as more images from his dream began to flood his mind.

He buried his head beneath the blanket and tried to slow down his breath.

He fell back asleep, but this time he dreamed about calling the repair service and informing them about the fungus in the kitchen...

He awoke again, but still he felt the urge to return to that reality, rather than facing what was actually out there.

When he opened his eyes anyway Sid stared at a headless torso in front of him and realized that he was lying in T. and A.'s marital bed.

Once his brain had made the necessary connections and understood that this meant that he was back at his flat, he told himself to get out as quickly as possible.

When he tried to get up his sick body was shaken by a salvo of coughing. He dragged himself to the bathroom anyway where he took a quick shower and coughed out some lumps into the sink that had an unsettling red tinge.

He shrugged it off, got dressed and left for the bus which he took down to the part of town where their theater practise would take place today.



Sid wanted to sit down in the grass at the nearby park, but when he arrived it was filled with older man and young boys who were dressed in yellow uniforms identifying them as members of the church of Jesus Christ. They were collecting garbage and mowing the lawn and so Sid had to settle for a bench instead.

A few minutes after Sid had stretched out on the bench a couple of unkempt bearded men walked past him and one of them halfheartedly threw an empty plastic beer bottle in the direction of a nearby trash can. He missed and the bottle landed right in front of the feet of one of the devotional cleansers. The man in yellow tried to give the bum a pious, forgiving look filled with brotherly love but Sid could see the suppressed hatred and insanity twinkle in his eyes.

After he had read a little more about the '72 presidential campaigns Sid unwrapped the bread he had hastily prepared before leaving the flat this morning.

When it was time to leave he got up and with a nervous look at the docile brother, Sid cautiously placed the aluminum foil that had contained his breakfast into the trash can.

He arrived at the rehearsal rooms and they immediately began with a warm up after which he felt as if his worn out body had been forced through a shredder.

They started the first round of rehearsal and about half way through they came to a scene in which Sid's character had to break down in despair.

He tried to use method acting which proved to be very effective . . . maybe too effective. As he slowly sank to the floor he [REDACTED] thought of everything that had happened.

The pressure of these painful memories weighed heavy on his shoulders and slowly pushed him down.

Behind his closed eyes the scavenger appeared and flew towards him, exposing it's claws and multiple backs. [REDACTED] he hit the ground [REDACTED]

His curled up body was shaken by sudden shivers [REDACTED]

When the scene was over Sid rolled onto his back and looked into the eyes of his fellow actors. They seemed to be deeply moved and strangely disturbed at the same time, by what they had just witnessed.

Their instructor hesitantly clapped her hands a few times and then announced they would have a short break now.

The room emptied and Sid was left behind, still lying on his back, unable to move.

He starred up towards the ceiling and listened to their sounds as they ate on the terrace below.



Whatever he did, he could not get the pictures his mind had just created out of his head anymore.

They kept streaming in and all he could do was lie there and let them flood his brain.

When the rest of the group returned he got a few concerned looks, but he gave them a big fake grin and got up.

Then they repeated the scene over and over again. At one point their instructor decided that a few of the others should embody the creatures of his unconscious.

So three of his fellow actors put on distorted dark masks and began approaching him as he stood there with his head buried in his hands. Once they reached him they began to push him down by placing their weight on his back.

In the scene that followed Nathan's character built him up again, pulling him like a puppet on invisible strings, into an upright position and describing his creation as a man who could reach everything he set his mind to.

When he asked him what he wanted to achieve Sid aspirated without thinking: "Love . . ."

The father figure that Nathan's character represented got out net-like cloths which he placed on his shoulders as if they were wings.

The rest of the group appeared on stage uttering the words: "Only he who is happy can escape the labyrinth, but only he who escapes the labyrinth can be happy. . .", first silently, then slowly raising their voices until they screamed at the top of their lungs.

As Sid began to move forward they latched onto the net on his shoulders, once again pulling him down.

He lay there on his back, breathing heavily, and thought: 'It's strange how art and real life interconnect sometimes', when A. appeared on stage, carrying a closed umbrella and wearing a freakish mask as well.

First Sid moved backward but when she opened the umbrella and took off her mask he slowly approached her and finally found shelter beneath her shield.

After the rehearsal they went to an open air party at the Spree. On the way there they passed various places that reminded him [REDACTED]. He just couldn't move around in this city anymore.

Maybe he had to leave town [REDACTED]

They arrived at their destination and went down to the lawn behind the wall where they were welcomed by a beautiful sunset over the river, loud electronic music and euphoric screams from



an ecstatic crowd in front of the speakers.

A song began to play

“What we are trying... is to see if we cannot radically bring about a transformation of the mind... But, that depends on you and not somebody else. Because in this there is no teacher, no pupil, there is no leader, there is no guru, there is no master, no saviour . . . you yourself are the teacher and the pupil, you are the master, you are the guru, you are the leader, you are everything...”, a voice in the music said. But Sid now recognized that it was the voice of Krishnamurti. He had heard it yesterday in the film A. had made him watch.

Instead his head filled with questions like: Who was he? What was this speech really about? Was there a connection to the ideas of that *Venus Project*?

Sid wondered whether the smile that appeared on his face over this realization was honest and heartfelt or fake.

There was some pain in it, he realized when he caught his reflection in A.'s sunglasses.

But maybe that was what made a real smile, a little grain of pain in it.

Sid looked up with open eyes on the lookout for new associations.

He stared directly at the back of a nearby bald shaven head that moved rhythmically to the music.

Sid got up and went toward the river.

But were these really new associations or rather new illusions?

Did it matter...?

Sid jumped up and decided to walk over to the abandoned ice cream factory across the river.

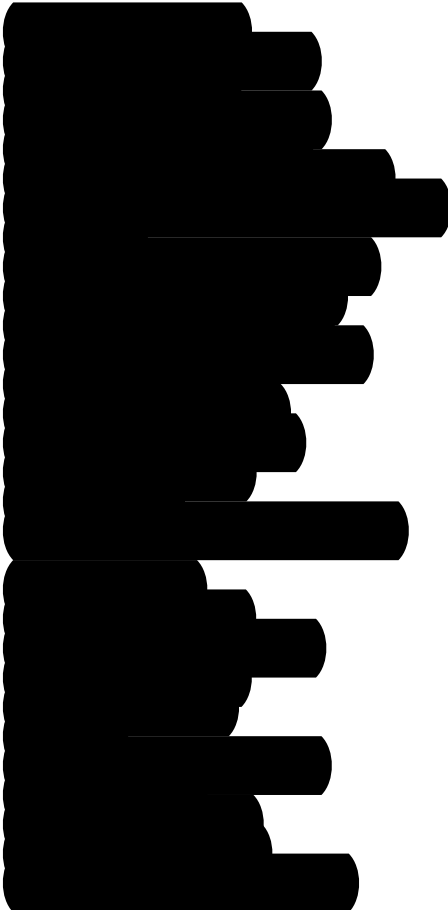


On the way he listened to the speech of Krishnamurti again.

When he arrived on the roof he sat down in a corner beside the sunset and the TV-tower.

When Sid had tried to explain that he tried to live by the rule: "If I think something might bring me happiness and I do not see how it might harm anyone, I will do it! I did not have the intention to do harm, so I won't blame myself!"





Sid looked up from his little black book and saw the sun set before him.



He got up and returned to the music. On the way there he suddenly passed a circular opening in the wall to his right. He stopped and went towards the shimmering green light of the tunnel that lay behind it. He touched the handle of the glass door before him and to his amazement it opened. . .

He went through the green and opened another glass door. He was welcomed by a giant hall made of glass and concrete that shimmered in rainbow lights through his 3-D glasses.

He made a round through it, past a few trees that grew out of silvery columns. From the distance he could hear the screams of a wild mob that had gathered somewhere down the river to yell at a giant screen that delivered them a team with which they identified because it wore the same three colors on their sleeves, as they did.

Sid decided to go to the other sound he heard to his right.

He followed the electric waves that crept into his ears and returned to the little spot behind the wall where he had been earlier.

He found his friends beside the river. They were three now, Ir. the woman for whom's promise Ja. had left her boyfriend was there with them. They all embraced and walked toward the music that had gotten louder. Sid danced for a while but quickly sat down again in order to write into his little black book:

*I sit still in the middle of the crowd
that moves ecstatically
as one, seemingly free
But are they as connected as they seem to be?
can't they see
that you is not me?
maybe I should get up and join them
maybe then I will see
maybe*

Sid got up and joined the crowd in dance.

But after a few moments of joined ecstasy he returned to his own individual goals and aspirations.

He just had to capture this scene of an ecstatic crowd dancing beside a wall his parents had not been able to cross a few decades ago.



But once he was done with filming he joined his friends again and offered them some of the absinth he was carrying in his backpack.

He found them sitting in a circle and joined them. Then he got out his bottle, filled it's cap with the green liquid, lit it and handed the little goblet of fire around. A man appeared behind them, that threw flaming sticks into the air.

Suddenly Mahs. appeared out of the dark beside him and joined their round.

Sid had never really looked at her before, he had always been occupied with his love for writing

Now that Mahs. danced right beside him, he kept his little black book in his hands, but he decided to capture her in a few lines inside it:

*She moves like the zebra
she has turned her legs into
with her black and white tights
that rise
into the sky
beside me
they're all I see
she sits down beside me
tells us of the liquids in her bag
puts on the mask of someone
who offers me LSD, speed, cocaine or crack
she doesn't react
to the questions I ask
her mind seems to be vacant
but vast
until she asks me how much longer
I think the evening will last
and if she should invite others...
I wonder if it bothers
my envious mind
and hide behind
dark glasses*



Sid took his eyes off her and let his gaze wander over the scenery.

When he turned his gaze back at her he overheard her talking about the impossibility of an objective truth or at least the impossibility of mankind to grasp it.

He joined the discussion: "Are you saying we're all sitting inside a cage, watching shadows on the walls?", he asked her and she replied: "No I'm more talking about what Kant has once described, that all the laws you think are governing the world around you are actually just products of your own mind."

". . . and only valid in a defined area?", Sid asked.

"I might be indoctrinated by the politics seminar on historical materialism", he commented, "but Engels for example claims that mankind will arrive at universal truths eventually if history just lasts long enough. Because if you follow the dialectic process you will arrive at rules that govern wider and wider realms until you finally completely understand. . ."

She looked at him with a somewhat intrigued gaze until he continued: "But I do have my problems with that theory. . . It leaves out of the equation that the dialectic method is not an objective truth and subject to change as well. I guess Engels acknowledged that fact but Lenin did seem to believe certain truths like the dialectic method to exist. . . And in the end it lead people behind that wall over there to proclaim that 'the party is always right'. . ."

Mahs. nodded contemplatively and then declared that she would go dancing now. Sid returned to his little black book and continued to write:

*I watched a man
that had been roaming around
and had seemed happy, as if he had found
clarity within himself
but then he touched my friend on the back
and she moved away
again and again*

Sid was interrupted from his manic scribbling by Ir., who moved further away from the brash man behind her and sat down beside him proclaiming: "There is no such thing as wasting time!" Then she was lost in the music again. . .

Ja. sat down next to her and asked Sid what he was writing about.



"Things from your memory or fiction?"

"Both I guess", Sid replied.

"I'd like to read some of it some time!", Ja. said.

Sid grasped for his back pocket and searched for the copy of a text he was carrying with him for situations like this.

Instead a piece of paper appeared that was tainted in a dark red.

Lost in thoughts where it might have come from he handed it to Ja. who said: "You're a strange creature Sid!"

"It's not what it looks like", Sid answered and explained that it was a doctors appointment sheet that had come into contact with the red pencil he was carrying in his back pocket.

Then they returned to the music machine and danced.

". . . how beautiful life can be . . .", a voice in the music proclaimed and Sid believed it.

At one point the group he seemed to belong to tonight declared that it was hungry and needed to find nourishment!

And so they walked over to the giant subway station across the street. They bought themselves a few kebabs and sat down beside the giant screens that had luckily been turned off by now. Sid got out a piece of chalk anyway and wrote the words "You can't look away", beneath the black monitor.

When they returned to the music only 3 of them were left. They danced a little longer until the sounds stopped and they were left with silence.

Sid decided to lead them to the green hole in the wall and after the girls had rolled themselves cigarettes for the way, they started their journey down the road. They lost Mahs. to her friends that finally arrived at the corner they passed. After a quick greeting that was followed by a quick goodbye Sid and A. went on towards the green hole. It was still open...

A. was amazed and scared when Sid touched the translucent doors and they actually opened. He went in and told her to follow. His voice echoed back from the walls of the bright tube.

"They can't just leave this place open at night...this can't be right...we shouldn't be here", A. said as she followed him down towards the second glass door.

"This is your city", Sid proclaimed. "You can do anything around here!"

They passed the second glass door and walked out into the giant concrete atrium with a few trees, many office windows around and a glass ceiling above.

Sid ran down between the trees and slid over the slippery ground. A. was still scared, expecting something unpleasant like a sudden alarm going off or security personnel seizing them. But



nothing happened. They left the building through yet another set of glass doors at the other side and walked out to the river.

After breathing in the fresh air and staring at the lights that reflected in the water before them, they went on towards the subway station and waited for their train.

Sid had handed A. some random prescription drugs he had found in the grass earlier, which she now got out.

"Can I take these?", she asked.

Sid wondered if she was serious and replied: "You can do whatever you want..."

"Will you carry me home?", A. added.

"I can't guarantee that...", Sid replied although he knew he probably would.

The train arrived and Sid sat down on the "no sitting"-sign on the frame in the back, even though there were a few cops standing on the platform next to him. But the train began to move and Sid casually waved over to them.

When they got out of the train A. silently handed the pill over to Sid and when he acted as if he was about to swallow it she demanded: "No, throw it away so neither of us can take it anymore!"

He did and they returned home without taking pain killers. At least Sid was convinced that being able to feel was preferable to total numbness. But for how long would that certainty last?

After sitting in the kitchen together for a few more minutes they said good night and each went to the bed of the other one.

Sid awoke in A.'s bed, checked the time on his phone, and granted himself another hour of sleep.

When he awoke the second time he remained in the twilight between dream and reality for some time, remembering the fantastic worlds he had just roamed. Although he had dreamed of persecution and fear at one point he felt the urge to return to them, like he did every morning. But then he checked the time again and decided that 5 hours of sleep had to be enough! He got up and went to the bathroom to take a shower.

Afterwards he got dressed and made 2 coffees. Sid swallowed one of them and brought the other one over to A. in order to make sure that she would be awake and come to theater practise in time. Before he left she told him to get something to eat for the rehearsal breaks. After realizing that it was a Sunday he went to the Turkish supermarket at the corner, only to find that it



was closed as well. Another victim of integration, he thought as he went down to the bus-stop with empty hands.

He rode the bus south, sat down on the little patch of grass in front of the rehearsal rooms and began to sort his notes from the past few days. When the battery of his laptop died he had no choice but to go inside and plug it in there. He found the place to be open but vacant and so he sat down in the little cafeteria at the entrance and continued his work.

Half an hour later their instructor Nele appeared in the door. She gave him a concerned look and pointed down at the lock. Only now Sid realized that the wood around it had splintered.

"Did someone break in here?", Nele asked and went in. She began to roam through the rooms and found that most computers, projectors and printers still seemed to be in their place. But when she went through the door that Sid had believed to be locked she was welcomed by chaos; open drawers, things scattered across the floor and a broken and empty safe.

As Nele called the cops the rest of the group arrived one by one and Sid informed them of what had happened.

They sat around in a circle and told each other of the times they had been robbed until Nele came out with a distressed look on her face and told them that they should start the rehearsal anyway. After another exhausting warm up they once again began to build Sid's character up, pushed him down, built him up, and so on, again and again.

In the break the police finally showed up in the form of two plain-clothed officers. A tall man in a yellow T-shirt with the emblem of the San Francisco police began to dust off surfaces on the search for fingerprints. The other man in a dark lumberjack shirt walked through the rooms and began to fill a stack of papers with the things that had been stolen and the personal information of the victims.

Sid's identification card was copied as well since he had been the first who had 'noticed' the damage. The act made him very uneasy even though he clearly was on the side of the victim this time. But what if there was some kind of glitch in the data records and he was suddenly connected to this robbery in a compromising way?

Sid told himself that this was rather unlikely but even if it was, it was just one more stain on his record.

While the officers kept filling out the paperwork Nele and the other two who were in charge of the place were wrecking their heads trying to come up with a way to compensate the damages. They were not ensured since no insurance company would cover this strange little place that could not be placed in any defined category.



After the policemen had left they went through one more round of rehearsal and called it a day. As soon as they were finished Sid had to sprint down to the subway station in order to drive across town to the only movie theater that screened the film he was supposed to watch for his filmcriticism seminar tomorrow. He saw the train leaving the station in front of his eyes and sat down dispirited and out of breath.

When he finally arrived at the newly erected glass hall of the biggest station in the east, he was already 10 minutes late. Confused and disoriented he tried to find the cinema and hoped they had not yet started.

Without seeing the film he would not have to show up at the seminar tomorrow. But he wanted to go there in order to ask his professor whether mere mortals like him had any chance of attending a press screening of *The Rum Diary*. If so he would have the chance to write his review before the movie came out and that way he might be able to offer it to newspapers, magazines or other forums that might be interested in it.

Again Sid wondered whether he wasn't investing too much hope, blood and tears into this vague plan...

What if it failed? What if there was no one out there who wanted to read, let alone publish the ramblings of a strange nobody? What if his professor gave him a bad grade for it? Would he have the energy to keep writing after a blow like that?

But Sid found the theater and pushed these worries and doubts back into the back of his head.

The guy behind the counter told him that they hadn't even started yet and that Sid should sit down outside and have a drink until he'd come out and announce that the film would begin.

So Sid did as he was told and went outside where tables and chairs were set up around a little stage on which an old man played guitar. Suddenly Sid saw a couple of familiar faces from his filmcriticism seminar around a nearby table and as they recognized him as well and started waving he had no choice but to walk towards them and make friendly conversation until the movie would start.

What was he supposed to say?

"How are you doing?"

"Oh well I feel like shit, been thinking about suicide a lot lately... how are you? Nice weather isn't it?"

They began to talk about the only subject that provided safe ground for all of them: Movies.

When Sid mentioned that he was planning to write his term paper on *The Rum Diary* the guy to his right asked: "Didn't that movie already run a year ago?"



"Well yeah in the US. But in Germany the film is starting in August..."

"You're sure? Because I already saw the DVD of it at the *Videodrome!*"

Could that be? Sid's doubts returned. He had only read those dates on the Internet, what if the film had actually already run in Germany or had been a direct to DVD release. His professor had accepted a term paper about it, but if there was no theatrical run Sid could bury his hopes of having his text published.

The man from the counter finally appeared and called them in.

They went inside, the hall darkened and the film began with shaky documentary footage of a moving train and it's dark haired passenger intercut with that of a women dancing behind bars. Suddenly the dark haired woman appeared behind bars as well and was introduced as Kübra by the interviewer, a woman that had spent the last four years of her life in prison for assault and rape.

She talked in cold blood about the people she had hurt [REDACTED]

This is getting old he thought and tried to focus on the film.

After the movie had ended he immediately left the theater in order to make sure he wouldn't have to endure any more soul crushing conversation and empty small talk. His feet carried him to the subway and suddenly he found himself heading for his flat.

It made sense, after all he was still terribly sick and it looked like it would be a cold night. In addition to that he still had some books lying around there which he would have to return to the university library tomorrow. And if he wanted to camp somewhere he'd have to pick up his bike first that was still standing at the theatre rehearsal rooms.

He got out at his stop but instead of going to the flat he headed for the nearby wasteland. Sid ascended one of the giant hills of sand and watched the sinking sun paint the clouds above the distant skyline red.

He remembered how he had come here with *her* and once again he realized that he had not been able to cry since they broke up. He tried to press out at least a few tears but his eyes remained dry.

Maybe crying wouldn't be enough to match the pain he felt inside, anyway.

Discouraged and broken he walked home.

When he arrived A. was sitting in the kitchen and after greeting him and asking how the film was, she wanted to know whether she could borrow his tent for a trip back to her hometown, she wanted to undertake tomorrow.

Since he had planned to live inside it for the next few days he was about to decline, but then he



asked instead: "Could I come along?"

She had planned to leave in the morning but they decided that Sid would come after his seminar and they'd pick him up from a nearby town. Sid almost started to get enthusiastic about the possibility of a spontaneous journey, but then he tried to contact the driver with whom he wanted to hitch a ride and was informed that there were no more free places left...

Beaten and tired Sid crawled into A's bed and after trying to sort some more of his recent writing he fell asleep.

Sid was awoken by the sound of an opening door. He looked up and saw A. collecting her stuff, getting ready for her journey home.

He tried to turn around and fall back asleep but it was no use.

Suddenly his body was shaken by a coughing fit that could not be stopped, since every time he tried to breath in afterwards in order to get some oxygen back into his empty lungs, his throat was irritated and he began to cough helplessly again.

Maybe these are symptoms of withdrawl, he thought.

Maybe that was the reason why he grasped for his touchwriter as soon as the coughing had cooled down to an occasional rasping sound

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Sid sank to his side and wondered whether he'd be able to cry [REDACTED]. But instead he was just shaken by another merciless coughing fit. He knew he couldn't stay in this bed, in this flat, if he did not want to stay here for a long time. So he jumped up and dragged himself to the bus. He would go swimming!
He knew this was probably a somewhat insane idea, considering his physical state and the whether, but it was what he would have done, had he gone through with his plan to camp beside the lake last night.
Sid picked up his bike at the rehearsal rooms and took the train to the lakes of the southwest.



Out of some masochistic urge he got out his touchwriter and opened the mailbox [REDACTED] [REDACTED] even though he knew it would bring him down. But then he noticed a second message in his inbox and when he opened it, it informed him that the grades for last semesters politics exam were in. Nervously he went to the website where the results would be displayed, hoping it wouldn't crash, like it did so often.

But it didn't and when the page had finally loaded he scrolled down and found the grade. It was almost perfect!

Sid felt the rush he had so often felt in back in school. The feeling of reinforcement of his character. The absurd notion that he as a human being was worth something because it said so on a sheet of paper. He decided to bathe in it anyway and with a big grin he arrived at his destination. He got out and rode his bike around the lake that lay in front of the exit of the subway, in search of a place where he'd be safe from the drunken hordes that crowded the shore. He passed the spot he usually went to and noticed that they had cut down the tree that had hung over the water on which he had spent his last summer.

He found an empty spot, sat down and began to sort his writings.

When his machines began to fail him Sid switched to reading the book about Propaganda he needed for a term paper but would have to return to the library today. He wrote down a few definitions he might use but soon he got tired of this somewhat pointless task. Why should he write 15 pages on the question whether the film *The Great Global Warming Swindle* was propaganda? He did not care, his professor did not really seem to care either and no one else would ever read his text.

It was all for the grade... That meaningless validation of his as a valuable member of society. Sid gazed out over the lake and wondered whether he should go swimming. When he took off his shoes he started coughing again and so he decided to just dip his feet in and wade around close to the shore.

Afterwards he continued reading about the '72 presidential campaign. It was somewhat discouraging to read about events which's outcome he already knew. To know that the book would not have a happy ending... His mind wandered off, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and he could no longer concentrate on the ramblings of Dr. Thompson.

When Sid looked up from the book he stared into the tiny black eyes of some kind of water bird that stared straight at him. It almost looked like a creature of prehistoric times with its rigid beak and the claws that clutched into the wood beneath it. Sid looked around and saw more of the black creatures that all slowly kept approaching. He wondered whether they wanted something to



eat and what they would do once they realized that he did not carry anything with him to satisfy their hunger.

At the other side of the lake Sid suddenly heard an all too familiar scream and when he looked over he saw the grey heron spread it's wings and catapult itself into the sky.

He jumped up, hastily gathered his things between the black birds that flew up around him and began to scream as well. Sid got on his bike and rode back to the safety of the subway station.

He rode the train to his university where he wanted to get some cheap food at the cafeteria. But when he arrived he realized that they had just closed. After buying a new black book to fill he went to the kebab stand at the subway station instead. 'I seem to thrive exclusively on falafel lately', he thought and bought a Halumi-sandwich instead.

Sid sat down on the lawn across from the American library, in front of the ethnological museum. He watched the faces of the people passing by as they recognized the giant poster of masks from different cultures that hung above the entrance. They seemed to drop their own masks, they wore on the streets every day, even if it was just for a few moments of staring.

Sid got out Thompson's book again and as he continued to make his way through his painful and paranoid visions he wondered why he was reading about an election that had taken place almost half a century ago when he could inform himself about the election that was going on right now...

He knew how simple it was, he'd just have to go on the internet, watch a few episodes of that satirical news show, *The Daily Show* and he'd be back on track!

But he knew that it wouldn't stop at a few episodes, especially in the state he was in right now. Once he'd sit down in front of the screen to listen to the soothing voice of the fake anchorman, welcoming him back, Sid would be lost in a frenzy that would stretch out over the next few days and leave him empty and devoid of any drive to ever get up again.

Sid tried to tell himself that following historic events over the media as they unfurled, did not provide too much insight anyway and when he continued reading he found Hunter S. Thompson's words to reflect his view as he likened the political process to covering football games, only worrying about the point-spread, the polls, the chances of winning this state and loosing that one...

Sid finished his Halumi and went inside the library to return the books. Afterwards he called his aunt and asked what she was doing tonight and if he could come over to her place.

She said they'd arrive late themselves but that he was welcome anytime.

Afterwards Sid gathered his things and rode down to his filmcriticism seminar. He was the first



to arrive in the small white room, only his professor was there, at his end of the table, reading a newspaper. Sid nervously approached him and stuttered: "You said last week that there were already press screenings for *The Rum Diary*, would there be any way for a regular mortal like me to attend something like that?"

His professor looked at him and told him that he could extend his press credentials and the invitation he had gotten, to him for that night.

He told him to write him a mail tonight to remind him to check when the screening was and if it hadn't already taken place.

Sid felt enthusiastic and nervous in anticipation, hoping desperately that he had not asked too late.

The seminar began and they started to talk about the film Sid had seen last night.

The conversation about the drug use of the 2 protagonists was somewhat irritating.

When Sid had just told Nathan about his plans to write a Gonzo filmcritique he had asked: "So does that mean that you take lots of drugs before you write it?"

After trying to explain that Gonzo was not about taking drugs but about subjectivity, Sid had replied that he had not decided on that yet...

As his professor now described heavy drug use as structural proximity to death Sid wondered how he would react if he found out that the student he had sent to the screening in his place had watched it while being under the influence. Would he be able to breath in a position of such liability, among all these professional journalists? Then again, maybe that was exactly the kind of fear and loathing required for a proper work of Gonzo journalism...

They went on to talk about the fact that the protagonists of the documentary seemed to repeat the same mistakes and tragic life events over and over again and the professor declared that his conclusion was that reflection, the exact thing that they were supposed to learn in this seminar, did not make a difference in the end because other factors were guiding our actions.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Sid felt tired and when he realized that he had emptied the bottle of caffeine he had bought earlier he decided it was time for more desperate measures. He got up from the sofa in the little lounge next to the lecture hall and rode his bike to the subway that brought him back to the lake. On the way he wondered how the visit to his aunt would unfold.

Sid did not know exactly with what intentions he was going to her place. Maybe it was some kind of familial commitment he felt, maybe some kind of guilt that they hadn't seen each other in quite some time. That he had not been there for her and for his little cousin when he found out that his uncle had cheated on her.

Had he really? Sid wasn't sure. He knew there was another woman, that his aunt wanted a divorce and that that was the reason his uncle had not attended their family gathering this Easter.

[REDACTED]

Sid arrived at the lake and after a quick look at the grey clouds above that looked like they were about to erupt, he began to undress.

A nearby fisherman gave him a look that seemed to say: "Are you really going to do what it looks like?"

Sid waded into the water and with a desperate scream he plunged into the cold lake.

After a few quick strokes had carried him into the middle of the lake he rested, floating on his back and looking into the dark grey sky above him.

'Bring it on', he thought.

Then he returned to the shore, got dressed again and left the city to go to his aunts house that lay right behind the remains of the wall.

When he arrived and rang the bell his aunt N. came down to open the door and gave him a hasty embrace before pointing to the little patch of grass in the backyard they called their garden, where he put his bike. Then they went upstairs and Sid was greeted by his cousin Roseline who immediately demanded his attention. As N. prepared dinner Roseline told him about her life that revolved mainly around school and the books about a young wizard that had already been a worldwide phenomenon when Sid was her age. She showed him a few wands she and her friends had carved out of wood and painted in order to reenact the events of the books. It seemed to Sid that she had withdrawn into the world of these tales since her father had left the house. But then again, he had lost himself in those books as well, what had been his reason for it other



than an active imagination?

After dinner Roseline went to bed and N. and Sid sat down on the balcony.

When she asked him how he had been doing the past few weeks he found a welcome way to stir the conversation in the direction he desired, yet wanted to avoid at the same time.

[REDACTED]

Sid did not really know how to phrase his next question since he still did not know what exactly had happened: "So he didn't tell you anything?"

She shook her head and her eyes filled with tears when she raised two fingers of her left hand and replied: "Twice."

Sid stared out into the sea of green beyond the balcony and once again he wondered whether he'd be able to cry tonight.

He asked her how she was dealing with the whole situation and she replied that she had somehow adjusted to it all by now. Sid asked if she had ever heard of the five stages of grief and began to list them when she said no. When he got to *Anger* she replied that she had always been someone who yearned for harmony and simply wasn't able to let out aggression that might lie somewhere within.

When Sid told her that he had the same problem sometimes she said: "I guess it's something within the genes we share... Maybe it would be good to be able to throw a few glasses against the wall every once in a while..."

But I'm also concerned about Roseline!

That's one thing I'm glad about; that he had already moved away for that job and wasn't around when it all unfurled. So she did not have to witness any nasty scenes! It's not good for kids to go through something like that!"

Sid choked up a little when he asked how Roseline was dealing with the whole situation and N. claimed that there did not really seem to be any change in her behavior. But the feeling passed.

"I'm not really sure what it looks like inside of her. I guess a mother isn't really the one to talk to in these kinds of situations..."; N. continued.

Unwittingly his mind drew the connection to his uncle at the the other side of his family that had died about a year ago.

"It doesn't feel quite right to draw a connection here but my little cousin Lu. acted like he was



not really affected by the death of his father. According to my aunt K. he still has not cried about it once. He's become quite aggressive though, get's into fights and only when he loses them, he tends to cry and scream..."

Sid did not want to tell N. what to do, tell her to talk more about the whole matter with Roseline, since she was probably right that she as a mother wasn't really the one Roseline could open up to about her feelings. But at the same time it hurt him to see how things like this were never talked about openly in his family. That he was having this talk with N. seemed like a huge exception already.

[REDACTED]

N. told him that talking about it all with his uncle had helped her a lot. [REDACTED] It helps to recapture it all, to reflect it, see it from another angle, cope with it..."

Sid was reminded once again of his professor's words from earlier: 'Reflection doesn't change anything! In the end there are always other factors driving our lives'.

[REDACTED]

"I guess I'm no longer looking for someone with whom I can have kids, a house and a car because that's no longer the kind of life I want to live.", Sid answered.

"And I don't want a relationship that's stale and uneventful. But I guess I am yearning for some kind of security..."

"You want a relationship in which you can trust your own feelings and that of the other!", N. said and Sid nodded.

He stared out into the trees again and then asked the question for which he had come here: "Do you think something like that still exists?"

"Yes!", N. answered without hesitation, in a firm and certain tone.

"Maybe it doesn't always last for ever, but it can last for a very long time!"

Sid gave her a thankful smile and told himself that if N. who had been cheated on after being together with his uncle for almost 20 years, did still believe in love, maybe he should not give up on it so easily either...



Sid noticed that he had to go to the bathroom and when he got up N. got up as well and after she had shown him where to sleep they both went to bed, hoping to be able to fall asleep soon and forget, at least for the night.

Sid awoke in a room full of pictures of mermaids and cute animals and realized that he was lying in the bed of his little cousin.

He still felt sick and tired and devoid of any energy to get out of bed and start the day. Why should he...

In order to get some life force back into his veins Sid picked up Dr. Thompson's book and tried to suck up the mayhem and mad drive.

He began to read about an incident on the campaign trail when Thompson had given his press credentials to a raving lunatic who boarded the train of a distinguished Senator instead of him and whom's behavior had cost him his pass for the train and the last remains of his reputation with his colleges. Sid had to think about the mail he had sent to his Professor late last night asking once again for his press credentials. Thompson had done it out of retaliation for hours of dull train rides, but his professor had no idea... Sid had not gotten a reaction so far though, and he began to worry that he had changed his mind or that the screening had already taken place.

With this healthy dose of fear in the morning Sid got out of bed and took a cold shower.

Afterwards he sat down on the balcony and while he ate breakfast he switched back and forth between sorting his notes, reading and writing.

A few hours later he was ripped out of his working process when Roseline returned from school, appeared on the balcony, sat down beside him and after a heavy sigh, began to talk about her day at school.

They went over to the kitchen and prepared themselves some lunch while Roseline went on about the boys in her class and a presentation about castles she had held.

As they ate she enthusiastically told him about all the good grades she had gotten recently, until her mood darkened and she told him about a D in Physics. "Before that I used to be good," she said and Sid could see his former self in her despair.

After lunch they went upstairs and Roseline sat down at the white piano in her room.

While Sid lay in her bed and stared at the ceiling she played him songs of musical geniuses and current popstars. Then she went on to perform pieces she had composed herself. She sang the



texts she had written together with a friend and Sid was deeply moved by the emotion in her voice.

When she was finished Sid asked if she had utensils to draw and as she got out a stack of paper she proclaimed: "I also have a set of quills I got in the town where Dad is living now!"

"Do you go there often?", Sid asked as she showed them to him.

"Well yes, no...he comes here every weekend, or every second weekend..", she hesitantly replied. She did not seem like she wanted to talk about it and Sid did not have the energy or will to dig deeper.

So they just sat on the ground and drew in silence. He first painted a picture for her, of a cat and a lamp that fell in love, after asking her for three words to compose it.

Then he tried to capture her in paint, on the paper before him, how she sat there on the floor, concentrated and lost in her own world.

Afterwards they played a board game until her piano teacher showed up.

Sid returned to the balcony and got out his little black book. He stared at the plain white pages that stared back at him. He had nothing to say. There was no sign of inspiration left in his brain.

As he looked over the little gardens around him he just felt tired and depressed.

[REDACTED]

So he picked up his book again and searched for inspiration in there. But he realized soon, he could not just read these tales, he would have to live them himself. Something that was quite hard in an environment like the one he was in right now...

N. arrived from work and left again soon thereafter under loud curses when she realized that some parents conference she had to attend had already begun.

Sid and Roseline made themselves dinner and ate on the balcony when they were suddenly interrupted by the sound of the phone. Roseline picked up and began talking about her day.

Afterwards she said to Sid: "Greetings from Dad!".

It was probably a good thing that she had not extended his wishes right away while he was still on the phone, probably expecting a reply. He would not have gotten one.

After dinner they went upstairs and played another board game until it was time for Roseline to go to bed.

"I just want to listen to my favorite song one more time!", she pleaded. Sid nodded and Roseline put on some popstar who began to sing about being unfaithful to her boyfriend and slowly killing him that way.



Sid wondered whether Roseline understood the meaning of those lyrics and the connection to her own life. But when he began to explain what her idol was singing about he noticed that she did not really have the attention span for something like that any more.

Her mother returned and sent her off to bed.

Sid sat down on the balcony with her again and was about to call it a night as well when his phone suddenly went off. It was Maa, who invited him to a party at the other end of the city where he would be DJing tonight. Sid told him where he was, said that it was somewhat unlikely he'd show up there tonight and after saying they'd see each other thursday, he hung up.

But afterwards he began to turn the possibility of going there tonight over in his head, again and again. He still felt sick and tired and was in doubt whether it was actually physically possible to get all the way to the eastern part of the city that he was not even in right now!

He felt like he had to go there in order to meet girls, yet at the same time he found the idea almost repelling.

But then he realized that he was on the verge of abandoning all hope. Had he really given up?

With sudden resolve Sid jumped up and began to pack his things. He had a duty, not only to himself but to Gonzo journalism, whatever that meant...

He injected himself with an espresso, embraced his aunt, picked up his bike from the dark garden shed and drove towards the subway station at the nearby lake.

When he arrived he went down to the water and sat down at the shore for a while to cool down.

He stared at the reflection of the moon in the water and knew he had to reach it or die trying.

He just could not breathe in an environment like the little town he had just escaped. Instead he seemed to dwell in dark damp holes where the air was filled with smoke and noise.

Sid got up again and walked toward the subway that rode into the station just as he reached the platform. As he drove north he looked at his reflection in the window behind which the dark skyline of the city began to rise. It took him a while to recognize the creature that stared back at him and he wondered whether a curve in the glass was responsible for his distorted face.

His hair had exploded when he had washed it this morning and was now falling down in long black weaves, framing his face that was mostly hidden behind dark glasses.

A broken necklace of a wooden sun dangled down from his neck, hanging right above his chest that was covered by the paint splattered shirt he wore underneath his black jacket.

'I wouldn't sit down next to that guy in the subway', Sid thought as he looked at the bike next to him that had his belongings strapped onto the back, stuffed into a few ripped plastic bags.

Sid checked if everything was still in place and properly attached and pushed his bike to the



automatic doors that opened before him as he arrived at his destination. He rode it down vaguely familiar streets and arrived at a small gathering of buildings, where he locked it and went toward the door that had the graffiti of a man with a top hat beside it, holding a sign that invited him to the 'theatre'.

Sid entered and found Maa. behind a counter next to the entrance.

They greeted each other and Maa. informed him about the proceedings tonight. They were serving something to eat and screening a movie before they'd start the music.

A young man with a giant mohawk appeared in the entrance and demanded Maa.'s presence, so Sid threw a few bucks into the metal case on the counter and went deeper into the building. He filled himself a plastic plate with some rice and vegetables and proceeded into the main room where he sat down on a dirty old sofa in front of the projector. They were showing a film about a dystopian future in which emotions were outlawed since they lead to pain and suffering. Even though Sid had decided that he did not want to miss feelings like love and joy, even if they might lead to hate and pain, by now he was already inclined to favour a life without them again. . . . They ended the movie halfway, leaving the system it portrayed intact and pushed the sofas to the walls in order to make room to dance.

The music started loud and abrupt and the floor slowly begun to fill with dark creatures that twitched and turned in flashes of bright light.

Sid took off his jacket and joined them.

The projector before him had now switched to abstract images of flashing colors and distorted figures that went along to the music that sounded as if the man on the altar of sound beside the speakers was forcing all kinds of music, random quotes and various sounds through a shredder and intercut them with the violent vibrations of a jackhammer.

It was exactly what Sid had needed.

He felt his life force flood back into his body as the adrenaline his brain produced, which seemed to situate him in some kind of war-zone, rushed through his veins.

Sid let the music shake him mercilessly until there was not a single nagging thought or painful memory left. After a while he moved back outside for some fresh air. He found Maa. sitting on the ground beside the entrance. He waved him over and looked up at him with big dark eyes. Sid sat down beside him and they started talking. Maa. invited him to some festival in eastern Eu-



rope when a girl dressed in black sat down beside them and joined the conversation. She began to talk about the Swedish welfare system and then said: "I have to go back there soon because the dad of my boyfriend died. I really didn't want to but apparently he had some money that we will now inherit. . . It finally pays off to be married I guess!"

Maa. began to laugh at this sudden outburst of cynicism while Sid said: "Congratulations I guess. . ."

Another person dressed in black joined them and without much of an introduction plunged right into an anecdote about his last visit to the Netherlands. He had walked past a construction site in Amsterdam, bearing a giant German flag. At the sight of this he jumped the fence and ripped off the golden lower third of the flag, leaving the black and red as symbols for the coalition of anarchists and socialists. Unfortunately he had not been aware of the fact that he was being filmed by four different cameras and now he was facing three years in jail for defacing a national symbol. . .

Sid left the gibberish and unconnected tales behind and returned to the dance floor where he danced himself into a trance in front of the giant black pillar of sound that the girl to his right seemed to be praising like some kind of deity.

But Sid got more and more tired as the morning approached and brought worries with it. He wondered where he should sleep tonight. Maa. had offered him to crash at his place, but judging from the size of his pupils he would not be going home some time soon. Sid toyed with the idea of riding over to the abandoned attraction park in the woods for a while, but in the end he realized that the subway would start operating again quite soon and so he decided to do the reasonable thing and go to his flat, even though he hated himself for it and was already terribly afraid of a rude awakening. He could barely keep himself awake in the subway and about half way he began coughing again.

When he arrived he dropped into A.'s bed and fell asleep almost right away as the sun ascended outside.

After a few hours of sleep Sid awoke from painful dreams [REDACTED] He almost came close to crying when he faced the day and found it to be absolutely empty. But then he pulled himself together and dragged his aching body over to the bathroom, hoping that a hot bath might revitalize him.



When the water turned cold and he began to shiver he grasped for a towel and got out. Then he simply collapsed beside the tub.

He curled up in the fetus position and stared at the hairs and dirt that covered the white flag tiles. But he still could not cry. He just lay there until he could finally get up again. He knew he had to leave this flat. He still had to watch the movie for next weeks filmcritique-seminar and so he tried to tell himself once again that it was his duty to go there as a Gonzo reporter in order to practice his writing technique... It sounded fake and hollow in his head but he got dressed anyway, only to end up in about the same position on the kitchen sofa.

He was ripped out of his lethal lethargy by the sound of A.'s key in the door. She entered the kitchen and he asked her how her short trip home had been. She asked back how his past few days had been, especially the filmcritique seminar on Monday because of which he had not been able to come with her. He told her that he would get the press credentials if the screening had not taken place yet. "That means I could actually try to publish my text before the film comes out! The only problem is that I don't have any clue where..."

"Well", A. replied, "I sometimes work with this association of young journalists, I could contact them, ask around..."

Sid felt a modicum of hope return to his life that had seemed so dark just moments before.

He thanked her and left the flat. On his way down he rang the doorbell of the neighbors in order to inform them that they were planning to move out. Maybe that would get them to take back their threat of complaining to the landlord company and Sid would finally be able to breath freely in his own home.

But no one answered the door and so Sid went down and took the subway to the western part of town.

He got out at Zoo station and went past the colorful billboards and screens that disguised the otherwise grey and ugly buildings of the area.

He felt out of place in this expensive neighborhood, but when he arrived at the movie theater that normally had their focus on french films, and bought his card he felt a little safer in his skin, as if he had bought himself a validation that he was one of the people who were allowed to roam this part of town.

Sid sat down and the curtains before him opened for the commercials.

After a few fleeting insights into worlds of happiness, sensual pleasures and fun, promised by flashing images if only you bought the right product, two naked people suddenly appeared on the screen. They were shown dancing in a public location until 2 policemen came to haul them



away to some kind of psychiatric institution where they were strapped to a bed and injected with drugs. Then the footage was rewinded and played again, only this time the naked couple showed the policemen a 'patients provision' and continued dancing...

An old celebrity with dark grotesque makeup urged him to get one of them as well and Sid wondered what exactly these magic sheets of paper were, that seemed to protect you from prosecution and unwanted 'help'. He was always afraid that his eccentric behavior might be misinterpreted as insanity, maybe these provisions bore the answer...

The ringing of a bell informed him that the film began and so he dropped the topic from his mind again.

What followed was a documentary about the opera village the director and fluxus artist Christoph Schlingensiefel had opened in an African village.

The film showed Schlingensiefel working on his last brainchild before his death of cancer and how it continued afterwards.

A few of the Africans who had worked with him on the project proclaimed that in their view he lived on through this...

Sid heard to old women who sat behind him giggling at this and was reminded of the trailer for one of Schlingensiefel's own movies *United Trash*, that promised: "Funny Negros".

Sid had seen it at a retrospective of his work about a year ago in some underground movie theater and remembered how repellent and strange it had seemed to him back then and partly still did. And this project of bringing the opera to Bukina Faso had a strange ring to it as well. It was reminiscent of Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* for Sid, at least at first.

But as Schlingensiefel explained a little more about the intentions of his project, its connections to the extended concept of art as formulated by Joseph Beus and the healing power of art, Sid began to see this project in a different light than just as the 'touchy subject' the media had painted it as.

Unfortunately Sid knew from his own experience about the complications that could arise out of the attempt to mix life and art. He had tried to do so in his very own flat and it had ended with the threat of eviction because of one spontaneous performance too many.

"You can't run a gallery up there!", his neighbor had told him with eyes that spewed with hate the last time they had talked. "I studied art as well but this just isn't the place for it!", his wife had added.

Sid drank too much from the water he had filled into the bottle he carried with him in the bathroom beforehand. Soon he felt the urge to return to the bathroom. But he held out and instead



he watched Schlingensiefel talk about his critics that called him the 'enfant terrible' of the German art scene, pleading them to treat his art a little more personally, to ask themselves who they were in it's context...

The film ended and Sid hastened out towards the restrooms. After freshening up he walked out of the theater and got into the first bus that stopped beside him. It carried him to one of the museums that granted him shelter, but instead of going in he sat down beside the nearby river and got out his little black book.

There was nothing.

Nothing he could think of.

Nothing he could write about.

Sid almost wished for the scavenger to reappear, but his despair no longer took a metaphoric form, it was just a plain, agonizing dark grey that surrounded him and blocked out any other color.

Sid got up and began to wander aimlessly through the city.

When he found himself surrounded by hordes dressed in the same three colors he fled for the subway and suddenly he was back in his neighborhood. But he knew he could not return home! Not if he did not want to end up curled up on the sofa, in front of the screen.

Instead he headed for the bridges that divided his district from the one to the east. He jumped the fence and before he sat down he decided to quickly disappear in the woods on the other side to relieve his bladder again.

But when he looked up he suddenly saw a few bright colors in between the deep green. He approached them and found the graffiti-covered remains of a building beside a small, overgrown path made of rubble.

Sid followed the path that ran along long abandoned train tracks for which the buildings must once have served some kind of function.

To his right a tent appeared in his field of vision that seemed to be empty but in use. Further into the woods he found another colorful ruin with the ashes of a huge campfire in front. Apparently Sid was not the only one in this town who was drawn to abandoned buildings. "des plus belles ruines..."

After the earthquake in Lisbon the painters of the enlightenment had been strangely fascinated by the ruinous city. There just seemed to be something about crumbled buildings, destruction and breakdown that touched a certain spot in the souls of some. . .



Sid continued his stroll through the cursed woods and arrived at a junction with a shunting switch to the left of the tracks. . .

Sid remembered an experiment he had once read about in which people were asked what they would do if they saw a train heading for five people standing on the tracks. In this hypothetical you would not have time to warn the people, but you did have the possibility to pull a switch and derail the train onto another track on which only one person was standing.

Sid pulled the heavy rusty lever before him and wondered what he would do in such a situation. Most people in the survey had seen it as a way of saving the lives of four people and declared they would pull the switch. But when confronted with a second hypothetical scenario in which they could save four people standing on tracks with a train heading for them most people suddenly declared they would not stop the train from smashing them. Because in this scenario the only way to prevent their death would be by pushing a corpulent man in front of the train in order to bring it to a hold. . . Four saved, one dead; it would be the same outcome and yet most people would not do it since they would actively kill someone instead of passively pulling a switch.

'Humanity, what a bunch of hypocrites!', Sid thought. Then he remembered that the study found those who did not see a difference between the two to be mostly diagnosed sociopaths and concluded that they were missing a certain moral compass everyone else was supposedly born with. Sid had his doubts about this theory but he forgot all about the subject when the bridges reappeared in front of him and he saw the sun set behind them.

He got out his camera, set it up and filmed again while he sat in front of it on a steel beam. He stared at the sun for a while, then he got out his little black book and began to write:

*I'll kill myself today
But I will do it in a way
That allows me to stay
On this earth a little longer*

Sid looked down to his left. From the angle of the camera it looked as if there was a gaping abyss beside him, but he only saw the cars rushing by below through a small gap in the bridge that actually lay beside him.

Sid looked up and tried to imagine an abyss to his feet. He took a deep breath, closed his eyes and let himself fall forward into the chasm of his mind.



The impact came abrupt and hard and when Sid got up again, glad to still be alive he had a slight limp. He went to his camera, pressed pause and watched himself killing himself. Then he got out his little black book again:

*I staged my own death
Maybe just in order to see
How it would be
Afterwards
Without me
Maybe to convince myself
Not to throw me from a shelve
To prove that I still want to live
Was I successful?*

As the sun disappeared Sid packed his things and walked down the street where a punk concert was taking place tonight.

Sid arrived at the dark black rooms that lay in the giant grey building at the corner. He sat down on the window ledge and began to scribble some more into his little black book as the room filled with people dressed in the uniforms of individuality. The first band began to play and their loud metallic sounds blasted out of the speaker next to Sid's head who kept writing until the main act appeared and the crowd began to move. At their second song Sid plunged into the moshpit in front of the stage and let himself be shoved around and thrown into the air to the dark violent music until his head was empty.

A. and Camille had showed up as well at the little bar and autonomous zone that lay so close to their flat.

When the two of them left Sid went with them, hoping he had moshed enough to be able to fall asleep soon.

Back at home they sat down in the kitchen where the girls finished their beer. A. told him that Do., a girl she had met a few weeks ago at a record release party, wanted to show up at their rehearsal tomorrow night in order to make photos and asked if he thought that was a good idea.



While she said it she was on the internet, logged in to the social network he despised so much. Nevertheless he asked if Do. had uploaded some photos A. could show him. When A. opened her profile Sid asked himself whether he had only asked this question in order to see photos *of* her rather than *by* her..

He was confronted with a black and white photo that had been edited almost beyond recognition.

Sid said that he did not have a problem with her taking pictures, in the back of his head he began to make vague plans of getting in contact with her, at the same time he hated himself for it.

He went to bed trying to tell himself that he had to keep on searching for love...

Filled with doubts and painful memories he fell asleep only to be awoken again around midnight by the sound of his phone.

He picked up and was welcomed by a fake indian accent offering to take his orders...

It was his American friend Y. who was calling from his Grandparents place in Pennsylvania where he had been staying every summer break in order to work so he could pay for at least a part of the horrendous tuition fees of his college.

"Were you already asleep?", Y. asked with an almost reproachful tone.

Sid told him that he had not slept last night and Y. lamented the fact that they had not talked in quite some time and that he should contact him tomorrow.

Sid thought of the last time he had seen him, back in their hometown in winter.

[REDACTED]

Sid did not know whether he would have the strength to write Y. tomorrow.

[REDACTED]

This time it took him a lot longer to fall back asleep but finally he was surrounded by the comforting darkness of unconsciousness.

The next morning Sid was awoken by the sound of his phone's alarm clock.

As he felt the creeping lethargy approaching he forced himself out of bed and into the shower. Maybe it was the thought of Do. that got him out of bed, the possibility of meeting someone new tonight, however vague and uncertain it might be.



He got dressed and fled the flat, got his bike out of the cellar and took the subway south. In the train a big man with green glasses and a guitar around his neck approached him and sang with an unidentifiable heavy accent: "We're just two lost souls swimming in a fish bowl, year after year..."

Sid grabbed the change in his pocket and filled his bucket and the man kept singing to the passengers, including two policemen who gave him a perplexed look but kept silent when he drew nearer and gave them a big crooked smile.

Sid arrived at university and hastened to the room where his psychology seminar was taking place. He sat through it silently, letting the presentation about fear trickle down on him without much reflection or own thought.

Afterwards Sid was approached by Maria, whom he had gotten to know about two weeks ago when she asked him whether it had really been him she had seen at the Richter exhibition, sitting on the floor writing.

She told him that she was his partner for the presentation on social insecurity in 3 weeks and they made plans to meet in order to prepare for it.

When Maria accompanied him on his way to the cafeteria she said: "It's strange that we talked so much about twins the last time we spoke. Because I now realized that you really remind me of a friend I used to have back in Paris. He kinda looked like you, and the way he spoke, and carried himself...And he always used to go to museums and sit down in front of the art pieces, he would draw though..."

"I guess I have a twin!", Sid answered and thought, 'Great, now I don't have to feel so alone anymore...'

They arrived at the cafeteria and split with a quick embrace. Sid went in and filled his plate with a giant pile of noodles. He sat down underneath a tree outside and as he began to eat he wondered whether he should write Y..

Hesitantly he got out his touchwriter and typed:

Hi,

I'm affraid I can't get on the internet for long today because my day is packed with university and tonight I'll have rehearsal for the theater play I'm in, which will have it's premiere on Sunday.

We'll have rehearsals every day until then so I don't know about the next few days either.



Maybe I'll be online on monday, like 8 pm my time?
So how are you doing? What have you been up to lately?
I guess it's the summer-break and you're back at the country club flipping burgers?
How is your girlfriend doing? Are you still together?
I'm in a somewhat fragile state these days [REDACTED]
I hope you're doing good, speak to you soon,
Sid

That was all he could muster up at the moment. It was enough to keep the conversation going and 'keep in touch'. But Sid was afraid that every further word might offer Y. the basis for cruel well-meant advice.

Sid searched his notes for the words he had written that cold winter night when Y. had told him to 'go back out there and fuck a few strangers.' [REDACTED]

*I almost died
last night
not despite
but because of the helping words of a friend
telling me everything would be alright
if I just saw the world his way
I felt the urge to bring my life to an end
because he made me see
myself with his eyes
and I looked like a freakish creature
someone I did not want to be*

Sid put down his notes and got lost in the words of a fellow freak until it was time to go to his politics seminar.

He sat down in the little room where the course was taking place and was joined by Jo. with whom he had held a presentations a few weeks ago.

They quickly exchanged the minimal requirements for friendly conversation and the seminar began. The young academic who lead the course first had to put in some critical words about the



last session when they apparently talked about a text in which Engels had called certain parts of society like merchants or bankers parasites. He pointed out that ideas like that had later been used in Germany to persecute Jewish people.

Once again Sid was reminded of Y. who had often complained that the political left in Germany consisted of Anti-Semites. Maybe it was only the product of the fact that he equated Anti-Semites with Anti-Zionists, but maybe there was more to it... They had once gone to a demonstration against Neo-Nazis and Y., who as the son of a Jewish father had more of a right to be there than anyone else, had come under attack for the fact that he was wearing a T-shirt with the American flag on it.

At another demonstration a few of his friends had brought a flag of the state of Israel with them and were attacked by an aggressive group dressed in black.

The seminar continued with a presentation about surplus value and Sid's mind began to wander off further...

Afterwards he rode his bike down the street to the film campus. On his way there he passed the abandoned university building in which he wanted to spend the night again. But when he rode by he brought his bike to a abrupt stop and turned around to take a second look.

A fence had been erected around it on which big signs proclaimed: 'Construction sight! No Trespassing!'

Sid began to circle the building and could not make out any signs of construction work. He wondered if *he* was the reason for the fence. Had he been spotted? Did the 2 people dressed in white that had waved back at him when he camped on the roof, rat him out? But most importantly: would he be able to continue living here? Maybe he'd find out tonight...

Sid drove on to his lecture on experimental film. Before he entered the auditorium he met O. with whom he exchanged a few quick words in the hallway, before they both had to haste on to their lectures.

This week his professor screened a few films from the 1920's, like the *Opus* cycle by Walther Ruttmann, that consisted of dancing colors and shapes to moving music.

Afterwards he read out reactions by the audience at the time who apparently saw an erotic element to it.

An actor had called it sensual and sexual, a contemporary critic claimed the audience had been in ecstasy when they watched it and the censorship bureau saw in it a threat to public moral and banned it.

Later critics had analyzed it in a Freudian context and claimed that it exposes neurotic symptoms



that the author had not been aware of himself.

Their professor pointed out that these films were intended to reach a broad audience since their goal was to transform society and train the abilities of perception.

The films had never really reached bigger audiences but Sid wondered whether his individual perception had been changed by the films he had seen in the past months. But in what way? If it had changed, he was not aware of it...

The lecture ended and Sid went outside, unlocked his bike and rode it to the rehearsal rooms down the road. He sat down in front of the door and soon thereafter was joined by Nathan

The rest of the group began to show up. At some point Do. arrived as well with camera in hand, but by now Sid barely noticed her anymore.

They began to rehearse and soon their instructor began to irritate Sid when she started to change scenes that had already been agreed upon because she thought that Sid's character was too depressing.

Half the group was sick, they only had 3 days left until the premiere and Sid had the possibility of *her* showing up towering over his head.

They went through with the rehearsal anyway and although it did not seem like they had made any progress, afterwards Sid was somewhat certain that the performance would take place on Sunday.

Sid had plans to meet up with Maa. tonight but he had not answered the text he sent him, and now that Sid tried to call him, no one answered. So he decided to camp beside one of the lakes in the southwest of town tonight, and as he rode the subway there he got a message from Maa.



who told him that he had gotten sick after the party tuesday.
Sid arrived at the first lake and began to encircle it in search of a spot that was somewhat secure from nosy pedestrians.
After he had searched the shore of the southern waters without much success he decided to head north.

Sid found a spot beside the water, that lay hidden from the nearby path behind a few trees, and told himself once again that he needed to make new associations.
He began to prepare his tent, but he did not put it up yet because he heard a few adolescents arriving at a nearby cove.

They did not seem to hear or see him though and so he unrolled his mattress and lay down beside the water.

He got out his touchwriter and in an almost automatic move of the thumb he checked his mailbox where he found a message from his filmcritique professor telling him that the first press screening of *The Rum Diary* had already taken place, but that he could attend a second one in the beginning of the next month.

Sid felt good but his euphoria was short lived when he began to worry wether that date would not be too close to the national premiere of the movie to still write the critique and find a paper to publish it...

He scrolled through his inbox and found a reply from Y. who had written him:

Hahaha no I'm not flipping burgers any more. Just taking a break.
Nice to hear you are in a theater. What got u interested in that?

cheers

Sid did not really know what to make of the message, the question about theater seemed somewhat forced but he decided to view the text as the heartfelt message of a friend that it was.



He got out his little black book and began to write a few lines but soon the sky turned black and he could no longer see what he was scribbling down so he went into his tent and looked up at the treetops through the opening in the ceiling until his eyes fell shut.

Sid was ripped out of his sleep again and again. The first time he opened his eyes the sky above was still pitch black. But from the other side of the lake the screams of a few girls who went for a night swim, were carried over by the wind.

The next morning he was awoken by loud splashing of someone or something that seemed to be in the water right beside him. He did not bother to see what it was but just turned around and pressed the jacket he used as a pillow against his ears.

Shortly thereafter he heard the voices of a few passers-by talking about his tent but he was still too tired to worry and tried to continue sleeping.

Finally the sounds of splashing and talking around him became too much and so he sat up and opened the entrance of his tent. He looked right at an old, naked woman who got out of the water and gave him a big smile.

Sid waved back at her and began to empty out his tent in order to take it down.

When he was done he went for a morning swim as well.

The water was still pretty cold and it took him some time to get just knee-deep into the lake.

'You're getting old', he said to himself and threw himself into the water with a scream.

After a few powerful strokes he came to rest on his back and looked up into the sky above where he saw the sun break through the clouds.

He returned to the shore and while he ate his breakfast that consisted of water and peanut puffs, he kept reading Dr. Thompson's accounts of the American election process.

The music in his headphones changed to a song by Edith Piaf

His eyes had filled with tears back then and he was almost moved to tears now. Almost.



[REDACTED]

He buried his head in his hands and felt like crying, but once again his eyes remained dry.

[REDACTED]

Sid tilted back his head, closed his eyes and let out a deep heartfelt howl.

An old man who was playing fetch with his dog gave him an irritated look while his white shepherd barked back with excitement.

Sid just sat there and stared into the woods [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] another message ripped him out of his petrification. O. told him she wanted to see him. It took a few texts but finally they arranged to meet at the cafeteria of their university in the afternoon.

Sid got up, packed his belongings together and rode to the closest subway station.

On the way O. kept writing him, asking him where exactly they should meet and which subway station to get out at... Sid was irritated by her behavior and wondered why it was always such a hassle to meet with her.

He arrived at the cafeteria and got himself a soup with which he sat down outside beneath a tree. Sid was just wondering whether he knew the guy with the blue shirt who had been on the same elevator as him at the subway and now sat at a table close by, when he noticed another bearded man walk out onto the lawn and lie down in the grass. The man closed his eyes and smiled as he slowly stretched out his arms. It was a strange sight between all the other students that sat around somewhat stiff and orderly and gave him irritated looks of disapproval. How could he have the audacity to behave so freely in an environment like this?

When the bearded man opened his eyes and looked up, Sid, who had stuffed his towel into the collar of his shirt so he wouldn't spill soup on himself, gave him a conspiratorial smile.

The man walked over to him and asked him what he was reading.

Sid showed him and they began to chat. The man introduced himself as So. and when Sid asked him what brought him to these realms, he told him that he was working on his doctorate about the emotional responses to music.



He was part of the research division for which the university had been assigned the status of 'exelency', something that had attracted Sid to this academic institution as well, until he had to find out like many others that his studies had very little to do with that 'exelency'.

So. talked about how the amigdala and other parts of the brain responded to music and Sid listened in amazement.

"There are people who are more emotional and have a stronger reaction in the auditory coropus.", So. explained.

"I've never seen my brains reaction to music, so I'm not sure...", Sid interposed, "But I always claim that I react more to the lyrics of songs than to the actual music."

"Did you use to write poetry as a kid?"

"Actually as an adult as well..."

"Well maybe that's the reason why."

"Well yeah I guess. I don't know much about music but I do understand *The Word!* That's the area I feel comfortable in..."

"I've never been really comfortable writing lyrics to my music.", So. confessed.

"I know the problem I'm afraid.", Sid responded contemplatively, "I found a way to write without putting too much pressure on myself: I just put my poems in the context of stories and claim that they've been written by the character..."

"Yeah, I also sometimes act as a character when I play music. It can be very helpful!", So. replied and then added with a pensive look on his face, "But I found it can also bear some danger..."

He looked at his watch and noticed that his break was over. They bid farewell and as So. walked away Sid wondered whether he would ever see him again.

When Sid returned to his book he got a call from O. who was already more than 10 minutes late and told him that she had taken the wrong train. Sid told her she should call again when she was close to the station and that he would pick her up there.

When they finally met she seemed disarranged and agitated. They walked over to a nearby lawn and she told him of some incidents that had taken place with someone she used to date, but wasn't sure whether they were really dating. He had apparently started to post strange texts on the social network they had met on, although Sid wasn't really sure if they were actually sent to her or appeared in another context, since he had never really understood how that internet portal worked and what the code of conduct was.

O. started to talk about a Kafkaesk aspect to it all.



“Sometimes I feel like my life is the fucking Truman-Show, as if there are things happening around me I don’t really understand, as if I’m just a character in a novel...”

When they parted again Sid was not really sure whether he had understood what she had been talking about.

Sid rode down the street to the rehearsal rooms where Nathan and A. were already waiting. Nathan greeted him.

[REDACTED]

Their rehearsal started and once again Nele began to change aspects of scenes that had already been decided on.

“Kill your darlings!”, she said and Sid remembered all the scenes that had been cut from theatre plays he had been in over the years.

When he looked at his phone after the last round of rehearsal Sid saw that Arletty had written him:

You wanna come to an exhibition at a gallery in Neukolln with me?

Sid called her and she told him that she had met a man she wanted to see again who was going to be at the exhibition tonight. She had written Sid an hour ago and by now she no longer had the resolve to go there since she was overtaken by doubts. Sid told her she should go and see him again and told her he would accompany her. They arranged to meet at a nearby subway station in half an hour.

[REDACTED]



*in the good old days
when murder still was a gentleman's profession
and manslaughter was not considered cruel
men in our position would have been in the possession
of a deadly weapon
and would have challenged the other to a duel
thereby winning the girl and getting rid of
the rival in love
or dying in grace, bringing an end to the pain
but nowadays I'm forced to keep playing the fool*

Sid had always condemned violence but by now he was not sure anymore whether he could uphold his pacifistic views. Maybe he had to aim his aggression at someone else if he did not want to end up aiming it at himself.

He asked Ja. and A. whether they wanted to come along to the exhibition in the hope that they might keep him from doing something he would later regret. He told them about the thoughts that were looming in his head.

Sid briefly asked himself if he agreed but then he decided that was beside the point.

'Love is dead', Sid told himself as he walked down to the subway station with Ja. and A., a conclusion he had come to before. . .

Or maybe it's not dead; it just never existed in the first place.

At least the picture he had drawn of it in his head never did. But even if it was probably just an illusion Sid decided to pursue it anyway.

Ja. and A. decided not to accompany him to the exhibition but to find beer and pizza somewhere in the neighbourhood instead.

"Don't hurt yourself!", Ja. said as they embraced.



[REDACTED]

Sid got into the subway and on his way into the city he remembered what he had been telling himself about a week ago: Make new associations!

He was going to a gallery to see art, something that he loved. [REDACTED] He had often gone to the neighbourhood he was heading for now. His friend Nab, who was in Vienna for a year right now, had often invited him to the *Limbus*, a strange little place that lay in the street the gallery Arletty had invited him to now, was located in as well.

With new found resolve Sid left the subway station [REDACTED]

Sid spotted Arletty and walked towards her to greet her.

They embraced and Sid pleaded with a sense of urgency in his voice: "Lets walk!"

He explained the situation to Arletty and begged her to drag him away from that dreadful shopping centre.

She took him by the hand and they walked down to the street where the gallery was supposed to be at, where she hoped to meet the man again she had met at the alternative Berlin tour she had taken last Wednesday.

He had told her that he would go there but since he had been the guide of the street-art tour she wasn't sure if it had been an invitation or just a suggestion.

When they arrived at the street they were met by a huge crowd.

There were a couple of open galleries and Arletty was not sure which one was the one he was at. Suddenly Sid saw the face of a girl that looked vaguely familiar.

He walked toward her and asked: "Do I know you from somewhere?"

"No, I don't think so, although you do seem familiar. . ."; the girl answered in a somewhat reserved tone. "Probably from some other exhibition we were both at. . ."

"Yeah. . . well so what's happening tonight? Is it some kind of open-gallery night?"

"Yeah, the galleries here and also in other parts of the city are open all night and there are special performances and stuff like that. . ."



Sid asked if she knew where the gallery they were looking for was located and she told him that they were standing in front of it.

She had finished her cigarette and went inside without a further word.

Sid looked after her and was suddenly overtaken by the urge to meet someone who could take the cold, empty spot [REDACTED] inside his chest.

'You've got to get laid man!', he heard the voice of Y. in his head, [REDACTED]

Arletty asked if they should go in as well, with a yearning look in her eyes.

'Someone who has not given up on love yet', Sid thought and followed her inside.

When she had told him that it would be an exhibition of street art he had given her a sceptic look first. Maybe it was just the strange undertones of the films by the street artist *Banksy*, he had seen about two years ago, but the word sellout kept reappearing in his mind.

They walked among murals of dogs and Arletty said: "See, that's how they do street art inside a gallery: They just paint on the walls!"

They went on into the next room and something about the pictures of morphing figures and beings implanted the wish for absinth in his head.

He opened his backpack and after taking a sip, he passed the bottle on to Arletty, Sid felt the warm feeling expanding in his body, that Hemmingway had described so beautifully in *For whom the bell tolls*, and he began to see things in the images around him he had not perceived before.

He stared at eyes that stared back at him and saw the fine connections inside the pictures of trees and other living beings.

They went on to the place next door and while Arletty kept wondering whether it was a bar or a gallery, Sid just stared at a giant mask that was hanging from the ceiling.

They went in further and entered a back room in which a man with a glittery west and a white guitar around his neck handled a few machines that surrounded him and gave out strange sounds that echoed through the room.

Sid sat down in an armchair before him and began to write, letting the musician take him away on a journey that finally ended with a fade-out and a voice repeating the words: "The man of the future. . . the man of the future. . . the man of the future. . ."

The music moved to another room but Sid just stayed in the armchair and kept writing until Arletty tapped him on the shoulder and asked if he'd come outside with her.



Sid got up and she casually introduced him to a man in a red shirt, whoms name he did not catch. But when they went after him towards the door Arletty turned around and whispered to him: "That's the guy!"

They ended up in front of the door and after a few more friendly words he turned away to his friends and Arletty gestured to Sid to follow her to the gallery across the street.

They passed the road and Arletty lit herself a cigarette and starred back at the man who now walked down the street toward the subway station in order to go somewhere else. At the sight of this Arletty let out a yearning sigh and said: "I ruined it!"

She explained that she had talked to him for about 15 minutes and that he had finally asked her for her name. But apart from that he had not asked for her phone number or the possibility of going out together and she just hadn't been able to ask.

Instead she had decided to interpret his behavior as rejection and given up.

"He's got to think I'm a creep!"; Arletty exclaimed. Sid tried to object but she would not listen.

They went down the street and sat down beneath a tree where Sid offered her his pipe.

When he told her that he did not want to smoke himself she said she had some weed of her own and began to fill the pipe with the green herbs from her bag.

Sid told her to lay back and they looked up at the leaves. He played her a few songs he had always listened to in situations like this.

Arletty seemed to enjoy *The Smiths* but when he played the latest entry in that row of songs about timidness and heartbreak in which the lead singer kept repeating the word 'fiasco', Arletty yelled: "Are you trying to tell me that this night was a fiasco?"

"No I'm trying to tell you that I have listened to all of these songs because I have been in this situation dozens of times and I know how you feel!"; Sid pleaded.

When Arletty complained that she had been sending out all the right signals Sid lamented: "At least your able to send out signals! I'm usually not even able to talk to someone I like because I'm so terribly afraid to open up! And when I do talk, I'm only able to do so because I have shielded myself off behind a mask and told myself that I do not need any human contact any way... Usually I spent my nights somewhere in a corner, though, making vague plans of getting myself in a situation with the person I've fallen for, in which I'd be able to open up. But they almost never come through and all that's left is loneliness and self-hatred!"

They sat in silence for a few moments and suddenly Sid remembered the shopping center behind his back and the things that had taken place in the building behind it.

He buried his head in his hands, rubbing his eyes



[REDACTED]

When Arletty recognized his desperate state she embraced him, began to crawl the hair in the back of his head and hummed a tune with french lyrics he did not understand but which soothed his soul anyway.

And finally he was able to cry.

His body began to shiver as he buried his head further in his hands. He dropped his glasses and his tears fell right onto the pavement where they were slowly absorbed by the dust and the dirt that covered it.

After a few moments of sobbing Sid got the feeling like he had to explain his sudden outburst to Arletty, so he tried to pull himself together and told her in a firm and almost neutral voice:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and now...". Sid's voice broke and he curled back up into a ball.

[REDACTED]

Suddenly Arletty got really upset and Sid stopped his self pity and turned to her. Now it seemed like it was his time to embrace her, but when he did she said: "You're so unhappy and I don't know what to do, I don't know how to cheer you up, I don't know how to help you, and I'm scared!"

She looked up at him and said with a sense of urgency in her voice: "Please tell me you won't kill yourself! Please promise me!"

"I don't know..."; Sid began and as he saw the look on her face he hastily proceeded: "I mean I won't! I'm pretty certain! I've decided some time ago that I want to live and I guess I still feel that way! I mean I can't promise you something like that but I'm pretty sure I will not kill myself! I don't want you to worry about that!"

Arletty seemed somewhat appeased by that answer and when she said she wanted to leave this place Sid got up and asked where she wanted to go. Arletty told him that she was invited to a birthday party tonight but that she actually just felt like going home and falling into bed.

"I don't want to have fun tonight!", she proclaimed.

"I'm angry at the world...but I guess that's mainly because I'm angry at myself..."



"Don't say you want to go home, go there! Meet your friends!", Sid pleaded but when Arletty asked him whether he would accompany her he explained that he had his final rehearsal early the next morning.

"No I guess I'll go home then!", Arletty said in a voice full of resignation.

They went to the subway and Sid kept trying to motivate Arletty to go out. Finally he ended up accompanying her...

They drove north and [REDACTED] got out [REDACTED]

"New associations!", Sid told himself and when they passed an abandoned shopping cart he told Arletty to get in.

"You get in!", Arletty responded and so Sid jumped into the metal cage and Arletty began to push him down the street.

They turned around a corner and suddenly Sid spotted a policeman before them who seemed to be walking up and down, guarding the building to his left. He was facing in the other direction, showing them his back. Sid began to gesture to Arletty to stop and let him out, but she did not seem to understand and just kept going.

Sid jumped out of the moving shopping cart and landed in an unfavorable position on his hands and knees beside it.

They left the cart in front of a sign proclaiming that you were not allowed to park any vehicles in the area and tried to act casually as the policeman turned around and walked towards them.

He stopped beside the shopping cart and scratched his head over the sudden appearance of this vehicle while Sid and Arletty turned around the corner and began to run.

They arrived at the flat, rang the bell and went up where they were greeted by a young man in an orange T-shirt who told them to put down their belongings and get themselves a drink from the fridge.

Sid entered the main room where a small group of people had gathered in a circle to drink and smoke. They reacted to his appearance like the arrival of a freak at the circus.

Sid made a vague gesture into the room, greeting them, and sat down in a nearby chair where he got out his little black book and began to write. A man with a green basecap began to hassle him from the right, asking him who he was, where he came from, what led him here and whom he knew of the people at the party. Sid felt cornered, as if he had to justify his presence. But he bravely gave answers anyway, which he commented on with exclamations like: "I love this guy!"



When he was done with his inquiry he said: "We're gonna drink some wodka together now!" Sid grimaced in disgust and got out his absinth instead which was commented with another: "I love this guy!"

Sid poured the man with the basecap a drink and returned to his writing.

While Sid was lost in his own world the host announced that he wanted to go dancing and a discussion unfurled about the question whether the group should go to a club in the east where a gay party was taking place tonight.

"They grab you on the ass on the dancefloor there!", The guy with the basecap exclaimed, "There will be a hundred guys on one girl! I won't go there!"

Sid decided that since he had successfully brought Arletty to the party, his work here was done and so he gave her a hug, took up his backpack and made another broad gesture into the room. As he turned around and left the flat he heard someone yell: "Oh no, Sid, stay!" and another, "I love that guy!"

Sid shut the door behind himself and realized that he would probably never see them again.

On the way to the subway [REDACTED] he began to run through the dark streets. The subway took him home where he fell into bed and soon thereafter into dark dreams [REDACTED]

Early in the morning Sid was awoken by the screams of the infant living in the room below. A. and T. had often complained that they heard the child cry almost every day beneath their room. They wondered whether that was normal or if the parents were somehow mistreating it, and they had said a number of times that they should inform social services or complain to their landlord company over it. But Sid had always told them not to do anything. He was pretty certain that their neighbors were basically good people and that the child was fine. Maybe it was missing the loud techno music it had been growing up with when Maa. still lived in the room above it. But T. and A. just wanted to let them taste a bit of their own medicine. 'An eye for an eye will leave the whole world blind', Sid had quoted Ghandi once and since then, they had not complained anymore.

They were probably in a weaker position anyway, since the child mainly cried in the morning when most of them were still sleeping, but the general population was already awake on their way to work. They on the other hand were making noise at times when it was not socially ac-



ceptable. They were simply living the wrong 'lifestyle'. In addition to that they lived in this flat illegally and so did not have many rights, whether their neighbors did abuse their child or not. Sid tried to go back to sleep by burying himself beneath another blanket but it was no use. Even though he had gone to bed quite late at night, or early in the morning, he was no longer able to numb the thoughts and memories that kept rushing into his head.

So he decided to get out of the flat as quickly as possible and dragged himself over to the bathroom in order to wake himself up with a cold shower.

Afterwards he got dressed and walked through the rain towards the bus that took him south. During the ride the rain got heavier and when Sid reached his destination he had to run to the rehearsal rooms and duck underneath every ledge. When he arrived he was soaked anyway.

An old man was sitting in the doorway repairing the lock the burglars had broken last week. Sid gave him a friendly nod and went past him into the building where he was welcomed by Nele who immediately commanded him to help her to prepare the stage.

Sid made some coffee to get himself going and they began to hang up curtains, install a projector and place the props in their positions.

The rest of the group arrived one by one and when everything was set up they did a quick warm up and began the first round of rehearsal.

Everything went quite smoothly and naturally. They sat down afterwards and went through a few aspects that still required fine tuning.

When they repeated a monologue at the end, Sid's phone suddenly went off. He figured that it was his mother who was in town and wanted to meet up with him during the break. But when they were finally done and Sid picked up his phone [REDACTED]

Sid let out a cry of desperation and sank to the floor.

But he could not allow himself to break down [REDACTED] He had to keep a straight face for the meeting with his mother. He had to put on a mask and act as if everything was alright. He just could not see his mother worried!

Sid retreated to the restroom and splashed water into his face. Afterwards he went outside and called his mother who was just turning into the street as they spoke.

Sid hung up, walked towards her and gave her a quick embrace.

They went in and after he had introduced her to the rest of the group he asked how long the break would last.

The two of them went over to a nearby sushi-bar and sat down on a long old table in between other customers who filled the air with their loud hectic conversations.



Sid could not have thought of an environment more unfitting for conversations like:

[REDACTED] My friends worry that I am suicidal. Oh by the way it looks like I might move out, or be thrown out of my flat soon and I don't know if I have the energy or the will to search for a new place so I might just squat abandoned buildings or sleep outside like I've done the past few weeks."

Sid overheard the woman to his right complain heatedly about her landlord as the waiter placed a few cold rice-lumps before him with a fake smile on her face.

When his mother asked him how he was doing he gave her a wavering movement of his hand and mumbled something obscure under his breath.

He tried to change the topic [REDACTED]

His mother gave him a sorrowful look [REDACTED]

When he saw the face of his mother wrinkle with worries he tried to change the subject again and began to talk about his Gonzo filmcritique plans, carefully leaving out the common associations with that form of writing, in his explanations.

They finished their meal and with a nervous look at the clock they returned to the rehearsal rooms where they made unspecific arrangements to meet tomorrow and said goodbye with another quick embrace.

The girls of the group left to put on makeup for the final rehearsal and Sid was left by himself in the little café downstairs. He sat down on the floor [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



He still did not know what to think.

Nele entered the café and told him to go upstairs to get his face and hair done as well.

Sid forced himself to stand up and after splashing his face with water once again he went upstairs.

He joined the rest of the group who looked at him perplexed and told Ja. to paint his face grey.

She moved the brush close to his eye.

"New associations", Sid told himself, ripped the brush out of Ja.'s hand and began to underline his eyes with dark grey circles.

He felt somewhat out of place among the others who had bright colorful faces and hair, but they went over to the stage together anyway, for the final rehearsal of the day.

The painted faces had an overwhelming effect and when they were through Nele seemed quite optimistic about the performance tomorrow.

They changed into their regular cloths again but the ones who had dyed their hair kept the color in and Sid left the paint beneath his eyes intact. The question whether he should remove it did not even appear to him. It matched the way he felt inside and he did not care about the reaction of people he might meet in the street.

Sid sat down in the corner.



[REDACTED]

he barely made it into the bathroom where he kneeled down in front of the toilet and threw up in a warm stream of vomit that had an unsettling red tinge.

Sid pulled himself up and tried to wash the sour and vaguely metallic taste out of his mouth.

When he finally left the bathroom again A. told him he looked sick and that he should come home with her and lie down so he would be in shape for the play tomorrow. Sid followed her submissively to the bus and they drove to their flat where Sid sat down at the kitchen table and tried to gather his notes of the past few days.

After more than 3 hours he was still sitting in the same position, towering over his laptop, trying to sort the things he had written. Sid decided to continue tomorrow, hoping that the sight of all these words would fill him with a sense of accomplishment and give him a pleasant start into the day tomorrow.

He turned off his machines and went over to the bathroom. He realized that he had not brushed his teeth in quite some time and so he got out his toothbrush, thinking of an upcoming dentist appointment he had made because of the tooth that had cracked during the concert at the beginning of the month.

Afterwards he retreated to A.'s room where he lay down in the bed and slowly fell into an unsteady sleep from which he was awoken again around midnight by the sound of his phone. Sid looked over at the screen and saw that Arletty was calling him, but he did not have the energy to pick up and so he just waited for the ringing to stop and tried to go back to sleep.

Sid once again awoke much earlier than he had planned. He stared at the ceiling for a while, tracing the cracks that ran across it, and thought of the upcoming day.

[REDACTED] the fact that it was the premiere of their play today returned to him. [REDACTED]



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Since S. had told Sid of his plan to start a new flatshare in October Sid had wondered whether he might be able to move in as well. From the way it looked right now he might no longer have a flat of his own by then and it might be wise to live somewhere with heating and a roof over his head when autumn came around. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Maybe being homeless was actually preferable...

Sid got up and went over to the bathroom to take a shower.

When he looked into the mirror above the sink, a broken man with long dark grey lines beneath his eyes stared back at him and it took him a few seconds to remember that it was the paint from the rehearsal yesterday, which he still hadn't removed.

When he got under the shower it began to run down his cheeks and he looked as if he had been crying for hours.

After the shower he made himself some breakfast and before packing his laptop he quickly checked whether the library he wanted to go to, in order to continue to sort his writings, was open today.

It was not.

Sid sat there indecisively, the possibility of falling into a hole and not being able to get out at all, looming over his head. He made himself a coffee which he swallowed as quickly as possible, burning his mouth, gathered his things and fled the flat for university anyway. On the way he told himself he would simply sit down on a lawn somewhere, where he would be able to log into the wireless internet he needed to download his writings from his touchwriter. Of course he could also just use the internet at his flat but he knew he wouldn't. He had to keep moving!

Sid arrived, sat down beneath a tree and began to work. The internet kept crashing and the mail program he used to get his texts onto his laptop did not seem to work right, but Sid had already gotten used to that and kept calm. The only thing that irritated him were the ants that kept crawling over his arms and across his keyboard.

Finally it was time to leave. They had planned to meet an hour before their final rehearsal began, in order to prepare a gift for their instructor. Sid went over to the bus to drive to the outgrowth



of a big coffee-chain they were supposed to meet at. When he consulted the electronic guide in his pocket about the exact location he realized in amazement that there were actually 2 of these coffee-houses in the same street. What sick mind could be responsible for planning something like that? 2 places right across from each other that looked almost exactly the same, with people dressed in the same uniforms, speaking in the same standardised phrases, serving you exactly the same beverage.

He went to the first one that was just across from the bus stop and when he saw A. and Ja. already waiting in front of it he knew he had come to the right place.

The rest of the group got themselves coffees with strange sounding names and expensive price tags. When Nathan asked whether the fact that he was not getting anything was a matter of principle or money, Sid answered: "Both".

They began to paint a bag that they filled with chocolates and champagne in order to hand it over to Nele after the play.

In between Sid quickly left to get himself a falafel which would be his main meal of the day, at half the price of their drinks.

When they had finished their work they went over to the rehearsal rooms where they made one quick run through to coordinate the technical equipment.

Afterwards Sid plugged in his camera to recharge and sat down on the floor beside it.

[REDACTED]

Sid went up again to renew the grey circles under his eyes that had almost completely disappeared by now, except a dark shadow beneath his right eye that looked as if someone had punched him.

Then it was time for the general rehearsal.

For the last time before the premiere he sank to the floor, got up again, sank down, got up...

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Once again he sank down to the floor.

Sid had the feeling like everything was headed for some kind of grand finale, like their play wasn't the only thing that would be staged here tonight.

A. approached him and told him that they should color his hair as well for the premiere and so he followed her and she sprayed the word 'exit' onto the back of his head.

Nervously he waited in the room next to the entrance and listened to the voices of the people that came to see the play. He laid his head against the wall

When he heard his family arrive he finally gave up and went back upstairs where he set up his camera in order to film the play.

The rest of the group arrived in the theater hall and after getting into a circle and wishing each other good luck everyone went to their position behind the stage.

As the hall began to fill with spectators Sid closed his eyes and tried to turn into his character. And he did.

The play began when the music set in and the stage lit up and it was no longer him who was moving around on it but rather some kind of composite being, a mixture of his own thoughts and feelings and those of someone else who was a mere product of his imagination.

But when it came to the scene in which he had to break down, the pain on his face was purely his own.

When Nathan had put on his makeup earlier he had painted his face white and given himself a red nose – and a Hitler-beard. Now a scene followed where he pulled Sid back up with a fiery speech. Someone had brought her little daughter along who began to cry at this surreal sight and had to leave the room. Whenever they had rehearsed that scene Sid had to hold himself back in order not to break out in laughter, but now the entire room was silent.

Before Sid collapsed again he looked out into the audience. But the spotlight blinded him and so he broke down again.

When the lights came back up after the final scene Sid stared out into the audience again. He felt relieved and miserable at the same time.

After they had bowed down before the cheering spectators Sid sat down behind the stage to



scribble into his little black book but this moment of calm did not last long because everyone seemed to demand his attention.

After his parents had congratulated him on his performance Merica his former drama teacher fought herself through the crowd towards him and gave him a heartfelt embrace. She told him how much his performance had differed from the last time she had seen him on a stage.

she gave him an inquiring look and asked how he had been doing. Merica gave him a look like she had made some kind of connection in her mind and gave him another long warm embrace.

"So that's where that melancholic look on your face comes from . . ."

After a few more hugs and praises Sid made it into the other room where he changed cloths.

Afterwards he went back down and the procedures continued.

His parents handed him a glass which he clinked with various friendly faces. He ended up in a corner with his family who tried to give him as much helpful advice and good wishes as possible in the short time they had together.

His father remarked how different his life was from the straight paths they were following. Sid recognized the grey hair at the side of his head and said: "Well this life also gives you long grey circles beneath the eyes . . .", he pointed at the paint he still had in his face.

A. walked over to them and told him they were all going to an open air party in the east of the city.

Sid went up again to get his backpack and said goodbye to his parents.

They left in a little group and headed east. But when they finally arrived at the place Sid's machine had lead them to, it was uncomfortably silent and deserted.

They sat down at a lake instead at which's end Sid could make out the ferris wheel of the park he had once dreamed of living in. By now he would have the resolve to do it, but as he had found out when he had last gone there the security surveillance of the place had increased dramatically.

Mahs. who had come to see the play earlier lit a joint and passed it around, and after fighting with himself for some time Sid finally took a hit when it made the round to him again.

Most of the people in the group acted like they had to find a place where they could dance or otherwise they would see the night as a failure. So they decided to meet with Arletty at the sub-way station they had just come from.

On their way there Sid took a shortcut beside an abandoned building and walked out into a meadow. The rest of the group had taken the straight and lit up way. They appeared on the street



to his left, divided from him by a metal fence..

Sid looked up into the sky above him and realized that he had a headache that now slowly began to disappear. When he looked over at the rest of the group it returned.

They gestured over to him to join them but something seemed to pull him into the other direction, away from them, away from everyone, every human being that might annoy, hurt or distract him with their behavior..

But finally he went over to them and heard their pleas:

“Come on, climb the fence, come over to us.”

After he hesitated for a while A. repeated what she had told him earlier in their play: “I’ll save you! I have a Rettungsschirm!”

He climbed and followed them...

When his flatmates finally announced they would go home to sleep and asked him to accompany them, he told them he would go south to camp beside a lake.

“Why do they want me to join them?“, Sid wondered as he walked with them towards the subway station.

Did they want him to come along because they wanted company? Did they want him to come along because they wanted him to sleep in safety tonight? Or did they just want him to come along because they could not understand why he wouldn’t do it?

Why wouldn’t he?

Sid said goodbye when they reached the station and split up, leaving him on his own.

He went up into the new hall of glass that had been erected above the rest of the station which would remain a construction site for more than 4 years.

When he sat down on the platform from which his train would leave he thought back to the things that had just happened in the past few hours.

The night he had spent with this little group had been enjoyable in some aspects...

Sid got into the train that had arrived before him and thought back at the swing-set they had settled around in the end.

But then he realized that his touchwriter had run out of battery and he no longer had time to reminisce when he set out on the quest to reanimate it with the help of his laptop.

Sid plugged the smaller electronic device into the bigger one and like a parasite it sucked the energy out of it until it lit up again with enough battery power to restart it’s system, letting the battery of it’s now unnecessary host die.



The transaction had finished just in time because when Sid was finished he had to get out to change into the bus and for that he needed the internet of his little guide to tell him which one. It did and Sid found the bus-stop at which he waited for a few minutes until the double-decker rolled in and took him further south.

Sid went upstairs and sat down among the hordes dressed in black, red and gold which roamed the streets of the city these days. Many of them had the 3 colors hanging around their necks as bracelets above white shirts which bore the names of the people they had admired earlier on giant screens. They behaved as if they had just watched Gladiators fight in a colosseum. Some were still yelling and cheering over the success of their favorites while others had already lost a fight with their own exhaustion.

Sid arrived at his destination, got out and walked toward the place where his theatre play had taken place earlier.

Suddenly he noticed a girl that had gotten out of the bus behind him and now passed him by, together with two other girls.

'I know this girl', he thought as he stared at her back, but he was unable to remember from where and doubts crept into his head, if he truly knew her or whether his mind was playing cruel tricks on him.

He toyed with the possibility of walking up to her and asking her, but quickly abandoned that idea again.

He remembered that he still wore the grey lines of his character from the play underneath his eyes and imagined her response if an unkempt freak with dark glasses and long hair would suddenly grab her from behind and ask her with insane grey eyes whether they had met before... But then again, what if he had seen her in the audience earlier, the paint in his face would actually be a helping factor in establishing safe, common ground.

He turned into the street the theater lay in and realized that even if he had been more confident about his outer appearance, he would not have been able to talk to her...

When he arrived at the gates of the theater he found them closed.

It took him a few seconds to realize what that meant.

His bike was parked in the front yard behind those locked iron doors and it had the tent strapped onto it, in which he had planned to sleep tonight.

He began to wonder whether he should jump the fence. He would not be able to take his bike with him, but at least he might get his tent and sleeping bag. That would mean that a long walk still lay ahead of him, since this neighborhood was not a safe place to camp in, with all



it's expensive buildings and their nosy and nervous inhabitants that would probably inform the authorities at the slightest irregularity in their neighborhood.

Sid realized that it was the first time he had stood in front of the theater at night and wondered whether they had always closed the gates. Or had they just begun to do so after the break-in last week? Sid cursed the burglars that had robbed him of his possibility to act suspicious. A week ago the neighbors might have been indifferent to strange sounds in the night, but now they might look outside and see him climb the fence...

Sid realized with sudden terror that he had given his phone number to the police in the case of the break-in!

Didn't that make him a possible suspect in their investigation? If he wasn't one already, due to his confession that he had not noticed the broken lock when he had entered that morning, he would surely become one if they caught him climbing the fence.

"But I just wanted to get the things from my bike!"

"You mean the bike that stood beneath the window that was used as an entrance in the burglary? I know you're not telling me the whole truth here, what was your role in that burglary?"

Sid gave up with a sigh and turned around to walk to the night-bus that would take him back further into town, right towards his flat...

He waited on the ground beneath the yellow sign of the bus-stop until it finally arrived and took him with it. About a dozen stops later Sid got out again and passed the empty crossroads, taking the shortest path to his flat.

But when he turned into his street and walked towards his building he realized that he could not allow himself to enter yet, if he did not want to end up in misery tonight or at the latest, tomorrow morning.

So he turned right in order to sit down in the backyard that was fenced in and only accessible by the people who lived in the buildings around it. There was a door, but it only opened from the inside and so Sid finally ended up jumping a fence after all.

He sat down on the nearby slide and starred up into the sky above that slowly began to turn from black to blue again.

Sid got out his little black book and told himself to write something before entering his flat:

*Should I become part of a group
every once in a while
even if it might mean*



that I'll stop writing in their presence
every once in a while?
should I walk across the isle
should I still extend a hand
even if I always seem
to suffer in the end?
Why
should I
continue to try
to make meaningful human contact,
if I can't seem to protect
myself against everything that bothers
me about the others?
Why?
Just because I always tell myself:
'Just try!' ?

Sid decided that that had to be enough, and if it just was because he did not really have any other choice if he wanted to go to sleep some time soon.
And his body was yearning for some rest.
So he got up, unlocked the back door to his building and ascended the endless staircase. When he finally reached his floor he saw Camille leaving the flat and begged her to leave the door open for him.
She greeted him with tired eyes and almost closed the door anyway. Sid jumped up the last few steps and put his foot in, before it closed. When he asked her where she was going she replied that she had to take the kids from Africa to the airport, whom she had taken care of during the last week for her job as a cultural social worker. Sid asked her with a pleading look to be quiet when she would return and wished her good luck on her way down.
He entered the flat and sat down on the sofa in order to think about the question where he would sleep tonight..
Everyone seemed to be back home and so every room was occupied except for the bathroom, the kitchen, or the blue room. There would also be the loft bed in the little vestibule but Sid had



not slept there much since Camille and Franz had moved in and so he wondered how quiet it was when they got up in the morning. Every corner he could have slept in lay in the paths of destruction they would take tomorrow morning in order to go to their work and their school. Every corner except those of the blue room...

But he had the terrible feeling like the night would end with an unforgiving failure when he did that and he just couldn't allow himself to enter for long.

He ran into the room with the stimulating blue ceiling that was supposed to keep him from resting, in order to get out a mattress that he carried down to the end of the hallway where he stuffed it into the corner. He went into the blue room once again, got out his blanket and also threw it into the small corner that had been hidden behind a curtain by the people who had inhabited these rooms before him.

He closed the curtain and tried to ignore the fact that half of his body was still sticking out below. To the sound of the music machine he had placed beside his pillow, he finally tried to fall asleep. But when the music stopped and he was still conscious he put on the video file that opened when he plugged in his touchwriter. It was the scene from *Where the Buffalo Roam*, in which Bill Murray, impersonating Hunter S. Thompson flew the plane that was following the air Force One, containing the journalists that were covering Nixon's run for reelection.

Sid had shown this video to T. earlier when she had told him on top of a giant spider's web on some playground in the east, that she couldn't sing and that she admired the way he had sung in the play.

After she had not believed him that he thought the same about himself but still was happy with his performance, he tried to explain himself with the video.

When Bill Murray now began to scream to the lyrics of *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* once again, Sid wondered whether this scene was still ahead in the book he was reading right now, on which the movie was partly based.

He put on something a little more quiet and tried to fall asleep again. The soothing voice of David Gilmour sang to him through the small speakers and slowly Sid drifted off...

Sid awoke and decided that 3 hours of sleep had to be enough. As he lay there at the end of the hallway and stared at the black curtain that separated him from the rest of the world, Sid recalled some strange scenes of which he did not know whether they had really happened or not...



Had he kissed T.? And Camille? Had he been welcomed in his own backyard by a giant family of Chinese immigrants with pitbulls who gave him little cigarettes which supposedly contained opium? Had he hung upside down from a swing-set and nearly broken his neck? Had he followed a blonde stranger through the night?

On the last account the memories of the previous night slowly returned to him and with them the memories of where he might know her from! Wasn't she a regular visitor at the *Drugstore* on Monday night? Sid decided that there was only one way to find out: He would have to go there tonight. Even if it meant staying awake for a long time.

But first he would have to get out of this flat! He pulled himself up at the curtain before him, put on pants, his glasses and motivational music and moved down toward the bathroom at the other end of the hallway.

After splashing his face with water he went into the kitchen to make himself some breakfast, where he found Franz and a strange girl sitting at the table. He asked them with a rough voice and nervous eyes that rolled around in his head, scanning the place, whether they had seen his towel.

Franz shook his head and when the girl gave him a frightened look they fled the kitchen, leaving Sid behind who hectically began to turn over chairs and the sofa in search of a clean towel he could take with him today.

He finally found a small, baby-blue towel beside the entrance doors and after grabbing his backpack and the bread he had just toasted he went outside and headed for the bus.

He had to reclaim his bike, and with it his freedom.

So once again he drove down the endless street he had gone down so many times before.

Once again he passed the flat that David Bowie and Iggy Pop had lived in, the little movie theater that claimed to be an Art-House, the town hall of the district and the strange tower that was painted in bright colors with monsters and other creatures on it that proclaimed: "Home sweet home" in giant letters.

He got out right behind it and walked down to the rehearsal rooms, probably for the last time in a very long time.

Sid rejoiced in relief when he saw that the gates were open. He went towards his bike, unlocked it, checked whether all his belongings were still strapped tightly onto it, and drove off towards the subway that he took south to the lakes. During the ride he stood beside two policewomen who eyed him with suspicion as he tried to hold on to his bike to keep it from falling over them. He peeked at the guns they held in their belts and wondered if they had ever used them. He was



reminded of Y. who had always praised the US for the fact that policemen were not the only ones who had the right to carry weapons there. He remembered that he had told him he might come online tonight to talk over the communication program he had on his laptop. He knew that he would have to reinstall that program first, before he could use it. Which meant a lot of work and sweat he'd have to invest for a conversation that might leave him feeling lonely and depressed. Sid decided to look at the conversation as an interview on the topic of gun-rights. Maybe it would enable him to bear the things Y. might say, if he tried to view them as an objective observer.

Sid left the subway and drove down the path beside the lakes until he found a free spot that seemed inviting, not far from the one he had camped at last week.

But the place his tent had stood was now occupied by a group of young girls that watched him covertly through the leaves of the trees between them as he undressed and jumped into the water.

He dived as far as his lungs held out without oxygen. In the middle of the lake he once again came to rest on his back and stared up into the sky above.

It was blue, without a cloud and Sid realized that he had made it to his destination after all. It was a little too late, or too early to put his tent up though. First he would have to go to his filmcritique seminar, then he would talk to Y. over the internet and finally he'd have to go to the *Drugstore* to meet his friends and to find out whether the blond haired girl he had seen downtown last night was really the one he had seen week after week on Monday nights without truly noticing her. . .

Sid got out of the water and put on the short red and white pants with the flowers on them, which he had been carrying around for weeks without wearing them, because it had been too cold.

With a sigh of relief he stretched out in the sun and closed his eyes.

Then he got out his touchwriter in order to write Y..

But when Sid opened his mail account he found an invitation to evaluate his psychology seminar and after some hesitation he decided that it was his duty to follow the link of the mail and rate the course on a variety of questions. The more questions he answered the more he realized once again how little he actually thought of the seminar.

When he was done he opened a new message and wrote:

V

Hi,

So what are you doing tonight, are you still up for chatting? I have a filmcritique seminar until 6 pm, I guess afterwards I could just sit down in the library of the campus for American studies (a quite fitting location I'd say) and get on the internet. The problem is that I'm not sure I can get the program on my laptop to work, so I might use my phone. The last time I did you did not answer though, so I wonder whether thats not working either...

Damn technology is getting the best of me! But I'll manage somehow!

So do you have time around noon, your time? Hope to speak to you soon,

Sid

Afterwards he got out *Fear and Loathing on the campaign trail '72* in order to find out whether the scene from *Where the Buffalo Roam*, he had watched repeatedly last night, was actually taken from this book or just a product of the screenwriters imagination.

But instead of a story about flying the 'zoo'-plane behind the Airforce One, Sid read a transcript of Thompson's tape recording of a conversation with two Demorcatc strategists who explained with pride how they had pulled the right strings and used the appropriate loopholes at the Democratic convention in order to get their man, George McGovern elected as the nominee.

Sid began to get hungry and wondered whether he could allow himself a visit to the cafeteria, even though he was planning to eat at the *Drugstore* tonight...He decided that he had to eat if he wanted to survive the day on the 3 hours of sleep he had had last night and so he packed his things and drove back up the path to the subway station. He reached a steep hill and had to pedal with full strength. When he had almost reached the top his phone began to ring.

All strength left his body and he almost collapsed when his bike began to swerve and roll backwards. He jumped off it and sat down on a nearby bench where he stared down at the screen.



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] he got onto his bike again and rode on down the path that was now smooth and straight again until he reached the subway station. He maneuvered his bike into the waiting train that took him to the cafeteria of his university, although he did not really feel like eating anymore, by now. Instead he felt sick. His stomach was in an uproar and he almost threw up again [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
So he drove down to the JFK-library instead when he reached his destination. As he entered the building a song came out of his headphones [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I don't eat
I don't sleep
I do nothing but think of you
you keep me under your spell
you keep me under your spell
you keep me under your spell...

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
After sitting down in his favorite spot in the computer room of the library and setting up all his technical equipment to recharge it, Sid went down to the bathroom. When he washed his hands he realized that he still had grey paint beneath his eyes. He hid behind his glasses and gave himself a big fake grin in the mirror before heading back up in order to get to work. He tried to log into the communication-program he wanted to use to call Y., but it informed him that his name and password were incorrect. He tried various tricks and turns until he finally managed to log in again. As soon as he came online his little cousin recognized him and wrote him a message. He tried to ignore it and began to sort his notes once again.



After a few hours of writing and sorting his hunger finally returned, just at the time when the cafeteria was closing.

He continued working until the roaring of his stomach became unbearable and he decided to drive over to the film campus and get himself some kind of snack on the way.

As he packed his belongings together he wondered whether he should try to get rid of some more of the grey paint beneath his eyes before the course began.

How would his professor react when he came into the seminar, looking as if he had just been punched in the face repeatedly?

Would he regret his decision to send him out on a quest to do research on Gonzo journalism?

Would he worry that Sid might show up at the press screening, looking just as inappropriate and thereby hurt his reputation?

Sid rode his bike down the street and stopped at the supermarket to buy himself some peanut puffs to get him through the day. He noticed the irritated looks of the other customers and the cashier and his worries increased.

When he reached the film campus and went to the bathroom in order to refill his bottle with water from the tap, he once again stared into his blemished visage in the mirror. He tried to splash water into his face to wash the paint off, but when he looked up again he still had a more than vague trace of it beneath his eyes.

"Freak power", Sid said to himself and went over to the room where the seminar would take place.

Sid entered and greeted his professor who sat at the other end of the long table, reading a newspaper. He did not seem to be bothered by Sid's appearance and instead said: "So you'd like to attend that press screening then?"

"Yes it would be pretty great and might to add some nice aspects to my term paper...", Sid replied and then went on to ask what he would have to do.

His professor replied that he would just have to sign on some paper and write *Cargo*, the name of the newspaper he sometimes wrote for, beside it. That was it.

His professor got a vacant look in his eye and began to reminisce about his first press screening.

Then he left for the bathroom and Sid decided to read some more on the internet, about the documentary he had watched for the seminar last week.

Then they began and soon Sid's head was swerving with ideas about social sculptures and the extended concept of art.

Their professor handed out a filmcritique about the movie and said in the discussion about it that



it would have benefitted from a personal reaction.

“Not that the critic puts his own views on a pedestal but rather that you can read his experiences as a substitutional reception!”

Sid felt his plans for the term paper reinforced by these words since Gonzo journalism was in his view exactly that.

But as the seminar neared it's end Sid could feel himself slowly crashing. His body began to protest the fact that he had been awake for so long without a break and when the seminar ended all Sid could do was to drag himself over into the nearby lounge where he sank down onto a sofa and closed his eyes.

Loud melodic music came through the wall to his right where some theater course was apparently watching a recording of an opera.

Suddenly Sid heard the sound of thunder and when he opened his eyes and saw the flashing light of lightening through the window, he realized that it had not been part of the opera, but that there was actually a thunderstorm raging outside.

He wondered how long rain and wind would last and whether he would still be able to camp beside a lake tonight.

For now he decided to get out his laptop in order to chat with Y..

But when he started the program he saw that no one was online and so he lay back down on the couch and read *Fear and Loathing on the campaign trail*.

After more than an hour Y. still had not come online and Sid figured that he had not gotten his mail earlier.

Outside the thunderstorm was still raging and he did not know what to do or where to go. So he just continued reading until 8 o'clock, the time they had originally made out to talk.

But when he turned towards the screen again, the little emblem beside Y.'s name was still grey. Sid felt cheated and tired, but he still had no better place to go and so he remained on the sofa until it was time to head for the *Drugstore* and finally get something to eat.

He took a different route than usual, that required him to ride up a hill first, in order to roll down at the other side again. His bikes speed increased rapidly as it took him further and further down. Sid spread out an arm to feel the wind rush by. Then he spread out the other arm as well and rolled down freehanded. His bike began to swerve due to the heavy weight on it's back and suddenly Sid saw a crossing road ahead. He considered hitting the breaks in order to bring himself to a hold before a passing car might hit him. But instead he kept his hands where they were and closed his eyes.



His speed increased and he rushed by the crossing road intact.

But when he opened his eyes again a giant brick wall came towards him fast and he had to grab the handlebars after all, ripping his bike around just in time.

He arrived at the subway station, drove north and found his way to the *Drugstore* where he locked his bike in the white entrance hall and ascended the stairs.

When he arrived upstairs he was greeted by one of the regular visitors who was spraying beside the entrance.

Sid got in and walked over to the kitchen counter in order to ask whether the food was ready yet.

It was not, and so he sank down on yet another sofa where he just lay with his eyes closed until T., A. and Ja. arrived and gathered around him. T. sat down next to him and began to tell him about her day until the food was finally ready. As they ate Sid felt how he was getting increasingly tired and miserable. He let his gaze wander through the room in search of the blonde girl he had seen last night. But she was nowhere in sight.

T. noticed his despair and tried to cheer him up by dragging him over to the ping-pong table. But it was no use.

After a few halfhearted attempts to hit the little ball across he handed the bat over to someone else and sank onto a sofa again.

But she would not give up so easily. She told him to get up again and follow her outside to show her one of the playgrounds in the neighbourhood.

Sid agreed and they said goodbye to the rest of the group and went out into the night.

Sid unlocked his bike and rolled it outside behind T. who turned around and asked: "Left or right?"

Sid gestured towards her to follow him and turned right.



[REDACTED] He just stood there motionless, his hand pressed to his forehead, clinging to a strand of hair.

He couldn't move. Time passed and at the same time it seemed to have stopped all together.

[REDACTED] after almost turning into a stone pillar again he dropped his bike and began to walk away [REDACTED]

When he reached the corner at the crossroads he began to increase his speed until he was almost running. He looked back over his shoulder [REDACTED]

He reached another corner and turned left once again until the entrance to a park appeared to his left. When he walked through the iron gates he suddenly saw a fox with felted, dirty fur running towards him.

They eyed each other for a few moments and then quickly passed by to continue their escape.

Sid went deeper into the park, past a horde of drunken youths that were standing in front of the monumental building in which the Nazis had once held their show-trials.

Finally he was surrounded by almost complete darkness.

He sank down on a bench and tried to sort his thoughts, but there was nothing left in his mind except a suffocating, numb grey.

He would have to get his bike back in order to drive down to the lakes, there everything would be alright. He just had to walk out at the other end of the park and he would return to the place where he had left it.

[REDACTED] What had T. done?

There was only one way to find out.

Sid went past the columns from a century that had long passed and turned left one last time.

[REDACTED] He turned back behind the corner and sank down to the floor, once again almost paralyzed. Suddenly he felt his phone vibrate and when he looked down at it he saw A. had written him that they had brought his bike into the staircase of their building.



[redacted] Sid turned around the corner again [redacted] He walked straight home, vaguely recognizing the sound of cars that passed him by as he walked across the street. When he reached the entrance to his street he [redacted] turned around and made a circle around the block again.

“This is just ridiculous!” he thought as he walked up towards his street from the other direction.

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
He jumped the fence into his backyard and got into his building through the backdoor. He found his bike where A. and T. had left it, rolled it out and rode it towards the door that only opened from the inside.

[redacted]
Once again he was paralyzed for what seemed like eternity. Finally the feeling passed and he opened the metal door. Carefully he looked to his right.

[redacted]
He pushed his bike out and rode to the subway, praying that it was still running to take him down to the lakes where he hoped to finally find some safety and rest.

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
Sid crossed the street, entered the station and carried his bike up the stairs. The platform was almost empty. [redacted] After a few minutes his train rolled in and Sid pushed his bike through its sliding doors. [redacted] he sat down next to it inside [redacted]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The train reached it's destination and Sid rode down to the lake. He took the first spot he could find, that was somewhat hidden from the path by a few bushes and trees and began to put up his tent in the dark. He got in and looked up at the stars, through the opening above him until he finally sank into an unsteady sleep full of disturbing dreams [REDACTED]

Sid was awoken again and again by the chatter of passers-by, the barking of dogs and the sound of birds in the water. He tried to ignore all of it and get some more rest that he needed so desperately, until a little child arrived which repeatedly exclaimed to its father: "Look a tent!" Sid opened his eyes and realized that he was lying at the footend of his mattress, curled up to a ball, since he had apparently erected the tent on sloping ground. He dragged himself outside and went into the bushes to relief his bladder. Afterwards he emptied out his tent in order to take it down. He unrolled his mattress underneath a nearby tree and began to undress for a morning swim. The water was cold and he still felt sick but when he lay down on his back again, slowly floating with the current, and looking up into the clear blue sky, everything seemed to be in balance again. He swam back to the shore, stretched out in the sun and just lay there with closed eyes. Then he began to read some more for a while. He started to feel hunger and wondered whether he should drive over to university for some lunch at the cafeteria. [REDACTED] he got dressed [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Sid felt dizzy, the world began to spin around him and then turned black for a few moments. He buried his head in his hands and his body was shaken by sudden shivers.

[REDACTED]

He got out his little black book and wrecked his brain for something he could write. The pencil felt heavy in his hand that clenched it in a way that pressed the wood against the bones of his fingers and made the flesh around it turn white.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In desperation Sid began to scratch out what he had written until he ripped through the page. Afterwards he sank down onto his back and stared into the leaves of the tree above him. He couldn't move, he couldn't think and again he had lost all appetite.

He saw the clouds move and watched the sun slowly making it's way across the sky.

Finally after another big fraction of eternity he was able to get up again. He decided to go to the cafeteria anyway, hoping that he would be able to eat once he reached it.

Everything was still slightly spinning when he drove down to the subway and when he got into the train he sank down beside his bike in exhaustion.

When he got to the cafeteria he got himself some Asian vegetable-dish, sat down beneath a tree outside and tried to force it down and keep it down.

In order to distract himself from his worries and fears [REDACTED] Sid picked up Dr. Thompson's book again and finally he found the chapter that inspired the plane-scene in *Where the Buffalo Roam*.

There were some significant changes to the film though. The plane ride that was being described by Thompson, who at this point in the book was no longer able to write but had to speak into a tape recorder instead, took place on the McGovern campaign and did not follow Nixon's Air Force One.

There was nothing in the book about Thompson slipping acid to a certain Harris from the post in order take his press credentials and assume his identity. Thompson did describe rampant drug use on the plane though, although it's not safe to say whether the events he described really took place or were just products of his own intoxicated mind...

Sid realized that you usually worked the other way around with book-adaptations; first reading the book and then comparing it to the film. Then again the way he proceeded was probably exemplary for his generations reception of Thompson's work. They saw the films and were either disgusted with them or intrigued and animated to find out who the figure behind them really was.

Gilliams adaptation of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* had probably been the most effective in terms of 'turning people on', although Sid wondered whether it had the fatal flaw, that it reduced



Thompson's work solely to the aspect of drugs.

Sid was distracted by the sound of his phone. T. called him and asked whether he would come over to Klaus's place with them. Sid asked her where it was and told her he would be there. He got up and went to the restrooms to freshen up. Then he consulted his little electronic guide how to get to Klaus's place and decided that he should use the internet of the university to quickly download some of his writing onto his laptop. So he sat down on the lawn close to his bike and started his machinery.

Once again it was a desperate struggle. His laptop kept crashing, the internet went on and off, and for reasons Sid did not even begin to comprehend his mail program only did half of the things he told it to do.

But finally he had everything saved on his laptop and in addition to that on a flashdrive he always carried with him.

He got up, unlocked his bike and rode back to the subway which took him north.

'I spend half of my life in this city riding the subway', Sid thought as he sat there at the end of the long yellow train that made its way through the ground. Sid told himself to enjoy the ride and so he looked up into the long gangway that was made up of the connected wagons, all the way over to the other side that already began to wind around a corner that wouldn't reach him for several more seconds.

When he came close to his destination T. called him again and told him that they had stopped at a kebab restaurant on their way to a park.

He found them sitting at a table outside, eating and talking.

They gave him concerned looks and he had to tell them what he had done after they had split last night.

They realized soon that he did not want to talk about it and T. told him that they had planned to play mini-golf. When she saw his reserved look she said: "Oh come on! We did not make it to the playground last night so we have to do this together now!"

They left and Sid went along. When they stopped at a grocery store to buy cherries they were joined by a friend of Arletty's, whoms name Sid just could not remember, like anything else about her. He was pretty certain that he had met her before, probably multiple times, but he did not know where or when.

he vaguely recalled a night he had spent with Theo and Arletty in a bar in Strasbourg.



A little more than a year ago, and a girl there that had to hide from the owner because she had started some kind of trouble there before.

Sid peeked over at her as they walked down to the park.

They got their bats and began to make their way across the field.

Sid overheard Arletty's nameless friend talking to T. about a test she had to master to get into an art school. He noticed the paint splatters on her shirt, pants and skin, looked down at himself and saw the red paint on his T-shirt. He looked back at her and noticed that she seemed to have some kind of scar beneath what he had thought was smeared red paint.

'Looks like she's the girl for me,' Sid thought with a bitter, crooked grin on his face.

She said she had let herself be inspired by the story of Ikarus for her entrance examination and they exchanged a few words about how much they both liked that ancient Greek tale. But then it was her turn to hit the ball and Sid was on his own again, left with all too familiar thoughts. . .

Did he feel something for her? What did she think of him? How could he come closer to her?

And would he be able to open up enough in order to come close enough?

They moved from hole to hole, sitting down on a blanket in between tracks. Sid got out his little black book, hoping to capture his feelings in a few scribbled lines and thereby taking control of them somehow:

[REDACTED]
from my inability
to reveal myself
but now I see
I might be 'free'

[REDACTED]
more than anyone ever before
and yet I can't even see

[REDACTED]
Klaus asked him what he was writing and when Sid told him that he did not really know what to call it Klaus nodded knowingly and told him that he had once carried a book like that with him as well.



"But it didn't go over too well at work. I did not want to explain to my co-workers what I was writing and so they started to call me the 'Stasi-agent' because they thought I was writing down their conversations. . ."

Sid overheard Arletty call her friend Mar. and when he looked over to her he saw that she had a little black book in her lap as well in which she was drawing the scenery.

"I should have brought my music-notebook!", Klaus said, "Then we would truly be an art-circle. You're writing, she's drawing, Arletty is smoking. . ."

After it took them about two hours to go through half of the course they decided to quit and went over to a nearby park.

Sid wondered whether he should smoke his pipe or the more 'social' option; roll a joint and pass it around.

It would not necessarily help him open up. Instead he would stop caring altogether, he might talk to her, but he would be content with the world the way it was and not pursue her anymore. . .

Pepito showed up and quickly noticed that Sid seemed "stressed out man!"

When Sid told him [REDACTED] Pepito said: "Yeah that sucks man, [REDACTED]"

'Apparently he is dealing with it a little better though', Sid thought as he watched Pepito follow Mar. onto the jungle gym.

Sid felt his darkness approaching.

[REDACTED]

But it passed.

T. dragged him onto the playground as well and when Klaus got his guitar from his nearby flat Pepito played Sid *No woman no cry*.

"Hey Mr. Sidman, don't look so down

No woman no cry!"

Then he played his own song *Ampelman*, urging the group to simply follow the green light and see where it took them. . .

The sky above turned grey and the first raindrops began to fall, but they did not care and just remained where they were.

Suddenly a fox appeared out of the dark green beside them.

It seemed meager and hounded as it eyed their little group with suspicion, trying to figure out whether they were his friends, inclined to feed him and give him shelter, or if they would leave



him behind and hurt him as well.

Sid felt a strange connection to the cunning but vulnerable being that seemed so out of place in this city of concrete, looking for shelter in this tiny green spot.

Mar. did not like it quite as much. She seemed worried of diseases it might carry and pitied the fact that it had to eat garbage.

Sid got up and followed the fox into the dark. It seemed as if it wanted to lead him somewhere, looking over it's shoulder every once in a while, sitting down and waiting for Sid to catch up whenever he noticed he was lagging behind.

But then the rain poured heavier and Sid could hear the rest of the group calling out to him.

So he turned around after promising himself that he would pursue the fox the next time he saw it. The little red carnivore looked back at him with its tiny black eyes that seemed forgiving but also had a sense of urgency in them.

The rain finally poured down too hard and forced them to search for shelter. So they went separate ways to whatever place they were calling their home these days.

Sid went over to Klaus's place to get his bike that he had locked there. When they said goodbye Klaus gave him a sympathetic look and told him to "hang in there!"

"It was a nice evening though, wasn't it!?", he added and Sid agreed and said: "We should do this again some time!"

"Definitely!"

Sid got his bike and rode through the rain until he reached the elevator that carried him down to the subway.

"Exit on the right!", a slurred mechanic voice told him and he followed it's orders and rolled over into the arriving train which took him back to his flat.

When he entered the staircase and was just about to roll his bike into the cellar, T., who had taken the bus, arrived as well. They went upstairs and sat down in the kitchen for a little while. Sid felt the strong urge to leave again and the idea of sleeping here tonight seemed more unbearable than ever.

he had kept away from his flat in the past weeks. And now he knew for sure that he wasn't safe here anymore.

But at the moment the fear of waking up within these walls was even more severe. What if he woke up tomorrow morning and went straight to the screen to absorb and forget?

Where could he sleep that that could not happen?



Where could he sleep at all?

If he went into the loft bed or lay down at the end of the hallway again, he would be awoken by Camille or Franz early in the morning.

The only place where he might finally sleep long enough to recharge his body's batteries sufficiently would be the blue room...

He did not allow himself to sleep there, but why?

Sid could not really think of a coherent reason anymore.

Hesitantly he walked across the hall and entered the dark room

He took the sofa and pulled it into a new position so that he would see something unusual when he woke up the next morning. Hoping that that was enough Sid undressed, lay down and almost immediately fell asleep.

He had come into the blue room to sleep late, but apparently that was no longer granted to him anymore. The windows were not closed all the way and the wind began pushing against them making them creak and moan so loud that Sid woke up.

He stared up into the deep blue above him for some time, then let his gaze wander over the pictures that surrounded him. His eyes stopped at an eagle spreading its wings, that had been painted straight onto the wallpaper and he realized that Mar. had drawn it at the last party they had held.

She had asked him what to paint and he had said: "Freedom", then he had turned around to go back to dancing

The memories of that night flooded his mind, drawn away from the wall where he was drawing beside Mar.

the police had come and ended the party

Sid told himself to move and forced his body out of bed and under the shower.



When he got dressed he realized that he barely had any clean clothes left and so he began to fill the washing machine.

Sid wrecked his brain about what he should do while he waited for the machine to finish. He remembered that he still had to go to a movie theater in order to watch the film *West is West*. But before he could do that he would have to watch *East is East*, to which the film they would discuss was a sequel.

So he set up the screen in the kitchen and sat down on the couch in between A. and T. who were both hovering over their laptops, wired into social networks.

While he ate some cereal he watched the film that introduced him to a Pakistani family living in Britain in the 70s.

About half way through the movie his laptop suddenly made a rattling sound and the screen turned black.

Sid pressed the power button but the computer immediately crashed again. He could smell the sweet stench of burned circuitry. He got the external cooling system S. had given him, but unfortunately he still did not have the proper cable to connect it. He placed the laptop on the grid anyway and waited for it to cool down.

S. had often told him that he should not have bought his laptop at the giant electronics chain where he had gotten it two years ago, since their products were designed to fail within a few years so that you'd have to buy a new one. But Sid just did not have the technological knowledge, nor the energy to do proper research on what might be the best choice.

Finally the computer started again and the film continued.

After it was over Franz came into the kitchen and suddenly they began to talk about moving out and handling the landlord company again. Sid felt as if all life was being sucked out of him. He sat there on the couch, with the screen in front of him and felt the all too familiar urge to reach over to his laptop and put on some mind numbing series.

He knew he had to get out. But there was still his laundry waiting to be hung up to dry.

He sat there motionless, trying to tune out the words of his flatmates, until he finally got up and dragged himself over to the washing machine.

After finishing this dreadful chore he tried to reanimate himself with coffee and loud music.

He knew he had to get out, but he did not know where to go except the movie theater for the sequel to the film that had just glued him to the sofa.

T. asked him if he wanted to accompany her to do some cloth shopping she had to take care of for a dress she was working on, which she had always deferred because she felt too pressured



to make the right decision. Sid declined but when they realized that they had to take the same subway they left the house together and rode west.

Sid got out in an expensive looking neighborhood and once again felt out of place. He walked across the street to the little cinema, bought himself a ticket and entered the hall where the commercials were already running.

Sid sat down, wondering what to expect and whether the movie would lift him up or pull him down as well.

The first film had had a strange vibe to it. It was advertised as a comedy and looked like one, even though it showed the Pakistani father beating his wife and kids. But apparently you were still expected to find humor in it, because of his funny accent.

So the first film had not portrayed the father, who seemed to represent all of Pakistan, in an all too positive light.

The sequel was mostly taking place in Pakistan now, and showed his side of the story.

Sid soon got lost in the beautiful sceneries and the music and especially one character, an old wise man who becomes a teacher to the youngest son, was quite engaging.

Sid felt the urge to visit that far away land that seemed so spiritual, strange and yet familiar.

But at the same time he realized how conventional almost every aspect of the movie actually was, from the plot structure to its stereotypical characters, and he wondered how much truth about a foreign culture could really be conveyed by a film like that.

But in the end the 'Feel-Good'-comedy kept it's promise and Sid left the theater in a vaguely cheerful mood.

He noticed that T. had tried to call him and when he called her back she told him to come home since Ja. and Ir. were at their flat and wanted to use his camera to film something for their studies.

So Sid went down to the subway station and took the train back to their neighborhood.

On the way he surfed the internet on his touchwriter in order to read a little about the background of the film and found out that it had actually been shot in India. This was bitterly ironic since the main characters had often stressed the fact that they were NOT Indians whom they insulted as 'cow-lovers'. Sid realized that that meant the temple the old teacher had shown the boy as part of their roots was actually an Indian, Hindu temple and his doubts grew further, about how much truth really lay in the exotic images he had just seen.

He arrived at his destination and walked home through the rain.



When he opened the door to his flat the sweet smell of weed reached his nose. It came from the blue room where Ja., Jr. and another girl were sitting on the sofa Sid had dragged into the middle of the room last night.

They greeted each other and Sid introduced himself to the third girl.

Directly afterwards he realized that he had smiled and nodded, but not caught her name.

He watched the three of them discuss their concept, interrupted by digression again and again.

But finally they were ready to go and so Sid set up his camera and began to film the three, acting as if they were students complaining about everything that bothered them about the school system, like grades, pressure to perform and total disregard for the students ideas and views.

Then they asked Sid to impersonate the French educationalist Celestin Freinet. They wrote him a text and he had to enter their round and hold them a lecture about his theories and the reform movement he founded.

Sid was a little irritated by the irony this monologue brought with it, which went against everything Freinet had stood for, but he kept his mouth shut and did as he was told.

Afterwards he downloaded the video files onto his computer and with it everything else he had filmed in the past three weeks. While he waited for the download to finish O. called him and after asking him how he had been she began to talk about a theatre project she was planning.

"So about the theatre thing we're gonna do. . . I told you about that right?!"

"Ahem. . . no I don't think so. . ."

"Oh well I guess in my mind it's already clear that you're a part of that!"

She told him they had to see each other so she could tell him about her concept.

They decided to meet on Sunday and after O. talked ten more minutes about a variety of subjects they said goodbye.

When Sid went to the bathroom and just lifted the toilet lid his phone rang again.

One more time it was O. who told him that she just needed to add what a wonderful person he was and that he should stay that way and keep his head up.

Sid went back into the blue room where his camera had finished downloading.

After they re-watched what they had just filmed they watched the recording of their play Sid had just downloaded as well.

It was a strange feeling to see themselves from a spectators perspective.

It got them into a nostalgic mood though, and when the film was over they decided to watch the recording of the play they had worked on last year.



Afterwards they just sat around for a while, staring up at the blue ceiling until T. suddenly started to talk about managing the move-out again. She said she had read the contract and found a provision that required you to leave the apartment the way it had been when you moved in. Unfortunately Sid had no idea what that state was since the people who had started this flatshare more than five years ago had all moved out long ago.

T. added that you had to pay for any damages or changes that had to be revised.

Sid tried not to think about the matter and focused on sorting the film footage he had just downloaded.

He worked until midnight and finally sank down on the sofa. He no longer bothered pushing it into some new position but just covered himself with a blanket and lay there, unable to move, trying to fall asleep and forget.

He couldn't sleep. He couldn't forget.

All his pain and fear came crushing down on him and he could barely breath.

He lay there for about an hour until he finally realized that he wouldn't be able to find rest in this room tonight.

He took his blanket and dragged it over into the hallway where he sank down to the floor, closed the black curtain and tried to find rest from it all.

The next morning he did not wake up by himself. It was his phone's alarm clock that ripped him out of his dreams.

He did not want to get up, he did not have the will to do anything, especially not to go to the psychology seminar that awaited him, but finally he dragged himself down to the shower in the hope that the cold water and loud music would reanimate him.

Afterwards he got dressed and hasted to the subway. He had been chained to the bed by his lethargy too long and now he was running late. When he arrived at university and stumbled into his seminar room the presentation about 'cyber-mobbing' was already under way.

Sid let the slideshow trickle down on him without much reflection.

After the presentation Sid and Maria. went up to their professor to ask her for the material for the presentation on social insecurity they had to hold in two weeks.

They went over to the library where they got a big black folder that contained information on a program that was designed to intervene in schools where students might develop social phobias.



They walked over to the cafeteria and began to organize their presentation over lunch. When they began to wonder whether there would be any grades for their work, Maria checked her account on the internet forum the university had trusted with those matters, even though neither students, nor the professors seemed to be able to handle it, and it regularly crashed. Sid noticed that she had already gotten her grade for the exam they had to write last semester and when she told him that it had been there for quite some time he began to worry, since there was still an empty space on his account, where the grade should have been. He felt like he had many times before; as if he had somehow fallen through the system.

He got stuck with the black folder since Maria would be busy organizing a play in the next few days, to which she invited him. He walked over to the JFK-library in the hope that he might be able to store it in a locker there over night. He had planned to go straight to an open air festival after his next seminar and had therefore left his backpack at home, for the first time in the past few weeks. A fatal flaw as it now turned out, because the old woman at the library counter told him they would empty out the lockers every night and throw away whatever they found in there. Discouraged Sid sat down in the computer room where he got on the internet in order to find out who he had to contact about his missing psychology results. After fighting his way through various pages, stuffed with unnecessary information, he finally found a mail address that sounded promising and wrote them about his troubles.

Afterwards he headed down the street to take the subway to his politics seminar.

The station had been under construction for some time and the benches had been provisional wooden boxes in the past few months. But as Sid descended the stairs he noticed that they had installed the old benches again that consisted of simplified naked figures. If you were not careful you ended up leaning your head against two wooden breasts or sitting down on a hard black penis. Two kids had apparently noticed the strange shapes and were standing in front of it in amazement.

"How can you built such a thing?"; one of them said.

"That's what you call modern art, I guess."; the other one answered.

An old woman approached the bench and looked at the shocked faces of the two young boys, irritated and inquiring, as she tried to find a comfortable position on the strange bulge beneath her bottom.

The train arrived and took Sid to the politics campus where he sat down in the seminar-room that slowly began to fill with students. Sid let his gaze wander through the room and wondered



what had gotten them interested in Marxism and Feminism. He was pretty sure that most of them were coming from fairly wealthy, middle class families and probably did not have too many interactions with people from the working class. Would they bring about the world-revolution, or would they end up in similar positions as their parents in the end?

The seminar began and after talking a little bit about capitalist-familys and their connections to the Nazi regime they went over to the topic of feminist interpretations of Marx's value theory. Sid remembered a session they had had a few months before on ideology, in which they had read a text by Engels who condemned all kinds of theorizing and philosophizing as empty talk that actually just enforced the status quo because it just called for a change in ideas and not a change of the system. Of course the text had seen Marxism as an exception, but Sid realized that at least in the context of their seminar it was exactly the same idle, meaningless talk.

About half an hour before the course ended Sid could no longer take it anymore and so he left. He had no intention to change the system.

'I don't have the wisdom or the audacity to design something that could claim to bring greater happiness to everyone', he thought as he rode the subway north. Happiness was something that was very hard to grip but Sid was sure that it differed from person to person, what constituted a happy life. All he could do was find his individual happiness.

'How am I doing on that so far?', he asked himself and looked outside into the grey clouds with a bitter expression on his face.

He arrived at home, threw the dreadful black folder into a corner, made himself a coffee and left again, as soon as he could. But it wasn't soon enough. The short time he had spend in the flat was enough to deprive him from all will to go anywhere and when he reached the station and saw the train leaving right before his eyes he was close to just collapsing and not getting up again.

Instead he tried to revitalize himself by reading some more of *The Rum Diary*.

The train arrived, Sid got in, walked toward the plateau at the end of the wagon and found O. sitting in front of it, together with a young woman who shook his hand and and told him her name which he immediately forgot again.

O. asked him whether he had read the invitation she had sent him. They were going to the performance of the band of a friend of hers now. When he told her that he had gotten her text but hadn't had time to answer yet she seemed to be in a bit of a snit and turned away to her friend to continue to talk about the theater lecture they just came from. When their stop came she said goodbye with a quick hug and left him on his own. He got out a few stops later and



walked down to the bridge where the Open Air was supposed to take place. When he reached it he could already hear the music hovering across the river and so he followed the luring sounds and stopped right in front of the giant black speaker it was emanating from. The music shook his bones and crept into his brain as he moved to its rhythm with closed eyes.

But after a while he was drawn back towards the river and as he walked along it's side he saw the remains of the ice cream factory rise up in front of him.

He climbed the fence and walked up to the roof.

He sat down in the same spot he had been in the last time he was here and got out his little black book in order to see whether he could still decipher what he had planned to write.

It was barely visible under the thick black layer of lead his pencil had left.

He dropped to the ground, simply collapsing in complete despair. Maybe it was a sign of fate, maybe it was pure chance that he fell to the left, back onto the roof, and not into the abyss that was gaping to his right.

His body was shaken by shivers and he just lay there on his side for another fraction of eternity.

Finally he regained at least partial control of his body and was able to roll himself onto his back.

He starred up into the dark grey above that looked like it was about to erupt in a violent thunderstorm. But time passed and nothing happened. Suddenly the sound of music reached his ears again, echoing back and forth from the buildings around him.

He sat up and leaned his back against the small wall he had just fallen from.



Two girls entered the roof from the door in front of him and when they saw him cowering on the floor one of them asked: "Are you alright?"

Sid waved at them in a way that was supposed to say: 'No, but don't worry. . . .' and they walked up to the wall to his right where they got out some spray-cans and began to color the red bricks. After they had finished their work they got into an argument over the name of a certain spider.

One of them walked over to him and said: "It's tarantula right?"

"Tarantel!"; the other girl insisted and Sid tried to convey to them that they were both right, just talking in different languages about the same thing.

The girls thanked him and as they turned away one of them looked over her shoulder and told Sid to find her on a social network.

"Add me! My name is tarantula!"; she yelled and walked away.

Sid knew he wouldn't do it since he kept away from those forums whenever he could, but he wondered how serious she had been. Was that the way you established human contact these days? Exchanging a few words with a random stranger was enough to tell him to become your 'friend'. At least your virtual friend..

Could there still exist something like human connection and real emotions in that virtual world? Sid was inclined to deny that possibility, until he remembered what he had heard in the psychology seminar earlier today. His professor had told them about the case of a young girl who had a fight with her best friend and ended their friendship. The mother of the abandoned girl decided to get back at her former best friend by creating the profile of a fictional young boy whom the girl added and ultimately fell in love with.

Real emotion, apparently real enough to drive her to suicide when the mother began to let her creation tell the girl that he hated her and thought she was, ugly, a slut, not worthy of his love...

Sid noticed that the dark clouds above him were no longer recognizable as such but had become one vast grey mass that seemed to be expanding and slowly approaching.

Sid turned around and noticed that the TV tower behind him had been almost completely swallowed by the grey fog that was now wafting over the river, straight towards him.


He got up and left the ice cream factory in order to return to safer realms. He followed the sounds of the music that carried him back to the giant black speakers, in front of which he tried to loose himself in the rhythmic waves they produced.

As he was dancing he felt the humidity of the air around him rising and when he looked up he



saw the grey fog still hovering over the river before him. He went over to a nearby tree, sat down beneath it and got out his little black book. He noticed that it was almost full and realized that he had forgotten to buy a new one at the tiny store at his university today. He took up his pencil anyway and began to write:

The formless grey
keeps approaching
Diffusing in my life of misery
wherever I turn I see
Grey
How much longer can I stay
in these realms of safety?
How much longer will the music play
and keep the grey darkness away?
I can't say
But I hope I'll find
another way
to fend it off
come the day
when there no longer is music
in my life



He returned to the speaker and continued to dance in the hope that the music would creep back into his mind and erase everything that bothered and hurt him. But when he opened his eyes again he saw that the grey fog was still right there above the water before him. Suddenly his phone rang and T. asked him where he was and when he would come home so they could talk about the future of their flatshare. With a heavy heart Sid left the music behind and crossed the bridge to the subway station. He did not dare to look to his left or right but he could sense the disembodied grey right beside him. He reached the subway anyway and as he headed south he called Franz to ask whether he would come home soon as well. Franz answered with a surprised tone and told him that he couldn't



make it tonight since he was at an Open Air party, the same one Sid had just been at, as it turned out.

Sid stayed in the subway anyway and caught another glimpse of the grey sky, before the window next to him turned completely black as the train entered into a tunnel.

When he arrived he hastened down the street, away from the fog that spread out over the bridges behind him.

He arrived at the apartment and the 4 of them who were home, immediately began to talk about what would happen to the flatshare.

They looked into the contract and found out that they had to give notice 3 months in advance but Camille revealed that she wanted to return to France to study and that she would move out as soon as she had found a place to live over there. T. told them that she had found an apartment today where she would be able to move in the beginning of the next month and A. said that she would probably leave for Africa soon and would like to live at a friends place until then, since she did not have a regular income right now.

The last time they had spoke Sid had said they should find a date to move out that would suit all of them the best. Now he felt like his flatmates were abandoning him.

He had thought of a date that lay far away in the future but now it was clear that he would be homeless at the beginning of October.

He wrote Sv., the last remainder of the flatshare that called this apartment their home before them and the second person who was still mentioned in the contract, informed him of their decision and asked him if he could come over to talk it all through.

Camille and A. went to a site on a social network for the members of the social organization they had worked for the last year and wrote an open letter to anyone who would like to live in their rooms for the time until September.

When they had everything settled Sid fled the flat. Arletty had invited him to a party in her district and so he now headed for the music, in the hope that it would disperse the grey fog that had turned darker and darker as the sun had slowly descended during their talk.

The subway took him straight to a crowded square where Mar. and Arletty were waiting for him in front of a bar, drinking beer, enjoying the atmosphere. Sid tried to do the same and even though it was a little difficult without the help of alcohol, he managed a crooked smile when an energetic one-man-band began to perform right in front of them.

But soon they went on to the subway to go to a club in the east.



As they waited for the train Sid drew a rose with the chalk in his pocket, onto the walls of a nearby construction site. Mar. approached him, asked if she could have some chalk as well and began to draw the face of a man.

Sid watched her, happy as always when he inspired someone else to express themselves, but at the same time he wondered again whether there was more to his smile.

In the train she began to sing a song by Edith Piaf and even though he could not understand the words that came out of her mouth, they almost brought a tear into his eye, like every time he heard that song since Camille had sang the translation to him. And yet he wondered whether there was more to his frown.

They met up with a few more french people and got out close to the bridge Sid had been at earlier.

As they walked towards the club to it's left Sid approached Mar. and told her about the abandoned ice cream factory at the other side of the river. Her eyes glowed with excitement as he told her about it and when they arrived at the club beside the bridge and Sid pointed to the chimney that arose on the other shore she suddenly exclaimed: "Let's go there instead!", and began to haste down the street towards it. Sid was taken by surprise and stopped her with the words: "Maybe we should tell the rest?!".

They turned around and quickly informed Arletty of their plan, then they crossed the bridge and walked past the river to the fence that lay between them and the abandoned building. He climbed it and when he reached safe ground on the other side he took her backpack and her hand.

They entered and let their gaze wander across the colorful graffiti on the walls as they ascended the stairs to the roof.

After sitting down next to the abyss Sid got out his pipe. "It's been a week", he said with a sigh and thought 'if this isn't the place and time to smoke it I don't know when.'

They glanced over the river to their feet and Mar. told him that the situation reminded her of her first love, with whom she had spent their first night in an abandoned building.

When she said that Sid felt the urge to search for love burn inside him again and he wondered whether it would be a good idea to try to come closer to her in these surroundings.

But then she finished the story about the night at the abandoned building with her first love with the words: "...so it was kind of creepy."

"I love can be creepy sometimes.", Sid said with a painful expression on his face



"I decided that it wasn't love that's creepy but just the guy!", Mar. said and looked out over the water.

Sid's heads filled with doubts and he realized that he would not be able to open up and tell her what he felt inside since he did not really know himself. He heard the voice of Y. in his head telling him to sleep with as many women as possible [REDACTED]

Mar. noticed the desolate expression on his face and said: "You're too troubled!"

"When we were at that park the other day and you were up on the jungle gym with T. I said to Arletty: 'I feel so down but I just realized that actually I'm not sad at all!'

Then I looked over at the empty spot you had just been in and Arletty said: 'Yeah, he has that effect on me as well...'"

Sid did not completely grasp what she was saying at first, but then she began to tell him what he should do to lighten up and be happier and he understood that she found his company depressing. Apart from the fact that he started to tell himself that she probably did not want to be with someone who she did not enjoy to spend time with, he wondered once again why Arletty perceived him as such an unhappy person. He wasn't leading an unhappy life, was he? Maybe the problem was that they were often together in bigger groups and since he did not feel comfortable around too many people he seemed to be sad to her, all the time. Maybe it was this sense of being driven that he had, which made him uncomfortable if he remained unproductive for too long, that she interpreted as being unhappy.

"I guess I'm mostly happy in retrospect these days. When I look back at the things I have done I tell myself: 'My life is quite alright!' But I admit that I forget to be happy in the moment sometimes."

"Then you're not truly happy!", Mar. said and Sid gave her a hurtful look.

After a few moments of silence Mar. added: "I'm sorry I started giving you all that useless advice just now! I mean it's probably pretty sound advice but I just realized that I could never follow it myself!"

You know I'm pretty good friends with my neighbor and she has this rare gift that she always knows what would be best for others. And people come to her for advice and she brings happiness to their lives. But the only person she has absolutely no clue about is herself! Her life is a mess and she can't find a way out. If she were only able to follow the advice she gives to others!" After a few more moments of meditative silence Mar. remarked how much the scenery of the bridge before them reminded her of a film that had deeply touched her once.



"It's about an old lady, and she meets this bum under a brige...ah damn I wish I could remember the name!"

Suddenly Sid found himself quoting Kerouac describing his friend Big Slim Hazard: "He once walked down the street with his mother and passed a man sitting on the street. When he asked his mother what the man was doing and she answered: 'Why that's a ho-bo!', he declared: 'I want to be a ho-bo someday!'"

Mar. did not seem all too happy with this view and she told him that she always ended up talking to the bums in her hometown.

"The streets aren't really a place where you can live!", she declared and told Sid of a night exactly one year ago when the celebration of music that was going on in the city tonight had been held in her hometown, where it originated from.

"I spent most of the night with a homeless woman who injected herself with heroin in front of my eyes at one point! She told me to turn away, did not want me to see this, but I said: 'No, I want to see it!'"

So all in all it wasn't my happiest 'fete de la musique', but it definitely left an impression!"

Finally Mar. remembered that she had to get up early the next morning for her oral examination at the university of arts and so they left for the subway.

On their way back they passed a guy who yelled something at the people in front of them who were pushing their bikes down the street. The man with the most expensive looking bike turned around and gave the guy an annoyed and spiteful look, but when Sid imitated the rude passerby and yelled as well a smile appeared on his face.

They all started yelling and laughing and when they quieted down again the man asked Mar. if she wanted some MDMA.

She declined and as they kept on walking Sid turned towards her, imitating the facial expression of the man and quoting part of a poem by Jim Morrison: "Hey man, you want girls, pills, grass? C'mon... I show you good time."

Mar. told him that she would never say never but that she definitely wouldn't take anything like that the night before an important exam.

Sid remembered A. who had told him that her sister did not believe her when she told her that he did not take any hard drugs. Suddenly he was worried that he might have portrayed himself in a bad light in front of Mar. and hastily added with a grin: "I found out that a lot of people seem to think I take all kinds of drugs on a regular basis and won't believe me when I tell them that I don't even drink or smoke tobacco!"



“Well they’re fools to think something like that, I mean you still seem to have it all together! You’re not really acting crazy!”

Sid did not take this remark too well either.

“Well that’s too bad because you know...”, he reached for the book in his pocket and showed her *The Rum Diary* again, “You know this text I’m working on about Hunter S. Thompson, actually I guess I am trying to turn myself crazy right now in order to write it...”

“Ah you shouldn’t, trust me I’ve seen people try and succeed and it’s not pretty! I’ve tried it myself but at some point I stopped because it just got too heavy!”

They arrived at the club in order to say goodbye to Arletty but after she had begged them to come inside with her because it was ‘so wonderful inside’, she decided to come along and they went down to the bus stop.

They had just found out that the bus Arletty had told them to take did not operate on a Thursday night, when Arletty got a call from her friends who were still in the club, telling her that there was fire inside and they were being evacuated.

After a few moments of worry they called again and told her they were alright but that their belongings were still inside where the fire was apparently raging viciously.

Arletty decided to go back to the club but Mar. who was getting increasingly nervous about her exam tomorrow told her she would have to go home and asked which bus to take.

Sid got out his little electronic guide, asked the internet and told her he would bring her home since he had to go into the general direction as well.

Due to the fine print of his contract, the phone company had just informed him that they would decrease the speed of his internet connection if he did not want to upgrade to a more expensive flatrate.

So now his guide was even less reliable than it had been and they almost missed the bus it advised them to take.

But after they hastily said goodbye to Arletty they ran towards the bus-stop and got in just in time.

Mar. began to nag about Sid’s dependence on this little piece of machinery which he had commented on with the ironic words: “We made it! Praise the almighty company that designed this machine!”

Sid tried to defend himself by explaining that the phone had been a graduation gift from his uncle who had gotten it for 50 bucks under the counter over his work, but Mar. kept insisting that that wasn’t a reason to use it.



She let Sid guide her home anyway.

"But you won't have this if you really become a hobo!", she said and Sid replied: "Why not? Why can't I be a well equipped bum?"

"The other bums will hate you for it pretty soon!"

"Well I guess that means that I'll have to keep moving. And then I won't be a hobo anyway, but just a camper!"

"Yeah, sounds like a good plan!"

They changed the bus and an old man with long, unkempt grey hair and a wooden stick with some kind of strange apparatus at its end started to talk to them. Sometimes Sid wasn't quite able to follow what he was saying and when he claimed that Pope John Paul the first was shot because he was an atheist Sid silently shook his head, but all in all it was a quite interesting talk. Whenever the old man turned around to include other people in the bus in the conversation they would face away with fearful or annoyed looks, but the man did not really seem to notice.

When they finally reached their destination and left the bus Mar. said: "See, somehow I always end up talking to bums!"

Sid accompanied her to the entrance of Arletty's building.

She looked at him and before he could say anything else she bowed forward and gave him a heartfelt but short embrace. He didn't really care. His mind was already somewhere else, fighting windmills in the nearby park.

He wished her good luck and turned around in order to write poems about strange creatures in bushes.

"See you Saturday in the midsummernight's dream on the devils mountain?!", he said over his shoulder as he noticed that tiny fraction of himself hiding in the back of his head, shivering and silently screaming for attention. Right, he had to find love, keep on searching even though he knew it did not exist or at least not in the way he had always thought it did...

Suddenly he heard her close the door behind herself and the screams in the back of his head grew louder.

He walked down to the park at the end of the street and the further he came the more the grey fog that still hang in the air seemed to approach and suffocate him.

But when he sat down on a bench facing the street he had just come from, the skinny, red fox appeared before him again. He knew he had made a promise, maybe to himself, maybe to the fox, to follow it the next time he saw it, and so he got up and started to walk towards the little animal that looked up at him with encouraging eyes.



The fox went back down the stairs Sid had just ascended and waited for him to follow, at the entrance to the street he had just come from.

Sid began to go down the stairs and the fox ran further into the street. He followed the cunning, wild beast until he realized that it was leading him right back to the door through which Mar. had just disappeared.

The fox sat down in front of her doorstep and looked up at the bell beside him. Then Sid reached it as well and the fox chased off into the night, continuing its escape from the cold fog and smog and all the other diseases of this town.

Sid caught himself almost ringing the doorbell, but then he realized that Mar. had that oral exam at the university she had applied to, early tomorrow morning.

So he sat down on the doorstep and decided to write her a poem instead:

My love is a fox in the city

*I am a fox in the city
you saw me last night
and pitied my looks
even though I feel alright
I admit I look sad
cowering next to that trash can
but it isn't that bad
I do what can
to get by, and so far
it's not going too bad
although sometimes
I do seem to forget
But there is a vulture
living close to my park
responsible for most of the times
my life turns dark
It's a heron
that lives by a lake
close to where I stay*



and whenever I see it
my life turns grey
I feel hounded and sad
but I will persevere
I will keep barking
'I am still here'
in the hopes that the man
who once was my master
might become my friend again
might see me as more than just an illusion
and will be able to love again
I am convinced
that I'll look healthier then
But if he does
will you help him nourish me
or are you also one of those
that can't see
love
that can't see me?

Afterwards he headed home, where he quickly packed his bag and sat down to drink another coffee.

He got out his music machine and made it play the soundtrack Neil Young had created for the movie *Where the Buffalo Roam*, which he deemed appropriate for the occasion.

According to a vast majority of critics the movie itself ultimately did not perform the task of accurately portraying the life and works of Hunter S. Thompson. Most of them also remarked that the soundtrack had been able to capture something significant about his writing, though.

When he heard the hymn Neil Young had composed for Dr. Thompson's escape into the mountains of Aspen, Sid agreed.

The harsh sound of the guitar at the beginning was vaguely reminiscent of Hedrix's version of the American anthem, when they were repeated in the main song by an orchestra they sounded



much more in tune though, a beautiful reflection of Hunters age old struggles with the American dream that he had searched for in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* although he had already declared it 'fucked' after his defeat in the run for the sheriff's office of Aspen. The song that got his lyrics from an old American folk song, pleaded:

Oh give me a home
where the buffalo roam
where the deer and the antelope play
where seldom is heard a discouraging word
and the skies are not cloudy all day
home, home on the range
where the deer and the antelope play
where seldom is heard a discouraging word
and the skies are not cloudy all day
no the skies are not cloudy all day

Sid sang along as he left his flat in the rising sun, heading for the green wasteland behind the bridges down the street.

He got there unbelievably fast and told himself to remember how easy it was to break free, in terms of time you had to invest into it. But of course 'the time it wastes' wasn't the real problem for his inability to change a situation...

It was thinks like obstacles. For instance the fence he found before him when he turned his bike into the newly erected park to his left.

He locked his bike, took his tent from the back and threw it over the fence. Then he followed and crossed the bridge to the still wild and abandoned other side.

Sid entered the woods behind it and passed the tent he had seen the last time he had been here. It was still as deserted as it had been back then, but after considering camping beside it he walked on towards the ruinous buildings that appeared to his left.

Somehow their crumbled walls purveyed some sense of safety and so he threw a few of the stones that covered the floor to different spots and put up his tent beneath the crumbled roof



that consisted of a few metal arches and the green treetops above them. He got in, unrolled his backpack and looked at them through the translucent opening in the ceiling ready to fall into a beautiful revitalizing sleep without worries of waking up the next morning inside walls that were actually strong enough to contain him and a concrete roof above that blocked his view of the sky.

Sid was awoken a few hours later by the sun shining through the translucent fabric above him. He decided to film it and his way outside into the rubble and the woods behind it. Although he had only slept for 4 hours he had not gotten out of bed so quickly and with so much energy in quite some time.

After filming his surroundings he pushed his mattress in front of the tent to have some breakfast. Then he began to sort his notes of the past few days and continued writing.

He was disturbed by voices that grew louder as a group of adolescents appeared somewhere behind the wall to his right. He heard them yelling, screaming and laughing and quickly lost his fears that they might steal the broken laptop he was working on.

But when his machinery started to die of empty batteries one by one, Sid decided to head down to his university to recharge it, and himself and continue his work there.

As he took down his tent he listened to the sounds of the people behind the crumbled wall. But after he had finished packing his stuff together he sat back down again and continued to write on the last machine that remained.

After about an hour he suddenly heard the sounds of music, carried across the bridges by the wind. He considered following its call but then he decided that he had to finish the text he was writing on, and so he stayed where he was.

Finally he finished and decided to haste down to university in order to get there before the cafeteria closed.

Feeling the time pressure breathing down his neck, he hastily rode his bike down the street below the bridges and when he crossed over to the entrance of the subway station he heard the shrill sound of the horn of a car behind him. He got into the subway, and placed his bike in a position that allowed him to sit. Sid asked the older woman beside him if his bike bothered her but she was sealed off from her surroundings by the headphones on her ears and did not notice him until she got out and began to complain about his bike blocking her way. But he could not hear what she was saying since he had put on his own headphones by now.



He tried to relax a little before arriving at his destination and continuing his race against time. And he made it, just in time to get himself a plate with couscous before they took the tray away. He sat down underneath a tree outside and read some more about the *Campaign trail '72* as he ate.

When he finished his meal Sid felt the tiredness approaching and he could barely move. The surroundings of the university gave him the vague feeling that he had to take care of things, even though he did not have any courses until Monday. But he did have that dreadful black psychology folder he had to read and prepare for his presentation. And he had actually come here for one thing that was more important than anything else. He had to print the poem he had written for Mar. last night. He did not know how or when he would hand it to her but he had promised himself to do it, and he would keep that promise, whatever it took!

He got up and walked over to the giant computer halls of the main campus where dozens of students were wired into the machines that had been set up there. Sid sat down among them, downloaded his text and printed it as fast as he could. Then he fled this gargantuan gateway into the virtual world again and headed for the JFK-Library down the street.

On the way to his bike he passed the little shop where he bought himself a new black book to fill and when he passed the sign that said: 'Keep calm and have a coup of coffee', he followed it's promise and got himself a bottle of liquid caffeine to keep his systems going.

But when he arrived at the library he realized that he had not brought the necessary cable to recharge his empty laptop with him, and so he had no choice but to return home to get it. On the way to the subway station he began to wonder whether he really had to return home to get that cable. What for? To start working on that psychology presentation? To sort his writings? He would probably not be able to do either once he was back, locked inside those walls. Considering the fact that he had only slept for 4 hours it was pretty much clear that he would crash as soon as he sat down on the sofa back home. But what else was there to do?

As he approached the subway that could lead him to his flat he realized that it could also lead him down to the lakes. He decided to let fate decide and told himself to take whichever train rolled into the station first.

It was the train heading south and so Sid got in and rode down to the lake.

When he arrived he just stretched out on his mattress and closed his eyes for a while. Afterwards he read a little more.



Finally he decided to call Arletty to ask her if they were coming to the theater performance Ja. was taking part in tonight. But when he turned on his phone it immediately went off again, because it did not have any battery power left.

Since Sid did not know where exactly the play was taking place he had no other choice but to return home.

After riding the subway north, arriving at his building and locking his bike in the cellar Sid ascended the stairs to his flat. When he passed the door of their downstairs neighbors he rang the bell in order to inform them that they were moving out. Maybe then they would take back their threat of informing the landlord company and Sid would finally be able to breathe again in his flat, for the few months that remained. But once again they were not there and so Sid continued his way up the stairs and entered his flat, where no one seemed to be home either.

He recharged his machinery and when his phone went back on he called Arletty. She told him they would not come to the theater tonight, but tomorrow they'd come along. Arletty suggested meeting afterwards and they said goodbye.

A. arrived to drop something off and they left the flat together and went to the subway where T. was already waiting.

During the train ride Sid began to wonder at what station he should get out, if he should still go over to the park where Arletty and Mar. were at to finally hand her the words he had printed earlier.

But he felt drenched out and was no longer able to think straight. So he just followed A. and T. mindlessly when they got out.

They went down to the little theatre in a graffiti covered backyard.

T. begged him to come along to a party a friend of hers had organized. Sid told her he was tired and could not guarantee he would still be conscious after the performance. After he added that she should have come along yesterday she asked where they had gone and he had to tell her about the night. When he mentioned that he went to the roof of the abandoned ice cream factory with Mar., T. asked: "Did you hook up?"

Sid could feel the grey misery crashing down on him.

An old woman beside the entrance announced that the play was about to start and so they went into the hall where the actors were already standing on stage, still preparing the props and chatting with each other naturally. It was already foreshadowing the nature of the play.

Ja. had already hinted that it had been a very personal production and that the characters on stage were basically them.



They began to talk about the consistency of sperm and Sid could feel himself getting sick and crashing further down. Then one of the actresses placed a melon between her hips and began moaning in orgasm as she stuck her hand into it in rhythmic movements.

Expressive scenes like that were intercut with intense personal stories about birth, suicide and theft.

The play ended with the recording of a survey they had done, revealing that five out of the seven actresses had tried hard drugs, three out of seven had had sex with a girl and so on.

The last point put everything that had just been said into a new perspective: "Seven out of seven lie regularly."

The seven actresses left through the back door and gestured to them that they should follow. Outside a band began to perform and they served the cake they had prepared during the play. People started to dance and Sid joined them. Soon the music did its part and he felt the grey mass in his head redrawing.

When it ended he followed the others to a nearby park hoping that Arletty and Mar. might show up there as well. But when he called Arletty she told him they were going to a bar instead. He lay there beside his friends who were passing a joint around and stared up into the stars above him for a while.

Finally he got up, said goodbye and went home. The grey was all around, clouding his mind as he dragged his aching body into the subway.

'Something is going horribly wrong here,' he thought as he arrived at his flat. 'Yesterday at this time I felt great, as if I could take on the entire world and now, 24 hours later I feel so incredibly down.'

'Maybe it's simply the sleep deprivation,' he tried to tell himself. He could barely stand up straight anymore, his entire body seemed to hurt and fatigue was spreading in his bones. He went to the end of the hallway to get his blanket and when he entered the blue room he simply collapsed onto the floor and fell asleep.



Sid was awoken late at night or early in the morning by Camille who suddenly burst into his room proclaiming: "And this is the blue room!"

She did not recognize Sid sleeping in the corner until he yelled something he did not quite understand himself.

Camille seemed irritated that he was there and did not know what to do, so she just proceeded: "Come on over take a look at the room!"

The heads of two men appeared in the door and looked around the room in amazement, staring at the colorful walls and at the strange creature that was cowering on the floor at the other end of the room, without a mattress, still dressed, wrapped into a thin blanket.

Sid felt like he was at an exhibition, but not as a spectator... He was the freak, the example of the underground Berlin art scene that was being presented to the two men, who began a stimulated discussion in french.

Sid yelled out once again and they gave him a look as if they were about to clap. When he threw a pillow in their direction they finally left and he rested his head on the hard ground and continued to sleep.

He awoke again several hours later, still feeling as tired as he had when he had gone to bed. But there was a different aspect to the tiredness, some soul crushing indomitability, the awareness that you could not get rid of it by sleeping.

Sid knew a cold shower would not really help either anymore, but he forced himself out of bed anyway and into the bathroom.

Afterwards he checked his mails and found a message from Sv. who told him he could come over to write the letter to the landlord company on Sunday.

At the same time O. wrote him, asking if they could meet and he called her back with a heavy heart to tell her that he didn't have time today and also would not be able to meet her tomorrow to talk about the play she wanted him to do with her. She sounded disappointed and upset but they agreed to meet some other time soon and said goodbye.

Sid was left alone in the kitchen, in front of the screen of his laptop that still displayed his mail-inbox.

He opened a message from Nathan and clicked on the link he had send him which lead him to a video of some American comedy program. Sid watched the video in which a man dressed like a reporter asked people if they thought the US should intervene after the recent invasion of Poland by the Germans and got answers that showed that all those people believed his words, just because he was holding a microphone. Something in the back of his head noted that this was



pretty funny but Sid's face stayed stale, no sign of a smile, let alone laughter. Still, after the video was over, Sid yearned for more. But he also knew that this was an insatiable desire that would leave him cowering in front of the screen for hours, days, maybe weeks.

With a desperate scream he slammed his laptop shut and went over to the blue room where he searched for inspiration, energy, a mad, determined drive, by finishing *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign trail '72*. The book he had gotten at the JFK-Library contained a few more pages after Thompson ended his journals of the cragged political landscape of his time with an ad from the McDonalds company he had read in a newspaper, claiming that all you needed was not talent, genius or education but persistence. After Sid read the annexed short biography he came to a chapter called *What is Gonzo?*. It drew a comparison to the character from the muppet show with the same name and claimed that just like it was undefinable what kind of animal he was, so was the writing style of Hunter S. Thompson.

Thompson had apparently not come up with the term himself. It was a certain journalist called Bill Cardoso who used the term to describe Thompson's article *The Kentucky Derby is decadent and depraved*. Thompson claimed he adopted it 'for no particular reason'.

The book went on to call his work 'a method-acting style of stream-of-consciousness writing'. Sid looked up from the book and realized that even though he had never read an exact definition of the term up till now, his own writing could be defined as just that...

With new found hope and determination he returned to his laptop in the kitchen to sort his notes of the past days and continue writing. He found part of a text he had written a few months ago in the depths of his touchwriter's data base and tried desperately to find the rest of the piece somewhere in the notebooks he had filled or the loose sheets of paper that had flown out of his typewriter and covered the floor of the blue room.

He finally found another big chunk of it in a notebook that lay between the empty bottles that filled up the bookshelf in the hallway, but he wasn't sure whether that was really all of it. With a revived sense of urgency he continued to sort his writings. It took hours to piece everything together and Sid felt time pressure rising in his neck. Maria. had invited him to a theater project she was doing at the abandoned radar station on the mountain that bore the name of the devil. Sid had invited Mar. and Arletty to meet him there. It would be an appropriate place to hand over the poem he had written for Mar..

Sid picked up his phone and called Arletty in order to ask whether they wanted to go there together. But after she picked up and greeted him she told him they wanted to go to the gay pride parade instead, that was going on today. Sid saw all his idle plans crumble before him. He got



Arletty to say they might come over there afterwards, but that she could not promise anything. Sid sat there motionless for a while and considered going to the parade instead. But he knew he couldn't hand Mar. a poem that held his hopes and desires in an environment like that. So he got up with a heavy heart and went down to the double decker that would take him into the woods of the west, hoping that he'd feel as one again in the abandoned wilderness. He tried to regain the energy that had flooded his veins earlier by reading some more of *The Rum Diary* as the city passed by the big window before him.

He left his ugly grey neighborhood through the street that was crowded with scantily dressed women, drove through the expensive shopping districts of west Berlin, past the impressive villas at the city's edge and into the green woods.

Sid left the bus and bought himself some liquid caffeine to drink before starting his journey through the trees.

After about ten minutes of walking he could see the white globes of the radar station rise up above the trees before him.

The closer he came, the more people he encountered, fellow travellers on a different journey but with the same destination, at least for tonight.

He arrived at the foot of the mountain that had been erected out of the rubble the second world war had left behind, and began his way up through the dense green thicket.

He arrived at the gated where he got a stamp on his hand and some glitter in his hair for the donation he placed in the small metal box before him. Then he walked on, following the wooden signs and the music that filled the air, which lead him into a small garden filled with tents. He walked past the first tower and ended up on a meadow where people sat around in the grass and danced in front of an orange baldachin that housed a bearded man who spun records with a big friendly smile on his face.

Sid sat down in front of it and decided to call Arletty again. He knew he felt free enough to open up in this environment. He still wasn't ready to begin anything new with Mar. or any girl but he just wanted to share this magical night with her.

He looked up into the sky, saw the grey clouds above and worried that they might not come since it looked as if it was about to rain, as he walked away from the music in order to be able to call Arletty.

But when he did she did not answer. He wrote her a text instead, urging her to come and returned to the meadow telling himself to put it out of his mind and simply enjoy and absorb the scenery instead.



[REDACTED]

Sid felt the grey closing in on him.

He just remained there, frozen and motionless. Like so many times before his body simply turned to stone. He felt like a small animal that stopped moving in the desperate attempt to fool an approaching predator. [REDACTED]

his heart rate increased as he became aware of his hopeless situation. But then S. appeared beside him and with a few fast steps he stood in front of Sid and began to talk with a big friendly grin on his face.

Sid couldn't hear what he was saying but somehow he regained the ability to get up and after saying to S.: "I have to hide! This city is just too small!"; he turned around and fled into a nearby building.

He went through a door with a sign proclaiming 'Danger!'; on it, beside the picture of a dead, bleeding stickman and entered a room with large steal beams dangling from the ceiling. Sid made his way through the rubble that covered the floor and entered into another room where he sat down on the ground, leaned back against the colorful, graffiti covering the walls and looked out into the grey sky above the green of the forest, through the large glassless windows before him.

The fog seemed to be approaching but even though there was nothing between him and the outside world Sid tried to tell himself that he was save from the formless grey mass that seemed to surround the entire peak of the mountain by now. That meant he couldn't leave this mountain of the devil without passing through the grey. And by the rate the fog seemed to be approaching he wouldn't be able to leave this room either quite soon.

Sid decided to get up and explore the rooms that had become his refuge and his prison for the night. He walked along the windows and saw the city at the horizon slowly being sucked up by the grey. He came to the end of the room and found the door before him locked. But there was a small gangway to his left that he began to walk down. He could hear the music of the meadow emanating from the door at it's end and after making sure that it was locked he leaned back against it and tried to loose himself in the sounds that made the wood on his back vibrate rhythmically. But soon he realized that he had to flee further if he really wanted to escape. With a heavy heart he got out his pipe and filled it with the last few crumbs of the green herb he carried



in the pocket of his worn out black jacket.
He lit his pipe, inhaled heavily and let himself fall back into the music behind him.
Then he got out his little black book and tried to find refuge in the dreamworlds of his imagination:

*I'll escape
into a land where everything
that can be seen
is either pink-purple
or green
all I need to do
to break through
to that dreamworld
is leaving the theater
with my glasses on*

Sid got out the old 3-D glasses his friend Lar. had once given him when he had bought himself a DVD with 3-D content, and put them on.

Suddenly the music stopped and a voice proclaimed that there would be a short redesign of the stage before another band would perform. It went on to inform them that they would have to take care of each other in order to make sure everything went well so they would be able to repeat this soon. Sid felt his chest tighten when he thought: 'Well, I guess that means I won't be able to throw myself off this mountain tonight..'

He needed to escape these suffocating grey thoughts, but how? He picked up his little black book to search for answers within its covers:

*all you need to do today
in order to see
things in a new beautiful way
is closing your right eye
you don't need love
to see the world isn't grey*



Sid did what the poem he had just written told him to do and saw the world turn pink. He wondered whether he had gotten the idea from a character in one of the series of the director, who once had planned to turn the radar station at the top of this mountain into an university for Freedom.

He remembered the Psychologist in the series that had started as a simple murder mystery and ended in surrealism of the extreme kind that had enraged many who just wanted to know who the murderer was.

That product of Mr. Lynch's mind had always worn glasses with two lenses of differing color.

Maybe Sid should use his Psychology graduate to become one of those...

When he searched for something in his pockets that could help him keeping the other eye shut he found a paper [REDACTED]. One of the mosquitoes that inhabited the air around him got into his eye, although Sid wasn't sure whether the bloodsucker wasn't as imaginary as the bats he saw hovering around outside of the windows at the end of the hallway. Either way, he was no longer able to open his left eye without pain, and his entire life turned green.

The music set in again and a voice proclaimed: "Ain't no sunshine when she's gone"

He looked up into the grey clouds before him and realized where he had heard those words before.

They had been on the soundtrack to the British film that had implanted all these illusions about love into his mind when he first watched it as a young boy.

Illusions that had now been shattered [REDACTED] or had they?

Sid looked up into the grey above him and realized that the film had not lied. [REDACTED]

Maybe the illusions were true, but Sid knew he needed new ones if he really wanted to survive and bring the sun back into his life. The singer on the stage behind him proclaimed that she would do a reverse rain dance, promising the crowd that the sun would come out afterwards.

"Let the sun shine, let the sunshine in", the woman pleaded.

Sid told himself to let the sunshine in as well.

"You don't need love to see the world 'en rose", he told himself again and closed his right eye that was still staring at [REDACTED] the paper before him. It turned pink, together with the rest of the world around him.

"I'll let the sun shine!", he continued the conversation with himself and got out the lighter again.



He took up the paper and watched the line of fire burn into it, [REDACTED]
With the ashes that remained he drew the grey circles he had worn beneath his eyes during the theater play, again.

Sid remembered Maria. Inviting him to a theater performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer-night's Dream* three weeks ago.

He had to admit it was one of the best performances he had seen in some time. It definitely beat the one he had been forced to take part in many years ago, back in his old school. He remembered the donkey's head they had put before his face and how it had almost suffocated him.

He was happy that he had escaped that prison for his mind, although he wondered whether he hadn't simply changed over into a different cell. And at least back then he still had a place to live and wasn't facing a life on the streets. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Nobody's ever taught you how to live out in the street
and now you're gonna have to get used to it

, the music behind him proclaimed. But when it went on to ask: "How does it feel?" Sid looked up, down the hallway leading to a view of the Berlin skyline that shined as pink as everything else around him and thought: "It feels alright to be a rolling stone!"

And if you were a rolling stone, maybe that gave you the chance to write for a magazine of the same name one day. All Sid could do was train for that day. That was after all what his time in university was supposed to be for. That was what he wanted to use his education for: As an instruction on becoming a Gonzo journalist.

Even if that meant that he needed to add a few things to the curriculum that did not earn him any credit.

Sid decided that he would have to fulfill his duty as a Gonzo journalist to cover the topic of freedom whenever he came across it. But he also knew that this crowd out there, behind that door his back was leaning on for protection, had the potential of turning into a vicious mob at any second since the reverse rain dance the singer had promised earlier had not been effective so far. Their greatest threat to him right now was, that they could eye him with suspicion and draw the attention of their bloodlust to him so that he would be forced to play the donkey for them and would no longer be able to report what was happening, as it was happening.



But then he remembered a way out that Thompson had used for times like these, when it had been impossible for him to write as well: The tape recorder. The second but last chapter of *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail* had consisted of a transcript of Thompson's conversation with his editor, as he was driven by fits of paranoia to walk up and down in his hotel room maniacally. Sid got out his little machine from the depths of his pocket and began to talk into it. Then he returned to his refuge and did a transcript of his words.

Editors Note: This is the transcript of the tape recordings that were conducted in the following 30 minutes:

Sid: He only had one objective. One task he would have to take care of on his path to becoming a Gonzo journalist - and getting paid for it. He would have to find Maria. and ask her if it would be alright if he covered this evening for future generations to come. Maybe she had some 'connections' or 'knew somebody who knew somebody' who might be in the publishing business. Sid got up and walked back out, down the hallway. At it's end he turned right and then right again, heading for the only door that was not locked. He ascended a mountain of rubble, heard voices before him and saw flashes of light and people looking at him through the door.

He knew he would have to disguise his tape recorder as a phone if he did not want them to rip him apart.

"Hi", he said with a nervous grin as he passed the two girls who were blocking his way. Then he walked out onto the meadow. He looked at the crowd that had assembled around the stage and realized that he would have to get away from the music that was simply too loud. He wouldn't be able to hear any of this later on and nobody would be able to make a transcript of this recording.

"Hi", he said as he saw another familiar face, some other friend of S. that passed him by.

Where was Maria.?, that was the only burning question at hand. He searched the crowd around him and looked into faces...

Sid was interrupted from copying what he heard, by two girls who entered the room beside him. But he told himself to keep on working despite their presence.



...and looked into faces filled with paranoia, grinning manically some might even call it happily, but just like Dr. Thompson Sid had no idea what that word was actually supposed to mean. Then he saw a man with a shrill orange coat in front of him, that eyed him with suspicion and Sid put on a fake grin as well, just like the rest of the people around him, as he passed without harm, reached a place at the other end of the meadow and sat down on a staircase. He [REDACTED] had to focus on his task but it seemed impossible. The music on the stage in front of him grew shriller and shriller...

Sid was interrupted by two men who entered through the opening beside him and began to proclaim how amazing and dreamlike all of this was. They walked up to the glassless windows and complained about the safety hazard of the unrestricted abyss before them. They began to act as if they were about to throw themselves over the edge giggling with excitement as they stuck their heads out. When one of them pulled his head back in he bumped it on a frame above it. His friend began to laugh with a loud voice that echoed from the walls and pointed his finger at the poor man.

Then he got into an argument with a security guard on the ground beneath him that told him to leave the building.

"OK, I'll jump then", he yelled, "Will you catch me?"

But finally he did as he was told and left together with his friend who was still rubbing the back of his head with a painfilled expression on his face.

Sid continued his work:

...grew shriller and shriller. It found a way into his head and removed everything else that was painful or annoying or deafening because it was actually more painful than any of it.

It was beautiful.

Sid let his gaze wander over the crowd before him again. But he couldn't see Maria., Instead he saw a man with a black top-hat and a blue coat who looked like he belonged to some other century. He saw another man, walking straight at him, that was older, much older than the average age of the crowd that had gathered here tonight to celebrate their youth.



The old man pointed at the towers that arose before him and told the woman next to him, that he had already been alive when they were still being used as a radar station. A group of people passed Sid and ascended the stairs he was sitting on. They sat down behind him and he knew he would have to move if he did not want to be devoured by them.

He got up and began to walk. His mind was filled with doubts, if he or anyone else would ever write down the words he was speaking into this machine..

Sid was interrupted again when the machine that had just been a tape recorder turned into a phone inside his hand and let the voice of T. echo back from the walls around him. She told him that she was not coming since the mountain of the devil was just too far away for her and she wanted to go to a party Pepito had invited her to, instead. "Well it's your loss...", Sid said and when she asked him if he wanted to come back into the city he declined thankfully and said: "I still have things to take care of around here!" He wasn't sure himself whether he meant the transcript, covering the rest of the evening, or playing his role until this performance of the *Midsummernight's Dream* had ended. For now he would take care of the first point, he told himself and continued with the transcript:

...he would have to do it! There was no way around it! But not now, he still had to gather more words because he still hadn't found Maria. and he needed to use his tape recorder until he had found her in order to remain conscious.

Sid walked up to a mirror that was hanging on the wall in front of him. He was amazed by what he saw: A stretched out face that was no longer that of a human being, but rather that of some kind of beast.

His face was grey and with terror he realized that he had turned into the donkey his character had to turn into, after all.

He had to get away from the music that was just too loud and too shrill by now! Hastily he went down the path that led him back to the tents in the woods and finally he could hear himself think again. Maybe he would find Maria. here!

He found music here as well, but it wasn't as shrill and loud. It came from just one man with a guitar who sang a soft song that calmed Sid's nerves considerably. He could barely see in the dark depths of the forest since he was still wearing the colored 3-D glasses, beneath the dark glasses he wore every day. He went on further and saw



another person dressed in orange. He grinned, smiled and walked further, down a green carpet that lead him back to the entrance doors where he hoped to find Maria.. There was a girl there, facing with her back towards him, that seemed like it could be her. Slowly he approached her but she turned around and...

At this point the recording stopped and Sid let out a silent curse. But then he realized that all that was missing was a short conversation he had had with a nervous and agitated S. who had fallen victim to his own friendliness and now worked as a security guard as well. After a few pushes and touches the second recording began to play:

With terror he realized that the recording had stopped. His machinery was failing him! How would he ever be able to get anything useful out of this? Sid walked back up the path he had just gone down on, past a sign that proclaimed: "Circus" Then he heard a voice welcoming the crowd to the *Midsummernights Dream*:

Gi.: I hope that everybody understands English, so I am Gi. and I'm here with an incredible crew of people who make this magic happen, and now you guys are here and make this magic happen even more! So give yourself a round of applause! So if you've wondered what this is all about...some of you probably know this area. This is a very very interesting story. Actually you know how Berlin doesn't have any mountains right? How we are proud of a hill and in Berlin we call it a mountain but lets be honest - its a hill...

Sid: He finally found Maria. and no longer listened to the woman on the stage. He said "Hi!" and asked her how everything was going but soon he saw that she was surrounded by others who 'made this magic happen' and so he let her do her work, play her part in the performance and just lay down in the grass next to her in order to continue to listen to the woman on the stage:

Gi.: ...actually the story goes that from that very high tower they could be listening to Moscow! And if you stand beneath that tower and look up you realize that it looks like a penis, right?!
And ah... down here there is a lake and the people that live around it call it the



vagina...right? So you have a penis and you have a vagina and we all have one or the other...

So there is a load of things planned for tonight. You know as soon as it gets dark there will be a surprise up on the tower! For today you can only look at it, if you want to climb it you will have to come back another day, because all of you guys staying in this area enables us to have another event like this around here soon. We have very strict safety regulations here otherwise we can't ever come back! OK? You're on? Yeah yeah yeah...So this summernight's dream is based on the creative collaboration of very many diverse artists! We have people here from Los Angeles, we have someone from Lithuania, there is a band here from Ireland, Portland Argentina, Australia...from all over the world! The artist collective who made this project possible together with the *Midsummernight's Dream*-team are called KGU and they are an amazing collaboration of young people just wanting to play magic and they were DJing before and they will DJ later on in the night! So give them a round of applause as well!

So the reason why this event actually happened is because a friend of mine asked me if I wanted to 'do this project with me?' And I said 'sure' and this project exploded because the guys from the *Midsummernights Dream* joined the team!

And he is an amazing rapper, he can freestyle on anything you come up with as a theme. I am not kidding. I just drop my jaw whenever I hear it.

And we had the idea that since the theme is '*A Midsummernight's Dream*' and 'you don't need eyes to see but you need vision', that you can come up to the stage and tell him a dream of yours... and he will freestyle on that. And since to freestyle, you need a beat we want all you guys to do the beat!

Sid: He approached the stage when the rapper appeared on it.

Rapper: Are you up for doing something together? ...any dream that you have in your life...

Sid: People began yelling their dreams and he joined in asking for 'Love'. Someone in the back screamed: "Sailing!"

Rapper: We have sailing...safety...joy...flying and ah sex!



Sid: "Love", he repeated, but the man on stage ignored his plea and went on to rap about sex instead.

Sid walked back into the forest searching for Maria. again and the sound of the guitar reached his ear as he walked through the woods. It was accompanied by a harp and a saxophone and Sid listened in for a while. Then he decided to give up on his search and return to the halls of safety he had found earlier in order to do the transcript right away since he did not trust himself or the person he would become when he awoke tomorrow morning.

He walked back up along the path and realized that if anyone was watching his movements right now, they would perceive him as a lunatic, pacing back and forth without a clear goal. 'Freak Power', Sid thought and raised his fist as he made his way through the crowd. He got back to the door, passed it and walked through the rubble again, away from all those people that kept him from writing. Here, in these empty realms there were only two of them.

He had met them earlier, roaming around, not searching for anything, but finding beauty wherever they went.

Sid got back into the graffiti-covered halls with the glassless windows and he could breath more easily.

He walked up to one of the broken windows and looked out at the fog that was still approaching outside.

'Bring it on', he said to himself, wearing a crooked grin on his face.

He sat down, stopped his tape recorder and started to write a transcript of what he had just witnessed and recorded.

The recording ended and Sid finished the transcript. By now it had gotten dark outside and Sid decided to go back into the crowd, in the safety of the dusk.

This time he wanted to try to capture everything by writing into his little black book.

But when he got out his black book in order to write while walking out of the darkness that surrounded him he realized that he had no chance of seeing anything he scribbled down.

So as soon as he got outside he searched for light and found it at the other side of the door he had just leaned against.



But after briefly sitting down beside it he decided to get himself one of the candles he had seen on his way, in order to stay mobile. So he got up again, and when he had found one he continued his stroll through the surroundings. He encountered Maria, who seemed to be in a terrible hurry.

He asked her how things were going and she replied that it was going quite alright but that they were somewhat behind in their schedule.

"But how do you like it? Are you enjoying the dream?"

"It's beautiful!", Sid replied, and he meant it from the bottom of his heart.

Sid felt his phone vibrate in his pocket and saw a message from his old friend Theo who was apparently still roaming around on the roads of Europe:

I'm in the middle of nowhere, couldn't get some money on my phone, can't read your mails - thinkin' about July - any idea? - might have a place to stay for a few days, about 20 miles away from Sarrebourg, but there's nothin' sure here - I might come to Berlin - I wish I could be any help to you from that far away

Sid wrote him back:

I'm on top of the devils mountain tonight where a midsummernight's dream is taking place. You would like it! If you do come to Berlin soon, maybe there will be another one of these up here...I'm doing my duty as a Gonzo reporter and capturing it all in writing. I'll send it to you and maybe you'll be able to read it some time.

Then he decided to call Arletty again, and make one last attempt of getting her and Mar. up here tonight so he could hand over that poem he was carrying with him. But she did not answer and Sid put his machine back into his pocket and decided that he had not time to pursue love tonight anyway. He had the duty to record this night so future generations might use it as an example or at least view it as a testimony of his time.

He no longer needed to search for love since he had already found what he needed. His love for writing.

Sid arrived back in the forest with tents and hammocks where he found the projection of a film on a small white screen that stood between the trees.



It displayed a silent film about some kind of machine that moved in mysterious rhythms. Apart from that not much was happening and Sid realized that this would be perceived as boring in almost any other environment. But here, in these magical woods people were standing in front of the projection, following every movement on the screen with amazement.

Sid turned around in order to go over to the guitar player who was still performing in front of a small devoted crowd.

[REDACTED]

Once again he wasn't able to move.

He just remained in the position he had been in [REDACTED] His heartrate increased and he felt like his chest was about to burst [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he still wasn't able to move.

He did not know how long he remained frozen, but [REDACTED] finally [REDACTED] he simply collapsed.

Fortunately he was standing on the path that lead up the hill and someone who was just going up caught him, put him back on his feet and dragged him along.

Sid dropped down a little further up the path again and sat down in order to gain control of the situation by writing into his little black book:

[REDACTED]

*and I turned to stone
I'll have to leave this mountain
I used to call my home
Have to place my tent
in another part of the world
where none of this pain and misery
ever unfurled*

He looked up and saw a girl with golden hair walking straight at him. Her face was covered with colorful tiny stones that glittered in the light and it bore a beautiful smile and shining eyes that looked straight at him.



"What are you writing?"; she asked and Sid tried to explain what he was doing, more to himself than to her.

"I guess some kind of journalistic piece on all of this..."

"So what's your opinion?"

"I don't want to form an opinion, come to some sort of conclusion, I just want to capture things as they are taking place!"

The glittery girl gave him another warm smile and asked if she could read his future in the cards she was carrying with her. Sid picked 5 cards out of the deck and placed them on the ground before her, facing down.

"So I'll just take a look at these cards and tell you what I see in them and you decide for yourself how you want to interpret what I tell you, since you know your life better than me!"

"Well I hope I'm enough of an optimist!"; Sid said as she began to turn his cards around.

The first one was a queen of diamonds and she remarked that that was somewhat special since all the other people whom's future she had read before had either a king or a queen in their cards, according to their gender, that had clearly represented them.

She pointed down at a 6 of hearts that she had placed beside a 7 of spades.

"It says here that you had a romantic involvement with someone...and your clearly the opposite of each other, but complementary and there is a flow you know? There is progression...you're trying to connect but these cards...they're also very different...you know?"

You'll have to built either a foundation or...like a foundation of height, you know?"

You have to built something higher here that has to be common starting ground to get to here"

She pointed down at the two complementary cards and over to the other cards.

Then she continued in her soft gentle voice that sounded almost like a song in his ears: "It's also interesting that this card is a diamond. that kind of means...like...the focus here, of this card is completely different."

She picked up the queen and held it above the other cards, facing down.

"The perspective of this card is very different and looks down at these cards in an unfamiliar way..."

She paused and looked down at the cards that lay in the grass before her, for a while. Then she looked up at Sid with her eyes that seemed to look through him and right inside his heart at the same time.

"This is a hard one..."; she said and let out a silent purling laugh.



"I mean the way this stuff...what I'm learning about how I interact with reality is I try to make stories out of very few clues. And sometimes I can make really good ones...

It's like being a search engine, but this, it's like I have this weird sense and I might be thinking about something, and then I hear someone say something else that seems connected to it in some way and then I put it together and make my story..."

"Sounds beautiful!"; Sid said and looked with amazement at this otherworldly being.

"This is a lot of evidence, I know that there is a lot of meaning here, actually..."

But I hopefully some of it was useful"; she continued her singsong.

"Yeah I think so:" Sid said and nodded meditatively.

"Maybe the big unclear meaning is also part of the clue..." the girl added.

"Maybe...Thank you though"

"Your welcome!"; she said and laughed again softly and silently.

Sid looked up at the path beside him

until he could no longer take it and turned his back towards the path, put on his dark glasses and pulled his hood over his head.

"I'm sorry but I feel like I have to disguise myself"; he said to the girl that looked at him with observant, knowing eyes.

"It's just that...path...Jesus Christ, this is ridiculous! I'm sorry ...can't stand to see..." he tried to explain, but somehow the girl seemed to know exactly what he was talking about.

"But what would happen...?" she asked with a knowing look.

"Well I usually turn to stone..." Sid said.

"Just in the past few weeks...?"

Without asking himself how she could possibly know such a thing he said: "Yeah,

..."

"You didn't know what to do..." it sounded more like a statement then a question.

"Yeah...and that's why I turned to stone, because I couldn't reach a decision...and finally I ran away..."

"Do you feel like...how long have you been here in Berlin?"; she asked and he told her that it had been 2 years now, since he moved back.

"Do you want to stay?"

"Yeah, well I was born here...I consider it my home and I don't want to leave my home!"



"No!", she laughed again, "And you know that that would be the wrong reason to leave I think, if you wanted to run away!"

She paused for a moment and gave him another long, fey look.

"It's just...we're in this big game together you know? Some characters you meet and then you know them...And then you know them like for ever and ever! It's infinite! And it's built into you now! You would be a different person [REDACTED]"

Her eyes began to glow even more intensely and her words began to tumble as if she had some kind of vision she needed to describe before it disappeared again.

"So many things and ...that's... its not just you have it and it grows deep into a moment but you have it and it shapes how you view the world! So it's alive it's interacting with reality...It's little parts [REDACTED] coming out and... but there you you know!

And [REDACTED] the same exact thing...It comes the other way...

And love is always there! You can always love somebody. Even...

It doesn't hurt anybody! Always keep love alive there is no reason it has to go any other way."

She gave him another intense look, urging him to listen to what she was trying to tell him: "Love that turns to hate is love that dies!"

Sid looked at her gratefully and after a few moments of contemplative silence he said: "Well I have to say that's probably been the best I have heard so far from anyone in the last few weeks on my situation [REDACTED]"

"Yeah I guess its like a coping mechanism...", she answered and went on to say: "Because you know, when other people see you so hurt they remember their...It happens to everyone almost. And it still, it hurts for everyone. They can see..."

But whatever you are doing you are alive and you are changing all the time! You can't predict anything. If you can then you are boring, like a machine, you know?"

"Yeah, I guess.", Sid said and after starring out into the woods for a few moments he asked: "So how did you get here?"

"Ahm...My family is polish", the girl answered, "And so I was living in America with them and I decided..."

America feels like it's falling apart, you know. Like this doesn't happen over there!"

Sid remembered the time he had spent in the alluring country across the ocean and asked: "Well, do you know the concert festival *Bonaroo*?"



She nodded with a sceptical look on her face and when he claimed that it was similar to this night she protested: "It's more expensive it's more organized. This is just people doing it because they invited their friends, you know?! It's just America is so...I don't know..."

"Where in America were you?"

"I was in Michigan and then in California!"

"And in California it's not like this anymore? Not even in San Francisco...Heigh/ Ashbury...?"

"No well it's like... the spirit is alive still! San Fransisco is a port city and things that are new are welcome, very very welcome! So it's very friendly in the city and it's very creative also. But a lot of people come to San Fransisco to find themselves, because there is so much to see, you know? And anything you express is understood because people try to understand it. People are good at learning new things!

But there is a lot of money in San Fransisco now...Everybody who is this age is working at a start-up or something! Or even at a restaurant and they have the money and they spend it on drugs or parties...or bicycles...or sunglasses. And it's like, it's professional partys...I mean people hang out...People go to clubs...

OK I'm gonna leave you, you have to write now!" the girl said with a knowing look at the little black book in his hand.

"Wait! I want to give you this text!" Sid exclaimed and handed her the poem he had written, printed out and brought here in order to give it to Mar., whom he probably would not see again, tonight or ever.

"Ohhh...Thank you so much!"

"Maybe I write my name on it or something..."

"That would be wonderful!"

"Maybe you find me on some kind of social network one day..."

"Is this written in invisible ink?" the girl asked as she turned the paper around in her hands.

"No, no, you have to fold it open...but don't read it in front of me!"

She gave him another warm smile and embraced him for a long time.

"Maybe see you later?"

She extended her hand and told him her name.

Then she disappeared into the night and Sid continued to write.

After a while he got up again and went back to the big orange stage where a man with a feathered hat told a story about an old lady who cheated death.



He was interrupted by the woman who had introduced herself as Gi. earlier and who proclaimed that the police was approaching and that everyone who had parked their car in front of the gates should remove it.

Then the man continued his story.

Sid noticed Maria. standing beside the stage and approached her in order to find out what was going on. She told him that the people who lived at the foot of the mountain had informed the authorities to complain about noise, but that the unrest did actually come from people outside of the party who had nothing to do with them.

"Apart from that everything is going quite well", she said and went on into the night to take care of the police.

Sid went back down the path to the tents and guitar sounds. [REDACTED]

He had to do his duty as a Gonzo filmcritic to report on the films that were being projected onto the screen in the woods.

But when Sid reached the small white screen it was no longer showing films but a slideshow of pictures instead.

He watched them change before him, repeating in a loop, over and over again. At one point he noticed a big moving black shape on the screen and it took him some time to realize that it was the shadow of a moth that was dancing in the lights of the projector, and actually not part of the artwork.

And yet it was.

Sid realized that the entire mountain was a piece of art tonight, it was a performance of *A Midsummernight's Dream* after all. A somewhat liberal and abstract adaptation admittedly, but as Shakespeare had once remarked himself: "All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players".

Maria. appeared out of the darkness in front of him and told him he should come over to the main stage soon, for the grand finale.

Sid decided to find some caffeine that would keep him awake until then and went up the path to the little bar that had been erected at the foot of the second biggest tower of the abandoned radar station. But tonight it wasn't just a tower anymore but a screen as well, displaying scenes of *Metropolis*, which Sid stared at as he listened to the rap band on the stage beside it.

When they finished their song the lead singer began to talk about their surroundings: "This place has a certain kind of energy because of it's history... And I think it's quite beautiful that we are



doing this in it's shadow now. We made the conscious decision here tonight that we will do something different! And we have people assembled here tonight from all over the world! This is what the fuck we do here now!

So we do these gatherings to have a good night filled with fun but we also do them to generate a certain energy to carry out into the world!

Did you notice the sign at the entrance by the way?

It proclaimed: 'Welcome Home'..."

Then he delivered a rhythmic flow of consciousness on the subject and the crowd erupted in cheers.

The screen displayed people who wore the mask of Guy Fawkes that had become some kind of symbol since it had found it's way into the consciousness of the planets inhabitants after it had been used in a film by the Wachowski brothers.

The rap band delivered it's last song and Sid who began to get cold in the fresh winds that blew at the peak of this mountain, made his way into the crowd that huddled around the stage, keeping each other warm.

The song ended and the rapper demanded praise for his fellow band members and the girl he called 'the queen of the night'.

Sid stared up at the tower again that was now covered with the colorful images of a cartoon. He remembered a scene from the documentary *Breakfast with Hunter*, in which Dr. Thompson begins a furious fit of rage aimed at the original screenwriters that were hired to adapt *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* into a movie and had the audacity to suggest to make certain chapters into animated scenes.

Ironically you could argue that Dr. Thompson's fear of being turned into a cartoon character came true in the end, thanks to Johnny Depp's performance...

As Sid watched the animated film on the tower become more and more abstract he realized that in the right hands an animated version of his book might have come closer to capturing his work, than anything else ever before; especially if it was being displayed in a forum like this, where a certain sense of freedom and mayhem lay in the air.

No wonder that the spirit of something as indefinable as Gonzo could not be portrayed by conventional means, not by Terry Gilliam and much less by Bruce Robinson! There was no connection between the audience and the action on the screen, since they were driven apart by the 4th wall, in a movie theater. But in a place like this where this wall had long been shattered, Gonzo could be captured, displayed and lived, and if no one else was going to do it, Sid had to take that role.



The cartoon ended in bright flashing colors and Sid turned back around to the stage on which a rock band was now performing. Sid noticed the rapper that had just stood up there in front of the audience, now standing right beside him as part of the crowd. When he looked back to the stage there, while the lead singer made his way through the crowd before him.

When he returned to the stage and announced that they were about to perform their last song, promising some more true rock n' roll, Sid moved closer to the stage and began to dance ecstatically. He headbanged himself into a frenzy and when he stopped again he felt everything around him spinning.

The song ended and the queen of the evening returned to the stage proclaiming: "Go back there where the dance was and look at the penis tower. And whatever you hear it might come from the tip of the penis, it might come from somewhere else..."

Sid walked over to the other end of the meadow and looked up at the tallest of the radar towers. Right beneath the giant globe on its top, colorful lights appeared that began to move. Sid heard the people around him sigh in unity at this beautiful sight.

The air was filled with the waves of soft sounds that seemed to emanate from the tower and yet were all around them.

Sid's eyes filled with tears as he looked up at the tower he had looked at so many times, being transformed into something even more beautiful than before.

The music faded out, the lights disappeared and the dream ended.

And yet it continued.

The DJs began to play behind him but Sid realized that this 'play' could go on, wherever he would go, up here, or anywhere else.

It was up to him to let the midsummernight's dream continue. He just had to keep dreaming and not allow himself to wake up ever again. Sid knew that he had set out to just that many times before and had always ended up with a rude awakening. But he still had the audacity to believe that it could be done. And even if he should wake up again, he knew that he would dream again eventually...

He turned around and walked down the path through the forest of tents one last time. The guitar was still playing but the screen had turned black.



He got back onto the green carpet that lead him to the gates through which he left the radar station and entered into the magical forest that surrounded it. Maybe he would encounter a nymph that wanted to turn him back from a donkey into a narcissistic actor, but maybe he could stretch out the play a little longer.

He heard a song emanating from the tower [REDACTED] but he wouldn't allow it to wake him and just kept going through the forest.

The path before him got steeper and Sid decided to stop walking and start floating down instead. He stretched out his arms and closed his eyes, felt the wind brushing past his face, and when he opened them again he was at the foot of the mountain.

The sky above the treetops slowly began to light up and the air was filled with the songs of the birds that greeted a brand new day.

Maybe I could learn from them, Sid thought. Maybe that's what you have to do if you do wake up eventually, sing yourself back into a dream...

Dam began to whistle along as he returned to paved roads and entered into the colony of garden houses whom's inhabitants had complained about the noise earlier. Sid heard screams and cheers interrupt the music that was still audible and when he turned around he saw the globe of the highest tower one last time at which's top the lights reappeared to wave goodbye.

Sid walked into another short patch of woods but finally civilization embraced him again when the bridges of the subway station and the highway reappeared before him.

He walked up onto the empty platform and sat down to wait for his train, facing the forest. Over the waves of the cars that kept rushing by on the highway, he could still make out the vague sounds of the music that came from the mountain he could no longer see, but still feel within him.

He was alone on the platform, except for a young woman dressed in the uniform that identified her as a member of the train company that owned the subway system of the city. Sid gave her a friendly smile but she turned her tired eyes to the ground when she noticed it, and began to walk to the other side of the platform.

Another person appeared and approached Sid in order to ask with a thick foreign accent which train he would have to take in order to get back into the city. Sid got up and said: "That one", as the subway, that would bring him home, entered the station.

He got in, sat down on the structure at its end and looked out at the sunrise they were driving towards.



He got out at the second stop to change into the underground from where another train drove him further into the city.

They crowd inside was that strange mixture of people who still saw this as a late night and people who were already living the next morning. People who were returning from parties and people who were going to work. Dreamers and people who had awoken.

But the dreamers seemed to be on the verge of waking up and admitting that it was morning as they fell asleep one by one, only to get up again soon, to face a new day. And Sid was one of them. He felt how fatigue slowly flew through his veins and took control of his body. He realized that Sv. would pay him a visit in about 9 hours in order to write the letter to their landlord company, that they were planning to move out soon.

Sid told himself that he would have to let the dream of the blue room continue as well. He tried to bring himself to see this as a chance. A chance to house enthusiastic, new and interesting artists in his flat over the summer without the constraints of silence for they could no longer be evicted since they were moving out anyway...

He arrived at his destination close to the flat where Iggy Pop and David Bowie had once dreamed a similar dream and walked up the street to the building he still called his home.

As he arrived at his front door he looked up, trying to figure out which of the windows were the ones that belonged to his flat. It took him a while and he wondered what had happened to the banner he had once hung out of the window proclaiming: 'Your Blue Room.'

Had it dropped onto the balcony of the neighbors underneath, and if so, did they still have it?

"I studied art as well, but this just isn't the place for it!", he heard the words of the woman from downstairs ringing in his ears.

"You can't run a gallery up there!"

"Hell yes I can!", Sid thought as he ascended the stairs and opened the doors to his blue room.

This evening had shown him that it was possible to mix art and real life, and he would push it to the limits, as long as he could!

He sank down on the sofa and looked up at the blue ceiling above him.

'Dream on!', he thought and got up again to get a piece of paper onto which he wrote the 2 magic words, and a ladder that he ascended in order to glue the paper onto the ceiling above him.

It was all he could do. When he'd awake again in a few hours he would find out whether it was enough to let this midsummernight's dream continue or not...



Sid awoke a few hours later. He realized that he was still forming sentences in his head, trying to capture his surroundings in words. He looked around and realized that the room was actually empty and no longer filled with the people he had just seen walking around his bed as he was trying to block out the sun in order to sleep. He put on some music in order to keep himself from falling back into that twilight between waking life and sleep in which he had just been.

And then he saw it: 'Dream On!'; it said in big blue letters on the ceiling above him. The white paper was swimming in the ocean right above him and Sid vaguely remembered what purpose it had. He had to continue the performance of the *Midsummernight's Dream* that he had been a part of yesterday! He had to continue to act as the donkey, or the Gonzo reporter, or whatever creature he had morphed into yesterday! He had to continue to mix art and waking life in order to keep on dreaming!

But how? What could he do in order to achieve this goal? He had barely gotten any sleep this morning and feared that he might crash quite soon.

He considered taking a bath in the tub next door but then he realized that donkeys did not go into bathtubs to wash themselves!

Donkeys cooled down in lakes that lay hidden in the magical forests they roamed around in since they had been metamorphosed while practising a theater play at their outskirts.

So Sid decided to return to the magical forest in which he had been transformed yesterday. He got up and began to dress. When he went over into the bathroom and looked up after splashing his face with cold water he saw a strange creature grinning back from the mirror. Its skin was grey and it took Sid some time to realize that it was the ashes [REDACTED] he had smeared beneath his eyes yesterday.

He went on into the kitchen where he made himself a bread with honey to take with him, and gathered his things.

Then he left the flat and went towards the mystery train that would take him back into the magical forest!

**Well I woke up this morning
got the crossroads on my mind**

, the voice of Jim Morrison proclaimed in his headphones as he walked down the green island that was floating in a sea of concrete.



But then the batteries of his music machine died and Sid realized that he would have to do it like the birds and sing himself.

The people that waited on the platform beside him eyed him with suspicion, wondering where his hat was in which he collected their money. When the train arrived and Sid sat down on the structure at the end of the wagon the old couple that was sitting on the seats to his feet got up: "Then we'll sit down somewhere else! I can't do this with someone sitting up there behind me!", the old man said to his wife.

Sid smiled at them and gave them a tip of his straw hat.

He got out *The Rum Diary* and tried to reinsure himself in his behavior by reading the tales of a fellow freak.

But in the chapter that followed, Thompson described how his alter ego Paul Kemp bought a car and an apartment and settled down, still feeling the urge to move on to South America but at the same time just yearning for a secure place to call his own. He described that feeling of 'finally having gone over the hump', that Sid feared so much and so he stuffed the book back into his jacket and fled outside, when the train arrived at his destination.

He gave the old couple another friendly nod and the wife smiled back until she noticed the shocked look of her husband and turned her head away.

Sid walked down towards the lake and searched for an empty spot in the sun. He found it at the place he had been camping at earlier this week.

When he undressed two old naked women came out of the water, but they went over to their bikes, got dressed and rode off, leaving Sid on his own.

He ran into the water and a few quick strokes carried him into the middle of the lake where he stopped to float on his back, like he had done so many times before. He stared up into the blue ocean above and could almost see the sheet of paper proclaiming: "Dream On!", floating in it.

Sid got out of the water, dried himself with his little blue towel and sat down beneath a tree to eat breakfast. Then he began to sort his notes of the past night in order to find out if he really had a story! But before he could get to his writings of yesterday he had to work himself through various other pages and when he finally began to piece the midsummernight together the batteries of his laptop died and he was forced to postpone his work.

Instead he began to read *Fear and Loathing in America - The Brutal Odyssey of an Outlaw Journalist*, a collections of letters Dr. Thompson had written between 1968 and 1976.



Sid made his way through the foreword in which the renowned journalist David Halberstam claimed that he couldn't think of anything worse, than for a young journalist to try to imitate Hunter, since 'there's room for only one on the ark'.

Was *he* trying to imitate Dr. Thompson? Sid wondered and felt a sour taste in his mouth. He tried to convince himself that he wasn't trying to copy Thompson's writings but rather learn from it! He wasn't imitating but impersonating him, after all that was the role he had chosen to play on the stage of the world. And hadn't Hunter like many other great authors done just that? Tried to absorb the writing style of another master of the word, they admired. Sid remembered that he had read in the biography that Hunter had actually copied texts by F. Scott Fitzgerald, in order to absorb the cadence of his style, so that it would flow out of him naturally whenever he sat down in front of his typewriter.

In one of the following letters, he had written to an editor who had sent him suggestions on how to make his writings more publishable, Thompson declared: "I'm pretty well hooked on my own style - for good or for ill - and the chances of changing it now are pretty dim. A journalist into Gonzo is like a junkie or an egg-sucking dog; there is no known cure." Sid looked up from the book and wondered whether there was still time to reel back before he became stuck with a style of writing that was quite likely to earn him rejections from pretty much every publishing firm he could think of...

He put down the book and after staring out at the lake for some time his phone began to ring. It was his aunt who told him that his little cousins holidays had started and asked if he would visit them this summer to spend some time with him. Sid had already been considering going there since they lived close to the concert festival, which he had bought a ticket for a few months ago and which would take place next week.

They arranged that he would come over Tuesday morning and his aunt offered to drive him over to the festival.

After the phone call Sid packed his belongings back together and left for the subway in order to be home when Sv. would arrive in the early afternoon.

He spent the ride back into town reading another chapter of *The Rum Diary* in which Thompson aka Kemp continued to built himself a safe, comfortable life with the help of articles he wrote for a wealthy friend of his.

When Sid arrived at his destination he decided that he still had time to go down to the park in which the friendly men in the bushes sold their herbs.



He got out at the bridges, got himself a falafel and went on into the underground from where he got to the park of rabbits.

The men in the bushes were already waving at him when he entered the park. It was the old drill. They told him to wait in the bushes where a few other nervous guys were already standing around. A man with dreadlocks appeared out of the green beside him and asked him how much he wanted.

Sid said: "20", The guy said: "How bout 40?", and Sid agreed since he did not want to go through the hassle of refilling the content of the little baggy into an old newspaper the man had picked up from the ground.

When Sid handed over the money the man gave him a big smile and said: "That's one too many man!", handing him back a 10 Euro note.

On his way back to the subway Sid remembered how he had once been asked by someone if he wanted to buy weed, before reaching the corner he usually went to and how that person had taken his 50 Euros, told him to wait for the weed, and disappeared. When he had gone down to the Rastas at the corner afterwards and told them that he only had 10 bugs left since he had just been robbed, the men had given him a sympathetic look and asked: "Was he an Arab?"

Reluctantly Sid had replied: "Well yes but I mean come on..."

"Oh no no! Remember: Don't trust the Arabs! Come to us Africans! You can trust us man!"

Sid was ashamed to admit it that even before that incident he had always felt comfortable around black people and given a friendly smile to any African who passed him on the street.

When he passed an Arab on the other hand he tended to look to the ground since he had been beaten up about to years ago by one of the gangs that inhabited his street.

He hated himself for it but apparently he had gone through quite severe conditioning that was hard to reverse.

Sid got out of the subway beneath the bridges again and walked home where he was welcomed by Sv. whom T. had already let in. They talked a little and told each other what had happened since they had last seen each other. Their lives couldn't differ more. Sv. had gotten engaged to his girlfriend and was about to move over to Sid's former hometown where he had found a well-paid job and a nice house beside the river.

When they showed him around the flat to get his opinion on how much would have to be painted and redone in the various rooms he seemed a little shocked at what this place had turned into, but all he said was: "Well it used to be a bit more tidy and orderly around here..."

They signed the letter they would send off to the landlord company and after noting that they



would have to wait and see what would happen now, and a little more smalltalk, Sv. left again. Sid moved over into the blue room in order to watch *Withnail and I*, the first film by Bruce Robinson who would go on to return to directing after a pause of almost 20 years for *The Rum Diary*. The film began promising with Robinson's alter ego sitting on a chair, smoking a joint, with a troubled expression on his face as a saxophone softly played in the background. He was soon joined by another character named Withnail with whom he lived in a flatshare.

Sid slowly felt the tiredness approaching and expanding inside his aching body. When he saw the two worn out figures on the screen pacing around and mumbling incoherently he realized that this was the right time to watch this film. It displayed the rude awakening the two men had at the end of the 60s and Sid hoped that by watching it he might be able to reflect on his own situation and thereby postpone his own collapse.

But about 20 minutes into the film he realized that he would need more to keep him up and running. He dragged himself over to the kitchen in order to get some caffeine into his veins. On his way he passed Franz and found out that he was also going to the concert festival next week. "Man I'm completely sick!", he went on to say as Sid tried to gain control of the waterboiler and find a clean cup in the sink that was filled with dirty dishes, even though they had a dishwasher now.

"I just took antibiotics for the first time and now I feel like I'm on drugs! I just called a friend of mine and said: 'Hey so I have some apples and bananas, err I mean pears and bananas...so come over and lets eat some bananas...' and my brother just looked at me and asked me what the fuck I was talking about."

"Well, get well soon!", Sid said and left the kitchen. As he closed the door behind himself he heard Camille yell from the bathroom: "How the hell did I manage to fill the washing machine with so much toilet paper?"

He closed the doors behind himself to get away from those raving lunatics and continued to watch the film. Soon he realized that he might as well just open up his doors again and watch the scenery in his own home.

When the film ended with a moving rendition of Shakespeare by the proverbial failed actor Sid was deeply moved. The film was a worthy epitaph to that infamous decade Sid had heard so much about, yet never witnessed himself. What other chance did he have than to relive it through testimonies of the time like this film? Where did this urge to relive it stem from anyway? All in all it had been a terrific work of art and the director seemed like the right choice to adapt a Hunter S. Thompson novel. So what had gone wrong?



Sid did not know and he no longer had time to concern himself with the matter since he still had to work on his writings of last night. Once he finished he went straight to bed and fell asleep right away.

Sid awoke, opened his eyes and read: "Dream on!"

But how? Sid became more and more aware of the fateful double meaning of those words. You think you'll be able to fend of depression by telling yourself you're a character in a play? Keep on dreaming!

He had planned to tell Maria., with whom he was supposed to meet today, that he had written about the evening, and ask her if she knew any forum where they could publish his text. But what he had read of his writings about the night had mostly been incomprehensible gibberish! That might qualify it as Gonzo, but would anyone want to read it? Keep on dreaming.

Sid read the sentence on his ceiling again and tried to repeat it in his head without the ironic intonation.

Then he got up and dragged himself to the shower.

He still had to read that black folder filled with information about social insecurity until he'd meet with Maria. in a few hours to prepare the presentation. And after all he needed her to have a favorable view of him as a competent young man if he wanted her to help him publish his text. Sid suddenly felt like he was only seeing her as an object and no longer as his friend and hated himself for it.

Suddenly he forgot all about his self-loathing when Camille began hammering against the door. He got out of the shower, grabbed a towel and opened the door in front of which a desperate Camille screamed with joy and rushed past him to the toilet.

As he dressed she came into his room and asked him if she looked sick.

"Well your eyes are kind of red and all in all if one looks at you one might think your pretty ill, yeah! Why?"

"Well I have to go to the doctor to get myself a sick note but I'm afraid he'll realize I'm still high on all kinds of shit!"

Sid told her it was going to be fine, went to the kitchen table, grabbed the letter of termination they had signed yesterday and left for the post office in order to send it off.



But when he stood in front of the letterbox a strange fear took hold of him. Suddenly it all seemed so final. Why was he doing this again? As a precautionary measure since they were going to be evicted quite soon anyway? Because he needed to move on to some place where he would be able to breathe freely again?

He couldn't really make any of these reasons sound pressing enough to compete with the fact that he would be homeless come October. In addition to that, dropping the letter in now would set a gigantic avalanche of bureaucracy in motion that threatened to overwhelm him already. But there was no way back anymore and so he just dropped the letter in the box and went to the bus without looking back. As the double decker took him to university he read about the film he watched yesterday afternoon, in an online encyclopedia on his touchwriter.

Then he reached the film-campus, sat down in the lounge beside the lecture hall from which the soft sound of a piano emanated and began to read the black folder while trying to sort all the information in a power point presentation.

Maria. arrived half an hour late but with strawberries, bread and a big smile on her face and sat down on the sofa beside him.

She told him that she still felt as if she was in a dream-state and that she had slept 17 hours after the night had ended.

He turned to her and said: "Thank you for that dream! I really enjoyed it, it inspired me a lot!"

When he told her that he had written all night she asked if he could send it to her so she could read it.

"I'd love to! I'll just have to sort it all some more and type the things I scribbled into my little black book by hand..."

When he asked her if they maybe had some kind of forum in which they were publishing impressions of the night like photos, videos or texts, she replied that they only had the social network he despised so much.

"You know one artist asked me if he could upload photos of me, he had made in the forest earlier that night..."

She began to describe his technique which involved working in the dark and a long time of exposure and went on to say: "But they're partial nudes, and I really enjoyed making them in this context but I don't think I want them displayed in that forum!"

"I guess it's kind of the same problem like reading something in a book or on one of those electronic machines...it lacks a certain aura.", Sid replied. "I think the way an artwork is represented is really important for it's reception, and when you surf facebook you're probably doing several



other things as well and just don't have the proper attention span..."

"Yeah and then you'll have that comment section underneath and some random stranger can just write something vulgar about it and it will stick to it..."

So I guess I won't let him display my picture there. Maybe you could upload your text somewhere else and we put a link of it on there or something..."

"Yeah but it would still be the internet...but maybe I have to overcome my general disgust with that medium."

Sid went on to tell her of his night and revealed that his *midsummernight's dream* had almost turned into a nightmare at times

that choreography with the colorful lights on top of the tower with S's friend Cléo who choreographed the whole thing!"

the lights that had waved him goodbye from up there.

almost cried when I looked up at the tower', he thought.

They went on to prepare the psychology presentation they would have to hold in two weeks until it was time for Sid to head over to his filmcritique seminar.

They went to the room it would take place in, embraced before it, said goodbye and as Maria went down the hallway towards the exit Sid yelled: "Dream on!", after her.

She turned around gave him a warm smile and said: "You too!"

"I'll try.", Sid said quietly, more to himself, and went into the room where his professor and a small group of students were already waiting.

They talked about the film *West is West*, Sid had watched last week for the session today.

His professor had brought along a critique of the film he had found on the most widely read website in this country.

After they had read it they began their critique of the critique.

The text argued that the first film had been great while the sequel was not worthy of your time and after a few of his fellow students remarked that it was quite polemic and one dimensional their professor agreed and criticized that the linear narrative and its binary approach limited it's abilities to say anything substantial.

But apparently this kind of journalism was considered professional and standard by the majority of film-critics.

"It's usually almost like throwing a coin in the air and on whichever side the coin lands it's either



good or bad! But what if the coin lands in the water where you can't see it or if it lands on it's side? I've sometimes been criticized for not condemning or praising films enough but I believe that it doesn't happen very often that the coin lands on just one side...", their professor went on to say.

He finished the seminar with the words: "What I consider a good filmcritique is a text that takes the reader along through your own personal experience with the film."

As Sid heard those words he regained some hope that he might be able to make a living off his writing after all, since this was exactly what he had in mind!

He returned home in order to continue to sort his notes and to pack for his upcoming journey.

When he opened his mailbox he realized that he would always do this with the fear of finding a letter from their landlord company, from now on, informing them of some unpleasant surprises. But today he found a free newspaper instead. Even though he had written 'No Ad's please!' in big letters onto the mailbox, someone had dropped in an anniversary edition of the most popular and vicious form of gutter press. He wondered whether he should burn it right here on the spot but then he realized that that probably wouldn't go over too well with the neighbors and so he threw the paper into the nearby trash can instead.

He went on up and began to switch back and forth between packing and writing.

He started to type all the things he had written by hand in order to piece everything together in one continuous text.

When he had finally finished his work he tried to put it into the folder where he kept the rest of his notes, but suddenly his computer complained that it's name was too long and crashed. When it restarted Sid saw that everything he had just written was gone.

He looked outside and saw the grey sky slowly turning black and so he went over into the kitchen where T. and Ja. were sitting and talking about the flat T. had looked at today, to ask if they were going over to the *Drugstore* to eat.

They left the flat and walked up the freshly painted staircase that was already beginning to fill with new graffiti and got themselves some salad and noodles.

After eating Sid suddenly realized that he had forgotten to print the ticket for his train ride tomorrow, and so he said goodbye and went over to the closest internet cafe.

Then he returned home and continued to pack.

He was just wondering whether he should take his gas mask with him when he realized that he still needed his entrance ticket.



After placing it in one of the pockets of his backpack and making sure that he had the ticket for his trainride as well, he tried to tell himself that those were the most important things and that it wasn't that bad if he had forgotten to pack anything else. He went over to his bed and fell asleep almost immediately.

Sid was awoken by the sound of his alarm clock and stared at the words on the ceiling for a while.

But he had no time to 'dream on', he had a train to catch, and so he forced himself out of bed and into the shower.

As he hastily ate breakfast he checked his backpack for the most important items, then he swung it onto his back, grabbed his travelling hat and left for the bus.

As the double decker took him to the central station and he saw the city passing by the big window before him, that feeling of travelling took hold of him.

Even though he was going somewhere he had gone many times before, for now, he would soon go on further, somewhere completely new.

"It should be easy for you to dream on, you're going to the *Fusion* next week!", Maria. had said to him yesterday.

He just had to make sure to make the dream last during the time he would spend in that grey little town where everyone had long been harshly awoken by life.

He arrived at the crystal central station that shimmered in his 3-D glasses in a thousand rainbows, and took the escalator down, deep into it's bowels where his train was already waiting for him.

Sid got in, sat down beside a window and saw the station passing by outside.

After staring out the window for some time Sid got out his laptop and began to copy his hand written notes again.

He got so lost in his work that he almost missed his stop. When the electronic bell began to sound and a mechanical voice informed him that they were approaching the station where he would have to change, he hastily stuffed his laptop into his backpack and stormed outside.

The last few times he had undertaken this journey he had always been stuck at this station because a few minutes of delay made him miss the small green train he had to take to his aunt's town. The train company that operated on this route was a private one and they profited from



every passenger who would end up frustrated over the fact that you could not rely on the big, party state owned company that had a monopoly on almost every other part of the country. But this time you could rely on them and Sid made his change over into the small green wagon, where he sat down, facing into the direction they were going, looking forward to arriving at the ruinous central station of the small town.

He was picked up at the grey building that was covered with fascist slogans and dirty graffiti, by his grandfather and his little cousin Lu. who ran towards him as he got out of the train, and stretched out his arms, demanding to be thrown into the air.

They headed down to the building that was made up of precast concrete slabs, like so many houses in this part of the world. The facade had been covered with bright paint a few years after the reunification, but apart from that nothing had changed. Inside it was still as grey as before. Sid remembered a conversation he once had with a student of architecture and history who studied the connections between the way houses were built and the political systems they existed in. She had told him that jewish people had mostly hidden in buildings from the previous century during the Nazi regime, which erected houses with thin walls through which you could eavesdrop easily on your neighbors.

The totalitarian regime that preceded them apparently built with a similar concept. Today you might not be able to hear through the walls of modern buildings, but you could see through many of them, Sid realized as he thought of the central station of the city he had left a few hours ago.

His grandmother was already waiting for them with lunch and so they sat down at the small dinner table in the living room and began to eat.

He had to tell them of his life in the city and they listened in amazement.

“Do you also have so many foreigners where you live in Berlin?“, his grandfather asked.

“Well yeah, although by now most of them aren’t really foreigners anymore, they’ve been living there much longer than me, most of them in the second or third generation...”

His grandfather told him that he had read a book by a former politician that argued that Germany would end up being overrun by foreigners quite soon. He had found it in the local library and when Sid tried to poke holes in it’s argumentation he began to defend it: “Well it’s all based on statistics! And the man knows what he’s talking about. He was the senator of the interior in Berlin!”

Sid tried to tell him that he shouldn’t trust statistics too much and that the claims the book made were even less factual and set in stone since they were merely theories, based on those statistics.



“Well I am living in one of those neighborhoods where a lot of people have a different background and I feel quite comfortable!” Sid said and they switched the topic.

As they sat there in the small living room with the grey tapestry Sid thought of the summers he had spent in this town. He had to go on bike tours with his grandfather every day before noon, but apart from that he had spent most of his time inside, reading, trying to ignore the old man yelling at his wife because she had fallen victim to another salvo of advertising and special offers that had begun to flood their mailbox since the world around them had changed so drastically. His grandfather mostly cut those commercials up into rectangular pieces which he placed in the bathroom to use as toilet paper. A canny soul like his was not paired well with a wife that went through phases of reckless spending every once in a while.

Sid remembered how he had once overheard his parents talking about her, that she had been in some kind of hospital where she had beaten up the warden and tried to leave without permission. But throughout his childhood he had never really known the reason why she was hospitalized every once in a while. He only got his information second hand, from conversations he overheard, since no one spoke to him directly and he was too shy to ask.

It was only when he began his psychology studies two years ago that he stumbled across the term ‘manic depression’.

He found out that his grandmother had been suffering from it for many years and he began to wonder whether he might have it as well...

After lunch he and his little cousin went over to his home.

They sat down in the living room and Lu. showed him a few of his new toys, but then the big black screen caught his attention and he turned it on in order to watch cartoons.

Sid sat there, tired and worn out from his grandparents flat and just stared at the colorful pictures of Japanese monsters that inhabited the screen and caught Lu. in their spell. Sid’s gaze wandered across the room and fell onto a photo of Lu.’s father in a shiny brand new picture frame. Sid remembered his last visit when his infant cousin Li. who had just learned to stand on two feet walked up to it, took it and began to run across the room until she fell down and the frame shattered on the floor next to her.

Her father had died almost a year ago by now due to a sudden heart attack at the age of 40. Before her brain developed it’s long term memory. She would only remember her father from pictures like the one she had broken.

Lu. on the other hand had a very strong memory of his father. But since he had dyed he had begun to loose himself in the colorful dream worlds the screen delivered to him every day. He



had not cried once about it, at least to his mothers knowledge and talked about it in a way as if he did not really mind. But Sid remembered how he had shown him a picture he had to draw in his religion class of Noha's arch and when Sid asked him to tell him about it he told him that God made it rain until everyone drowned.

"Who is this God?", Sid asked and Lu. said: "He lives up in the sky, but I don't believe in him anymore. He let my father die and for that I now don't believe in him anymore!"

Finally his aunt K. came home and after asking her son why he was hanging in front of the screen again she gave Sid a short embrace.

"Good that you finally come visit us again, even if it's just for such a short time!"

They drove over to the kindergarten across the street that was housed in a little building surrounded by grey concrete, to pick up Li.. She was sick and a little scared of the tall dark stranger that had come along to take her home.

"Who's that? It's your cousin Sid! Well she doesn't remember you anymore from the last time you were here.", K. said and Sid began to hear the cry of his conscience, complaining that he left his family alone in this hopeless, grey town.

But on their way back they dropped by the house they had began to renovate shortly before his uncle's death.

K. showed him around the bright colorful rooms and told him they had considered selling the house for some time, but eventually decided to move in this summer.

"This is all too big for just the 3 of us...", she kept repeating as she showed him around.

They drove back to the small flat they still called their home. Lu. went out to play soccer with the neighbors child and Sid and K. sat down in the kitchen.

K. asked him what he would do this summer, hinting again at the possibility that he'd come back to visit them.

"Or are you going to travel?"

"Maybe", Sid answered and told her that he had been camping a few times in the last few weeks.

"Alone?", K. asked and went on to say, "I used to be alone quite often as well when I was younger, and I didn't really mind. But you get used to being with someone and in the end it's always better than being alone."

Lu. returned and they began to play with the little plastic bricks Sid had spent most of his childhood with.



After dinner K. asked if he could show them the recording of his theater performance and got out her laptop into which he plugged in his flash drive with the film.

But his grandmother was still busy in the kitchen and so Lu. began to browse through the other video files on the computer.

After watching a film of his sister shortly after her birth he found a film of a day they had spent on a frozen lake 2 years ago. When his father had still been alive.

"I can't watch this!"; K. exclaimed and went back into the kitchen. But after a few minutes she returned and sat down next to her son who watched himself gliding on the ice next to his father, with a smile on his face that was pure, unbroken by mourning or sadness.

Sid could see the reflection of his aunt's face in the screen. As she watched herself repeating all those foolish jokes you make when you find yourself in a sudden situation of happiness, she looked miserable and bitter and it almost drove Sid to tears.

"I mostly filmed Lu., if I'd only known, then I would have filmed more of him!"; K. lamented and when she heard her former self proclaim: 'I'm capturing this for eternity!', she let out a silent sigh of sorrow.

The video ended with the fleeting figures of Lu. and his father above their reflections on the ice, going off towards the horizon slowly getting more and more out of focus.

"Now show us your play already!"; K. demanded and so Sid pressed play and the screen displayed their performance again.

His little cousin and his grandmother were somewhat confused by the actions on the screen and Lu. soon began to yawn and asked how much longer the play would last, and when he would finally be able to use the laptop to watch an animated series that had been developed on the basis of a movie from the last century, in order to reel in a new generation of consumers for the various toys and other paraphernalia of it's universe. Ironically the films had dealt quite a lot with death and father figures...

When his mother finally told Lu. to turn off the machine and go to sleep he asked Sid whether he would go to bed with him. Sid had planned to use some time of the night to write or maybe even escape these walls and go for a walk down to the nearby lake. But the whole day had worn him out so much that he simply agreed and went along to brush his teeth.

He read Lu. a few good night stories in picture-books with little poems next to the images of gnomes and elves.

He felt sick again and began



to choke. Lu. gave him an irritated look and said: "Come on, keep on reading." Sid finished the story, kissed his little cousin good night and lay down on the floor at his footend. He felt like crying himself to sleep, [REDACTED] over his dead uncle, over his ill grandmother... But as he starred outside into the grey clouds that slowly turned black he could not even get himself to loose a single tear. He just lay there for an indefinite time, listening to his little cousin breathing and shivering, shaken by his dreams every once in a while. Finally Sid got out his touchwriter and began to write:

The little boy suddenly found himself in some strange kind of forest, the edges of his field of vision blurry, containing the constant possibility to morph into somewhere completely different. Suddenly he realized he was chasing something, trying to find something all along. The environment suddenly felt strangely familiar and he was sure he would finally find what he was looking for all this time, here. There was a corner behind which it should be, always had been. His heart filled with joy as he passed around it, he started running, reached out his arms...

But there was nothing there. He had been so sure, it should have been there, it had always been there... The setting was familiar, but something was drastically different and somehow that made him endlessly sad and angry at the same time. Suddenly he heard a sound behind his back and as he turned around he had the feeling he had seen something scurrying away. He hesitantly followed the movement back into the deep blue of the forest. He saw the movement again, chased after it through some thick bushes and found himself on a plain field. In front of him was a little colorful creature that seemed vaguely familiar from some Japanese cartoon world. Was this what he had been chasing all this time? The creature came closer and looked at him with its big eyes. Slowly the little boy approached it and extended his arm towards it. Just as he was about to touch it, a powerful grumbling sound arose from it, the ground beneath him seemed to begin to shake and the creature started to grow and morph before him. His big friendly eyes turned into little red slits and claws and teeth started to appear. With a loud roar the creature jumped forward and seemed to try to grab the little boy who turned around and started running back into the forest, back to that corner behind which there was supposed to be help. But he knew he was all alone, lost in this dark twisted world. His fear attracted more of the giant creatures, they seemed to come from all sides, above and beneath trying to capture him with



their claws to rip him apart. And there was nobody that could help him. At strangely slow speed one of the creatures metamorphosed in front of him towering higher and higher above while opening its jaws, bearing its sharp deadly teeth. The little boy pressed his eyelids shut as hard as he could and started screaming, but somehow he knew that there was no one there who could hear him...

When he awoke he was still screaming but as he recognized the familiar surroundings of his bedroom lit up by the morning sun he calmed down. He noticed his grumbling stomach and went into the kitchen for his breakfast. His heart jumped with joy as he saw his mother already preparing his favorite cereal for him.

When he noticed the tears in her eyes his little mind shortly felt confused until he remembered that his father had died a few days ago. 'That must be the reason why mama is crying', he thought. Then his thought process was disrupted when his mother extended her hand and handed him a little plastic figurine she had fished out of the cornflakes box... A character from an American cartoon he loved so much. He couldn't wait to show this to his friends at school! What else would await him at school today? Hopefully they would learn some more about dinosaurs, that was really exiting...

Afterwards Sid fell asleep, facing the monsters of his own mind in his dreams.

He found himself in a strange room that seemed to be made up mostly of plastic. He had come out of the shower and was wearing nothing but a towel. When he turned around a girl followed him into the room. She was quite young although her age seemed to differ whenever he looked at her.

As he sat down on her plastic bed to get dressed she began to undress and suddenly she jumped up onto him, completely naked and began to kiss him. But her lips felt wet and as if they had been in water for too long, and wrinkled just like her fingers that grabbed his back.

Sid felt sick as she pressed her cold flaps of meat against his lips and water began to flow out of them.

Her face began to turn green and suddenly she transformed into a giant frog that was trying to devour him...



Sid opened his eyes and stared up a plastic moon on a small blue cloud with stars that was hanging above him. After a few moments he realized that it was the lamp in his little cousins room, who was still sleeping in the bed beside him, still sounding as if he was going through nightmares as well, sighing and shaking in his sleep every once in a while.

'How do you dream on when all your dreams turn into nightmares?,' Sid wondered.

Finally one of the shivers that shook his little cousin was too strong and he awoke from his dreams with a suppressed, silent scream.

But when he noticed Sid lying on the floor beside him, a smile appeared on his face and he asked if they could play.

Sid told him they should have some breakfast first and so they went over into the kitchen and toasted some bread.

Sid put on music on his laptop and his little cousin began to dance around the flat.

But then Sid took a quick shower and when he came back out Lu. was glued to a screen again, this time that of his little game machine on which he tried to kill as many 'bad guys' as possible. He stared at it with a grim and almost hypnotized look on his face as sounds of explosions and screams came out of it.

Sid tried to lure him away by putting on the music video of an American rock band he had once shown to him when he was about 4 years old and wanted to know if he had any cars on his computer. Sid had found the film that showed a taxi driver kidnapping the lead singer to drive him around the city at full speed and dance manically in a tunnel.

Since then Lu. always asked for it whenever Sid visited him and he watched it over and over again, singing along in a made up language and dancing through the room.

Sid could sense that there was a musical vein in the young boy. He remembered a family visit they had once at a small rural residence to celebrate his parents marriage, where Lu. had found a piano in the main hall, on which he had begun to play. He had never even seen a piano before and did not have any kind of musical training, but the music simply flew out of him and guided his fingers on the white ebony. It sounded like a professional work of Free jazz and Lu. sat there completely lost in the music, in total concentration. His mother had recorded a part of it and Sid still listened to it from time to time. His favorite part was a moment towards the end when you could hear their grandfather interrupting him to tell him how well he played. Lu. had begun to yell at him, enraged and frustrated that he had ripped him out of his flow!

Sid sometimes wondered to what extent they were really related, but this incident made him relate to the little child like never before.



Unfortunately a piano was expensive and there weren't many possibilities of learning how to play in the small town he lived in.

Still, Sid was determined to keep his creative side alive and so he showed Lu. how to headbang and they turned in circles to the music until they tumbled through the flat and fell to the floor in exhaustion. After listening to the song for the fifth time Sid convinced Lu. that they should go outside and ride bikes down to the lake.

Lu. got dressed and they went to the little garden shed to get the bikes which they rode around in the nearby woods for a while where they found a meadow with horses. As they fed them, Lu. touched the newly built fence with curious eyes and before Sid could say anything he had gotten an electric shock. He was too surprised to cry, so he just said: "I'm not doing that again!"; and they rode on to the little boat-shed his father had remade a few years ago into a comfortable little holiday house.

The sky was still grey. The water seemed inviting, though, and so they went swimming. Sid lay back to float in silence and stare into the sky. But his little cousin came paddling towards him and demanded his attention.

After getting out and drying themselves they rode back up the hill to the flat where they ate a warm soup to warm up again. When Sid began to fill the dishwasher with the plates they had used Lu. ran over into the living room and when Sid was done cleaning up he found him there, sitting on the floor, staring at the screen again.

But when the doorbell rang and his friend Mi. asked if he wanted to play, they all sat down in the living room to play a card game he had bought because it was sold with the characters from the animated series he had just been watching. For a while everything went quite well, but when Lu. continued to loose he started to get upset.

His little sister came running into the room and began to throw the cards into the air. Lu. screamed, Mi. screamed., Li. screamed and K. yelled over from the kitchen.

Sid tried to get the two boys over into Lu.'s room in order to cool down the situation.

But when they went on to play with action figures that were also based on the series Lu. and Mi. got into an argument over which of their figures was more powerful and Lu. suddenly got angry and began to punch his perplexed friend who started to cry and ran home.

Lu. looked up at Sid with tearfilled eyes and said: "He's stupid!" and continued to play with the dark father figure in his hand.

K. called them over for dinner and after eating something and preparing himself a few sandwiches to take with him he gathered all his things and said goodbye to his grandmother and Li.



who was no longer scared by him and silently said "Snid", when he kissed her on the cheek. Then he followed Lu. to his aunt's car and she drove him down to the former air base in the neighbor town where the festival was supposed to take place. Shortly after K. exclaimed "3 more kilometers!"; they came to a hold at the end of a long row of cars.

After considering their options for a few moments Sid said goodbye, thanked them for the ride and jumped out to make the rest of the road by walking.

He passed the line of waiting cars that filled the air with fumes and a diverse range of music. After a few minutes of walking a fence appeared to his left behind which the tent filled hills of the festival area rose into the sky.

But with every step Sid took towards it's entrance his heart sank lower.

Sid looked up into the grey sky above

Sid was about to collapse under the weight of his backpack and dark thoughts when he saw two girls dressed in orange standing beside the road. He walked up to them and asked for the shortest way for people who arrived on foot and they pointed toward a small metal bridge over which a colony of backpackers walked over onto the fenced-in realms of freedom.

He followed them and arrived at a small station where another group of orange people took his ticket and gave him a bracelet around the wrist in exchange.

One of them handed him a small booklet and a plastic bag and said: "Enjoy!"

Sid took a look at the plan that was printed on the back of the schedule and began to walk down the paths that all bore the names of communist figureheads.

He was overcome by a terrible sense of indecision, unable to make up his mind he wandered through the towns of tents and caravans that stretched out all around.

He needed to find some kind of shelter, he told himself, and began to look for a tree.

His search took him across the entire area but even though he began to sweat and his back began to hurt from the weight it had to carry, he did not give up until he finally found a place beneath a small pine where he erected his tent.

He set up his things inside, sat down in its entrance and got out his pipe.



After taking a small hit he leaned back and looked up at the translucent rectangle in the ceiling above him. Through it he could see the branches of the tree that shielded him off from the sky that was still cloudy and grey.
He got out his little black book and began to write:

*This window into the outside world,
today it shows a tree,
it means home for me,
the homeless traveller
who does everything to flee.
I also see
the promise
of an ever changing neighborhood
that's waiting to be explored
whatever I will find
I will write
and I know it will be good
for my restless, haunted mind*

Sid got up and opened the fabric doors of his tent, like so many times before, in order to walk out towards the gates that lay before him.
But before he closed the tent behind himself he took up the mask he had brought along to disguise himself in order to be safe from any vultures that might inhabit the air of these parts of the world. His plan was ingenious; They would not pursue him if he looked like a bird himself. He put on the black birds face he had made with S. for a short film and began his journey. His precaution had not been in vein, because after just a few steps he encountered a giant white, winged creature that hovered in the air beside him and gave off a soft glow.
Sid ducked beneath his hood anyway, but when he approached it he realized that it was just a firefly, although admittedly a gigantic one.
He passed a big yellow tepee and walked onto a meadow filled with tents and baldachins. When he approached a big tent at the other side a song reached his ear and as he recognized it he let out the hissing croak he had developed for his character in the short film.



He noticed how a few bystanders turned around in shock over his animalistic behavior and appearance. Sid raised his fist and continued his journey as he thought to himself: 'Freak Power!' He walked out onto another meadow and sat down in front of a giant wooden wheel where he got out his little black book:

*Death walks among us
and yet we laugh
because he is locked
on a boat behind bars
and makes us believe
that we are the ones who pull the strings*

Sid was ripped out of his thoughts by the sound of a bell and when he looked up he stared into the empty eye-sockets of a skeleton. He walked over to a nearby rope and pulled it. An old British man appeared next to him and explained they needed to work together in order to set the wheel in motion and make an animated film, melting all the skeletons that were attached to the wheel into one that moved. But Sid soon gave up since he had realized some time ago, that he did not possess the necessary social skills in order to make a movie. He walked up to the foot of a mountain which he began to ascend. At its peak he sat down next to a metal rocket someone had erected here and labeled 'symbol'. He looked out past a sea of tents and caravans into the woods that surrounded them and in which he used to roam around with his grandfather telling him: "You know, not everything used to be bad back in the east. Some things are better now, but a lot of things are worse..." But by now he seemed to have fallen victim to another belief system that seemed like the complete opposite at first glance. 'If you turn left long enough you'll end up back to the right eventually', Sid thought as he looked at the plan of the short term town they had erected on the airbase his great grandfather had apparently served on for some time. The face of Lenin stared back at Sid, although his eyes were covered by Cyrillic letters. He folded the plan open and tried to locate himself within the soviet names. But soon he gave up and just walked on down the path at the other side of the hill.



He walked through a gate of books and toward the tent that lay behind it where a couple of asian musicians intoxicated the crowd before them with the sounds from their strange wooden instruments.

When the song ended Sid strolled through the orient a little while longer until he found a small winding tower that housed a library.

Sid looked up at the bookshelf and a title caught his attention: *No Man is an Island*.

He sat down and got out his little black book:

*Shall I read yet another author
trying to convince me
that I would not be
better off alone?
The last ones have failed miserably
and I can't see
why this one should be
any different*

He opened the book anyway and when he had just begun to read a chapter full of legal jargon a girl to his right suddenly started to talk to him and asked what he had picked.

Sid showed her the book and when she asked whether he knew the author he said: "Not really, but the title just jumped at me. It's out of a poem Hemingway based a book on as well..."

"You know *About a Boy*? It's also in that film I think..."

"Yeah, I actually read that book and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* back to back in order to compare what the two had to say about isolation and connectivity. The results were somewhat inconclusive..."

Sid remembered how much the ending of the first book had upset him, which seemed to claim that all was well since the main characters 'acted appropriate to their age' now and no longer sang out loud in public involuntarily for example...

He had not finished *For Whom the Bell Tolls* since it had disappeared somewhere in the depths of his room one day, and he would probably not read the end of this book either...

A guy to his right suddenly handed him a joint and Sid thankfully took a hit. Before he turned back to the young man he pulled down his mask.



The man gave out a surprised scream when he noticed the change in his face, then he looked up at the bars of the ceiling around them.

"Oh this is your cage, eh!?", he yelled out and his face lit up.

"You can't leave?", he said and gave him a sympathetic look.

"Well maybe I don't want to leave", the crow said in a desperate attempt to convince himself even more as the man.

"I have all the books I need..."

He knew he needed the kiss of a virgin in order to turn back into a prince, but unfortunately he had been banned to a land where every girl he met had long lost her innocence.

The time for fairytales was over and the prince was doomed to a life behind bars.

The man disappeared and was followed by another visitor who repeated the ceremony and asked: "Do you want a hit?"

The prince took his offering as well and inhaled the herb that was supposed to make him forget the bars that surrounded him, and make him believe he was free.

But the medicine had long lost its potency and the bars around the prince remained visible since he knew that they were not erected in one particular spot but surrounded him wherever he went, protecting him from his fellow human beings, but also disconnecting him from them.

But maybe the book on his lap bore the answer.

Maybe it could implant illusions in his head that were strong enough to make the bars translucent, or maybe even make them disappear completely?

'No man is an island'...

Maybe that meant that he should reach out to the mainland he was supposedly a part of?

Sid got out his phone and decided to call Phoebe who had called him earlier and told him they should meet after midnight when her work was done, that she had to take care of, in order to get her ticket.

But when he reached her their inability to orient themselves in these strange surroundings got the best of them.

Phoebe told him she would call him back once she had found herself and hung up.

The next visitor offered the crow some herbs, but the prince refused and asked for information on their location instead. He had already gotten used to orienting around communist symbols and names after living in Berlin for 2 years, this task was actually quite simple and common. But on these grounds there were no longer streetsigns or streets and so he had to rely on his plan instead.



The man next to him pointed at a big white circle in the northeast and proclaimed: "We're in Neuland! Over there is the movie theater and if you follow that way you will return to the meadow!"

Sid thanked the man and informed Phoebe of his location. Then he took off his mask and looked at it for a while. The film for which they had made it had long been considered a failure by him, since it had not reached its main goal of getting his friend into a school for cameramen.

But now as he put on the mask again he realized that it had other benefits...

"Religion has some critical points, but it also has its benefits..."; the man next to him said.

"Well I disagree!", another man proclaimed and the prince fled the tower as his friend called him and told him to meet her in the sand before the stage.

He greeted her and the young man she was with.

They began to talk and soon Sid got lost in their words.

He tried to get them to walk around for a while in order to be able to continue observing the scene, as it was his duty as a Gonzo-reporter.

When they finally came to a hold again Sid ascended the green structure they had sat down upon and lay down on the throne at its top.

But as he sat there the king began to feel sad since his encounter with Phoebe had made him realize that even in this kingdom of equality not everyone was happy without limitations.

Phoebe had told him that she had to work quite a lot in order to get in and that she did not enjoy it that much...

Another illusion was shattered and the prince ascended the throne that had become just another empty symbol.

He asked them whether their little group should walk on to the next possibility to sit.

On the way Phoebe said: "I wonder whether the crowd will be different, now that they changed the way to get a ticket."

"Yeah, what about those who just aren't able to make a long term commitment like that?", the man that accompanied her and whom's name Sid didn't recall said.

"Well there are other ways to get in, and if it's jumping the fence..."; Sid said, but he wondered what labels you could use to describe the people who had gathered here for the next few days.

"I like the fact that people here take less alcohol and more other drugs. It makes them friendlier..."; Phoebe said as they ascended the hill on which's top the rocket had landed. But when Sid put on his mask and began to poke at the unicorn-shaped balloon next to him the drunk man that held it yelled at him and gave him a threatening look.



Luckily he was no longer able to get up and so Sid turned around again and said to Phoebe: "Well maybe the crowd *is* different this year!"

They sat down but just a few minutes later Sid proclaimed: "I have to return to the library!"

"Do you want to go on your own?"

"No come along if you want to!", the prince said, remembering the words that made him forget the prison bars of his all too human condition. When they passed a music machine around which a small crowd began to form they were drawn in as well and began to loose themselves in the sounds for a while...

But even as he danced, slowly loosing himself in the crowd around him, he was still terribly aware that he was after all just a crow in a golden cage.

"All I do is reminisce our love", the voice in the music proclaimed and Sid just had to move. After getting lost for a while they finally returned to the cage of books. But when he put down his mask and declared that the crow was back in it's cage Phoebe said: "You can leave this cage, though!"

They finally went off and after saying goodbye Sid returned to writing.

"It really is a fusion", the girl in the group next to him said. They talked about how they had gotten here and seemed as if they had joined some kind of cult he had become a part of as well.

The three people began to develop more than just friendship with each other and Sid had to get out of this culture of promiscuity

He pulled down the crows mask and told himself:

"That was a different chapter! You are a crow now!", and he went out not thinking about the past anymore, apart from the vague memory that you shouldn't kiss frogs since they might transform into something unpleasant, but just living in the present...


He sat down in the grass and got out his touchwirter.

I'll begin every chapter
with a poem
that way there will be no more concern
about ending and beginning
maybe that trick might be winning
praise and interest from the people
Who I want to feed me



cloth me
pay for the way I live on this earth
I give them the structure
I want them to give me

Sid wrote as he walked toward his tent. But on his way he passed a deep voice that called out to him to tell him a story.
He sat down behind a wall filled with eyes that seemed to jump out of it.
It reminded him of his friend Y. who seemed like he had found himself over in the states. At least he kept repeating to him that he didn't suffer from all that pressure that seemed to weigh on his shoulders and acted as if he wanted to persuade him to do all the things he was doing.
Then he turned his touchwriter back on in order to take control of the situation by writing poetry:


how can this all be
you won't believe me
the things I see
the things I hear from the tents around me
'That sounds really bad in German'
the girl beside me proclaimed
'Don't call me Schlampe!'
then laughter
that makes me realize
that the beast with two backs
is not next door
I get up from the floor
of my tent
and walk over to the shower
that's housed beside a giant tower

Suddenly he realized that this was going to be a hard trip, there was no other way to phrase it. . .
The grey fog was closing in on him.



"There is nothing that can get you higher than sitting at a desk, writing," Hunter S. Thompson had once proclaimed and Sid realized that his trip had lasted several weeks now...

He arrived at his tent in exhaustion and lay down on his sleeping bag to look up at the opening above him.

Sid realized he had no option left but to study the works of Hunter S. Thompson in order to find the answer.

In the editors note to *Fear and Loathing in America*, he read the words Clarence Darrow had uttered almost a hundred year ago that proclaimed that new ideas always came from outcasts.

Sid remembered what he had just heard a man proclaim a few hours earlier in the library, holding a book by Linus Pauling: "They all proceeded what the majority has now realized as a whole! I mean this guy practically prepared what we now know as nuclear disarmament..."

The editors note ended with another cautionary note that you should not try to imitate what followed, just like a disclaimer before a freakshow on TV. Dr. Thompson's own note did not contain any of these warnings, as if it was too late anyway, at that point, as if you had already too many pages to return and listen to people who told you to beware...

Sid was hooked and yet able to put down the book, knowing he would pick it up again quite soon.

He took off his jacket and after eating half a banana for breakfast he went to sleep.

It took him some time to fall asleep but finally he must have succeeded and drifted off into a dream because he awoke a few hours later from a short but revitalizing sleep.

His bowels were in an uproar from the sleep deprivation though, and so he followed his nose to the nearest colony of plastic cubicles in which he sat down and relieved himself after asking a girl that stood in front of it for some of her toilet paper. Afterwards he returned to the tent to get his second breakfast. While eating the sandwich he had prepared yesterday Sid studied the plan to find out what was being offered to the inhabitants of the tent town today.

But the only name he recognized was one from which he told himself to stay away. [REDACTED]

Soon he gave up on trying to plan his days here and went over to sorting his notes of the past night. The absence of internet made it impossible to get everything saved on the laptop that wouldn't really be save either. The fact that the mobile communication network had broken



down also ruined his plans to send Maria. his article on the midsummernight's dream. In the end he told himself to give up and returned to the cage filled with books in order to make the bars that surrounded him all the time at least visible and thereby graspable.

After packing some of his things back into the backpack he put on his mask and began his journey.

He walked through many strange lands until he finally found the entrance to the orient where pillars of books guided his way to the golden cage of words. Before ascending the tower he went over to the revolving mirror in front of which he had left *No Man is an Island*, yesterday night when a strange man had slapped his cheek with a glove and challenged him to a duel. When Sid had told him to choose his weapons the man had proposed a fight with the googly eyes that lay around.

After his defeat Sid had forgotten all about his book and when he returned early the next morning he had not found it where he had left it.

But when he approached the scene now he found the book hanging from a string in a tree right before him, waiting to be picked like a ripe fruit. It took some effort to get it down and a few pages remained on the tree, but finally he took the book with him, to the top of the library where he sat down beneath the bars of his cage and continued to read of a man who was locked in a 'prison of his choice'.

After reading for a while he looked up and let his gaze wander over the scenery around him. It landed on the pile of books that had finally collapsed completely after people had kept throwing it down and reerecting it, last night. A girl climbed up next to him and he greeted her with one of his hissing croaks, she seemed to interpret it as his way of defending his territory and quickly went down again. Sid returned to the book that still had not delivered any real insight on the question whether he should remain an island or not.

After a few more pages he went down again and after consulting the plan in his backpocket he decided to go over to Kalkutta where a certain Robert Etzold was supposed to appear soon. After a quick stop at the quarters with the intense smell he found the country which he had always thought lay much further away.

He sat down in a boat and listened to the soft music that filled the air around him. Then he got out his phone and wrote Franz who was supposed to arrive today:

Hi, have you entered the realms of the **Fusion** as well by now?

If so, shall we plan to let our paths cross or shall we let fate decide if we meet?



Once again he wondered whether he really considered Franz his friend or if he was merely a person who lived in the same flat as him. He remembered how he had told him that he was going to the *Fusion* as well, about a week ago: "I'm sure we'll meet eventually!"

Sid had asked with a concerned look: "You think that you can find people you know so easily?" "Yeah sure!" Franz had answered, but when Sid had gone on to ask [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he was told: "No! I don't think you meet anyone you don't want to meet..." Sid told himself to believe his seemingly ironic and contradictory claims and went on to discover more of Kalkutta, this country he had heard so little about...

He walked over to a little metal structure that looked like a stranded submarine. Inside he found a few fishes floating in the air and a device that allowed him to take a look above the surface. But when he looked in he saw a shattered mirror, reflecting scenes from many different places at once. Sid sat down in the captain's chair and the vibration of his phone informed him that he had gotten a reply from Franz who wrote that he had a new phone and therefore no idea who he was.

But if you tell me who you are we should definitely meet as soon as my bus arrives!

Sid wrote him who he was and asked where he would be. Then he got up and walked over into the sun that had come out of the grey, to dance.

Soon it got so hot that he was able to take off his shirt and he decided to return to his tent to get rid of his excess cloths there.

When he reached his temporary home he dropped off his jacket and quickly got out his laptop in order to save the notes he had made.

But soon the machine began to complain about battery shortage and so Sid grabbed a banana and went back out in the direction of the giant firefly before him. He returned to the forest of words where he noticed with amazement that the pile of books was being rebuilt. He sat down in the library and after consulting his plan he decided it was time to go to the casino.

But instead he ended up back in Kalkutta when the music hypnotized him and persuaded him to dance for a while until he regained the strength to move on. He passed a gigantic metal fish and when he was confronted with a staircase that lead up a hill before him, he followed it to the peak.



He looked down on the scenery that unfolded below him, but soon he gave up on trying to locate the casino and after simply staring at the horizon for a while he went on to stroll through his surroundings.

He walked across an unsteady bridge and when he looked up he noticed a strange metallic worm was following his every move.

When he finally found the casino the stage was deserted and so he went up a few stairs and sat down on a school bench.

[REDACTED]

'You don't meet anyone you don't want to meet'... But what if a part of you desperately yearned for someone he had told himself to avoid. What if that part took control and dragged him over to the performance of [REDACTED] electronic music collective?

As if he was driven by remote control he got out the plan from his backpocket to check when and where they were playing.

But he couldn't find them in the giant sea of names on the paper before him and suddenly the teacher that had arrived in front of the class demanded his attention.

"That chapter is over!", Sid told himself and took up the small chalkboard before him to copy the ABC.

Then music began to play that lured him downstairs again where he danced for a while.

But soon he realized that he still felt like an island and decided to return to his cage.

On the way he passed the movie theater and when he noticed that it was the blue hour he threw that plan over board and went inside the hangar instead where he watched a film about a boy with whom he immediately identified when he began talking to himself about his desperate search for love.

But when he seemed to get the girl Sid just felt disgusted and annoyed. It did not last for long though because people began to beat him up in front of the girl he had chosen to be his savior.

When the young man on the screen began to cry the people in the hangar behind Sid began to laugh and he felt as if they were laughing at his tears...

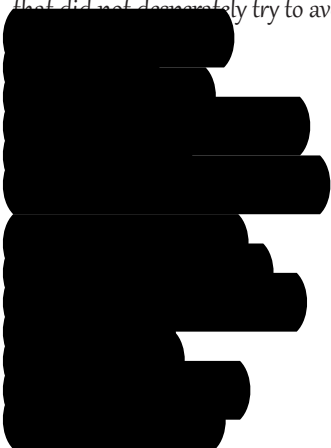
In the end he got the girl and Sid ran out of the theater in misery.

Sid realized that he had lost his pencil and so he bought himself a new pen at a small store next to the hangar. Afterwards he put on his mask again and returned to his cage. He grabbed the book he had stored up in his prison and desperately searched for answers in it. He needed to connect, he needed to find someone to save him...



The crow took off his shirt again and used his new pen to write on it's front: "Kiss me, I am a cursed prince..."
He put on the shirt that now bore big black letters on it's front and got out his little black book:

*Someone offered the prince some bread
it wasn't bad
although his real needs
were not fed
by it.
He wondered if he should return to his throne
or maybe the tent he now called his home
but he knew in those places he would feel
even more alone
than now
he feared his heart
might turn to stone.
He knew there was another cursed being
that did not desperately try to avoid him*



'I need to end this chapter!', the prince told himself and turned toward the girl to his left, who had given him the bread, in order to give her a poem in turn.

But she was gone. Instead the back of a different blond woman faced him when he asked:

"Would you trade some of that herb you are smoking there for a few scribbled lines on this paper?"

The young woman and her friend looked at him, perplexed by his masked face and he continued:

"I'd like to propose a deal: You give me a hit from your joint and 3 words and I give you a poem containing these 3 words in return!"

"Drunk, fucking and bitches!", the girl said and Sid went to work:

He was drunk again
lost inside the bar
'To the fallen star'
and he caught himself starrng out the window
where he started watching
two female dogs fucking
in the street
as he realized that they were both bitches
he wondered if animals
could be lesbians too
like those famous penguins in the zoo
were supposedly gay
although some claimed
that they were just trained
by people that wanted to sell
their devious lifestyle

He handed them the poem and walked out the library in order to find more people who could inspire him.

Sid sat down again in front of the nearby stage where Indian sounds lured him in. He meditated for a while, then he went further until he came to rest at a fire. But ultimately he knew he had to return to his cage.



First he had to go over to the movie theater though, to do his duty and report on the films that were being displayed in this strange country outside time. Sid watched the crew of some American spaceship overdubbed with dialogue about eviction and realized: It was crass propaganda! After they were informed by their boss that their company was selling their ship, Spock told them about a forgotten epoch. Sid needed to write:

lets change the past

*the sirens sang
'I am chief of all things'
but they disguised it as a meditation
and so the crowd just took it
listened without understanding the words
'ministers and governments are all the enemy'
they silently whispered
and suddenly I understood*

Sid needed to get away, get back into his cage. But even in his refuge he did not find refuge. The man and woman that sat there earlier were still there and greeted him when he arrived. It was hard to admit but Sid realized there was only one way out: The tape recorder. He realized he had no other choice and just hoped that these creatures around him would not rip his touchwriter that he now disguised as a phone out of his cold dead hands:

Editors Note: This is a transcript of the tape recording, made in the next 15 minutes.

Sid: Freak Power!, he yelled as he approached the music. But then he realized that this *was* freak power in action. A couple of freaks erected their own town in the shatters of a long forgotten crumbled empire that used to use this environment as an air force base. 'So why all that paranoia?', Sid wondered. Why was he resisting their attempts to change his view on the world with the help of art? Was it because he didn't



accept the word 'art' as applicable in these cases? He didn't know. All he knew was that he had to reach his tent in order to do a transcript of these mumbled words. But the further he went the more he got the feeling that he was completely lost. Then he saw the wheel. It was spinning in front of him, a couple of skeletons rushing through the air. So Sid walked towards it. On his way he suddenly noticed a poster proclaiming: 'Deutschland abschaffen!', a play on words on the title of the book his grandfather had just read. But was it really 'play'? If these freaks actually were working on some grand scheme to get rid of the state of Germany, and they probably were, Sid wondered if he sympathized with their goal, if this was what they wanted to erect in its place. But maybe the problem was just that he was feeling utterly alone when he knew he should be feeling connected to the people around him. But he just couldn't convince himself that no man is an island. Maybe he was a rare exception. He definitely felt like one. More than he had in a long time. Didn't that mean that their grand scheme to erect something beautiful, a new state or the absence of it, a simple status of freedom, joy, connectivity - had failed? Sid was driven back to his tent. He had to do a transcript of this recording! That was all he knew, that was all he cared for right now. Because after all that was his job, that no one paid him for but that he forced himself to do anyway. He realized that he did not know why, maybe he did not want to know. It just seemed to be working for him - didn't it? He felt sick...

Sid finished the transcript and after quickly eating something he tried to calm his mind with some letters from a fellow freak among freaks. It was preceded by a few pictures, one of them of Thompson's four year old son, looking at a bullet-riddled portrait of J. Edagr Hoover. 'He started with the indoctrination at an early stage as well', Sid thought as he remembered all the children's faces he had seen today... Then he went back out to return to his cage where he asked a young girl for 3 words and wrote:

*They anxiously awaited the explosion
the crowd was going to be sprayed with foam
they were told
that it would bring them happiness*



and that they would no longer feel so alone
it was incredible while it lasted
but in the end
they all just stood there with wet cloths
freezing in the cold
even though they had been told
by the man
something like that
would never happen again

"Thanks! My boss asked me to send him a postcard from the *Fusion*, I'm gonna send him this paper instead!", the girl said when he handed her the paper.
After completing his work Sid felt cornered by all the people that had gathered in his cage and so he got up and walked out into uncertainty.

He drifted through the crowd. He entered a crowd that had gathered in front of one of the hangars and listened to the woman that was singing of heartbreak inside.

Desperately he searched for a familiar face that might save him, but he knew he was alone...
He got tangled up in one of the nets that hung around in the trees on his way to the library, but finally he returned to his cage, still tangled up, but at least in a more comfortable environment.
Could it be that this entire area was a gigantic web...?

The book that waited for him up here did not bring relief either as he continued to read the arguments of a self proclaimed 'playboy'. It depressed him, like everything depressed him. His only remaining option was more drugs. He decided to start easy and get some liquid caffeine into his veins. It cost him a fortune, but the bastard behind the counter had him by the balls.

He told himself to get something to eat if he was already on it and searched for a place to buy good food at a decent price. He had to settle for expensive pizza instead.

He sat down beside a nearby stage wrote and ate as he listened to a woman sing about productivity:



You can do whatever you want,
except for the things you really need
take drugs, drink beer, smoke weed
everything you need to feed
that empty feeling inside you

Sid decided to return to his tent to store what was left of the expensive caffeine for later. Back in the tent he tried to calm his nerves with some more *Fear and Loathing in America* in which Thompson wrote about the very people Sid had just handed his money to, wearing “beards and beads to disguise the sad fact that they were actually carbon copies of the bourgeois merchant fathers whom they’d spent so much time and wrath rejecting.” He went on to talk about the special kind of light the freaks of his day generated nevertheless and Sid wondered if he could see any light out there beyond the doors of his tent.

He couldn’t, but he told himself that the fault was his own. [REDACTED] he saw the entire crowd as [REDACTED] people who did not believe in love, or at least the kind of romantic love he believed in. People who would stab you in the back without hesitation and whom’s highest and only goal was their own fake sense of freedom for which they did everything, even if it meant hurting the people they claimed they loved.

Sid forced himself to go back out there anyway, back to his cage in order to write poems for them. But first he told himself to sort more of his notes.

When he went back out he took the bottle of absinth he had brought with him and placed it into the pocket of his jacket. Then he walked straight to his cage.

A wrecked car passed him and he felt as if he was walking through some apocalyptic hellscape. To his right a giant robot stood on a roof and played the guitar and Sid told himself to simply stay on his path without any further looks left or right.

When he arrived in the forest of books he encountered a cat which approached him, looking for shelter, but ran away when the music on the nearby stage began with a loud rumble.

Sid ascended the stairs to his cage and after reading some more arguments for connectivity he asked the girl beside him for 3 words:

This trip into the east
bears it’s surprises
it is a giant feast



and although everyone knows
that demise is
imminent
you might meet people
who will become your friend
and guide you to different places
after the end
or maybe their words
will take your mind on a journey
if the girl next to you
tells you to dream
there is no reason to fight her
when she exclaims:
“Die Realität
hilft beim Träumen nicht weiter“

But she left before he could hand her the paper with her words and the prince remained alone in his cage.
Sid got out his plan and caught himself looking for the band [REDACTED]. He found it and wrote: “Avoid!” next to it, but then he got up with the intention of finding it. Luckily on his way a message from Phoebe reached him:

Hello, just made a big mistake. Apart from that I'm doing fine. I want to go to Jack Steppa at one o'clock, it's dub. But I have to work until 11, Jubitus etc.

Sid sent his condolences, asked if they should meet at the dub-stage at 1 and went out onto the meadow in order to find it.
Suddenly a man with green sunglasses spotted his mask and let his bull loose that attacked him with its stuffed horns.
The crow gave him a hissing croak and continued.
Instead of the dub-stage he found the place he had planned to avoid and soon he was lost inside a sea full of faces, [REDACTED]



Finally he found his way out again and ran away from the techno tower towards the wall of death. Beside it he found the dub-circus where he was supposed to meet Phoebe later and with the somewhat secure feeling that he had somewhere to go to, he went back to his cage. But on his way there he was suddenly stopped by a man in an orange west that looked vaguely familiar.

"Aren't you Sid", the man who had recognized him from a party they had held in the blue room asked. After telling each other how they got here the man whom's name Sid could not recall began to talk about the job that paid his entrance fee: "It's quite relaxed. I'm thinking about coming over here with my own little business next year; to rent out those little bikes, you know!?"

He began to throw around numbers of what it might earn him and Sid's mind drifted on.

"Well I'm off to the forest of books! See you soon I guess!", he said and continued his journey.

He sat down next to a few guys who admired the pile of books below, that was just being rebuilt. He found his book and continued to read for a while. Then he got out the absinth and filled the cap with the green liquid which he lit on fire and watched for a while, dancing, flickering blue and yellow flames that slowly stretched out over every surface that was covered by absinth. And since the cap had been loose and he had spilled the liquid when he filled it, the flames quickly spread and suddenly Sid had to work hard to diffuse the plastic bag in which he had kept the bottle. Suddenly he looked at the fingers of his left hand and noticed that they were burning as well.

When he finally managed to suffocate all fires he looked up and said: "Cheers!" to the people next to him, that starred at the strange creature beside them.

Sid went over to the stage where the frantic stutter of a woman lured him right into the first row where he began to headbang himself into a frenzy. Afterwards he went back up into his cage where a man with an ornithological book asked him how to pronounce different birds names. After all he had to be an expert on birds, the way he looked... Then he leaned back and starred up through the bars behind which the sky had turned black by now. Somehow in the darkness, everything was easier to take in. You couldn't see as far, couldn't see faces all around. He briefly looked into his plan in order to find out where to go, but then he just went out into the night without a clear destination.

He ended up at a place that seemed completely unfamiliar and yet vaguely reminiscent of something...



He sat down at the foot of a small hill that was inhabited by some kind of giant white space-kraken that seemed to suck something out of the ground below him. After watching the alien being for a while Sid went on and ended up where he had started; the cage. It had gotten quite crowded but he still found some room next to a girl that was reading a children's story.

He read a little more of his story and noticed that he was getting tired.

He went back down with the intent to get the caffeine from his tent. On his way he bought himself a new little book to fill. It was a school folder and the woman behind the counter demanded: "But only write pretty things!"; when she handed it to him. "Only pretty things in pretty handwriting!"

But Sid knew that he couldn't promise the woman neither. Although that might be an aesthetic question...

Sid returned to his tent where he just lay down and looked up at the stars through the translucent opening above him.

He felt worn out and tired but he dragged himself back out anyway, telling himself that there was nothing the caffeine couldn't take care of.

He went over to the nearby hammocks where he sat down and drank his bottle. Then he went on to the nearby circus where he met Phoebe

She told him she had missed a shift at work earlier today and when she asked Sid how he felt and he responded with a vague wavy gesture of his hand she said they should go inside and let the music erase all nagging thoughts from their minds.

They began to dance and Sid felt as if he had been hooked into some invisible grid. His body was flooded with electricity and shaken in rhythmic shivers until he finally collapsed onto his back and began to write:

*The crowd in the circus went bizarre
as if this hangar was still in use of the military
with a brutal unforgiving war
raging outside
although tonight
there was nothing there
the only raging
came from the inside
it was they themselves*



that acted as if they had come here to hide
with their eyes opened wide
and their faces morphed
as if in terror
over a fatal human error
that had someone caused to drop the bomb
But hadn't that threat been overcome?
There was nothing left there in the east
that could have forced the west to drastic, final actions
and the west was crumbling as well
walls and banking sectors
everything fell
So the only explanation left
was that these people were celebrating!
Then why did it seem like
they were actually waiting
for the end?
What was going on in the heads
of those people around me
'you won't think anymore
if you bang your head'?
'Next year will be the apocalypse,
better make the most of it'
'the end is only the beginning'
'if you stop thinking you are winning'
I realize I am one of them
so desperately grinning

"Mother do you think they'll drop the bomb?", he had asked his mum the last time he had seen her and listened to Roger Waters repeating this and other questions in the music that came from their expensive stereo system, which they never used because it was too loud for the neighbors. And she had told him that she was actually far more afraid of that possibility nowadays. Because nuclear disarmament seemed like a joke to her since there were still enough atomic



bombs left to blow up the entire planed multiple times, and there would be for much, much longer.

"There are so many countries that have the bomb even though they are collapsing! And you hear of those terrorists that could easily get them..."

He realized that his parents had been considering going here as well, since they had been transformed by that festival they had met at after half a year of living across the Atlantic. K. had said she had thought of coming here as well but wasn't able to do it because of her kids.

Maybe he should take her with him next summer, to that land that lay just a few kilometers away, and yet seemed so far. It was only fair to include people who lived in this part of the world if you were building a parallel society in their neighborhood.

Sid remembered the couple he had overheard in his cage the first night, welcoming a stranger.

"It's your first year?"

"No my second!"

"Oh mine too, it's his first"

"Yeah I'm just diving in..."

The young girl had sat down between the two lovers and thankfully accepted the joint they had handed her.

"Ahh thank you guys!"

"You know it really *is* a fusion!"

"Yeah I really got into the whole topic as well throughout the last week! So how do you think that whole phase 2 with the changed mechanisms for getting a ticket worked out?"

What the hell had they been talking about? Was there some larger scheme at hand here? Some plan to transform this festival into another form? A certain '*Fusion*', but a fusion of what? Of music and art? Or of art and life? Was this little city of tents and abandoned military hangars like the opera village of Schlingensief?

If that was the case, then what was phase 2?

Or was he mixing things up here? Was phase 2 actually a term Phoebe's companion from last night had used when he talked about all the books he had to read? "You have to read for what?"

"For phase 2 of the antifascist, anti-German group I belong to. So that we all talk on the same level I should read those books and understand what they are saying so I understand what they are talking about!"

After hearing that, Sid had perceived almost everything people around him were saying as an attempt to brainwash him.



But there also had been reaffirming words, like Phoebe telling him that it sometimes seemed to her that under the name of his studies of filmscience many quite interesting sociological experiments were being conducted.

As Sid now sat down inside the circus he regained his consciousness as a Gonzo filmcritic and looked up toward the screens that surrounded him, although screen was the wrong word since the moving images were actually projected onto moving rectangular structures that hung from the ceiling. Still within the realms of cinema though, if you follow Lev Manovich's conception of the term...

The cubes that revolved around themselves displayed morphing images and shapes and the colors in the metal frames around them functioned as a logical extension to their content.

According to Lev Manovich this was a form of revolution since it offered a different kind of perception of time and reality in general around which societies would be built eventually. But wasn't it the other way around? Didn't a society for example become agrarian and *then* develop a cyclical perception of time?

The content of the 'films' was vaguely reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp's work, only that the squares had definitely reached the third dimension by now. They were computer animated mostly...

Phoebe bowed down to him and asked if he wanted to go outside.

So they went, right onto the meadow where the circus was taking place. After watching a robot play drums the sound of electricity caught their attention and when they followed it it led them to a red and a blue man who were fighting each other on plateaus - with lightning.

"Which side are you on?", Phoebe asked and when Sid refused to pick a side she repeated he had to!

When it looked like the red man had won Sid said: "I'm on his side!", giving in to her ironic remark.

Although they weren't ironic as she had explained last night, but merely other options to view a topic. She said them in her calm soft voice in order to remind people of the variety of views that existed.

"So what's the fusion? What is being fused?", Sid asked her.

"Nothing! It's just the fusion of Mecklenburg and young people, something that doesn't happen all that often!"

"Well I was already here Monday visiting my aunt! Why do you think there is nothing else but a fusion of this state and young people? Not something like the fusion of politics and music?"



"Well I think that's up to you to decide..."

They went on to another couple of men, but this time they were merely fighting with fire. When they walked on they passed a station with a red light sticking out that flickered nervously as a shrill warning sound went off. Sid and Phoebe approached the station and read a little letter informing them they should contact a certain service team. But they didn't.

"I don't think the people you're supposed to call know what the red light means either.", Phoebe said as a car full of freaks in orange coats passed. On its side it bore a red cross but it looked like it had just come from an apocalyptic hellscape.

Sid turned to Phoebe again and asked her for three words before sitting down on the ground in order to write:

*above her mini-skirt
she wears an orange shirt
making use of the possibility
to get in for free
and see
everything there is to see
but is she able
to react to the red light
in the way a water-crew
is supposed to?
Driving around in circles
in her damaged car
that looks like it's from an apocalyptic hellscape
after some nuclear war
she's just as disconnected from reality
as the rest of the people around seem to be
and still it all seems to work
for now...*

Then they went over into a hangar full of eyes and then on to a square where Phoebe wanted to meet some people.



“Well I guess there is another thing the fusion can be: A place where you are actually able to reach the end of the rainbow!”, Phoebe said and Sid answered hesitantly: “Well usually I try to tell myself to enjoy the rainbow while it lasts instead of chasing for the promise at it’s end.”

“Well but I guess when it’s lying on the way you might as well pick it up!”

They went on to Neuland where Sid wanted to return to his cage.

On their way they found a rock with a graffito of a bold man on it. Sid grabbed the book he carried in his pocket and compared the picture on the inside of it’s cover with the graffito. It was him! This was “Freak Power”.

But were the people around him truly freaks? The kind of freaks Thompson had described? How many thieves were among them? How many prostitutes?

They lost each other in the music in Neuland and when Sid opened his eyes again after dancing for a while he could no longer see the green-haired girl whom he had followed another night.

Sid decided to return to his tent where he stretched out and ate some more of the sandwiches he had prepared. Then he read some more in *Fear and Loathing in America* before finally deciding to try to catch some sleep, with the ground shivering from the electronic sounds of a nearby circus, gently weaving him into a dream.

It was a very unsteady dream and the persistent music did not really allow him to rest.

A few hours later he was no longer able to shut it out and so he got up in order to take a shower. But the nearby water station wasn’t operating anymore.

In front of it Sid met another familiar face, though. It was the girl who had played a fox in the film from which the mask on Sid’s head came, and whom’s name he just couldn’t remember...

They made vague plans to meet again and Sid went on, on the search for functioning showers.

But the tower of showers had an insanely long line in front of it and the air around it was filled by hungry seagulls. So Sid ended up back at his prison cell. But he had to realize with terror that his book was no longer there!

After briefly searching for it, he decided to go on to the casino. On the way there he suddenly saw Mahs.’s face. She was sitting in front of the theater, wearing an orange shirt, next to another girl that was guarding the entrance doors.

After a little introductory small talk Sid asked her: “So what is the fusion? What’s being integrated and melted here?”



After she gave him a confused look he went on: "...like, is it the fusion of different art forms?" "Yeah I guess so!", Mahs. replied, and after briefly thinking about it she continued: "Or maybe the fusion of you with the festival..."

"You mean you become one with the crowd?", Sid asked and thought to himself that the fusion had not taken place inside of him yet.

Two unplanned encounters in one hour – Sid's fear [REDACTED] grew again, but he quickly pushed the thought away.

He turned back to Mahs. who told him that she would be working here until 4.

"So you know where you can find us!", she said and Sid went on to the casino where he lay down, closed his eyes and listened to a voice from the speakers talking about losing its roots. After almost falling asleep Sid decided to return to the theater. He sat back down with Mahs. in front of it and waited until they opened the gates.

But they didn't, and after the waiting got too much Sid went back to his tent where he read some more *Fear and Loathing in America*, which helped him to regain a sense of purpose. He had to sort his notes, and for that he needed to recharge his machinery.

So he picked up his backpack and went over to the recharging station at the other end of the area.

As soon as he had plugged his laptop into the energy socket and his touchwriter into the laptop a man approached him and asked if he could plug his phone into his laptop. Sid gave him his adaptor instead and when he sat down next to him and asked him for something to write he gave him paper and pen as well.

When the man asked him what acts he planned to check out today they found out they were going to the same punk band. The man gave him a few other suggestions and showed them to him on the plan.

"Don't go to *Kollektiv Turmstraße!*", he told Sid when he saw the big letters beside it proclaiming "Avoid!"

Another man came along and asked if he could use his USB-cable to recharge his phone. So Sid interrupted his work and wrote Franz instead, asking when he would be where.

Sid wrote Phoebe as well, asking whether she was still there or had actually left like she had hinted on last night.

"It's all very interesting, but I can't seem to get into it...", she had said.

"Let your work be work! It's *Fusion!*", a man with golden sunglasses across from him yelled out.



Sid had actually just finished copying his last page and so he unplugged his machines and returned them to his tent.

Then he walked down to the central omnibus station in order to get himself a ticket back out of this place. He had to walk straight through the city of tents, endless rows of temporary homes where thousands of people huddled together.

After passing the giant graveyard of cars he arrived at a concrete square where after being redirected to different info points he reached a fourth one where a girl in an orange shirt asked him if he had mushrooms he could sell her.

"No, sorry...can I buy tickets for the bus here?"

The girl directed him to a fifth location and as he left he heard her complain: "I don't get it! Where do all those spaced out people on the dancefloors come from?"

When Sid finally arrived at the ticket counter he was informed that there were still organizational problems and that the ticket sale had been rescheduled to tomorrow.

"I'm never gonna get out of this place!", Sid thought as he walked back down the path with the soviet name.

Back in the realms of the concerts he briefly sat down beside a shipwreck and listened to a few people who played music on strange strings and drums while others were dancing in a way that looked like fighting without touching each other.

But then his stomach demanded attention and so he set out to find something to eat.

He finally found something quite delicious for a price that seemed reasonable and returned to his cage with it.

Fed and housed like that he felt quite comfortable and even though he no longer had a book to read up here anymore he decided to stay for a while.

He looked over to the girl beside him and said: "Could you give me 3 words?"

"Relaxing, love and true!", she said and Sid got to work:

*The princess sat
on top of her tower, relaxing
she knew she had
nothing particular to do
and yet so many options
But as she gazed over the scenery
she asked herself*



who all those people were
'who could they be?
and why is it that everyone you see
seems to disappear
the next second?'
she wondered as she looked
into the sky above
You could make brief encounters here
but could you find true love?

He handed her the paper and as he watched her read he wondered if she might be the one to set him free.

She was the first who had asked for 'love'..

But then his mind began to cloud with doubts about her interests and his own intentions.

She handed the paper back to him and said: "An interesting resonance to my words..."

"You can keep it, it's yours", Sid replied and she put it into her backpack and returned to her book.

Sid realized that he would have to return to the theater to meet up with Mahs. before her shift ended, if he wanted to see her again and make further plans with her about the evening that he just could not spend on his own. So he said goodbye to the strange girl and left his cage.

But when he found Mahs. and asked what her plan for the night looked like she answered: "I don't know yet, the only thing that is set in stone is that I'll go over to the performance of *Kollektiv Turmstraße!*"

When Sid heard that he hastily said goodbye and began to stumble back to his tent. He felt the desperate urge to get his mask in order to hide behind it.

On his way he realized that he had forgotten to ask Mahs. for her phone number and would most likely spend the night by himself.

Unless he went to the concert after all...

Once he reached the tent and felt the mask on his face he calmed down. He returned to the theater and told Mahs.: "Well I'm still not sure if I'm gonna go to *Kollektiv Turmstraße*. But do you maybe wanna meet somewhere afterwards?"

She replied that she'd like that and he asked her for her phone number. Then he returned to the magical forest next door where he sat down beside the stage and lit his pipe for the first time today.



He leaned back for a while and lost himself in the music. Then he got out his new little book and tried to find answers in the words he scribbled down:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
*In order to save me
but now I see
it was too late*

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
*like all the other people around
if they know it or not*

The prince was lost in the maze [REDACTED] This was [REDACTED] Hades, the eternal punishment [REDACTED] created from him.

He listened to the magical lyrics the woman from the eastern country whom's woods the prince had roamed in his youth, was singing. A tear came to his eye as he remembered that life used to be beautiful once. He still remembered the way it felt, but he just couldn't bring himself to see the way he had back then.

It had been melancholic then, but a magical kind that still allowed all his feelings to exist. Now he just pushed them away. He had driven his canoe through the lonely green that bore the crumbled buildings of an era that had just ended.

It had been a time of transformation of which almost all of the people around here were children. They now paid tribute to that time in the hangar that housed the movie theater and the documentaries cronicaling the new found possibilities.

Den felt the tears run down his cheeks as he remembered the events of his own life that mirrored that of his entire generation.

*Who am I?
I'm no longer able
to define me over
the place I come from*



because there is no such thing
I've been shaped
In so many ways
by so many worlds
I called my home
we've all been able to uproot us
since the borders became mere lines
on a map.

There was no longer a gap
that kept us from travelling
I was born in the north
of the old and new capital
then I moved to the north
of the country
lived close to the sea
the harbour city defined me
until I set out
across the ocean
and lived in a land full of promise
For some time after return
I lived everywhere
on the continent
now I'm in the west
of the biggest city of the east
where will I go next
it's up to me
But the question remains:
Who am I?
Who can I be?

Sid got up and told himself to view the world the way he had back in his childhood, in the 90s and at the beginning of a new millennium that followed.
The time when the biggest concern of the west was that the President was cheating on his wife.



Sid had been told that that time of promise and optimism had ended.
But as he looked around at the crowd that danced before him he had the strange feeling of déjà vu. They used to dream, now they were told they had been awoken. By new violence. By new wars. They had literally been naive children that had now grown up.
But the people here refused to wake up.
They refused to grow up.

So Sid told himself to regain the same poetic, slightly melancholic view he had held as a young boy.

After all, music was what turned depression into melancholy.

And the air was filled with music around here. He just had to find music that spoke to him.

Sid put down his mask and walked toward the tower under which a certain collective was about to perform...

[REDACTED] through the melancholic eyes of a young prince that had been turned into a raven by [REDACTED] curse.

When he arrived at the tower the crowd that had gathered was gigantic.

Apparently [REDACTED] wasn't the only one who liked the music that was about to be played beneath it. 'New associations!', Sid told himself and started to dance.

But after a while he just felt the urge to move on and so he bought himself some caffeine and returned to Neuland where he sat down in front of the stage again.

*Am I beginning to feel the fusion
of myself and the rest of the crowd?*

*The main purpose
of this event
what it is all about*

*Will I remain
an island of pain
or will I feel the love
for my fellow human beings
I know they all deserve?*



Sid was reminded of the recording Einstein had once made of his worldviews, in which he meditated on Schopenhauer's claim that man could do what he wanted, but he could not *want* what he wanted. It was a relief for Einstein to know that the people around him did not possess a free will. It enabled him to forgive them the things they did and kept his good humored and optimistic views alive.

Sid tried to tell himself this was his opinion as well, and so he put a smile on his face for everyone he encountered as he walked back to his cage. He took a quick look in the library and found his book again which he took up to the second floor.

He sat down among two couples and began to read for a while. Then he tried to write Mahs. but the broken down communication network made it impossible and so he just got up and started roaming around in order to find music that spoke to him.

Nothing on his path really caught his attention and so he just went on until he reached his tent where he sat down to sort his notes.

His neighbors had put out a big mattress beneath the tree next to him and greeted him with friendly but slightly tired faces.

As Sid photographed the pages he had filled today he overheard one of them talking on the phone about a friend of his who was getting married somewhere at this festival.

Sid finished his work and left his tent behind, plunging back into the madness.

But this time he headed further into the city of tents in order to find the island of birds that supposedly lay in the west.

He approached the small forest and walked toward another dancefloor on which he moved to the music while giant grey men watched him from the trees around.

After a while he went on his way back through the tents in order to see a certain king dance.

He arrived at the tent that was named after the headquarters of the socialist party in Berlin that had been demolished a few years ago.

Inside the palace Sid passed a text that talked about the future and about remaining as hopeful as they once had been. A projector threw moving images of green hillsides and fields onto the text that you could only see when you stopped focusing on the words. Sid wondered whether you still received the images of beauty and positivity if you did not actually see them, but just read the text. And if so, did your subconscious make a connection to the words, maybe made you view them in a more favorable way?

Again Sid wondered whether this was still art or rather propaganda. But he realized that even if it was there to influence you, it probably had a different effect depending on who was reading it...



Sid went on past a subway in which monsters were apparently throwing a party, and sat down beside the stage. When the music began he got up and started to dance.

But after his third song the monarch who wore a strange black star around his eye, proclaimed that a storm was coming.

First the crowd began to cheer over this bizarre announcement, but then a female voice filled the tent with an urgent information, announcing that different meteorological institutions had announced that extreme weather conditions were imminent and that the festival was being shut down for the duration of the approaching storm.

The crowd was assigned to leave the tent and the festival area immediately and return to the camping grounds.

They were supposed to evacuate in an orderly fashion but as Sid followed the fearful and frustrated mob outside, a sense of doom lay in the air.

As he approached the exit he saw that the sky that had just been partially cloudy when he had entered, had turned to a dark grey that looked like it was about to erupt. The wind gripped the fabric of the tent and jerked it around viciously.

Out of fear that this might be a sign of the nearing appearance of a vulture, Sid put on his mask and began to run towards his tent, hissing and crying out to the panicking people he encountered on his flight to safety. The voice of the serious sounding woman came from all sides, repeating over and over again that they should evacuate as quickly as possible. "Do not search for shelter beneath trees!", the voice proclaimed and Sid realized that his tent was placed directly underneath a potential target for lightening. But there wasn't much he could do about it, it was too late for relocating it and so he just hoped that the trees around him were higher. Maybe the red man and the blue man he had seen dueling each other with lightening yesterday would put aside their rivalry and catch the flashes of light that now filled the sky.

Sid had sensed that this gathering was heading for an apocalyptic ending, but he hadn't expected it to unfold so soon.

He arrived at his tent and noticed that one of his neighbors had closed the translucent opening on the ceiling in order to protect the interior from getting wet. Just as Sid closed the fabric of the entrance behind him, the rain set in. The wind rattled the walls of his shelter through which he could still see the air lightening up in shorter and shorter intervals.

But over at the nearby open air stage the party apparently just continued. People kept on dancing, laughing into the ugly grey eye of the storm.

The beat mixed with the sound of the thunder that followed the lightning rays closer and closer.



Sid got out his laptop and decided to spend the time until the apocalypse sorting his notes. When he finished and the world around him still existed he went over to read some more of Dr. Thompson's letters.

After a few pages the rain began to calm down and Sid could hear cheering people passing his tent, going back to the festival area where more and more places were pushing out sounds again. Could it be that the apocalypse was already over?

So the people around here had been right in claiming that the end of the world as we know it wouldn't be the end of the world. Now it was time to erect something new in the shatters. A new society, a new way of interacting with each other.

Sid put on his jacket and went outside in order to see how it was going. He passed stages and tents that were being reerected and when he reached the palace and entered he had a strange sense of *déjà vu*

"The queen is dancing" the man that bore a strong resemblance to a droog from a future society in Britain, sang, just as he had, before the storm had set in.

Sid remembered a poster a group for a vegan and straight edge lifestyle had hung up at different places asking for help in escaping and stopping *the collective time warp*...

Were they right? Were they all lost in a time and space that had become cyclical? Would the King end this song and his set with the announcement that a storm was approaching?

In the end Sid wasn't sure what his last words had been, but the set did end and Sid followed the other people out of the tent, expecting to be welcomed by wind and grey clouds.

But the sky that awaited him as he stepped outside was actually colored red this time, by a distant sunset.

Sid went over to Neuland where he began to dance to the sounds of a bold man that hummed into the microphone and became one with the beat the man behind him produced. Suddenly someone tapped him on the shoulder and said: "Sid?"

It was a girl that had participated in the short film and therefor recognized him with mask.

Sid couldn't seem to recall her name and when the singer began his next song Sid continued dancing while she went over to the side.

After the band was done she walked back to him and they started to talk.

"So are you alone?", she asked.

"Yeah...I guess you know the tragic story..."

"Yes I've heard, [REDACTED]"



[REDACTED]

Sid could not ask any other questions, could not think, could not move anymore.

He just stared at the ground until the nameless girl asked him if he wanted to come with her.

At a nearby stage they paused to dance for a while and suddenly Sid saw Raul Duke before him. He was holding a fly swatter and wore a white hat, a Hawaiian shirt and a piece of cloth over his mouth to fend off the sandstorms of the Arizona desert.

Sid wanted to rip it down in order to find out if it was really Hunter S. Thompson's alter ego or just an imposter. He got out the book he was carrying in his jacket in order to compare his face to the picture on the inside of the cover, but when he looked back up Duke was gone and Sid wondered whether he had just been an illusion, a product of his deranged mind, a sign that he was finally losing it...

They went on and his chance encounter met some friends of hers. They went off to the east but Sid suddenly remembered that the only band whom's lyrics he actually knew was about to perform. So their ways parted and Sid went over to the stage close to his tent where they were playing. He made his way toward the front row and began to sing along, from the bottom of his heart.

The lead singer was apparently overwhelmed by the giant crowd that had gathered to see them, and by the surreal scenery around them. He kept repeating how incredible all of this was. People began to climb the stage in order to dive into the crowd and let them carry them. Finally Sid jumped up onto the stage as well, spread his arms and closed his eyes, and let himself drop forward into a sea of raised hands that carried him further and further away from his starting point and deeper and deeper into the heart of the crowd. Sid tried to get down again but he was merely turned around and continued the journey on his back.

He ended up at the side eventually where he came back to the ground and walked back toward the front.



A moshpit formed and Sid plunged himself into elbows, shoulders and raised fists again and again. The band said goodbye but the crowd did not let them leave and they played one encore after the other.

When the concert finally did end Sid felt exhausted. He went over to the nearest circus tent where he sat down on the ground and closed his eyes for a while. Then he went on to Neuland where he sat down in a green chair beside his cage and closed his eyes again.

He kept thinking [REDACTED]

The stories he had been told [REDACTED] earlier sent his mind racing in all directions and he had no clue how to stop himself.

He closed his eyes again and realized that he was about to fall asleep. He could use more caffeine, weed or absinth to get him going again, but why?

He tried to remind himself of what he had chosen to do earlier, of trying to view all this with the eyes of the melancholic yet poetic young boy he used to be.

He got out his little black book and tried to write:

[REDACTED]
the girl said

with a strange tone

that made me feel

utterly alone

'I guess the first time it happens

you tend to be more consequent

in your denial'

she said with a strange smile

that seemed to say

this is no longer how you do this today

'It's not the first time

and I'm not consequent'

he tried to bring her monologue to an end



I'm not really in control

of my reactions to her

any more

Music came wafting over from the stage and Sid approached it hesitantly, slightly limping from the wounds he had gotten in the moshpit earlier.

He lay down next to the speakers, stretched out and closed his eyes again. Sid shortly drifted off into a twilight state. When he regained consciousness again he told himself to go back to his tent in order to get some real sleep. He forced himself to stand up and stumbled across the area. When he reached his tent he heard the loud and hard beats that emanated from the close by circus tent, but he lay down and fell asleep anyway.

Finally he could no longer block out the loud eruptions of the beats next door and awoke.

He starred up at the ceiling and saw ants crawling on the translucent fabric above him. He knew there was a small hole somewhere in it, but neither he nor the ants seemed to be able to find it. Sid told himself to find a functioning shower and left the tent.

On the way to the water station he suddenly saw two glittering faces that seemed familiar. Ph., a good friend of Franz, who visited him regularly and was practically another flatmate, and a guy Sid had met many times as well but just could not remember the name of.

They gave him big grins, hugged him and asked how he was doing. Sid replied that he had just woken up and was still tired. They were looking for something to eat and so after they told him where they camped and informed him that Franz was already at the dancefloor on the island between the tents, they parted ways and Sid went on toward the showers.

They still didn't work and so he showered beneath a nearby tap, kneeling on the ground, trying to cover every part with the cold refreshing water.

He had lost his towel at his aunts place, had not been a good hitchhiker. But on his way back to the tent he suddenly saw a big red towel lying on the ground. He looked around and when he could not find anyone who looked like the owner he dried his hair with it.



He returned to his tent where he got dressed and then went on through the city of tents, to the dancefloor that lay within it.

He entered the dancefloor and saw Franz who was dancing ecstatically on a platform on the other side.

But in the end he was just another face in the crowd to him. They had lived in the same flat for about a year, but they might as well have been strangers.

Sid turned around in order to return to the main area.

He wanted to go to the theater, but it was closed, he wanted to go to the cinema, but he wasn't in the mood for a children's movie.

So he went on to the casino, where he lay down in a darkened hole in the wall, closed his eyes and let the voices and sounds from the stereo create images in his head.

He was forced to dream by himself. But even that did not seem to work anymore.

Sid went outside the theater and sat down in the sun. He felt a tear on his cheek.

He decided to go over to Neuland where he would hopefully be able to be sad but still remain inside the dream.

'Music turns depression into melancholy', he told himself again.

But when he arrived in the orient the stage was deserted. He approached a small group that sat in front of it and asked them if anyone was playing soon.

"The Afghans are caught in a traffic jam, but *Talking to Turtles* are about to play now instead.", a guy with a sailor's hat said.

A girl whom's face was just being covered with green glitter said: "They're great!"

"Well I guess they are if they can talk to turtles!", Sid said and the girl replied: "Yeah, and they are so cute that you really believe them!"

The man in the sailor's hat handed him a joint and Sid asked him for three words. He listed three kinds of food in a way that sounded like a shopping list and Sid began to write him cooking instructions for a dream.

"Our Afghan friends have arrived and will perform in about half an hour!", a voice from the speakers proclaimed.

Sid remembered that he had come here on the search for music that would help him dream, so he handed his writings over to the sailor, put on his mask and decided to fly around the area until he would find a place to land.



Sid spread his cloth-wings and flew to the lighthouse on top of the hill, then down again, to the techno tower where he heard a song that pulled a string in his heart, but that stopped as he approached it.

He came to the ground on a chair across from the psychedelic ambulance where people lay around in the grass, next to a pool.

They had flown too close to the sun, but now they had handed themselves over to people with friendly, understanding eyes. Sid flew closer and stopped in front of a sign that told him of a congress on Entheo-science that would take place at the botanical garden of his university. Sid was very sceptical when he read about the issues that would be discussed: "psychoactive substances in the context of consciousness-science, psychopharmacology, ethnobotanic, spirituality, therapy and politics."

But he wondered if it might be a fitting subject for a Gonzo article, until he reached the bottom of the sign that declared the entrance fee was 60 Euros.

"These drug freaks wont get my precious money!", Sid told himself and flew on towards the central bus station, wondering whether he should try to get into that congress for free with fake press credentials or a rope over the fence...

He flew past a red sign proclaiming: 'Propaganda' in Cyrillic-looking letters, next to the image of a spacecraft.

Beside it hang one lonely placard for an antifascist meeting and one for a camp for the climate. The crow eyed them for a moment and then flew on.

A man appeared before him that was talking into a tape recorder manically, with a paranoid look on his face and a white hat on his head. As he passed by, the crow gave him a friendly croak and wondered if he was just a figment of his tormented mind.

He flew down the boulevard that was a rare exception to the eastern figureheads who lead the campers through their temporary city. At the end of the street of the french existentialist he found the little bar at the edge of their world, where tickets were being sold to go beyond it's borders.

He arrived and was welcomed by a long line of fellow travellers. He had no choice but to join them and wait, so he sat down at it's end, in front of a couple of green boxes that filled the air with their sweet stench.

The mood at the central station was similar to that of all the other places of transport he had seen around the world. You were here because you wanted to leave. That was the only reason



for the people who made up the line before him. The time they spent in it was not meant to be enjoyed and they yearned desperately for the moment they held their ticket and could return to the dancefloors to 'get the most' out of their remaining time here, until they'd finally have to use their ticket and return to that dreadful 'everyday life'.

Sid decided that he wasn't one of them and asked the girl next to him for 3 words: "Family, Opinel, airport", she said.

Sid asked: "What the hell is Opinel?" and she pointed at the name at the side of the knife she was carrying with her.

Sid got to work:

*tension was rising
in the line at the airport
all those people who yearned to escape
filled the air with anxiety and hate
until it became unbearable
and a man
head of a family of five
got out his french army knife
and began to 'cut in line'
but it was useless
instead of his intended flight
he got one to a prison that night
where the sun did not shine quite as often*

But when he finished and wanted to hand her her words back, she was gone and he noticed that he had arrived right in front of the counter behind which a bearded man with a stressed and paranoid look on his face spoke into the microphone: "There are only busses to Berlin left! Everyone else, go home! We can't help you. I guess you'll have to stay and continue dancing..."; he laughed with a forced grin and horrified eyes as if he was imagining the horrible nightmare of being lost in this dreamworld for ever.



When he finished his speech, Sid asked if the man could help him to get to the south of Berlin by Monday afternoon. The man handed him a ticket for a bus that would leave at 4 p.m., then looked down at it with a nervous frown, wrinkled his forehead, turned around again and said to Sid: "Be back here on Monday at 10!" before he handed him his ticket.

Sid thanked the man, paid him and flew back to Neuland as fast as he could.

When he arrived 'our Afghan friends' just finished their set and were thanked by the crowd with enthusiastic cheers. 'How many of them had sent planes into the home country of these musicians?', Sid wondered as he went over to the casino where there was a session of 'reading, drawing and riding' taking place.

But he only got till Kalkutta where he sat down in the bowels of the stranded submarine.

Then he returned to Neuland, hoping to see people who could talk to turtles.

He sat down in the sand before the stage and got out the few loose papers he had left to write:

*'So you were born in the capital?'
the man next to him had said
'it's a good place to come from
if you were not born too late
he proclaimed sincerely and loud
It made me wonder
if I should be proud
of my heritage
study it
by studying this crowd
since they seemed to belong
to that culture
that had grown strong
in the town I consider my home,
and that now extended
beyond its borders
to another place I am 'from'*

Sid realized that this was exactly what he had come here for, like with every other place he went to. To study it, learn from it and about it.



He wondered in how far that meant studying himself

When he tried to explore his feelings in that area all he found was the formless grey and he almost turned to stone again. Lost like a turtle on it's back he lay there beside the speakers in the sand. But then a cute couple began to talk to him and got him back to his feet where he began to dance to their music.

So this is our story
it will be hard from time to time
but we are both each others heroes
I'm yours, you're mine

The lead singer sang these words while looking over to the woman on the keyboard beside him.

The band played their last song and the woman behind the keyboard got out her camera, just like the overwhelmed lead singer last night..
What a strange festival where the artists were taking pictures of the audience!
The concert ended and once again Sid set out to get to the casino.



He put on his mask and the crow flew up the hill with the lighthouse where he hovered around for a few seconds until he saw the hangar that housed the casino and flew towards it. On his way he suddenly saw a bottle lying in the sand below, that was still half filled with caffeine.

After a few seconds of hesitation he picked it up and went over to the water station where he filled it's other half with water.

"Beware of liquid ecstasy", it had said in the plan he had gotten at the entrance, next to a skull that slowly dissolved.

That terrible poison that had been used by someone, the yellow press had labeled a 'mad man', to drug people at Christmas markets.

Sid remembered how he had talked to Maa. about it once, who had said: "Oh yeah, that poison – I take that recreationally!". He had explained that it was a question of the dose and that men reacted different to it then women who mostly fell unconscious.

Sid told himself that no one would try to rape him if he passed out and that it might actually turn out to be an interesting experience, if there really was liquid ecstasy in his drink.

He flew on to the casino while taking a sip every once in a while.

When he arrived at his destination, a bearded man sat on the stage and read a children's book about a sad donkey who was depressed and homeless. The crowd laughed about his cynical remarks and Sid felt as if they were laughing at him. Wasn't he the donkey in this midsummer-night's dream? After listening to the bearded man imitating his voice for a while Sid got out again.

He went over to the movie theater and entered the hangar that was stuffed with people. He walked up to the screen and lay down right beneath it, next to a few other people who were apparently sleeping. Sid looked up at the images that seemed morphed from his position. A giant head talked about the quicksilver content of lightbulbs.

The movie seemed to criticise the politics of the European Union that was vaguely reminiscent of the planned industry of the Soviet Union. Just that today the decisions that were made for long terms and big portions of the continent were, according to the film, driven by lobbyists.

A man appeared on screen that proclaimed all advertisements for energy sufficient lightbulbs were actually pure propaganda. Sid tried to recall the definition for propaganda he had read for his term paper on environmental documentaries in order to find out whether this film could be considered propaganda as well!



The movie showed how the policy of energy sufficient light bulbs had been implemented in Cuba, the first country to do so. It called the measures totalitarian and the state a dictatorship and Sid remembered a voice he had heard earlier while flying across the meadows, calling out: "Cuba libre", and all those shirts with Che Guevara on them.

He realized that there was propaganda taking place around here, but it was a variety of views you could learn more about and decide for yourself what you wanted to take over into your own life, and what you rejected, just as there were a variety of stages with different kinds of music you could either listen to or avoid.

Sid went outside and decided to listen to the music at the stage in Kalkutta.

"We haven't slept in 3 days!", the lead singer proclaimed as Sid arrived. "Sleep deprivation is quite helpful with hallucinations, you know..."

Sid wondered if he should take that advice into his own life. He had done it before.

He looked up and suddenly he saw another girl who had played a fox in their short film.

He put on his mask, lay down next to her, and croaked.

It took her a few seconds to recognize him, but when she did her face lit up.

She asked with whom he had come and Sid had to tell her his sad tale again.

"You could put up your tent at our camp!", the fox answered and gave him a smile. But Sid answered: "No thanks, I barely sleep in it anyway!"

The band played their last song and she told him they were about to move on to some Chilean band. After getting up and watching a woman dancing on a ledge for a while, Sid followed her to the stage beside the lake.

"So what's the fusion?", Sid asked her, and after she stared at him with a confused look he added: "What's fusing here? Music and art or..."

"I don't know, I guess music, people, a bit of commerce, vegan lifestyles..."

They arrived at the stage and began to dance.

"This is incredible, the best festival I have seen in my life! Thank you *Fusion!*", the man on stage proclaimed as he got out his camera in order to take a picture of them.

Sid sat down next to the speakers for a while and watched the fox dance with her friends. One of them had hair that reminded him of that of a lion and of another girl he had once loved because she was a beautiful wild cat in his mind as well. He had never approached the lion and told her how he felt, though, probably because he was afraid of its claws...

Sid felt the fake smile he had put on for the fox fading and told himself that he needed a place where melancholic music played and people would not give him strange looks when he cried.



But when he got up and walked over to Neuland, the stage was deserted. He went over to his cage instead and read a little more of Simmel's strange tales about a shiny but empty world. After a few chapters the band that had been setting up their instruments until now began to play and Sid went over to the stage. A man proclaimed that he came from a far away land in the south east and got out his saxophone.

Sid had come here to cry, but the music was just too happy and so he left again, after a few songs, in order to find a place where he would feel more comfortable with his grief.

He went over to Kalkutta, but as he descended the stairs from the lighthouse he heard the man on stage yell out to the crowd: "Are you all doing good?"

The audience answered with loud cheers that suffocated his silent "No..."

He sought for refuge in the stranded submarine and looked out at the crowd through a net.

He wondered whether that feeling of unease that seemed to take control of him again, was at least partially a result of the demands he was placing on his body.

It was worn out and tired and Sid realized that he had not eaten in a while.

Maybe a good meal would revitalize him and give him a new perspective.

But first the search for food would put a strain on him...

"Let's play pretend!", he told himself, put on his mask and flew down towards the food stands.

He stopped in front of the first vender and asked how big a portion the soup they were selling there was. When the man behind the counter showed him the small plastic cup Sid said: "Well do you have anything else for under 3 Euros that might feed me for the day?"

"I could give you some bread with it", the man replied and Sid agreed.

"The soup will take a few minutes. Meanwhile take this bread and put it on the oven over there!"

Sid did as he was told and walked over to a metal structure at which he looked for a while until he found out that there was fire inside it.

"Do you know how to use this thing?", Sid asked the woman who stood next to him.

The woman whom's clothing and shape of face made her look like a native from some far away land did not reply but just looked up at him with intense, shining eyes.

When he found out how to put the bread inside the oven she said: "You look so young!"

Sid did not really know what to reply so he just smiled at her and when he noticed the setting sun behind her, shining through the clouds, he said: "Look at that!"

He got his soup and sat down beside the oven where he asked the woman for 3 words. "Love, breathtaking and amazing", she replied and as he got out his paper she continued: "keep these 3 words in mind!"



She looked at him for a while and then said: "I don't think you do..." Her voice was slurred and Sid did not quite understand what she said next.

After a short silence she asked: "Are you someone with wisdom?"

"Is there anyone who really has wisdom?", Sid replied, unsure if he had understood her correctly when she replied: "I have a name, I have a name...I kept my name and my name is...kept me for ahh...something"

She seemed to be searching for something in the purse she wore around her hips.

"Well I guess this bread is done!", Sid said and raised his soup with the words: "Cheers, or whatever you say...enjoy your meal!"

She mumbled something he did not understand.

"I hope any of the...you make you...you see a conspiracy?"

"What's a conspiracy?", he asked.

"Conspiracy!"

"What's a conspiracy?"

"Conspiracy!", the woman repeated and Sid looked at her with a wrinkled forehead and said:

"Yeah where?"

"You know what a conspiracy is?"

"Yeah sure; a bunch of people coming together to plan something, to influence others!"

"Yeah!"

"So where is a conspiracy?"

"I don't know.", the woman said and looked at him as if he had brought up the subject.

The music next to them was quite loud and the woman seemed to be intoxicated and struggling with the language so Sid wasn't quite sure he understood her correctly when she said something like: "You don't think anything is bad!"

"Me?"

"Yeah!"

"What, you think I don't think anything is bad? That's not true!", he exclaimed. But then he hesitantly added: "You think so? How can you tell?"

She did not answer and so he went on: "War is bad! I guess...So I do believe some things are bad! Do you?"

Instead of answering his question she mumbled something he did not really understand but that seemed unconnected.

"Maybe your coming from...a country...where..."



"Well sometimes I guess I try to tell myself that nothing is really bad or evil, inherently...", Sid said after some consideration.

"Its not about evil or bad or about...", the woman said and Sid asked: "What's it all about?"

Instead of an answer he got an invitation to try the dish she had before her. Sid wasn't quite sure he had understood correctly so he asked: "Can I try?"

She nodded and when he picked up some of it she said that she liked something about him.

"You like my what?"

"I like your way of...Is it something you do on purpose?"

A man suddenly interrupted her and said: "Could I disturb you? Because we have to change the hot stuff you're leaning against and I don't want you to get burned."

"Oh no, no one wants that!", Sid answered.

"But you can lean against the other oven!"

"Or we could just sit at the table...", Sid said to the woman who was already walking over to the nearby rocket that seemed like it crashed here some time ago.

When he caught up to her she suddenly embraced him and pulled him down onto her.

He did not fully give into her and so he landed in an uncomfortable and strange position on his own back, his arm resting on her chest.

He got up, put the soup he was still holding on even ground and decided to ignore what had just happened because he did not know how to react to it.

"So what's something I do on purpose? The way I look at things?"

"Yeah...you know you're different and...there is something that a male of my species is supposed to know and do and act..."

He had understood most things she said but the words did not really seem to go together in his head and so he asked her to repeat what she had just said.

"A male, of the species should look and act and do!"

"Ok... and I do look and act and do? Or I don't?"

"I don't know..."

Sid looked at her irritated and confused and asked: "What species are you talking about?"

"I don't know if people...you have a lot of rules!"

"I have a lot of rules?"; Sid said and gave her an inquiring look.

"You shouldn't follow those rules!"

"Like what rules? What rules do I have?"

"I don't know...I can't...I don't think ahhm...people who follow rules develop...between."



"I'm not sure I'm following you. Could you repeat that?"

"Ok, I think there is...you cannot follow...there is ahh...you're coming...changes...I don't know!"
The woman drew her legs toward her body and buried her head in her knees.

"Alright...", Sid said hesitantly.

"Well anyway...you gave me 3 words and I'll try to put them into a poem, OK? So give me a few minutes!"

He began to write a few lines and she leaned back for a while until she suddenly sat up again, very close to him and said: "I have to help you!"

"What now?", Sid said and looked up from the paper he was writing on. She looked at him with an urgent look and he asked: "Why are you shaking your head?"

"I have to help, I have to help! It's my profession, you know!"

"What's your profession?"

"I'm a doctor, medicine doctor..."

"Oh really?! Wow...like a ahh"

"...and you have to follow me!"

"I have to follow you?"

"You have just decided!"

"I have what?"

"You have just decided that..."

"Decided what?", Sid asked with a confused look.

But the woman did not give him an answer but an embrace instead. Sid wasn't sure how he should react and so he just sat there motionless and stiff in her arms for a while until he finally replied by embracing her as well.

She raised her head and pressed her forehead against his, looking him directly into the eyes with an intense, mesmerizing glow.

Then she raised her head a little further and suddenly her lips touched his. Sid was no longer able to ignore her advances but he still did not know what to do. He softly answered her kiss but kept his mouth shut and after a second he redrew his head and looked down at the paper before him.

The woman leaned back, looked at him for a few moments and then asked: "Do you want kids?"

Sid looked back up and answered: "I don't know... I used to...I really don't know...maybe one day"

The woman gave out a silent sigh and let herself drop onto her back.

Sid returned to his poem and stared at the words he had written so far:



*have you ever heard of love?
people say it's the greatest
it stands above
all other feelings
is breathtaking
and moves you in ways
that are beyond compare
but there is also an aspect to it
that's hard to bear*

Suddenly the woman got back up and said: "Was it too much? What I just gave you?" Sid looked at her and did not know what to say. Had it been too much? Why hadn't he returned her kiss? Was it because she seemed older than him, although her foreign heritage made it hard for him to tell how much older... Maybe he had just gotten that impression from the words with which she had introduced herself which made clear that he was younger than her... Or was there something else holding him back. Something that would have held him back even if she had been the same age as him?

"I guess it was a bit much because I..."

..."; Sid tried to explain himself.

The woman gave him a hurt look and said: "I don't want to be cursed on the lost end! Something can be...I don't want to be the person on the lost end. I'm too strong for that!"

"Yeah!", Sid said with a tone that was meant to be reaffirming but was full of doubt because he wasn't sure he had understood what she said.

After a moment of silence the woman added: "Maybe I see you some other time when things have changed...maybe I will see you later?"

Sid wanted to see her again. He was afraid it might send out the wrong signals but he said anyway: "You want to exchange phone numbers?"

After all he still did not know what signals he did want to send out.

He got out his phone and asked: "So what's your name again?"

"My name if you spell it it's C H double O N K A N G"

"Koonkang?", Sid read out what he had written into his contact list.

"Well ah, yes you have a different spelling but it's ok!", the woman said.

"And what's your number?", Sid went on.



"My number is 0...41..." the woman replied hesitantly.

"You have your phone with you?", Sid asked but she replied that it was back in her car.

"I'm not good with numbers!", she added and when Sid realized that she could not remember it he said: "I could just write you my number on here? And then you'll call me!"

The woman agreed and Sid wrote down his number next to the poem he was still writing on. He was looking for an ending but the woman drew his attention away from the words and asked:

"What makes you different from the other people?"

"I don't know! I'm not sure I am too different from other people, especially around here...I feel like around here everyone is kind of different, aren't they?", Sid said and thought of a sentence he had once written on his wall; 'I am different...like everyone!'

The woman answered something he did not quite understand: "Yeah you could be like one of 200... with roots from India and make your living..."

She looked up and said once again: "What makes you different?"

"What makes me different...", Sid repeated her question, "I don't know...I don't know...what makes me different.. I write..."

He pointed down at the poem he had almost finished.

"You write", the woman said and added, "I think that makes a lot of difference.", but he misunderstood and thinking she had claimed that it made a lot of people different he replied: "Well I guess then I am not different!"

He wrote the last line and when he finished it she said hesitantly: "You know I don't want to go around...I don't go around and just talk to guys! I don't think it's the cool way to do it! It's not... different...depends...If I'm drunk enough, or whatever OK its different. But you know it's not the thing...I don't go first...base! You understand?"

She looked up at him over her knees she still held close to her chest with her arms.

"Yeah I guess...", Sid said and tried to give her a sympathetic smile.

"Comprendes?", she said and kept on talking in a language he did not speak so that he did not understand anything anymore.

"I speak only a little...", she explained.

"What language was that?", Sid asked who once again did not completely understand.

"Portugese!"

"Oh Ok...I don't speak any..."

After a short moment of silence the woman suddenly turned to him again and demanded to know: "What is your dream?"



"What? 'What is a dream?'," Sid asked who still had difficulties hearing her silent voice over the heavy music in the air.

"What is *your* dream?!", she said and after he did not answer she repeated with a sense of urgency: "What is your dream?!"

"I don't know...," Sid hesitantly said and the woman extended her hand to grab his head and force him to stare directly into her hypnotic brown eyes.

"Look at me: What is your dream?"

Sid could not look anywhere else but her deep eyes and knew that she would sense any lie he could tell her. So he told her what he had been dreaming off for so many years now: "Love"

She kept looking at him and he continued: "I guess...but I'm not sure if it exists in the way that I dream of it..."

She kept starring at him and after some intense seconds of silence Sid asked: "And what is your dream?"

She loosened her grip and looked down.

"First dream, I was always thinking it's...its ahm...you know what...I just have this space of work and marriage."

"Work and marriage?"

"Marriage...marriage and work..."

"OK...but that's not your dream any more? Or is it still?"

"I was always saying, if ever could be down...it would be work...for my family life I have not been given the opportunity...so it depends...maybe..."

She looked at him expectantly.

Sid finished his soup and handed her the paper with her words and his phone number

"It's a poem made of the 3 words you gave me! I guess I'm moving on...you have my phone number so maybe you write me a text!"

"Or I come with you"

"Well I need some peace and quite to write...I'm sorry I need to write a little in my tent! See you later?"

They embraced once more and Sid returned to his tent in order to write and think about what had just happened. He sat down and got out the paper he had stored in his backpack:



Did her kiss
lift the curse
or did it only make things worse?
confront me with my inability
to act out naturally
be who I want to be?
Maybe she just wasn't the princess
I wanted to see
I wanted to set me free
but she did enable me
to walk upright again
and feel more like a man
and less like a feathered beast

He soon ran out of paper and battery for his touchwriter and so he decided to go back outside in order to recharge and buy another book he could fill.

He left his tent and realized that day had turned into night.

The streetlights that stood on the meadow before him had been lit and gave out huge flames every once in a while. The robot band was at it again and the sounds of rock and roll filled the air.

The celebrations were proceeding in full force by now...

Sid arrived at the small shop that bore the name stores that sold products from the west used to have in the GDR. His parents had often told him about the excitement of shopping in those places. Sid did not quite feel the same rush since the products that were being sold were obtainable pretty much everywhere by now. But he still felt satisfaction when he got another little book to write into..

Still he proceeded to the docking station and recharged his touchwriter

Then he went on. When he passed the hangar that housed the theater he noticed the wooden clock in front of it, announcing that the next performance was about to begin.

Sid entered the darkened hall and sat down next to a man with widened pupils who turned to him, thinking that he was his friend who had just sat right beside him, and said: "It's my first time in the theater at the *Fusion!*"



Sid wondered whether he should get out his pipe but two pantomimes appeared on the stage and made it clear that smoking was forbidden. So he got out the absinth he had in his jacket instead and as the play began he took a few small sips. The performance consisted of 3 women who dragged each other across the stage on their hair and danced esthetically on a bed of roses. After the play Sid felt the tiredness approaching and so he bought himself another bottle of cafeine.

Then he began to wander across the area, floating along in the crowd, past flashing lights in trees and people in strange costumes. He paused at the round building which's roof kept morphing and starred at a stature of Jesus and a little television screen that were placed in a cage beneath the sign: 'potentially suspicious'.

But eventually he returned to Neuland to which's stage the name Marcel Duchamp had drawn him. The band that appeared on the stage had apparently let themselves be inspired by the work of the french surrealist whom's films Sid had studied during his last semester.

But after all the surreal scenarios Sid had just passed he did not make the connection here. The music was beautiful and produced with the help of a few strange gadgets but apart from that it was not really all that dreamlike and abstract.

Until he lay back and closed his eyes. A surrealist film began to take shape before his inner eye as the music crept into his head and pulled the strings.

But slowly the film turned into a dream and when the band finished Sid decided to make his path through the wild sceneries that unfurled around him in order to go to sleep in the safety of his tent. As he arrived back at the outskirts of the camping ground he could see lightning at the horizon.

Harsh electronic music filled the air as he undressed and lay down but he tried to integrate it into his dreams and soon he was at least able to reach some sort of twilight state, or rather some other kind of twilight state..



It just went on and on

He slept for a few hours until the beat crept back into his head with full force and threw him in and out of dreams. Finally a man close to his tent began to scream: "*Fusion!*", repeatedly, at the top of his lungs, as if some kind of transformation was taking place within him his voice became more and more frantic and euphoric. Other people answered his call and joined into the mad chant.

Sid opened his eyes and saw raindrops purling down the walls of his tent. It felt damp and when he looked down at himself he saw that his waist was resting in a puddle of water that had formed on the floor.

He got up and after quickly inspecting the damage and declaring it harmless he changed into cloths that were dry. Then he decided to leave his tent behind, hoping that it would still be standing when he returned, and went outside.

It must have rained significantly during the time he had been asleep, because in front of the firefly a lake had formed.

As he stood before it in amazement a man walked up to him and asked him for the time. Sid looked at his touchwriter and proclaimed: "It's 6:37"

"No no, the time!", the man, who had not understood, said and Sid showed him the screen and repeated: "Yeah 6:37..."

It took the man some time to look down at it, and when he did he said: "It says 6:38...so you lied! Why is it so early?"

"Well, is it early or just very late?", Sid said but the man did not seem to hear him and went on to say: "You know I just smoked weed for the first time in half a year!"

Sid went on past many more lakes that covered the meadows until he reached the casino where he sat down and listened to the sounds that hovered through the air.

A man approached him and handed him a joint.

"There is no time for worries!", he said.

"Its so early...", Sid said and looked down at the joint sceptically.

"There is no time and space at *Fusion!*", the man insisted and Sid agreed. He took a hit and crawled into the darkened hole in the wall where he closed his eyes and listened to the echoing voice of a woman that surrounded him. "We will change!", she exclaimed and Sid wondered what she meant.



We'll change ourselves
change the world
until everything has unfurled
this is our space
this is our time
this is a fusion
of what's yours
and what's mine
we're all connected
we're all intertwined
and with all of our imagination combined
we'll make this place grow
and stretch out across the land
because we know
the end
is imminent
but the end can also be the beginning
either way
we are winning
as long as we dream on

After returning to the twilight for a while Sid got up again in order to find out whether theater or cinema were showing something that might stimulate his mind. But the theater was closed and Sid did not feel up for a space odyssey, so he walked through the magical forest of books and returned to his cage. The pile of books was slowly turning into pulp and everything up in the library was soaked as well so Sid took the wet book and carried it over to the movie theater where he lay down beneath the screen. Just as he wanted to start reading the hall darkened and the film began. Sid remembered the last time he had seen it, back at his university after a healthy dose of sleep deprivation, and how he had lost consciousness during the space portal sequence. His mind had produced its own images to the colors that came flashing towards him and his facial expression had been quite similar to that of the depicted space traveller.



As he watched the dawn of man Sid remembered the T-shirts of a few people he had seen around here, depicting the iconic row of the evolution of mankind. But instead of a simple upright man, going to work with his briefcase, as it was usually ended, one shirt had shown a man with a guitar in his hands, screaming into a microphone. On another shirt the second monkey had developed short green hair that grew until the last being in line had a giant green mohawk and once again screamed into a microphone.

Were these pictures right?

Were the people that crowded these realms really the next step in evolution, superhuman beings? A new society centered around music and art that spawned a new species that was further developed?

According to Kubric the first step in human evolution went along with the first murder. What was the price mankind had to pay for turning into this? And who was to say that it was really an evolution and not in fact a devolution? Sid looked over at the man who was sleeping below the screen beside him. Was this the crown of everything living on this planet?

Sid remembered how he had once read an article by an anthropologist who claimed that cultural celebrations and the drugs that were used in them played a significant role in the development of human society. He illustrated how the cultivation of hops for example changed the living conditions of early farmers and what role psychoactive drugs had and still held in native South American society for example.

In the society Sid grew up in alcohol seemed to play an important role, but the meaning that drugs held for the culture this festival was propagating, was far more significant. Did these drugs that seemed to be an important basis for this society really advance human progress and common happiness, or would they be their doom in the end?

Sid got out his touchwriter and started to type:

Is this soma
that keeps everyone smiling
for 4 days straight
makes them forget
about envy, misery and hate?
what if these celebrations of a new culture continued?
would they keep smiling?
as anxiety and insanity kept piling



behind the facade
until they finally erupted
or made them collapse
perhaps...
but so far it seems to be working

His touchwriter died of battery shortage and so Sid decided to leave the dark halls in order to recharge it at the nearby docking station.

A young man that left the theater beside him suddenly stopped at the doors after reeling back the black curtain that held out the sun.

"This can't be!", he exclaimed as he looked at the milky windows in the doors.

"When I entered the cinema it was dark outside, and now look at that!" He opened the gates and pointed out at the sun that had risen quite high by now.

"Good morning!"; Sid said and the man shook his head and lamented: "Another night I've spent without sleeping..."

"Sleep is overrated!"; Sid said and walked on to the docking station where he plugged in his touchwriter and continued reading.

Finally the poem from which the book borrowed its title appeared in the chapter Sid read.

But it was in the forum of a publicized television announcement, spoken by a woman the man behind the camera called: "an amazing actress" as he watched her reciting the poem in a speech about disabled children.

Sid put down the book that just contained too much cynicism for him on this grey morning. He unplugged his touchwriter and went back to the casino.

On his way he suddenly felt his pants slowly gliding down his hips and when he looked down he noticed that his belt had ripped at the hole he had worn it in and he was forced to close it in another one.

Back at the casino a DJ with a white coat played sounds that seemed to stem from the inside of a church. Organs and religious quires filled the cave-like hangar and Sid closed his eyes and listened for a while.

Was this music 'potentially suspicious' as well, like the statue of Christ over at the bar Sid had passed last night? And wasn't the movie theater and the entire areal full of screens quite similar to the one that had also been labeled as such?



The man next to him asked Sid about the book he carried with him and Sid told him about the title: "It's from a poem that claims we're all connected, no man is an island — we're all part of the mainland..."

"So I guess you're reading this in the right environment!", the man said and Sid wondered whether he was right. He still hadn't really felt the connectivity to the people that surrounded him, that everyone else seemed to perceive. There still hadn't been a fusion of him and the rest, making him feel as if they were one...

Sid decided to return to his tent in order to get his laptop and carry it over to the docking station as well, so he could sort his notes of the past day.

His path was filled with people who had collapsed in exhaustion and were now lying on the ground and at the hillsides. Suddenly Sid saw a poster on a chair before him that informed passersby how long after consumption different drugs could be traced in their blood. It ranged from cannabis all the way to crystal meth and Sid wondered how much of what was being consumed by whom...

He had not seen anyone taking anything out in the open except for weed which's smell seemed to fill the air at almost any place you went. But he had seen a lot of wide pupils and distant smiles...

He continued his path and noticed that it was covered with little plastic bags.

When he arrived at his tent he tried to motivate himself to walk the way back he had just undertaken in order to work, by reading a few more of Dr. Thompson's letters.

But he just got more and more tired until he almost fell asleep again.

Finally he managed to drag himself back outside.

When he was half way there he realized that he had left half his notes in his tent, but he proceeded anyway.

When he arrived and plugged in his laptop the girl next to him asked: "Are you going to work now?"

"Well I guess...I'm not sure you call it work if you don't get paid for it...But I wrote some things and now I have to save it on my machine before I loose it all again..."

She asked him what he was writing and he gave her a vague answer.

"And is it only for yourself or for others to read as well?", she asked as he emptied his back pocket in which he found a few texts he had printed out.

"You want to read something?", he asked and held the papers up. "Poem or short story?"

"Short story!", the girl replied and he handed her a text he had written about a year ago.



She began to read and he started his work.

When he had saved everything he had brought with him on his laptop and on a flashdrive, he packed his machinery together and decided to bring it back to his tent. But first he dropped by the casino again, where a school of rabbits was supposed to take place.

After waiting in front of the blackboard for a while a man to his right leaned over and told him that class was canceled for today

"Don't you want to hold a short lecture up there?", he asked and went on to say: "I already earned extra credit for a biology presentation I held there yesterday! I talked about the common Pökelfischotter. You know that it has only one fang?! It claims to be vegetarian, but every once in a while it does eat a little fish. For that reason he has one single fang in his jaw. And an eye patch! You know the common Pökelfischotter lives in the Amazon river and in it's currents it easily gets water into its left eye. For that reason it has an eyepatch..." he ended his lecture and turned to Sid again. "So don't you want to go up there and teach us something?"

"I've got nothing to teach..." Sid said, "Besides, the risk is too high that I might end up smashing the blackboard or burning the console. This might be a reform school, but the aversions are just too big..."

Sid said goodbye and returned to his tent.

He quickly dropped off his laptop and tried to fix his belt with some aluminum foil, then he went to the nearby circus where a machine-theater was about to take place. He sat down on the ground before the tent until the gates were finally opened.

Inside Sid sat down on the floor once again and began to wreck his head whether he should light his pipe.

Suddenly electronic sounds began to emanate from the stage and the hall was slowly darkened as the sounds grew louder and louder. A machine appeared out of the dark and a curtain made of water was raised before it.

Strange images appeared on the falling waters. A man who claimed he had once played the part of Hamlet could be seen, until the rain stopped for a moment and a metal skeleton was pulled across the stage on strings.

Then the wet screen was resurrected and an old woman appeared on it. Her face seemed to melt and fall apart over the pouring water.

The light exposed a giant metallic bird that stood above the metal structure in the center of the stage, which turned red and pumped like a heart.

More and more metal skeletons were erected and slowly they seemed to turn against the audi-



ence. A giant vaguely female structure raised its arm and flew forward as flames rose up behind her.

The audience screamed up in agony and horror, but Sid's gaze was solely chained to the metallic vulture that hovered above it all. The creature began to describe Ophelias unforgiving libido as the man who played Hamlet demanded that all women should be sown shut. "Then we will finally be able to massacre each other in peace!"

Ophelia appeared in the water again and proclaimed: "Long live hatred!", followed by flames that now seemed to shoot directly at the audience. The air was filled with the stench of gas and metal.

Shakespeare's dreams had turned into nightmares...

When the play finally ended in a massive erosion of noise and explosions, a big portion of the audience streamed right towards the psychedelic ambulance, their eyes widened in terror.

Sid went over to Neuland hoping for some calming music to soothe his nerves.

On his path he passed another poster that demanded:

Help dissolving the collective timewarp!

Live Straight Edge and Vegan!

Dream on strangely...

What collective morphing of time were they talking about? And if they were not using any drugs, how come they used such strange words to describe reality? They lived sober all their lives, maybe that enabled them to see reality more clearly. Maybe they were right and time really had become a giant wheel that kept turning and kept repeating everything over and over again.

Just as Sid arrived in the forest of books, the music set in. He sat down beside the stage, closed his eyes and listened for a while.

After a few songs he got up again in order to find something to eat. He entered the line in front of the pizza vender and waited to get himself a plain pizza with tomato sauce and cheese. A guy walked up to him and asked him if he had some speed. When Sid said no he seemed personally insulted and walked off without a further word.

Sid got his pizza and sat down beneath a nearby tree, next to a little wagon with speakers on it, behind which a few guys were adding their music to the program. A small crowd had gathered before it to dance and Sid stared up at one girl before him who was wearing a crown on her



head. A princess...

Sid watched her move to the music and chug her beer until she suddenly stumbled toward the shade of another nearby tree and threw up beneath it. Then she returned to the wagon and continued dancing.

Sid noticed more and more people who roamed the field with plastic bags, collecting the trash they could deliver at the appropriate station to get some money in return.

He returned to his tent in order to take care of that duty now, so that it couldn't nag him anymore.

When he checked the booklet he had gotten last week, in order to find out where the waste should be delivered to, he read: "At the waste collection points you can trade a *full* waste bag *and* the deposit strip of your *Fusion* ticket for 10 Euros or a *Fusion* propagand set (special edition)"

There it was again, that mysterious term. Sid wondered if he should get himself one of these sets in order to investigate further in that matter, but then he decided that 10 Euros were a lot for something he did not really want...

Sid got out his laptop and saved the remaining notes.

Even though he had no clue anymore in which order or context the pages he photographed belonged, his work revitalized him a little and when he was done he felt ready to collect some trash.

After fulfilling his duty he returned to Neuland where he sat down before a stage filled with people who played traditional music from their homeland, wherever that might be. The lead singer, who was dressed in a white jacket with roses in his pocket, winked at him as he began to play their next song. But Sid did not feel quite comfortable with the cheerful and fast music. When he remembered that the next theater performance was supposed to take place soon he went over to the hangar of plays.

A big crowd had gathered in order to see the play that promised that 'life is a fairytale'. But the fairytale merely consisted of three witches who mistreated each other and told vulgar jokes. It was supposed to make you laugh but Sid nearly broke down and cried.

He returned to his cage, no longer able to be neither prince nor crow.

The pile of books that had been destroyed by the rain last night was already packed together in trash bags.

There was no denying it anymore, the festival was nearing its end.

Sid began roaming the area and [REDACTED] ended up at the techno tower [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



He dragged himself away from the shiny happy group that moved to the warm rhythms and went back to Neuland.

Sid was drawing from his last resorts. He bought himself a bottle of caffeine, sat down beside the stage and lit his pipe. Then he got out his little black book, desperately hoping that he was still able to dream:

*I can't pull myself up
from the ground anymore
things that worked before
won't work anymore
everything seems a bore*

*feed me
the starving artist cries out
to his audience
they give him a few pence*

The massive, and intoxicated singer told them a story: "I was with this girl. She said: 'Do you see your ear?'"

The crowd cheered yes.

"Do you like it?"

The crowd cheered yes.

"Cause I could bite it right off!"

The crowd cheered yes.

The singer gave them a perplexed look and said: "No! No no...No on that one!"

Then he asked them to make the sound you would make if your girl had just bitten you.

He howled out in pain and the crowd joined him. But Sid's scream sounded more like pleasure than agony...

Suddenly a girl that danced before him stepped on him. He cried out again



[REDACTED]

The cursed prince saw his reflection in the screen of his touchwriter and grinned since that was what the reflection was doing.
Hadn't he been kissed awake?
But no, it had not been the kiss he needed. He hadn't joined in...
Maybe it was the cage he had build for himself that had kept him from doing it. That had made him tell her to meet again. His yearning for commitment that had made him test her, if she would want to see him again. His anxieties were getting the best of him!
He had been running away from the scavenger for too long.

swansong for humanity

*rest in piece humanity
your dead to me
I leave you behind for a while
I'm going away
maybe we meet again some day
and then we'll have better times with each other...*

Sid jumped up and danced. The music crept into his brain where it mingled with the fumes he had just inhaled.
He was back in the *timewarp*...
Things were happening that had already happened. No event seemed connected to the next...

*She had told him
she was a medical doctor
back where she came from
maybe he should have taken
her medicine*



*but instead
he just had
to test her for sin*

Sid wondered if he should go over to the psychedelic ambulance. But he was too paranoid that they might end up robbing him blind by selling him tickets to the botanical garden.

Maybe he could ask them to help him with dealing with the most dangerous addiction there was for him. Maybe they could help him quitting [REDACTED]. He was going through serious redrawl, his mind was on the brink.

Sid got up and walked over to his cage.

As he walked towards it he saw that he wasn't the only one coming down. Everyone seemed to be tired and close to waking up.

*Tomorrow I'll return
to a land where the playgrounds aren't as plentiful.
Where you're not greeted by art on every corner.
But where you're just as alone.
Tomorrow I'll go home*

He would have to keep dreaming, even if he had already awoken a few times since the midsummer night's dream.

A little kid climbed up to him and asked: "Sorry Sir, do you need the beer bottle that's lying over there?"

Sid handed it to him and saw how 2 other kids approached him to see what he had just caught. He pointed at the 3 colors of the bottle and said: "Look, Germany!", and the three kids began to laugh with disgust.

The crow got down from its cursed tower and flew over to the second tower that was playing techno in its bowels that could be heard all the way over to his cage.

"La vie en rose", the voice in the music at the stage by the sea proclaimed. But unfortunately it was not that of Edith Piaf, to which he could have cried melancholic tears. Instead a song played in which a deep male voice proclaimed that you could see life in pink when you were in love.

[REDACTED] A song that they had played at the club beside the Spree, [REDACTED]



And this song was so painful that he could no longer express it since it would have scared the people around.

He had a dream
that might have brought him to prison
maybe even to hell
had he continued dreaming it
But now he had broken
the spell
and awoken
many became one again
no longer part of a whole
when he left it all behind
he wondered what he would find
and if he'd ever be able to dream again
maybe next year
when he'd come back here

"So what's the fusion? What's fusing?" Sid asked the middle aged man beside him.

"Well it was back then...I mean it was a fusion of different musical styles. Mainly techno, but also other kinds of music...First time at the *Fusion?*", the man asked and it sounded like he was asking how many years he had served.

"You know it's my sixteenth", he went on after Sid had answered.

"1996, I think was my first year, second *Fusion* ever..."

"So tell me about the magical 90s!", Sid demanded.

"It's been exactly the same, it's the same every year! Actually I think it's still a very good festival!"

"Do you think anything has changed due to the change in the way the tickets are sold?"

"Well no..."; the man replied hesitantly "It's been a problem for some of my friends but...I mean there is still the option to just come on Sunday relatively short term..."

Sid said goodbye, returned to Neuland and danced for a while. Then he sat down to write:



Back on the market
I have to sell myself
To the highest bidder
The Indian seemed like she was bidding too low
But now I have realized my real value, I guess
I'd settle for even less

How come the system of supply and demand clouded his brain and made it's horrible pressures sensible here? Around all the leftist propoganda and calls for freedom of the mind.

Could it be that both had been just as devoured by capitalism as their iconic images?

T-shirts with Che Guevara on the front 15 Euros...

A weekend of communism 80 Euros...

Pizza for 3 Euros or noodles for 6 Euros? Japanese food for 5 Euros

'If you liked our music you can buy our latest album!'

And 'Zappatistic coffee express', a label that belonged to a little shop that had a big sign of lightning in a circle above it.

One more iconic symbol that had now been instrumentalized to sell coffee.

What had happened to those ideas? Sid might not have agreed with all of them, communism, anarchism or pretty much any other ism that came to mind. But the fact that these ideas had been sucked dry from the inside, devoured by a system that only saw a strategy to make money in them. What had Franz's friend said, when he first saw him here, at the beginning of the festival: "Next Year I'll come back and rent these little bikes. I figure that that I'll make a quick buck with them!"

Had this happened already in the 90s or had the man he had just talked to a little while earlier fallen victim to the propoganda that was given out for trash?

Propaganda? Or advertising?

What was the difference? Advertising for a growing business that had the urge to expand and a vital interest in leading people to more brand recognition.

Could this be?

Sid remembered that the girl he still referred to as the fox in his head since he could not recall her actual name, had told him that a little bit of commerce was fusing as well in her eyes. "Just a little bit..."



Sid walked over to his tent to get himself some pants that would fit on his meager hips without the help of his belt which had ripped completely by now.

After switching into the sweatpants he had brought along to sleep in them, Sid turned to Thompson's book telling himself that the Doctor had never worn 'appropriate' cloths either.

Thompson's letters were soothing but unfortunately Sid realized that he would not have all the things with him that were bound to his pants, so he put them back on and tried to use the elastic red string he had wrapped his backpack in.

They proved to be an excellent belt and so Sid went out again after putting on his jacket as well and drinking the last sip of caffeine.

He walked past a wooden sign that pointed at one of the tents in his neighborhood proclaiming: "MDNA".

People with tired, worn out faces passed him by and he wondered if any of them would take up the offer in order to be able to smile one last time.

Two girls who were standing in front of the circus tent waved him over to them and gestured that he should limbo beneath a stick they were holding.

He did as he was told and entered the dancefloor in the colorful insides. When he looked up at the ceiling he saw, next to a bear on a swing and a skeleton in a cage, two screens that displayed moving images. The right one showed butterflies flying through the air over and over again in a loop that would have made Lev Manovich proud. A new sense of time was propagated by these images, a cyclical one. The *timewarp* the straight edge propaganda poster had been talking about!

Were they aware that it wasn't drugs alone that altered time and space? And if they wanted to fight that, did that mean they also wanted to fight it's other causes?

A man with long dreads bowed down next to Sid who had sunken beside the speakers.

"What are you writing?", he asked and after Sid had mumbled an answer he went on to say: "Well it's nice to see someone sitting and writing on the dancefloor! I'm a comic book author but I usually gather my impressions and then put them on paper later.."

He went on to tell him about the small business he and a few friends were creating in order to sell their work and then said: "It's all about: 'Gute Laune!' Do you have 'Gute Laune'?"

"Well..yeah?", Sid replied and the man urged him to proclaim it out loud: "Say it! Just saying it makes 'Gute Laune'!"

Sid put on a smile and yelled: "Gute Laune!"

"Do you know this trick...", he said and put his pencil in his mouth for a few seconds.



"It raises your mouths sides and makes your mind think: Hey I'm smiling – I must be happy!" Then they both got up and Sid placed himself right before the speakers which pumped beats into his head that pulled him on strings all across the manege. Sid lay down on his back in a corner of the dancefloor and looked up at the images that were still being spit on the ceiling. Suddenly the left screen displayed a symbol saying: "Acer – empowering people" and it took Sid a while until he realized that this was not part of the projection but the projector itself declaring: "No signal" in small letters in a corner of the screen. But then an advertisement of apple from the late 90s appeared on the screen beside it and when it began to change it's colors Sid realized that it was part of the VJing set. 'There is no such thing as bad publicity', Sid thought and it made him wonder if there was a dangerous side to this kind of culture jamming...

**The dream is over
but I'll do anything to make it become reality**

the music proclaimed and Sid went back outside, telling himself to dream on, whatever he would encounter. He decided to go over to the psychedelic ambulance in order to get answers to some questions he had been asking himself lately. He walked past a tent proclaiming: "No entry! Psychedelic emergency" and another one saying "enter at your own risk" Then he walked on into the main tent where the floor was covered with people who lay there curled up in the fetus position or passed out on their backs sleeping. A man in front of Sid, with a painted face was sucking on his little finger and looked around manically. There were a few brochures lying around. But the people around here seemed too busy. More and more people were coming in, who were finally crashing, after four days of straight partying that were about to end in a rude awakening in just a few hours. Sid ended up back in Neuland where a man on the stage proclaimed: "We're gonna take you on a little journey: From the bottom here, of dark demons, to a dancing frenzy!" Sid sat down beside the stage and lit himself some absinth. As the music got more hectic he stood up and joined the crowd in front of the stage where he began to move as the music took hold of him. After a few songs he turned back to his cage where he read a few pages in a book about a place



quite similar to this one, where a society of searchers yearned for freedom and transcendence. Sid remembered the catastrophic conclusion of the book and asked himself if this would end similar tonight.

There was a couple in his cage, right beside him that began to kiss and so the crow gave out a hissing croak and flew back beside the stage where he lit himself another drop of absinth.

"This is not copyrighted! What you think we're crazy? We are but that's beside the point..."

The man said as he held up an USB-stick that contained their album. *"So get one and share it!*

Pass it on to your friends! You all get together, everyone gives one Euro and then you share..."

After some dancing Sid returned to his cage to see if the scenery had changed. It had gotten more crowded...

He asked the man next to him for three words:

What this day needs

is more hours

so we can plant a few more flowers

in our brains

shoot a few more drugs into our veins

not bound by rules, laws or manners

we raise our banners

but maybe the end of today

won't be the end of the world

maybe we'll look back on the things that unfurled

and everything will seem even more beautiful

in retrospect

"Thanks!", the man said and went off into the night. Sid took his spot on the pillow next to a girl that just said: "There's this guy and he goes around, writing poems and stories for people. I hear he's quite out there, but he has an amazing imagination! Maybe you have to be a little crazy..." Sid looked at her behind his mask and croaked.

It was time for a change of scenery and so Sid left Neuland and began to roam the area.

He found himself back beneath the tower of techno, [REDACTED] But the music had stopped and Sid stood alone on the empty dancefloor.

So he dragged himself over to the hangar that was labeled 'Cabaret at the end of the world'.



He passed through rows of postapocalyptic vehicles and went toward the entrance doors below a graffito of a crumbling city.

But when he arrived inside the band was just leaving this stage as well.

Worn out figures passed him by on their way out, like rats leaving the sinking ship. But a lot of rats remained inside, with big, heavy smiles on their faces, in complete denial of tomorrow. After all they were lost in the *timewarp*.

Finally yet another band entered the stage, but their music was just too happy and so Sid fled out across the meadow where he suddenly encountered yet another friend of a friend whom's name he could not remember. After a few hasty greetings she told him that they were on the search for a quiet place to sit down since they were nearing the end of their resources.

"Where are you going?"

"I guess to the same place! I feel pretty worn out as well..."

"Well come along then!", she said and introduced him to her companion Ju.

On their way into another magical forest, the girl whom's name Sid seemed to recall as F. or H. said: "I heard about what happened [REDACTED]..."

"You..." Sid could barely press out the words. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

They sat down below a tree filled with white ghosts and Sid asked: "Could you give me three words?"

*Midnight arrived
and with it the day of departure
it was the end of all noise and all laughter
people passed by with worn out faces
and minds that were empty
roaming between the different places
with the desperate quest
to get the most out of the last few hours
they would spend in this wonderland
before everything came to an end*

He handed her the poem and she read it with big eyes as they walked on toward Neuland.



"So what's the fusion?", Sid asked once again.

"I guess it's a fusion of different lifestyles...But it's also more... You know for me the festival always has this otherworldly feeling... A place outside of space and time..."

.As they walked toward his cage F. told him of an experience she had made with mushrooms a few days ago: "I could think so unbelievably clear! I think I should always take them now when I'm searching for answers...a solution..."

They arrived in his cage and he welcomed them with some absinth.

They started into the blue flames for a while in silent meditation, each lost in their own thoughts.

Sid looked through the grates at the place where the pile of books had once been. But by now there was nothing left, not even the red trashbags they had thrown the books into.

Finally he could no longer hold himself back and disturbed F's peaceful silence

Sid wondered if the tone of his voice had made her feel like she should calm his worries. But ironically they did not. Any answer would have hurt him since he could not bear to even think

The grey came approaching and he was about to loose his mind to the demons

But then a sound ripped him away from the abyss, that he had not heard in quite some time. The man who was lying on the floor next to him got out his phone and began to talk. The telecommunication networks were back in action. Had that many people left already? Sid wondered as he left the cage again, next to the girl whom's actual name was H., or was it?

She was going to bed and Sid accompanied her on her way until he no longer had the nerve to swim against the heavy stream of faces that came towards him. So he said goodbye and headed over to the Manege close to his tent that had kept him awake the last few nights But when he arrived there now - now that he needed it - it was empty and Sid realized once more that the festival was nearing it's bloody, grey end. For most people at least...

There had to be places where there was still something going on! There did not have to be many people there, but at least music or an atmosphere of wonder this sphere had had when it was still going strong! Sid realized it was his duty as a true Gonzo reporter to report on the proceed-



ings until the bitter end and so he tried to get back to Neuland where he hoped to find refuge once more! On his way through wonderlands that were already being taken down again Sid passed a place where giant plants ate the lightbolbs.

"I've got a lust for life!", the desperately happy voice of Iggy Pop proclaimed. The song had always been able to pick Sid up when he was already close to the bottom and so he approached the bar and began to sing along with new found hope. A man with a blue star around his eye, dressed in a white jogging suit across from him looked him directly into the eyes and then made a gesture with his hand as if he was about to reveal a secret to him. He approached the woman who ecstatically danced with closed eyes, opposite to Sid, and began to kiss her. She answered his kiss passionately until she opened her eyes. For a moment she seemed to be shocked that someone she did not know was kissing her, but the man kept at it with persistence and finally she kissed him back again with new found pleasure.

Sid sat down beside the stage and got out his little black book:

*His curse was still strong,
too strong to bear fort he prince
had he been wrong
in refusing the Indian women's medicine?
Was he now lost forever
in a life devoid of sin
but also devoid of happiness?*

Sid looked up from his scribbled notes and saw how the man who seemed like he had come from a long passed decade now put his arms around two young girls and drew them closer until they both kissed him at the same time.

Then he approached Sid and asked: "What are you writing?"

Sid stumbled over his answer and the man gave him a big inviting grin and made a gesture over to the dancefloor that seemed to say: "Go ahead! There is enough for everyone...I show you a good time!"

Sid left the little bar where the man had apparently found a way back into his youth, with a vulnerable feeling that drove him to put on his mask.

He sat down next to a fire and watched a man swinging a burning stick through the air around him. Then the music switched and a voice suddenly proclaimed: "There's a limit to your love."



A song [REDACTED] he still had on his music machine, haunting him whenever it came on by accident.

Hurt and broken he went on.

He found refuge inside a thieves hole where people were still dancing euphorically. But there were no real thieves here, were there? Somehow the exterior of the stage seemed to Sid like a facade, and when he went outside again and looked back up he saw that it's windows actually were just drawn onto a thin wall...

Sid returned back to his tent. On his way he passed the wheel that still kept turning and at which's foot people were still gathered. The wheel increase its speed as Sid approached it and the mob before it began cheering death, who started rowing towards them.

He wouldn't be able to take a hold of him though! He would dream on even after the end!

"I'll keep on dreaming!", Sid told himself. But it sounded a bit hollow and forced...

He arrived at his tent and realized that he no longer had to listen to the bass that had stolen so much of his sleep. He did not have to listen to something someone else had selected for him. Unfortunately he only had a few songs in his selection since his touchwriter had crashed and was no longer able to play music except for a few songs Sid had sent himself via mail. So, melodramatic fool that he was he put on an all too fitting song.

"This is the end!", the voice of jim Morrison proclaimed. It got even worse when the unforgiving machine shuffled to *The Wall*. As Roger Waters begged "Oh babe...don't leave me now...", Sid could see the scavenger bird he had seen earlier in the tree above his translucent ceiling-opening. It was there grinning down at him with disgust and silent resentment and Sid began to share Hamlets wish to sow all womankind shut so mankind could finally begin massacring each other. Sid decided that what he desperately needed now was some Gonzo journalism! Fortunately he was still master over the music and so he put on Neil Young's hymns for Hunter S. Thompson.

Oh give me a home
where the buffalo roam
where the deer and the antelope play
where seldom is heard
a discouraging word
and the skys are not cloudy all day

Sid told himself to return to that home tomorrow, either to the lakes of the west or even the lake



next to the abandoned military station outside of the city.
“That’s the way I like my former army bases: abandoned!” Sid thought to himself as he began to dream.

Sid was at some girls place whom he did not know by name. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The girl
whom’s quest they were drew him away [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] yelling
so loud that Sid awoke.

He started up at the ceiling of his tent and the pain of consciousness slowly flooded his body. Next to him he heard someone who was just walking through the tent scream: “Does anyone want a whole set of drugs for free. We’re leaving and can’t take them all anymore!”

Sid felt the urge to relief himself and so he went over to the plastic cubicles that now smelled worse then ever. He opened one that proclaimed with a green sign that it was not occupied and heard a desperate scream from someone inside. Sid went on to the cubicle next door. Then he walked over to the hammocks that hang in the shade of the circus tent from which beats were still emanating but which’s doors had long closed.

Sid lay down among others who were softly rocked by the wind, lying in the cloth like they were frozen, without noticing him or anything around them.

Sid lay there for a while and decided that he would take down his tent and then walk across the area for a while to search for a place where he could get fully back into the dream which he so desperately yearned to extend beyond the boundaries of this festival.

So he returned to his tent and began to pack his backpack. He noticed that his jacket was stained with mud and ripped open on one sleeve and cursed himself since it meant he’d have to buy a new one soon. And what did he know about the jacket market? Nothing! Making a decision on what to buy would be pure agony!

He put on the jacket anyway and it matched the ripped straw hat and the red string he was wearing for a belt. When everything was packed together he shouldered the giant backpack and began to walk across the remains of the festival.



Garbage trucks were roaming around next to the postapocalyptic vehicles which fit perfectly into the scenery by now.

The palace was still going strong though, one of the last few refuges of denial, and so Sid went towards it, past a few deranged figures who looked at the blue sky as they walked out with panic in their eyes. It had still been dark when they had entered, how could this have happened? Hadn't it just been Thursday? Why was everything already over now?

People were sniffing speed off their drivers licenses and health insurance cards out in the open by now. The end was near, why shouldn't they?

Sid went inside the palace and danced for a while, until the alarm clock of his touchwriter told him to go on. He returned to Neuland in order to go up into his cage one last time. But the top floor was crowded with people who were smoking and laughing with a hint of desperation in their voices. Sid could barely get his massive backpack up the stairs and would definitely not have been able to force it between them.

So he sat down on the first floor and got out his little black book to make sense of it all:

*you can only dream alone
there is no way to share it with others*

[REDACTED]

*but those were lies
to hear and my self*

[REDACTED]

*I merely saw myself
a product of my mind
giving the part of me
that had been changed
a face that I could see
while unconscious*

*I can't daydream with others
neither anymore
since I perceive them as beings beyond my control
unconnected to me
yet potentially*



just as dangerous
as creatures out of a nightmare
and I can't bear
their company
on my trip through time
I'll have to dream by myself
for a while

Sid was a little disturbed by the words that stared back at him from the shiny white pages of his little book.

The book he had bought yesterday was almost full and so he got up and went on to the docking station since the *Intershop* lady had told him that it had been their last paper. So he recharged his touchwriter while filling up the last pages:

do I have any last words
some kind of resume
about the world I have lived in
until today?
I can't say
my mind is on the brink
I can feel my spirits sink
I'm too tired to think
maybe that's all I need to say
about my stay
in this place of pleasure and pain
but I tell myself
that it has not been in vain
as I look at my books filled with words
even if it hurts
I live to write

He could hear the people around him who were recharging their phones in order to get back into contact with the outside world to which they would return soon.



A man next to him was talking to his boss, pleading for another day off, someone else was desperately trying to contact someone who might take him along in his car.

Sid's alarm clock sounded off again and so he unplugged his touchwriter and walked down the boulevard, through the city of tents that was slowly dissolving, leaving nothing but the revolutionary streets they had assembled around.

A bearded man was standing in the middle of the disappearing city. He was wearing a white trenchcoat and held a stick in his hand which he raised up into the air while he cried prophecies of doom and despair. The people around him tried to ignore his warnings as they hastily packed their belongings to return to jobs and families that were waiting for them back home.

Sid was passed by a girl with a giant backpack who was breathing heavily as she ran down the boulevard in order to catch her bus.

More and more people with high humps on their backs appeared around him, all streaming towards the concrete field before them that was now filled with numerous busses. The little bar with the red roof next to the asphalt was no longer playing music. Instead the nervous heavy bear of a man that stood behind the counter kept screaming into a microphone, feeding information to the anxious mob that had gathered before him.

Finally he announced the 10:30 to Berlin and Sid boarded his bus.

It remained in it's ramp for some time and Sid turned to the man beside him and asked him for 3 words. As the bus set itself in motion Sid wrote:

*In these strange lands
it had been easy to make friends
as long as you had a bottle of liquor,
a cigarette filled with herbs,
or white powder on a plate
it was never too late
to meet someone new
to feed their needs
and share a night
but now the bottles are empty
mere garbage in the streets
did they bite the hand that feeds?*



*Now they returned to realms
where they would not be met with friendship
if they went around asking random strangers
if they wanted to share a trip
they'd have to find other places
explore other spaces
where they could continue
to live like they did
in these past few days
they had spent in such a beautiful haze*

When he turned back to the man to hand him his words in a new context he found him sleeping, finally passed out after a long period of sleep deprivation. How would he feel once he'd wake up again? Would he go back to some job in order to have enough money to afford all those places in their hometown that tried to be miniature versions of what they had just witnessed?

Sid looked outside and saw the forests he had roamed once, pass beside him.

He looked down at his touchwriter and opened his mail account in order to see if he was back in realms where you had internet access.

He was and he found a message from S. In his inbox. Sid waited nervously for the mail to download. He could already see from the title that it was a reply to his inquires whether he could join the flatshare he would start up in October.

When the message finally appeared on his screen he began to read. S. began by telling him the latest news about his plans to live in that camp outside the city that had been erected around former soviet bases at the Kesselberg.

Then he went on to lay out his plans for the flatshare he wanted to start in October. He explained that he wanted to try out an alternative life in his new home and after giving an overview of the existing rooms he described what he wanted to do with them.

He explained that he wanted 4 people to live in the three rooms and instead of giving each their own room they'd use all of it collectively! He went on to talk about different projects he was envisioning for the flat like collective works of art, cooking nights, Open Stages, movie screenings, workshops, gardening, all on the basis of give what you can.

S. went on to tell Sid that he had been rejected by the stage-design studies as well and therefore had a lot of time on his hands to invest into this project.



S. ended his message with the words:

You gathered some experiences on that topic through Your Blue Room, didn't you?
So if you could imagine living in such a place and have the elan to bring the dream to life with your abilities you are very welcome!

See you soon at the shooting of our film,

S.

As Sid read these lines he became increasingly enthusiastic. He looked out of the window and saw the meadows hushing past him lit up by the sun that broke through the grey. He regained the audacity to hope that his future might not be uncertain in a way that was threatening to his existence but rather uncertain because of all the possibilities it might bear.

Sid wrote back to S. telling him about the feeling of *Déjà vu* his text had triggered; how it reminded him of the text he had once written for people with whom he wanted to share a flatshare quite like the one S. just described. But now that flatshare, the blue room was dying. An illegal contract that brought trouble with the landlord company, trouble with the neighbors over noise and strange behavior and flatmates who just saw themselves as flatmates and not as part of some kind of artist-project, had slowly sucked the life out of it. But all these factors could be avoided now! At least that was what Sid told himself when he reread S.'s text as the bus was entering his hometown that seemed much nicer than it had when he had left. It actually felt like arriving at the city that was his home instead of just the town he lived in at the moment, when they drove through the district at the northeastern outskirts of the metropolis where he had been born.

They arrived at the train station beside the colorful remains of the wall from where Sid took the subways back to his flat.

A man with a trumpet entered the train and since Sid was the only one who gave him a few cents he played just for him. He sang something in Spanish and pointed at Sid as if he wanted to say: "Always keep that in mind!"; then he left and Sid got out *The Rum Diary* which he read until he reached his destination.

After carrying his painfully heavy backpack up the stairs he entered the flat and sank down on the sofa next to A. and T. who welcomed him with warm embraces.

A. seemed cheerful as she cleaned the kitchen but T. stared at her laptop with a tired and desperate expression on her face.



When Sid asked if everything was alright she told him that she had just found out she would not get the apartment she had hoped to move into at the beginning of this month.

Sid made himself a pizza and listened to her talking about her troubles.

When A. asked him how the festival had been Sid had to tell her about his last days: "It had pretty intense ups and downs...but all in all it was really inspiring and I don't regret going there!" After finishing his meal Sid went over to the bag in which he kept his cloths and found a belt and his other jacket that was in a slightly better condition than the one he had worn the last few days.

He gathered Hunter S. Thompson's books with which he would have to show up at the JFK-Library today in order to lend them for another month. Just before leaving he saw the crows-mask lying on the table before him which he grabbed and placed on his head like a basecap.

When he entered the bus and sat down a few older men who had just been talking to each other in a foreign language turned around, looked at him and gave him big friendly smiles. But then two women dressed in blue uniforms entered the bus and one of them said to Sid who had stretched out over two chairs and rested his heel at the edge of one of them: "Can't you sit orderly?". It wasn't a question but rather a command and even though Sid wasn't sure this woman really was in charge around here, the associations of her uniform worked on him and so he asked: "What exactly do you consider 'orderly'?"

The woman pointed at his foot and he moved it an inch so the heel wasn't touching the chair anymore.

The woman mumbled something under her breath and went on. Sid arrived at the shopping center close to his university where he had to buy batteries for his mp3-player. He tried to ignore all the images and flashing colors that were shot at him left and right and once he had gotten what he needed he stormed out again and went over to a supermarket. It felt good to finally buy his bottle of caffeine for less than a Euro instead of 3 and so letting the revitalizing substances run through his body felt much less like a guilty pleasure.

Sid felt the demands living in a city was putting on his senses, especially in this part of town where mainly grey haired men and women or people in suits that were not torn to tatters, roamed the streets. and gave him and the mask on his forehead strange looks.

As Sid drove down to the library he took off the mask and placed it in his backpack. Some of the books that he wanted to keep for another months had been a little worn out by his constant use of them and he felt like he had to leave the impression that he was an honorable person so he wouldn't be fined for it. He wasn't, the book clerk did not even take a look at them but just



scanned his student ID and informed him that he could have taken care of this over the internet as well. He could have, theoretically... But practically fighting his way through various pages of excess information until he had finally found out how to do it, and then going to the actual website he had to consult for it, that was a far greater strain on his nerves than dragging himself down to the library where he would deal with an actual person instead of some program. Sid headed down to his film campus and sat down in the lounge to wait for the seminar to begin.

On the sofa next to him a beautiful girl was sitting who told a disabled girl in a wheelchair how many guys wanted to go out with her and how stressful that was for her.

Sid felt how he was slowly getting tired and tried to wake himself up by splashing cold water into his face at the restrooms before going to his seminar.

Their Professor had told them that he would tell them how to write the critiques for their term papers, but he opened the session with the announcement that they would not do that tonight but read a text he had written, based on his experiences during the last semester with the course. It put forward the proposition that cinema was no longer what it had been back in the 20th century.

First he asked them how their first visit of a movie theater had been like and some students began reminiscing about their childhood memories. Then he went on to ask how they were watching films these days and after one girl began to talk about student gatherings in small project rooms Sid told the rest of the course about the movie screening at the squats in his neighborhood he sometimes visited.

He also caught himself confessing that he watched films illegally on the internet and after the seminar he wondered whether he should have kept that to himself.

Even though he kept drinking his caffeine ration for the day he grew more and more tired as he drove back to his flat. He got out at the supermarket and stacked up on microwave dishes and cereal that was supposed to feed him over the next month. Then he went back to his flat and sank down on the couch next to A. who asked him if he wanted to search the trashcans of the nearby supermarkets for anything of interest.

"Containern", she called what seemed to be some kind of new trend in this city. It did have a strange vibe to it, roaming around behind supermarkets going through the trash. But most things that were being thrown out were still in perfectly good condition. They had just been deemed unsellable for whatever reason and it was cheaper for the supermarket chains to just throw them away. Still it was a crime to steal the garbage and so Sid and A. had to try hard not to look suspi-



cious as they sneaked into various backyards behind the stores. But most supermarkets in their district seemed to lock in their garbage and all they found were a few loafs of bread. They returned home and Sid began to sort his notes of the past days again. After some time of fighting with the vast amount of paper and data on his touchwriter he gave up for now and went over to the squat across the street to get some food. But he did not stay long in the dark anarchistic halls. As soon as he finished the pancakes that were served today, he returned to the flat again where he fell onto the bed and into dreams.

Sid awoke and stared up at the ceiling where big blue letters welcomed him in the world of consciousness with the instruction to: 'Dream on!'

But he felt tired and he knew it would be hard to keep on dreaming today, especially after the ugly dreams he had just left.

He picked up his touchwriter in order to pick himself up with some music and opened his mail inbox, happy to be back in the world of the electronically connected and at the same time shocked about how automatic this move had become.

He found a message by Maria. whom he had finally sent the text he had written about the midsummernight's dream.

She wrote him that she found it incredibly beautiful and these words meant more to him then he could say.

She said she'd come by in the afternoon and as Sid looked around the room he realized that he'd probably have to tidy up a little so she wouldn't think he was crazy after all.

She ended her text with the post scriptum:

"ps:was it enough?"

And Sid figured she meant the end of his text in which he had written about the words on his ceiling. He answered:

Morning,

I'm looking at the sign proclaiming 'Dream on' right now and I wonder if it still is enough. I preferred the translucent opening in the ceiling of my tent through which I can see the blue sky or treetops or the sun shining in...

Anyway I can't think of anything else you could bring besides script and laptop,



maybe the black folder...surprise me!?

Unfortunately I'm a slave of my datebook and only have time till 7, then I'm going to the premiere of *Ted* with Nathan (remember him?).

But since I'm already awake you could already drop by earlier. I guess I'll be home, so if you want to, come by whenever you have the time!

See you soon,

Sid

Then he got up in order to take a shower while listening to an album a famous German hip hop band had made after getting in contact with psychedelic drugs. It was a overwhelmingly optimistic record full of connectivity and positivity and when Sid left the bathroom and entered it again after putting on some pants A. and Ja. were standing in front of the sink singing along and dancing.

Only T was still trapped in her search for a new home, calling various real estate managers and asking for meetings.

After eating breakfast Sid got himself a plastic bag and began cleaning up the blue room. T had told him a few weeks ago that her ex always claimed it looked like a scene out of *Trainspotting* and Sid wondered why he seemed to have the tendency to turn his life into sceneries out of books by Irevine Welsh. But there would be no dead babies crawling on his ceiling, Sid told himself and got to work.

It took him several hours and during his cleansing he found many strange objects from which he had no idea how they had gotten into his house.

He had just finished eating a microwave pizza when Maria. appeared.

After telling her a little about his experiences at the *Fusion* they went to work.

Sid noticed that he had already forgotten most of the things he had read about the subject but they put together an acceptable first draft anyway and decided to meet again tomorrow. Then Sid drove of to the movie theater at the other end of town where he was supposed to meet Nathan who had free tickets to a movie premiere. Sid had told him he'd come along without knowing what the film would be about, but when he consulted his touchwriter now he saw that the film had been directed by a man who was most famous for a cartoon which Sid had once watched religiously. He had seen every single episode, some of them twice but by now he had a very ambiguous relationship to the series. Apart from the fact that it was one of those shows that sucked him into hours of mindless staring at the screen, he felt more and more that it was mor-



ally empty. It was another outgrowth of postmodernism, a series of unrelated references, funny because you knew what they were talking about.

Sid arrived at the cineplex and met Nathan. After he had finished his cigarette and Sid had summed up the *Fusion* for him, they went inside.

As they ascended the stairs they already noticed a few big men dressed in black and when they reached the top they saw that there were metal-detectors in front of the entrance doors. They had to hand over Nathan's bag and all their technical instruments and after passing through the metal arcs they were scanned by a guard who came uncomfortably close to sensitive areas of Sid's body. After this unpleasant experience they sat down and were welcomed by a chubby man in glasses who stood before the screen and announced that they had the pleasure to see the film a whole months before it officially came out. After a few flat jokes that were followed by chuckles he added that the director would appear on stage afterwards and answer questions.

After a few more jokes he wished them 'fun with a great movie' and the film began.

It was basically a close exercise in fulfilling the requirements of the buddy-comedy genre, just that one of the friends was played by a bear. Apart from that it had strange references to 80s TV shows and made jokes about homosexuality.

After the happy ending the chubby moderator reappeared and introduced the director. After he had thanked the audience and answered the first few question Nathan leaned over to Sid and told him that he practically was the intellectual dog from the series that had made him famous. Sid soon saw what he meant and it confused him since that character had always seemed to him as someone who would look down on people who would watch something like what they had just seen. Was the director secretly laughing at them? Maybe you had to resent your audience in order to make funny but empty films like this.

A man a few rows away from them raised his arm to ask a question and the moderator pointed at him with the words: "Give the microphone to that long-haired bomb-planter over there!"

The audience laughed but choked on their chuckles when the man said: "Well funny you should say that because I am actually a Muslim!"

The film had opened with the narrator talking about "the wonderful Christmas holidays which the children of the neighborhood celebrated by beating up a Jewish kid." A little while later the bear had said to an Indian woman: "Thanks for 9/11."

The film had been full of remarks that were so outright racist that it was clear that they were not serious, and yet they seemed to creep into the viewers subconscious and make him utter remarks like that.



Sid and Nathan decided to leave this strange assembly and went outside. Nathan rolled himself a cigarette and when he said to Sid: "I heard you might move in with S.?!"; Sid remembered that his potential future home was right around the corner. He did not know the exact location but he knew the street and so they walked there to take a look. Everything seemed quite fancy and somewhat expensive, even the graffiti was rather street art, part of the famous 'scene' of the city. But the kebab, which was always a good indication what your surroundings were like, was priced reasonably.

S. had said they should plan subversive acts to shake up the neighborhood, maybe that was a just cause, but maybe it was just his legitimation for living in a place he had often talked about with disgust.

"They should have listened to me!", Nathan said as they passed the expensive cafés and shops, "A few year back when all this started I was still politically active and I went to a meeting on gentrification around here where I proposed you should stab a few pregnant women in order to prevent the neighborhood from becoming to high class!"

Sid who did not know how to react to this statement, said goodbye to Nathan and returned home. When he arrived he suddenly felt the desperate urge to sink down in front of the screen and lose himself in the emptiness of the grey series.

Instead he sank down on the sofa in the blue room which looked friendly and inviting again, and after one last look at the sign above him he fell asleep.

Sid awoke with that empty feeling he had gotten so painfully accustomed to. The sign above him haunted him, seeming like an impossible chore he did not know how to master... He dragged himself to the shower and put on the hip hop album again, in order to revitalize himself in the same way as he had yesterday.

Afterwards he made himself some cereal and began to read the black psychology folder again to get the information it provided back into his mind.

It contained a program to intervene when children showed signs of social insecurity. Sid began to read the classifications and descriptions of the term while comparing it all with the slideshow presentation they had made. But soon he felt his mind drifting off and suddenly he was no longer reading but simply staring at the screen.



He knew he had to do something to break free but he felt trapped in his own body, unable to move.

He remained motionless for a while, sitting, staring [REDACTED]. Then his eyes fell on the sign above him again and he let himself drop to the side and crawled over the ground until he was able to pull himself up at the door. He'd have to dream on and the only way to do that seemed to be returning to the magical forest at the edge of town.

He grabbed his backpack, left the flat and took the subway south.

When he arrived he undressed and plunged into the cold water.

After floating on his back for a while he got out of the lake again he saw that Maria had sent him a message, telling her to come over to her place. Sid packed his things back up and got into the subway. But when he looked at her text again he realized that he had misread it and that he wouldn't have to show up there for another 2 hours! So he got out at his university instead and after getting himself something to eat he went over to the library to finally read the folder.

After getting beyond the classifications the program to prevent social insecurity was introduced. It relied heavily on conditioning and introduced a system of rules that were rewarded if the socially insecure child kept to them, like: "When I'm with someone I talk as well and ask questions, I talk loud so others can understand me and look at the person I talk to, I stand still when I'm with someone, don't dither around, hands calm, no biting fingernails"

Sid was disgusted by the program that seemed to treat its subjects like Pavlov's dog, with total disregard for probable causes or about what the child might actually feel like.

It had formulated a norm and anyone who diverted from it was considered as someone who was in need of adjustment. But didn't these people that were considered mentally disordered fulfill a valuable role in society? Sid had to think of thinkers like Henry David Thoreau who had withdrawn to a simple shed in the woods where he formulated his own philosophic views on society. These social outcast would be slowly abolished if psychologists like the makers of this program had their way.

Sid decided to address these points in the discussion at the end of their presentation and took the subway north to Maria's flat. She welcomed him with ice coffee and they went to work.

It took them all day and they finished as the sun set behind a nearby church.

After congratulating each other on their work Sid left and walked to the bus station. He got in and realized that it was the same bus that he had always taken when he returned home [REDACTED] the other end of town. The bus passed the column of victory and Sid looked up at the golden statue on it's top. He told himself that the winged being actually was a greek goddess



and not an angel and somehow that helped ease the pain that had pushed down on him again. But when he arrived home he sank down on the sofa anyway and was unable to get up again. He knew he still had to pack his backpack with sleeping bag and tent since they would finally be filming their short film this weekend at the abandoned army base outside of town. Sid would go there right after his psychology presentation and spend the nights there, either together with A. or alone.

After about half an hour of starrng at the ceiling Sid finally rolled over and let himself drop to the floor from where he crawled towards the door again.

He only packed the most important things, then he returned to his bed and fell into the blissful oblivion of sleep.

Sid was ripped out of his dreams by the sound of his phone very, very early in the morning. From the ungodly hour and the french number of his screen he could tell that it was his friend Theo who was prone to call when he was drunk and sleep deprived. Sid usually welcomed these calls but tonight he remembered everything he'd have to take care of tomorrow and so he grabbed the phone and threw it into a corner.

When he awoke again the next morning he saw that Theo had tried calling him 6 more times before giving up.

Sid took a shower, got dressed and finished packing. Then he hasted off to university. In the subway he tried to practise the presentation and when he looked up from his unorganized notes he realized that he was not the only one who was desperately trying to punch something into his head that he should have prepared at home.

He arrived late, Maria. came even later but they began somewhat on time anyway. While Maria. talked fast and more than scripted Sid mostly read right from the pages before him. He wasn't really present, his mind had already wandered off to the abandoned army base beside the lake to which he would finally return to spend an entire weekend there.

Still the presentation went pretty well. When it was over they congratulated each other and Sid went down to the cafeteria where he filled himself a box with noodles so he would have something to eat out there in the wilderness.

He went down to the station to take the subway to that city in the outskirts of the metropolis he



called his home, where he had to catch a bus that would take him to the gates of the base. But the train was late and when it arrived it only went two stations further before stopping due to technical difficulties. He took another train and had to get out and change because of reconstruction work, into a train that was cancelled.

The tension on the platform he had stranded at slowly grew and Sid saw a couple of old ladies screaming at a little man in uniform who looked as if he expected to feel the pulping of their umbrellas on his skull any second. But he was saved from their fury by the arriving train and with a sigh of relief he sank down onto his little plastic chair.

When Sid finally arrived almost an hour late at the crowded central station his back was aching from the giant backpack he carried, and he was covered in sweat.

But nevertheless he felt alive. The feeling of travelling had taken hold of him again and when he took the green bus up into the woods he felt how all pressures and worries seemed to fade away. He got out at the giant tower with the remains of hammer and sickle and entered through a hole in the wall.

After dropping off his backpack in the ballroom he met Nathan, S. and A. at the other end of the areal and they began to film.

They were just shooting a scene in which the crazy card maker discovers that a certain hole in the wall is gone, when S. screamed up: "I can't take it anymore, I'm going home!"

He was in the middle of a swarm of mosquitoes that for some strange reason were only hovering around him. "Oh common, it's not that bad, just one more scene!", Nathan begged, but S. stopped filming and abruptly turned around.

Sid had no chance but to follow him and return to the giant dancehall where S. and Nathan got their stuff together and told them that they would be back tomorrow around noon.

A. and Sid put up their tent in the dirty old ballroom. As they talked their voices echoed through the air.

After unrolling their mattresses Sid got out the food he had bought earlier and his little black pipe and book.

He took a small hit he handed it over to A. who was lamenting the fact that they had not gone swimming.

After they listened to the music that streamed out of the laptop for a while A. suddenly said she would take a shower and after throwing off a few cloths she climbed through the window and ran out onto the meadow. Hesitantly Sid followed her and they stood in the pouring rain for a while.



When they returned into the wide dry windowframe, looking out into the grey sky, Sid suddenly saw a bold man in a black shirt as he was just turning around the corner.

He turned to A. to tell her, but she was just standing there with closed eyes, listening to the sound of the rain.

Sid went back inside, A. followed him and he told her of his startling vision. He approached a dark backroom in which he expected to find another door.

But in the wall he had once seen an opening in were only a few windows. He peeked through, but he couldn't see anyone anymore. What strange creatures might be roaming around out there? Was he part of a bunch of hired brutes, supposed to guard these realms from intruders? Somehow that option seemed preferable when Sid thought back at the jar they had found on a nearby mantelpiece about a year ago. 'Don't think of the heart in the jar!', Sid told himself as he entered an even darker room next to him.

Suddenly he paused when he sensed a vibration in the walls around him.

"What's that sound?"; A. said as she appeared behind him.

"I don't know..."; Sid answered in a desperate attempt to make his voice sound like everything was going just fine...

Then the thunder set in and Sid was shaken when sudden shivers rolled down his back.

Was the sick mind roaming these lands again, that had placed that heart on the old lithic mantelpiece beneath the symbols of fascism and communism a year ago?

What strange rituals were held around here in dark, stormy summernights?

Sid maneuvered A. back into the ballroom and filled the lid of the bottle he had brought with him, with it's green content which he lit on fire. "I wonder how much it would hurt to drink it like that..."; Sid said but when he saw A.'s unapproving and concerned look he blew out the blue flame that danced on the surface and took a sip.

Then he handed the provisionary cup over to A. and as she drank he said: "Give me 3 words!".

She answered and he got to work:

The uprooted generation

*the storm raged
they were caged
by the thunder,
inside the hall*



where his ancestors used to ball
although the idea he'd call
those men his ancestors
was just hilarious
it had just been a system
his forefathers had lived in
but which had landed in the dustbin
of history
he couldn't see
did they define him?
his ancestors?
his nation?
his generation?
the girl with whom had danced
in the rain earlier
and who was now lying
next to him in this ballroom
would return to her ancestors land soon
was she searching for something there
he hoped to find here?
We are the uprooted generation
he told himself
and it rang true
maybe it wasn't that bad, if this
was what they would do

She read it and exclaimed: "Really good!" with a big smile on her face.

Then he saw how she turned it around and asked: "What's this?"

"It's a poem I wrote for Mar..."

"Can I read this as well?"

Sid nodded and kept scribbling into his little black book. When she finished reading she picked up the book by William S. Burroughs she had been reading and placed it between the pages.



Then she got out her sleeping bag and as she unrolled it she asked Sid if he could tell her a bedtime story.

Sid picked up his touchwriter and began to read a story he had been writing on about a year ago:

“The wise, wrinkled medicine man raised his brown bottle and took a big sip out of it. Then, lost in deep thought he looked at Umma Gunga, one of the few adolescent members of the tribe that hadn’t left the Jungle for the big city yet. His eyes wandered from the washed out red basecap of the boy over the corporate logo on his shirt before they settled on the bottle of cheap booze in his hand again.

When he noticed Umma Gunga’s pleading look he held onto the bottle a little tighter and furiously shook his head. With a deeply serious expression on his face he told him that alcohol was a great demon and would most likely wipe out their race completely very soon, then he took another big sip.

With milky eyes he gazed towards the woods and declared that it wasn’t even that powerful a drug anyway. If the old rituals of the tribe were still upheld they both would have tasted the most beautiful hallucinogens on the planet one day.

When he noticed the sudden spike of interest by the boy when he uttered these words he carried on, thankful for the attention he received.

He took another big sip and then told the story of one of the oldest rituals the tribe used to perform. Whenever an old member would get to the point where death was imminent they would go into the jungle, towards one of the most secluded and holy places. Only the old and those with deadly diseases were allowed in that part of the jungle, no one else dared to go there, for whenever someone would enter that region, it was to meet an ancient horrible creature with a name long forgotten to everyone now.

This creature lives in a big web in the treetops and when it notices someone moving beneath, it glides down and lands on their head. There it rips a small hole into the skull and lets a string of saliva drip into the open wound.

That’s when it begins.

Little is known about what actually happens to you when you have been bitten by the creature since barely anyone has ever returned from it, but it’s said to be the most beautiful feeling you have ever felt, so dazzling and overwhelming that you let the creature drag you to it’s net and weave you into a cocoon to slowly eat away at your



body. But you wouldn't feel any of it for you would be lost in an amazing world of never ending pleasures powerful, unimaginable and indescribable until you have felt it for yourself, or so they say. Those few who against all odds did come back. But even if they might have managed to escape the grip of the creature, they couldn't escape the wonders they had tasted and eventually they all would return to the jungle to sacrifice their bodies to the creature for the pleasures of the mind it offered them in return.

The old shaman took two more sips and gazed off into the depths of the jungle, knowing the creature was living somewhere deep inside there.

He raised his bottle, pointed into the darkness and proclaimed it was one days worth of walking, straight into this direction and that he himself would very soon go on that journey towards death, for he was old and about to die.

But suddenly his face froze and turned to ashes, as if he had seen something horrible in the deep, green darkness.

He jumped up and let out a loud heartshaking cry into the night. Then he ran over to a nearby stone wall and began inscribing shapes into it, scraping with his bare hands until his fingertips ripped open and he was drawing with his own blood.

A small crowd began to gather and joined Umma Gunga watching the old man in astonishment.

For a while no one said a word, only the beat of drums from a nearby hut were to be heard. Suddenly the deranged old man turned around and began to speak in an entrancing intonation, his grim face lit up by the flickering light of a nearby campfire. He told the bystanders of fast approaching doom while gesturing at the shapes he had inscribed into the wall.

Particularly one of the figures had caught Uma Gungas attention; carved into the stone there were the outlines of two gaping, almost human looking eyes, except for the fact that they were attached sideways to a small hairy head. Underneath them the old man had carved a small hole into the rock, that seemed to be the mouth of the creature, with large insect like pincers at it's sides from which the blood of the medicine mans fingernails was slowly dripping down the rock.

Next to this there was a mural showing a few men with nets and what appeared to be equipment conceived by a western civilization, hunting and capturing smaller versions of the same creature.



By this time the shamans words had completely transformed into some sort of chant and he danced ecstatically to the beat of the drums that had now swollen to a powerful roar.

Some of the bystanders joined him in dance, others turned away to resume whatever they had been doing before.

Umma Gunga slowly approached the medicine mans bottle that was lying on the ground to his feet, completely ignored by him now, slowly leaking out.

He grabbed it and hesitantly raised it to his nose. When his nostrils captured the stinging scent of the alcohol he grimaced in disgust. The medicine man was right, alcohol wasn't a considerably good drug and in the long term could only do harm. He remembered how he had once, quite some time ago by now, attended one of the last major ritual celebrations his tribe had held. There he had had just a little sip of the brew the elder members of the tribe had prepared.

An experience that changed his life.

It was such an intense feeling of connectivity to the earth and all living beings, everything around him and when he closed his eyes today and concentrated he could still evoke the memories of it.

This experience was probably one of the main reasons why he stayed with his tribe instead of following the call of civilization like so many others at his age had.

His gaze touched the shape of the creature the medicine man had engraved into the stone and it was in this moment that he decided to follow the old shamans directions to find the mystical animal and the wonders it promised.

He turned around and went to his hut to pack a bag with some basic provisions and to get some rest.

When he lay on his old dirty mattress and gazed at the stars though a whole in the roof he listened to the soothing sound of the medicine mans chant a little longer, until his thoughts turned into dreams.

The next morning he quickly nourished his body for the trip, then he grabbed his bag and started walking into the direction the medicine man had pointed to. He passed the stone wall in front of which the old man had collapsed at some point this morning and was now sleeping in the dirt before it. Umma Gunga wondered where all that energy had come from that gave him the strength to dance all night, if you looked at him now it was hard to believe he was the same person. His eyes were sunk back deep



into caves in his skull and the sun shined mercilessly on the countless canyons that ran though his leatherish skin.

With a slight feeling of anxiety he looked into the deep green, light swallowing jungle that lay before him, then he tried to clear his mind of all doubts or generally any thought whatsoever and started walking.

He had been walking for almost one and a half days now and the doubts in his head grew louder, whether he had taken the wrong direction, already missed the spot, or if the whole story was just the product of an old and confused mind driven crazy by a world that passed by too fast.

He had almost reached the resolve to give up and turn around. Irresolute he looked back into the direction he came from, staring into the pulsating green of the jungle that lay behind him, when suddenly, out of the blue, he noticed some movements in the branches over him and felt a light weight drop on his head.

Out of reflex he raised his hand up to brush through his hair, but before he could grasp anything a sudden stinging, intense and at the same time absolutely numbing feeling spread from his scalp throughout his entire body in a matter of seconds and he plumaged into a black void. The last thing he felt was an almost fluffy, pulsating little body and a few drops of his own blood under his fingertips before everything was swallowed by the darkness.

At first it was as if all of his senses had been turned off, there was simply nothing to see, hear smell.

Then they came back one after the other.

He felt as if he was floating, completely weightless and shapes began taking form in front of him. Something that looked like a giant DNA string, triangular structures and a viperish silhouette came flying right at him in flashing colors which got more and more intense until it became almost unbearable. But the maddening feeling passed and they faded over into a clear, untainted, gleaming white.

Out of the luminance a body began to form. The first thing he could make out were wafting strands of shimmering hair.

The contours that manifested before him were perfect, unflawed and slowly transformed into a shining white, indefinitely beautiful body of a woman.

Now also her face became visible and as she turned it towards him and saw him right



into the eyes he had the most overwhelming feeling he had ever experienced.

He had never seen this creature before, nevertheless he was absolutely sure;

He loved her

He had always loved her, somehow she was all the women that had ever rejected him combined into one beautiful being that now turned towards him with eyes that promised him everything he had ever yearned for in his life.

He felt so relieved, feeling her presence coming towards him, more and more capturing him in a warm intense glow.

Then in a singularly perfect moment she finally reached him and embraced him and it was only then that he noticed that heavy suffocating severity that had been smothering him; in the second that it was relieved, by her.

He answered her embrace and in perfect unity they were the only entity floating in the infinite deep blue nothingness.

Her body was so soft that he felt as if he was falling into her, though her body, over and over again, as if they were in a surreal dreamlike scenario where that would be possible.

Suddenly all the pain of material existence flooded back into his body

Slowly vision was restored to his eyes. He could make out the movements of a few dark silhouettes in front of the bright blue and green of jungle and sky above him, handling enigmatic devices and apparently struggling to detain something small but very fast.

Uma Gunga's gaze slowly wandered down and he was filled with horror and disgust as he realized that what he was looking at was his own torso! His entire body was covered by a white plasmatic substance that bound him to the ground and rendered him completely incapable of any movement.

Then he noticed that the glowing white was spoiled by a gaping wound in his right leg shining bright in a light red.

He stared at it in astonishment over the fact that he did not experience any pain. His thoughts were disrupted by a face appearing in his field of vision and words spoken in some strange language reached his ear.

It sounded excited almost manically so. The head the words originated from was that of an older man, his light skin was covered with dirt, scars and sweat. A cowboy hat shaded his clear green eyes, which looked right into Uma Gungas with an intensity



that was almost hypnotic.

Noise from the people behind him shortly caused the man to turn around and leave Uma Gunga's field of vision for a short period of time in which Uma Gunga kept inspecting the white substance he was covered with. Although the surface looked almost liquid it actually seemed to be pretty solid and however hard he tried to move, he could not break out of the gummy matter. He actually did not really seem to be moving at all.

The man with the cowboy hat reappeared in Uma Gunga's sight holding what appeared to be some kind of small axe.

In a deep calming voice he uttered a few words to Uma Gunga then he suddenly raised the axe and hammered it down into the white substance right above Uma Gunga's chest.

A crack appeared running up to the point where the substance was touching his chin and all the way down his right leg.

The man with the hat leaned forward, slid his fingers into the crack and while screaming out in exhaustion ripped the white substance apart thereby uncovering Uma Gunga's body.

Then he lay his arm around his shoulders and with another repressed outcry lifted Uma Gunga up onto his feet.

His eyes sought Uma Gunga's and his look seemed to ask if he was doing alright. Apparently somewhat satisfied with Uma Gunga's reply he removed the support of his arms holding him upright.

Uma Gunga felt the blood rush to his head, everything before his eyes turned black and as if he had absolutely no control over his body he collapsed and fell back down to the ground."

Sid finished the chapter and noticed A. had fallen asleep.

He put down his touchwriter and tried to make out the parts of the schedule for their shoot tomorrow in the darkness that surrounded him.

Then he turned the paper around and tried to read the reversed script Nathan had sent him a few days ago. They had both developed an idea for their film once, after Sid had found this abandoned army base and decided to make a film here. But then S. had joined, and it more and more became their film.



When Sid looked down at the revisions Nathan had made he realized that almost none of his original ideas had remained. But instead Nathan seemed to turn their film more and more into some kind of polemic against the portion of society that he felt were taking away his city, the place where he had grown up in.

Sid remembered how Nathan had asked him a month ago to take a closer look at his flatmate Franz and record things like certain phrases or reoccurring behavior.

"I want to develop my character for our film into a hipster!", Nathan had told Sid and now he asked himself if their entire film had been redrawn into his personal take on that cultural group.

Were he and A. portraying these types as well in his eyes? and was S. in on the whole ploy or was not even Nathan himself fully aware of the strange undertones of the script? Sid remembered how he had found them at the other end of the areal earlier, writing onto the walls for a dream-sequence they would shoot tomorrow. S. had written sentences in the language he had designed himself that looked vaguely Arabic and Sid realized that the scripture was supposedly actually functioning, with its own grammar and so on, and he wondered what meaning the sentences held that would show up at a prominent point in their film?

Were they slogans like "Death to the hipsters" or "Die yuppie, die"?

Sid decided to confront Nathan tomorrow and crawled into his backpack as well.

He looked outside into the lightning that was still lighting up the dark sky and listened to the rain and the other strange sounds that filled the air in these parts. Something out there sounded like drumbeats that slowly soothed him into a soft sleep full of dreams.

Sid opened his eyes and the cracked ceiling of the ballroom appeared.

Light was shining in through the big glass windows and he could hear birds singing, their beautiful songs echoing off the walls urging him to rise. Sid looked to his side and saw A., still sleeping peacefully beside him. He tried to get up without waking her but every sound was multiplied by the acoustics of the hall. A. looked up at him and he said: "Lets go swimming!". She mumbled something, turned around and fell back asleep until another sound woke her up again and she said with tired eyes: "Lets go swimming!"

They got dressed and Sid picked up his backpack, then they walked down to the hole in the wall that surrounded them and across the street onto the pier. Sid undressed again and after some hesitation he jumped, head first into the cold blue before him.



After their swim they walked down the road to a place called 'the canteen', that Sid had seen when he drove by with the bus yesterday.

They walked past the colorful graffiti at the roadside and passed a small information point where a film that was shown in a booth told them about the border that ran through the nearby woods 2 decades ago.

The video ended with images of plants and animal life spreading out over the former zone of death. Sid and A. walked on around the corner and saw two heavily tattooed men sitting in front of the building, beneath two big German flags, eating meat. Sid walked up to them and asked if this was the entrance to the canteen and one of the men replied: "Yeah just walk in, it's open."

"They don't serve food there though...", the other man replied.

"Don't listen to him, he's dumb! He's got his mental papers in his pocket."

Sid and A. smiled and nodded irritated as they passed them and entered a staircase that lead them upstairs where they were welcomed by an older woman in a white coat who stood behind a counter. When Sid asked her what they were serving she listed a couple of dishes with meat.

"Do you have anything vegetarian?"; A. asked and the woman said: "I can make you some eggs and potato salad with bacon bits..."

They asked her to leave away the bacon and sat down at a table at the other side of the room.

The walls around them were plastered with old commercial plates and Sid wondered how they got there.

These symbols of capitalism were from times long before the reunification, had the owners bought them somewhere afterwards in order to welcome the new system they now lived in?

Sid got out his machinery in order to recharge

A. noticed his suffering looks and he felt like he had to explain himself.

..", he said and A. looked angry.



They finished their meal and went back down to the ballroom where Sid could no longer restrain himself [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

'No!', Sid exclaimed and when A. gave him another concerned look he excused himself and went up to the roof.

He knew it wouldn't ease the pain to [REDACTED] reveal what monsters had been roaming his fantasies...and yet he wanted nothing more [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the lyrics of a song that kept creeping through his head, [REDACTED]

Come on and save me
Oh won't you save me
from the ranks
of the freaks
who suspect
they will never love anyone

[REDACTED]



Maybe [REDACTED] he would not be writing so manically, as he did in the last few weeks... Sid didn't know what to think, did not know what to do, so he got out his little black book and began to write:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] Nathan appeared in the dark attic and told him that breakfast was ready.

Sid followed him down and when he sat down beside him he asked: "So have you made this movie into an anti-hipster film?"

"I thought that was pretty much obvious to everyone!", Nathan said with a surprised look on his face.

"I didn't realize it until Sid told me last night, but I guess I'm just an actor so...", A. said and added: "Well I like the idea anyway!"

Sid nodded slowly and said: "My only concern would be...weren't you and Phoebe talking about the question whether I could be labeled a hipster?"

"Yeah..."

"So I'm a hipster to you?!"

"Yeah, but I don't mean that in a bad way!"

They began a discussion about the term and whether it was a negative or a positive one.

"He's wearing hipster cloths, he listens to hipster music, reads hipster books...he's a hipster!", Nathan exclaimed and when he went on to call Hunter S. Thompson's a hipster author Sid jumped up and began to punch him on the head.

"Ehh, you hit me man!"

"Yeah!"

It had only be a soft blow to the head though and neither of them seemed really angry but inside Sid was actually quite agitated.

"My problem is not that I don't want to be a hipster because I would prefer to be labeled as a hippie or something like that...I just resent that entire construct in general that you seem to place over the world in order to put the people you encounter into boxes! I don't want to see the world that way and I don't want to propagate that worldview!"

He went out into the atrium where he sat down to write until Nathan came out and told him they were filming now.

So Sid followed him. He would still do everything in order to finish the film, whatever the product would look like in the end...

They went over to the main road where they would film their arrival.

"I hope you know that you're the only non-hipster character in the film!", Nathan said as they walked down to the hole in the wall where they filmed the arrival of the card-maker and his two friends on the mysterious grounds.



The mosquitoes were back at it in the damp and dark woods and soon S. began screaming again. He had come with long pants and sleeves this time but the beasts had apparently mutated from some soviet toxic that was covering these grounds and they even stung through Sid's thick jacket. As Nathan and S. prepared the next scene Sid went through the hole and sat down beside the road where the headwind of the passing cars kept the air clear from all bloodsuckers. He decided to pass the time until the next shoot with a little experiment and began waving to the people that drove by.

Out of the 50 cars that passed him about two responded to his wave. The rest kept starring at the road nervously or gave him looks that seemed almost horrified at this sight that came so unexpected and was so out of the ordinary.

A. appeared beside him.

"One of them might end up calling the police...," she said and went on to reenact the call: "Hi I want to report someone who's disturbing traffic! He's waving at passing cars!! It's a real threat to safety, you have to do something!"

Nathan appeared in the hole and called them over to start filming.

Sid remarked after the first take that you could barely see anything else but his face in the frame and proposed that S. would move a little further away with the camera. "We decided on that style and now we have to stick to it!", S. said and Sid kept telling himself: 'As long as the film gets done...'

They shot a scene in which Nathan's character kept talking about the drugs he had taken in New York and after it was over Sid told him: "When we started we said we wanted to evoke a dream-like world with the film remember...? I wonder if the fact that something like a hipster appears in it now, takes away from that?"

You really seem to have a problem with that!", Nathan exclaimed, "What am I supposed to think there!? Why would you complain if you aren't a hipster?"

I'm not complaining about the fact that the film is anti-hipster I'm complaining that it claims that there is such a thing! But you can't even see my point because you're trapped in that constructed world view!"

Sid wondered if he should tell Nathan to cleanse the doors of his perception but the words sounded hollow in his head and he began to wonder whether that would be something a hipster would say...

When they returned to the ballroom he asked Nathan: "So what does it mean now in the end when I kill your characters?"



He felt more and more like he was a character in a Bret Easton Ellis novel, but at the same time he wondered whether that was a book a hipster would read... This whole thing was beginning to turn him crazy!

"Oh common don't focus too much on that! In the end there is not much sense in any of it anyway!", Nathan answered and they went on to film a scene in the attic where the card maker was supposed to meet a couple of his duplicates and so Sid had to appear in different parts of the room to create footage that would later be edited together to make it look like he was standing beside himself.

"Are you sure this will work like you've planned it?", Sid asked and when S. nodded furiously Sid decided to believe him and kept going walking through the room without listening much to their instructions, except when S. told him that he was out of frame or in a part where he would have to stand later to play one of his twins.

After a short lunch break they began to set up a scene that was supposed to take place in the atrium, but when rain began pouring down on them they moved inside and set up another scene in the ballroom.

Finally the rain stopped again, so they filmed the scenes outside and finished their schedule for the day.

Sid and A. said goodbye and went down to the lake where they met Camille and her father. They were on their way to France in the van that the self-proclaimed Anarchist called his home. After swimming in the lake that reflected the pink clouds above they sat on the pier for some time and while A. and Camille talked about mosquitoes her father and Sid just sat there and stared at the horizon where the sun slowly sank into the lake. Sid looked over at the old man and wondered if he would end up in a similar position one day.

Finally Camille and her dad went on and Sid and A. returned to the halls they called their home these days.

Sid sat down and stared at his touchwriter, [REDACTED] until A. asked him how he was doing.

Sid responded with a sigh back and she continued: "That doesn't sound very happy.

After he had told A. [REDACTED] she began to tell him what he should do...

He tried to escape her well meant advice by lighting his pipe and after he handed it to her they both enjoyed the sounds of their silence echo through the ballroom.

"How much longer do you have to study?", A. asked and Sid replied: "One year..."

"And do you have any idea what you want to do after that?"



Sid started thinking and for some reason he started to see nothing but grey in his future.

"I don't know!", he suddenly realized.

After some silence in which he thought of all the possibilities that weighed so hard on his shoulders he exclaimed: "Damn I'll have to make money with my writing!"

He wasn't sure whether he had realized that this was something he was expected to do, what he wanted to do with his life or what he felt he had to do.

Once again A. began to give him advice and he could barely take it.

After she had listed him different steps in how he would have to research on the internet for publishing firms he finally said with desperation in his voice: "Apart from the fact that I don't feel like I could do these task you've described there I more and more get the feeling like all that really matters in the end are connections to the right people..."

"Yeah but connections can be made...", A. said and suddenly proposed: "You could hire me as your manager!"

Sid looked at her and tried to read in her face. But he was unable to make out any contours in the dark.

"Are you serious...?", Sid asked and when she said yes he caught himself throwing numbers through the air.

"That would be really amazing...I'd give you 50%..."

"I want 60!", A. replied and once again Sid wasn't able to read her face in the darkness before him. A taunting laugh echoed back from the walls until it ended in silence.

"Could you write a book?", A asked into the silence.

"I guess that's what I am doing right now...", Sid answered and after some hesitation he went on:

"But I'm somehow uncertain what that thing it will be in the end..."

"Meaning...?"

"Well...Meaning that I don't even know the answer to that for example! I don't know what's brewing there in the depths of my little black book..."

Sid got out the absinth and filled the lid. Then he lit it and watched the flames dance for a while.

"I guess we should celebrate then, you becoming my manager...", He said as he raised the lid.

He looked up at her and blew out the flames. Then he handed the provisionary cup to her.

"Yehaw!", she responded and after taking a sip she gave it back to Sid who raised it toasting to the both of them and drank the other half.

"I believe our business just must end up well, now!", A. said, wiping the last drops from her lips.

"Our business...", Sid repeated her words that left an uncomfortable feeling as they echoed away.



"Do you have the feeling that your stuff you did at your internship at that agency kind of taught you some stuff?", Sid asked and he felt like he was probing his friend for her business skills, trying to find out if the contract they had both entered into was profitable for him.

"Yeah, I really think so! Because I kind of saw how that kind of business works. If you just...support the people in doing what they try to do!", A. explained and slowly Sid began to sense that feeling of unease disappear.

"And I also think its a really nice thing!

Because you know; you can let the artist be the artist...and so they don't actually have to do the business!

You're like the in-between person!"

"It sounds kind of wonderful for the artist..."; Sid said and added: 'and kind of horrible for that poor 'inbetween-person'; in his head.

"Yeah, but it is! I mean that's why you've got people who do that!", A. told him and Sid went on to say: "You know Jim Morrison once said...he was talking about native cultures and ancient civilizations and about the shaman that many tribal communities used to have..."

No one really knew what exactly his role was, especially he himself did not know, but he just had to let his trip unfold and then it would have some kind of effect on, some kind of function for the rest of society..."

He paused for a short time and then added contemplatively:

"I like that..."

"Yeah it's good!", A. answered and he could see her smile in the darkness.

Sid got out his touchwriter and began to write and after some time A. unrolled her backpack and crept in.

"I guess I'm going to bed soon...", A. said and Sid asked: "Do you want another bedtime story?"

"Oh yeah please continue where I fell asleep and started to dream about jungles and creatures last night!"

Sid got out his touchwriter and began to read, his voice echoing back from the walls around them:

"The second awakening was rude and after it everything developed at an astonishingly fast pace.

When Uma Gunga opened his eyes again he was lying in a shining white bed. His gaze first caught the ceiling of linen above him, then it went down to the footend of



his pallet where the bearded man with the cowboy hat was standing, still covered in dirt and scars but with an expression on his face that looked even more excited, almost to the extend of madness so...

Next to him there was a blond woman in a white coat who leaned forward and suddenly stared talking to Uma Gunga in a language that was somewhat similar to his. It took him a while to realize that he could actually understand the gist of what she was saying.

She told him they were a team of scientists from Europe and North America who were looking for a substance unknown to civilization up until now.

This team had brought Uma Gunga to the medical camp in the base they had set up a few months earlier.

There a doctor looked after him and analyzed his blood.

In the camp next door they looked after a different patient. They took all kinds of probes from the creature they had captured in the jungle, while Uma Gunga was getting better, and after little more than a week they had subtracted and synthesized the substance within the saliva of the creature.

At that point the man with the cowboy head who had walked up beside Uma Gunga opened his fist and exposed two little light green pills to him

Uma Gunga looked down at the pills and then into the face of the man. He was looking at him with an encouraging smile.

Then he took one of the pills and swallowed it.

Uma Gunga extended his hand and took the other one. Then he sank back down and closed his eyes.

Again he immediately felt a strange sensation not as powerful as the last time he experienced it, but still intense, numbing his body, but this time apparently from within his stomach accompanied with a slight feeling of sickness.

Again it felt as though he plummeted into a black void, but not everything was swallowed by the darkness.

And not all his senses disappeared but still he was pretty deprived of sight, smell touch; only making out the vague silhouette of a man with a cowboy hat with a triumphant and somewhat distant and distorted grin on his face.

Next to him, slowly a body started to appear while the room around it was morphing, slipping backwards in a stream of colors and shapes.



Uma Gunga could now feel his stomach revolting furiously as the sensations became more and more intense.

The area around the body was illuminated by a gleaming white glow that was expanding from it, promiscuous with strands of shining hair.

Again he could slowly make out the cloudy contours of an infinitively beautiful face belonging to the seemingly perfect woman the body was forming into and again this sight was accompanied by a powerful rush of emotion and untainted love for this being.

But her contours stayed blurred and she continued to waft at the other side of the room. The unsettling feeling in his stomach worsened.

Then his gaze was captured by the vision of the man in the armchair beside the body.

His cowboy hat had fallen from his head and he was looking up with an expression of absolute fulfillment and triumph. The sickness in Uma Gungas stomach became almost unbearable.

He followed the look of the man and realized he was seeing the body as well. The roaring of his stomach grew louder and louder.

The man slowly extended his hand. Uma Gungas vision became blurred and for a few moments it looked to him as though the man was putting chains around the body, possessing her, enslaving her. He wanted to sit up, jump towards them and break up the scene in the haze before him but when he tried to move his stomach sent an uproar through his body so intense that he had to fall back and embrace it with his arms. Rocking back and forwards like that, unable to get up he was forced to witness the man extending his hand towards the body. Uma Gunga wanted to cry out but he choked over the taste that arose from his guts and all he could utter was a rattling breath.

It seemed to take forever for the hand to reach it's destination. Uma Gungas gaze went back and forth from the gentle gleaming visitation to man's face that was morphing more and more into a grotesque grimace of triumph and joy. Uma Gunga's intestines seemed to be on fire.

He took one last longing look at the gorgeous face that was, in spite of everything that seemed to be out of order, still looking towards him with an unbroken graciousness and love.

The sensation in his visceral organs seemed to calm down a little and he was able to



breath more freely again.

Then the man's hand reached her thy.

Uma Gunga's bowels seemed to explode and in a burning burst he leaned forward and threw up a warm stream of blood and vomit.

When he regained consciousness he felt cold and empty inside. Again everything seemed to happen at accelerated speed, passing by in front of Uma Gunga who felt strangely indifferent to it all.

The team of western scientists took down their tents and returned to civilization, leaving Uma Gunga behind. He returned to his tribe where life went on as if nothing had happened.

Only the behavior of the medicine man had changed, he had remained as manic and strange as he had been that night when Uma Gunga had left and his behavior grew even more deranged and curious when he told him about what he had witnessed in the jungle.

Now as they were sitting together at the fire once again he had one of his introverted, almost catatonic phases, though, staring with empty eyes into the green darkness of the jungle. He did not even squinch when a figure appeared in the woods and came walking towards them.

It was as though the old man had already been expecting him and as the man came closer the medicine man turned around and looked at Uma Gunga with an endlessly sad and broken expression written into the canyons running down his face.

He remained silent though and so Uma Gunga looked up and greeted the stranger as he arrived at the fire.

He recognized him as one of the sons of the tribe who had left their community a long time ago to live in one of the big cities of so called civilization.

The man was dressed accordingly, his clothes dirty from the journey, but not as washed out as Uma Gunga's and matching one another. The face under the expensive looking basecap was friendly and promising.

After the medicine man kept ignoring the newcomer Uma Gunga offered him a place to sit beside the fire and a sip from the brown bottle of the old man who was not guarding it as furiously as he used to.

The man who introduced himself as Miguel accepted thankfully and after staring



into the fire for a few moments contemplatively he started to talk.

At first he acted a bit secretive and mysterious but then his general tales of the latest developments in the outside world became interesting when he started to describe a new phenomenon that was slowly spreading all over the continent and beyond it's borders.

Some kind of new hallucinogen had appeared on the market and while apparently not being physically addictive its effects were said to be so intense and beautiful that you would never want to miss them again.

Reportedly your inner most desired were somehow answered by it, many told of seeing some kind of beautiful female being...

When Miguel noticed the expression on Uma Gunga's face as he uttered these words he paused and looked at him inquiring. Uma Gunga did not say anything but just nodded his head encouragingly, as a sign for Miguel to continue.

Miguel gazed into the fire for a few seconds, took another sip from the bottle and then went on to say that though the synthesized drug was effective it seemed to have a few downsides, primarily, the fact that it apparently wasn't as intense and powerful as it could have been...

There seemed to be a "more natural" way to introduce the hallucinogenics into your system, one that felt much more pure, immaculate, some would say. That's why auxiliary to the syntheticized drug, for a much higher price of course, the creatures from whom's saliva the drug is extracted, themselves were being sold.

At the sound of these words the shaman suddenly let out a loud and powerful cry of agony.

He jumped up towards Miguel, grabbed him by the shoulders and started shaking him while uttering incoherent words of great danger and despair. Then he suddenly stopped as his eyes wandered past Miguel's astonished face and stared motionlessly into the jungle behind him.

Uma Gunga followed his gaze but all he could see was the green of the plants.

The endlessly deep, hypnotizing green.

Everything around him seemed to become quiet, inwardly as he felt his heartbeat rise and his breath streaming sharp and rhythmically out of his lungs.

When distant chanting reached his ears he slowly turned around and once again he witnessed the shaman dance in front of the wall drawing in blood on the stone and



shouting in rhythmic spasms. Uma Gungas gaze wandered down towards his own body and he realized his hands beating in sync with the shaman's movements on a wooden board before him. His hands appeared to be a little further away from him as usual though and all in all it almost seemed as if he was outside of his own body, floating slightly above, glancing down. Then he turned to the right and saw Miguel very close beside himself who a bit hesitantly and with a confused but slightly ecstatic expression on his face followed his example alongside with a few others who had come out of their huts to join them. A strong feeling of connectivity fulfilled Uma Gunga, to his fellow tribemembers and all living things around him, Miguel drumming beside him, the villages dog who was howling apparently also synchronously behind them, the animals in the jungle moving, creeping, crawling within, and the jungle itself in its powerful and eternal beauty.

The drumming, that was now emanating from the entire tribe that had huddled around the shaman, became increasingly intense and accelerated in speed, while Uma Gunga was beating on the wood to his feet that crumbled under his fingers without him even noticing but simply continuing to drum upon the ground itself sending out shockwaves through the earth.

The oscillation joined in with the vibrations extending from the people around him as the drumming reached a climax and just when Uma Gunga was about to collapse in exhaustion the medicine man let out a deep and staggering cry into the night that echoed back from the jungle around them in innumerable voices that abruptly stopped their drumming and left the area around him in complete silence. When the shaman started to talk the entire crowd seemed to lean forward as to make absolutely sure that they would not miss a single word...

His voice was deep powerful and very melodic and he told them that the connectivity they had just experienced would soon extend over all of mankind, over the entire world, connecting every living being on the planet.

It would be given to them by an ancient godlike being that itself was permanently connected within it's extensions. A common spirit that embodied all it's entities and would soon expand over all living things on this planet.

While uttering these words he had slowly approached Uma Gunga who had been so captivated by the old mans voice and every sound of every living being around them he neglected his visual sense and only realized the shaman had approached him as



he was towering above him. Uma Gunga looked up into eyes that glanced back down upon him with a warm and wise expression. The shaman extended his hand and with the blood that the stone wall he drew on had drawn from his fingertips and painted an ancient intertwined symbol on Uma Gungas forehead. When he started talking again Uma Gunga knew that he was speaking loud enough to address the entire crowd, but it seemed to him as if the medicine man was merely whispering and talking to no one else but him. He told him to follow Miguel back into the city, then turned to Miguel and summoned him to show Uma Gunga that enigmatic new drug he had talked about. The entire tribe still seemed to be entranced and connected by the moment they had just shared and so they all got active when the shaman instructed them to prepare their journey back into civilization.“

Sid wasn't sure if A. had fallen asleep when he looked over into the darkness beside him where she had been lying when he last saw her. But she did not make a sound of move and so he stopped reading and got out his little black book instead:

*Could it be
that the future that lies
before me
is not just a lie
but reality?*

Time was changing it's usual forms and so Sid was unable to determine how much longer he kept scribbling until he finally passed over into another, even more abstract but less lucid dream...

Sid awoke a few times as night turned into day. First it was another thunderstorm and the sudden feeling that the ceiling was coming down, then it was the uncomfortable pack of cloths that were his pillow and the urge to relief himself. But he kept returning to his dreams until he finally found something in the real world to cling to and pull himself out on. Sid sat up in his sleeping bag, searched for his touchwriter and when he



found it he opened his digital date book and tried to find out when the press screening of *The Rum Diary* would take place.

With excitement he realized that it would already be next week! Suddenly a landslide of anxieties began to wash over him. He wrote down some questions he would ask his Professor on Monday and told himself he'd have to rewatch all films based on Hunter until Tuesday! Then he picked up Paul Perry's unapproved biography about Thompson he had brought along and began to read. He got to a chapter about the *Campaign Trail '72* and read about all the things he had already read in Hunter's account of that time. Now, according to Perry he read what had 'really happened'... Sid remembered Thompson's views on biographies that were expressed at the beginning of the book and he felt like he understood. This claim of objectivity, the fact that they were writing what most remembered about an incident and therefore claimed that that was how it had happened was directly opposed to everything Gonzo - 'the least accurate and yet most truthful' form of journalism - stood for. The longer he read the book the more he got the feeling that the black and white photographs it was filled with held more truth about Hunter than the few colorful scrawls by Ralph Steadman that lay in the middle of the book.

A. awoke and they went down to the pier to go swimming in the rain. Afterwards they sat there and stared at the circles the raindrops drew onto the surface of the water, while A. smoked a cigarette. Then they returned to their ballroom and ate whatever eatable was left for breakfast. Afterwards both buried their noses in their books and Sid reached a chapter in Perry's book that marked a period in Hunter's life as his 'decline'. According to Perry it was a sudden rise in his cocaine use and his celebrity status that kept Hunter from producing as he had before.

Sid didn't buy it. It all seemed a bit constructed, a complex life forced into a simple narrative. But he saw that Perry needed to tell a tale of Hunter's demise to make his own editing work he had done for him seem like more of a victory. In the introduction he had prided himself as the one who got Dr. Gonzo to write again and who revived Hunter's career, that kind of reputation could only be upheld if you wrote about a terrible demise of the writer first.

Then the book went on to talk about the making of *Where the Buffalo Roam* and quoted Hunter who proclaimed that he sold options to his work to various people just for the money, thinking that none of the directors who bought the rights would ever produce a film. But the producer Art Linson who bought the rights to Hunter's obituary to Oscar Zeta Acosta's *The Banshee Screams for Buffalo Meat*, actually went through with his plans.

The content of the script was considered irrelevant by most editors at the Rolling Stone and it was changed numerous times, though not to better results.



In the end the film was a commercial and critical flop and yet Perry acknowledged that it spawned a new generation that took their views of Dr. Thompson from Bill Murrays portrayal in the film. "They think I'm the guy in the movie, not the guy I am.," Hunter once complained. After claiming to know what the breakup of Hunters marriage had really been like he went on to talk about his own time with the writer, painting it as a bright spot in otherwise darker and darker days.

The book ended with a quote by Thompson, calling himself a roadman for the boys upstairs followed by the Acknowledgements in which Perry called Unauthorized biography the truest form of history.

Sid put down the book and decided that it was yet another failed attempt of capturing Hunter S. Thompson.

A. awoke from the dreams she had fallen into after their morning swim and shortly thereafter Nathan and S. appeared.

After eating and fueling up on caffeine they went to work.

Suddenly rain began to pour again, heavier than before and Nathan who had a scene outside in the atrium soon was soaked.

They went on to shoot a scene in which A. and Nathan's characters met their doubles and Sid had nothing to do but to sit idly by and watch them. He had nothing left to read, nothing to occupy his mind.

[REDACTED]

He looked over at A. and Nathan talking to themselves on the set they had built at the other end of the ballroom. They seemed endlessly far away, separated from him by an invisible barrier. He was just as absent as their invisible doubles that would be edited into the picture later on.

Finally it was time for him to act again and so he followed S. up to the attic from where you could look down into the ballroom through a hole in a milky window. Sid wondered whether this position had been used the same way by members of certain agencies back when this building was still used by the Russians.

They ran out of scenes that took place beneath roofs and so they set out to shoot the dream sequence in the ruins at the other end of the areal.

When they arrived Sid's shirt was completely wet, clinging to his skin in a cold embrace.



In the place where S. had written on the walls 2 days ago water was dripping down on their heads in every corner and they had to watch out that the camera and the sensitive props would not be destroyed by the rain.

Sid tried to protect the artificial head and the masks they were using, from the rain while the rest filmed in the room next door.

The rain outside stopped but in the ruins it kept pouring down. When they went on to film the next scenes on the main road the sun broke through the clouds, though and soon their cloths were dry again. They filmed the last scene beside the wall that surrounded the base and returned to the ballroom to pack up their things. Nathan held a little speech and declared that all that was left was the breakfast scene they would shoot back in Berlin. Then they went down to the bus stop where they found out they would have to wait half an hour until the next bus would take them back into the city. Sid excused himself and went down to the lake one last time. He sat down and watched the sun sink, painting sky and water in red and pink. He ripped out a leaf of reed and built a boat out of it which he placed in the water. Soon the current took hold of it and carried it out onto the lake. As he watched it float away into the sunset Sid thought of their film

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the footage they had shot last year, of Sid manically painting a giant plan [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the film group decided to stop shooting because the leaves on the trees had changed their color and did no longer match what they had filmed so far, Sid did not really care anymore since for him the things they had filmed already had fulfilled a function that exceeded anything a finished film could do for him. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid suddenly felt the desperate need to finish what they had started, so he had contacted the others and urged them to finish this film.

And now it looked like they were actually about to complete their work!

The little reed yacht was barely visible anymore and Sid noticed that half an hour was almost over, so he turned his back on the lake, telling himself to return here soon, and went back to the bus stop.

They drove through fields covered with fog for a while until the grey buildings of their hometown began to rise around them. They entered the subway and when S. and Nathan reached their stop they said goodbye and told each other they would meet again soon to film the breakfast scene.



A. and Sid returned to their flat where civilization welcomed them back with a letter by their landlord company informing them that they took note of their letter of termination. After a few lines about possible repairs and restructuring that would have to be paid the letter informed them that the caretaker would come over in about a week to check on the condition of the flat. Sid told himself that these were good news since the janitor was a really sympathetic man, at least the last time he met him.

When they arrived at the end of the staircase Sid fell down onto the couch and almost immediately went to sleep.

Sid awoke to that all too familiar feeling of despair. Locked in these walls with the blue above him merely painted on. He wanted to get himself out of the grip of his fatigue by swimming but every lake lay just too far away.

Instead he had to make do with taking a cold shower.

Afterwards he sat down and began to sort and save the vast amount of notes before they would completely outgrow him.

It went well for a while, he connected loose ends and completed unfinished paragraphs, until his touchwriter decided to stop sending out the texts. Sid pushed it's inexistent buttons over and over again, but nothing happened. Finally he threw the diabolic machine into a corner and decided it was time to start watching Hunter S. Thompson caught on film with *Where the Buffalo roam*. A. joined him and as Bill Murray appeared on screen she lit his pipe. She leaned down and kissed the gas mask he had pulled onto his face, breathing out the fumes directly into the mouth-opening.

Sid got out his little black book and wrote:

*the world is the way you see it
you look at reality
and everything you see
is the truth*

Thompson is whoever you want him to be!



Am I escaping into my phantasies
is this man I'm studying
slowly becoming the man
that greets me in the mirror?

Sid looked up from his little black book again and watched Bill Murray drinking cocktails in a court room, then it was back to his book, then back to the movie, continuing in this way until the film ended.

"It still hasn't gotten weird enough for me..."; Bull Murray said and Sid moved his lips along. He looked through the room and saw the 2 TV's he had destroyed through the years. His gaze touched upon the colorful walls, the fire extinguisher in the corner, the rigid bookshelf that was made out of the drawers he had once destroyed in a desperate attempt to set himself free at a performance evening they had held last year..

All of this wasn't nearly weird enough, Sid decided and so he jumped up and told a perplexed A.: "I'm going to the museum!"

He needed peace of mind to think straight! He was a nervous wreck, barely able to put on a shirt and shoes.

But finally he did make it out the door and into the bus that took him to the nearby modern art gallery.

On the way there he pulled *The Rum Diary* out of his pocket and began to read. When he looked up from his book he realized that he had missed his stop.

He had to get out in front of the giant glass colosseum next to the house that was completely covered by facade and a giant billboard promising even more internet access with your phone. The reporter hasted down the red boulevard that was crowded with the stars of dead filmmakers whom you could see standing right beside you if you looked through the golden raree-cases. It was all too much, he just had to get away from these bastard children of modernism and back into a time when hopes and dreams were not yet dying!

But was that really the truth? Had there ever been such a time?

When he entered the museum and walked down the stairs he suddenly saw a San Francisco police officer beating up a black man. It took him a few seconds to realize that this scene was just a statue.

He showed the old woman in uniform his little plastic card and she handed him his ticket.



Sid ran towards the music and sat down before the little screen that displayed 'Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band', performing 'All you need is love'. Sid chose to believe them and told himself that as long as you had love, dreams would stay alive. He got up and went over to Otto Pieper's 'Room of Light'. A long haired couple sat on a nearby bench and whispered: "Look at this! It's beautiful..." Sid sat down in a corner beside a silver cube that emitted light every once in a while, and began to write into his little black book:

*Didn't I just have an epiphany?
didn't I just see
the answer to a long forgotten question
How can it be
that such an important realization
could just slip my mind like this?
I'm full of ignorance and bliss*

Sid looked up from his notes and tried to remember what he had just thought about when he saw the film. He couldn't remember. He hadn't been able to pause the movie and hadn't been able to form a decent thought since whenever he had an idea it was swept away by other ideas right away, by further pictures that would not rest like the renderings by Steadman, but which kept on coming, blowing his mind with excess information. Maybe that was the fatal flaw every movie based on Thompson's work had: His writings were supposed to make you think, inspire you by giving you a different view on what was happening in the world, so you could take it and form your own view, exactly what good journalism was supposed to provide... But films could not fulfill that function since you could not stop them in the same way you would put down a book or a paper whenever you felt the urge to marinate on something. Of course you could pause a film when you saw it on DVD or streamed it over the internet... Sid had to think of Lev Manovich's theories that the limitations of new media actually bore the possibility of a new kind of perception. Maybe if you watched *Where the Buffalo Roam* or *Breakfast with Hunter* via a stream that would stop every 5 minutes due to a slow connection, you would be able to take in Thompson's words with a little more reflection since it would give you time



to think...

Then again that seemed like a long shot since most internet users would probably turn to another window on their desktop in the meantime, hoping to find something else to capture their attention. A different kind of perception, but probably not one that was really an improvement... As he watched the moving lights on the walls around him Sid told himself that he would have to watch *The Rum Diary* in that way anyway.

A man in uniform appeared and made a gesture with his hand Sid did not understand. He looked up at the man and asked: "What seems to be the problem?"

The man kept going with his hand movement and Sid wondered if it could be that he was dumb. But he wasn't, at least not in that sense of the word, because when Sid continued to lean against the wall and asked: "Can you talk...tell me what's wrong?", the man answered with a calm but deadly voice: "Don't lean against the wall!"

Sid's question why he should not do such a thing was answered by: "Don't lean against the wall!"

"But my jacket is clean, there is no way that it will get dirty or anything..."

"Don't lean against the wall!"

"Can I lean against the wall if I sit over there?", Sid asked and pointed over at the bench.

"Don't lean against the wall!", the man repeated in the same calm voice but with eyes that were glowing more and more and so Sid jumped up and left the room.

'Another cultural institution where you being kept from thinking!', Sid thought as he went toward the exit, but suddenly he saw a friendly face as he walked back out through the room where *St. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* was still playing. It was the uniformed man who listened to 'All you need is love' all day and who had apparently been turned into a loving and friendly creature by the endless repetition of this powerful 4 letter word...

After talking to him for some time about his daughters studies and the artworks around them Sid went on and left the museum.

He sat down beside the nearby river and continued reading *The Rum Diary*.

He got to the chapter in which Chenault, the girl of Thompson's second Allter Ego Yeamon is being raped by black people who drag her away from the dancefloor of a bar during a carnival.

Perry had quoted one of Hunters friends who claimed that this was a nightmare that rested in the common subconscious of the south.

But was that really it? Sid refused to see Hunter as a bigot. He remembered one of the letters from *Fear and Loathing in America* in which he informed his friend Zeta that he was actually a



multibigot who simply resented everyone, whatever class or race you might place him in. The chapter was different from what he remembered from the last time he had seen the film. Apart from the fact that Yeamon was someone completely different in the film Chenault had not been shown completely naked on the dancefloor.

Maybe the movie had not been able to portray it's characters as the 'Doomed' they were according to Sala who used the term for the first time in one of Thompson's works. Maybe that would have compromised the genre of summer-comedy as which the film was marketed...

Sid got up and returned to his flat when the batteries of his music machine died and he was no longer able to block out the sounds of the traffic that rushed by on the bridge beside him.

It was all getting too much, Sid felt like the world was out to get him as giant billboards that sowed ice cream with female legs that you wanted to sleep with and devour at the same time, and the street thugs of his neighborhood passed by. But then he remembered what he had just read about Thompson's friend Semonin whom he had renamed Sala for his book: "Beneath his pessimism, his bleak conviction that all the machinery was rigged against him, at the bottom of his soul was a faith that he was going to outwit it".

Thompson aka Kemp had decided to adopt that world view and Sid decided to do the same as he grinned into the ugly grey face of his hometown and returned to the hole that would be his home until they would be thrown out in October.

When he opened the door he was welcomed by loud music. He followed the voice of Mick Jagger and it lead him to Camille's room where Arletty and two other people were sitting on the bed. After introducing himself to the girl and the young man and immediately forgetting their names again Arletty told him: "Camille has cockroaches!"

Sid wasn't particularly surprised as he let his gaze wander across the wasteland she called her bedroom. He excused himself and went to the blue room in order to write, but when he entered he suddenly saw the fire extinguisher he had once found on the street, nearby. He grabbed it and ran back into Camille's room screaming: "Where are you, you little sons of bitches?", pointing the hose into different corners of the room.

When he saw Arletty's scared expression he said: "It's empty. . . it wouldn't help anyway, these little fuckers even survive atomic bombs. . . but maybe I scared them a little. . ."

He returned to the blue room and sat down at his typewriter.

But he was disrupted before he could even start because the doorbell rang and Arletty appeared in the hallway to open the door. He heard her talking into the little machine beside the door:

"You have to walk all the way up!"



Apparently she was inviting more of her friends to her new home . . .

Sid got up and shut the door for some peace and quiet but before he sat down his stomach began to revolt, demanding to be fed.

Sid made himself a pizza and while he ate he continued reading *The Rum Diary*.

Arletty appeared in his doorway and asked if he wanted to come along.

The man who had introduced himself as Io. or Jo. appeared beside her and looked at the colorful walls around him.

"Where do you come from?", he asked and Sid replied: "Take a guess!" He began to list various south American Countries, some of which Sid had heard before when he told people to guess where his dark skin color came from, others were new entries on his list.

Finally the man gave up and said: "So where are you from?"

"Sorry but I won't tell you. . .", Sid replied, "Does it matter?"

Arletty asked once again if he wanted to get something to eat with them and when Sid declined, telling her he had to work, the little group left and he had the apartment to himself.

He kept reading and as he finished his pizza he got to a chapter where Chenault and Kemp end up together. Somehow it was much darker than in the movie. These were definitely not the shiny happy characters from the film but real people.

Whether there had ever been a living and breathing Chenault or not back when Thompson worked in Puerto Rico, but the woman he described in his book had flesh and a soul that had been torn apart and reassembled many times, like that of any other human being.

The movie told you that it's main character drank and especially the trailer made it seem as if he did it in order to have a good time. But in the book the main character got a chance to explain himself and tell the reader why he "banished the ghosts with rum".

Sid was ripped out of his thoughts by thunder. He was sitting in the windowframe and when he looked up from the book he saw rain pouring down into the street below. The sky was ripped apart by bright lightening and a few women ran past his building screaming as they tried to shield themselves from the rain with their tiny handbags.

Sid decided to finish the book. Every once in a while the wind blew a few raindrops into his face but all in all he was safe from the water that came streaming down harder and harder as the thunderstorm moved closer.

When he closed the book the thunder stopped as if it had brewed up to this point in sync with the dramatic tension of the book that erupted in catastrophe.



Sid went over to his laptop and found a few audio bits of lectures Thompson had held at Universities.

He lit his pipe and lay back as he listened to Hunter rambling on for a while.

Finally he told himself that he could no longer put off his duty of watching bits of *The Rum Diary* and writing every 5 minutes.

He started the film and the first thing that sprung up at him were the vast amount of strange symbols and cryptic names that appeared on the screen before the actual movie began. All these weird little production companies that dwelled in the depths of Hollywood...

Sid decided to research who exactly were the ones who financed this movie. If you wanted to understand the way the movie business worked you had to follow the money...

But when Sid put on some music to keep him going he was suddenly disrupted when he heard: Roger Waters sing the only real love song he had ever written:

If you didn't care
what happened to me
we would zigzag away...

Sid was suddenly unable to think

He tried to bury himself in his research but
his internet connection died and left him alone with the painful memories.

Then his touchwriter died as well...

Outwit the machine that's working against you! Sid told himself and turned to the typewriter that stood beside his laptop.

As the metallic arms touched the paper with soft rattling, Sid calmed down.

He turned back to the laptop and somehow managed to get internet by plugging in his touchwriter.

It was slow but it worked and Sid found out that behind the label GK a certain producer called Graham King lay hidden, the main source of cash for the film.

He had apparently worked with Johnny Depp before last on 'The Tourist', that had come under controversy when it was nominated for a Golden Globe in the Comedy category.

Maybe this time the duo wanted to make sure something like that would not happen again and therefor set out to turn the dark book into a film that was easy to classify as a light summer-comedy...



The reporter pressed play again and watched a red airplane float through a blue sky to the voice of Sinatra singing of a place in the sky where you could leave confusion and all disillusion behind...

It was followed by the insides of a hotel it passed where Johnny Depp awoke as a frighteningly convincing imitation of a young Thompson aka Paul Kemp.

After an amusing dialog with a hotel employee who delivered room service to the hung over Kemp, other characters were introduced as funny freaks at whom's misadventures Sid was supposed to laugh for the next 90 minutes.

The topic of politics was introduced quite early in order to portray Thompson as a humanitarian who picks the right side eventually, whereas Kemp described his utter ignorance toward the entire local situation in the novel. It would take till the 60s that the real Thompson would be turned 'from a mere reporter to a revolutionary' because he got caught in a police beating.

The character of Moeberg was introduced quite early as well and had apparently been extended in order to give him more screen time than you would expect from the book. But the people who were expected to watch this film had been introduced to Thompson by *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and expected some insanity and rampant drug abuse beside the seemingly harmless rum consumption that was described in the book.

However forced the character seemed, Giovanni Ribisi gave an impressive performance of crazy, a shining example of type-casting gone right.

Maybe some viewers would also expect the topic of *doom* and so Sala started talking about it soon as well. But somehow it sounded like a punchline in Dans ears.

And of course Chenault was introduced soon, in a romantic setting to mysterious music. In the book Kemp made a horrible fool out of him when he first saw her but in the movie he was just pretty Johnny Depp who had probably been declared sexiest man alive by different parts of the yellow press about a dozen times during his lifetime.

After some more comedy and soft social commentary Sid began to wonder: 'Did this happen in the book?'

There had been a chapter in the book in which Kemp waits in vain at the airport for the major to arrive. While he drives over to Yeamon where he meets Chenault again, in the book, the film has him picked up by Hal Sanderson who takes him to his home where he introduces him to Chenault as well, just that this time she is *his* girl since there is no Yeamon. Sandersons role was expanded as well and although Sid had enjoyed the acting of Aron Eckhard in many films, it seemed out of place in this one.



Why had the character of Yeamon been killed in the screenplay? All that enormous weight placed on a young writer to split up his personality and feed two characters with it, for nothing. Johnny Depp had claimed that he tried to include both of the characters in his portrayal of Thompson but if that was the case, why was he never shown hitting Chenault or becoming a raving madman?

Had there been any cock fighting in the novel, apart from the fact that Sal might have mentioned it in a dialogue once? In the film it suddenly seemed to be an important story arch...

The scene with roosters flying through the air in slow motion as they battled each other to loud early rock or blues or bluegrass was followed by one in which Kemp strolls through a dirty slum where a poor little girl looks at him through the window of a broken down car. Johnny Depp looked at it and took a picture with an appalled look on his face. The Paul Kemp of the novel never took a picture of the misery that surrounded him and when he did notice it, he was not personally moved. But it seemed as if the script would not have been seen as complete had it not included some kind of moralist structure, a hero who changes his ways and becomes a white knight in defense of the suppressed locals. You couldn't show this misery without such a reaction by the main character. Depp couldn't change his image with such brutal indifference...

Of course Nixon had to show up as well, although back then Thompson had no idea that he would one day see him as his arch enemy. But he belonged to Thompson and so he had to be shown. It was like a checklist was being filled out and Sid was suddenly reminded of the course in American Literature he had visited at the High School during his time in the States. There writing was being thought with the definition of past genres like romanticism or gothic as having certain criteria that had to be fulfilled, ranging from certain symbols to typical characters. But could you capture Gonzo as a style with this cooking recipe approach?

But when Depp said: "The only eventuality worse than him is you know that one day some filthy horror beast is gonna show up, make him look like a liberal.", it sounded like he was using Thompson's views on Nixon for some political commentary on his own times and the Presidency of Bush jr..

It got even stranger when he began portraying Hunter as some kind of prophet when he remarked: "He aint gonna win, Irish guy is gonna win, but they ain't ever gonna let him live!", as he watched the Nixon/ Kennedy debate on TV, but these preposterous comments lost their sting when they were followed by the funny remark: "I do horoscopes!"

The dialogue was followed by more drug fueled mayhem by Moeberg and naive idealism from Kemp, both mildly entertaining although Sid wondered who the hell had had the idea to make



Moeberg into a man who likes to listen to speeches by Adolf Hitler on vinyl?

Why that crass overstatement when so much other things were left out. Strangely enough the movie answered that question itself in a monologue by the newspaper-owner Lotterman: "Like most every other newspaper on earth it's financed by it's advertising and without advertising not only is there no Lasangna there is no paper to put it in so thus there are one or two things that we don't write about."

Could you simply change newspaper to movie and get the answer to most of your questions?

Was it really the age old struggle of money vs. creative freedom that haunted this film? Or was there another reason why Hunter S. Thompson could not be caught on film accurately?

As he watched Kemp and Lotterman discuss the death of the American dream due to the corruption of capitalism Sid wondered whether this was the conclusion Thompson had come up with in his investigations. He couldn't remember anymore, all he could really think was: I need a drink.

He walked over to the kitchen and actually found a bottle of rum in the fridge. He remembered that he had bought it for the last time he had seen the film, about half a year ago. Since he did not drink, apart from the occasional glass of absinth the bottle was still half-full. He took a sip and continued the movie. Soon he caught himself drinking whenever Johnny Depp was shown drinking. This movie turned Thompson's novel into a damn drinking game!

It also turned the main character into nothing more than a voyeur: In the scene when he witnesses Chenault having sex with her boyfriend you can barely read anything else in his facial expression beside sheer amazement and whining envy. There is nothing that tells the viewer of the thoughts that are supposed to run through the mind of Kemp.

"The scene I had just witnessed brought back a lot of memories - not of things I had done but of things I failed to do, wasted hours and frustrated moments and opportunities forever lost because time had eaten so much of my life and I would never get it back..." were the thoughts that came to Kemp's mind after having this unpleasant vision. But in the film the vision is followed by yet another comic relief, a funny double entendre that even made it into the trailer, and shots of Amber Heard in a tight bathing suit.

Kemp being instrumentalized by Sanderson was portrayed in much greater detail. In a scene showing a shady meeting of various untrustworthy characters the roles of 'good guy' and 'bad guy' were dealt out.

After a sexually charged goodbye a drunken Paul Kemp is seen talking to Sal about being "so hopelessly, progressively in love". Stange to hear that from the character who proclaims in the book:



“...it is one of these words like Love, that I have never quite understood. Most people who deal in words don't have much faith in them and I am no exception – especially the big ones like Happy and Love and Honest and Strong. They are too elusive and far too relative when you compare them to sharp, mean little words like Punk and Cheap and Phony. I feel at home with these, because they're scrawny and easy to pin, but the big ones are tough and it takes either a priest or a fool to use them with any confidence.”

That there was no Yeamon present at the car chasing scene might seem like a more accurate portrayal of reality since Thompson spent the night that part of the story is based on with his friend Semonin alone.

But that night trouble started because Thompson left without paying the bill. In the book he lets his alter ego Yeamon take care of that. Since the Yeamon-side of Thompson was left out in the movie it portrayed a Paul Kemp who gets into a precarious situation due to a few unlucky coincidences.

There was no Yeamon in the beatings that followed and therefore Dr. Thompson was reduced to Depps depiction of a man who just wants to protect himself and once again gets out of the frying pan into the fire when he burns a policeman's face in a comedic mishap.

The scene in which Sanderson bails them out was almost directly taken out of the book, with the exception of Yeamon's parts of course. Sid wondered how close it was to the real incidents though, and if Thompson had been in a similar debt to the man who bailed him out, a certain William Kennedy according to Perrys biography.

The scene in which they find the car and take it back into town got a slight change to it when the 2 protagonists decided that Kemp should sit on Salas lap when they drive the car, in order to overcome the fact that the front seat had been robbed. A change that gave way to a couple more amusing mishaps.

The book does not give more than 3 pages to the fact that Kemp was hired to do some shady business for Sanderson. In the book the business isn't quite as shady but it is also not a big deal for Kemp, a man who seems like he has long been disillusioned. In the film the scene is a main turning point and it's followed by images of Kemp driving in his new car which he got for his deal, past green jungles and beautiful beaches. Images that also played very nicely in the trailer. Depp's Kemp picked up a beautiful Chenault in the beautiful car and the heterosexual romance plot got one of its first climaxes.

Instead of Yeamon, Sanderson accompanied them and Sal to the carnival and therefore there were a few more shady business talks being held and moralistic phrases being uttered before the wild



party of this fast paced film continued in the streets of St. Thomas.

After another vaguely romantic scene on a boat in which Kemp told Chenault that he needed to find his voice in order to be a good writer the carnival unfolded in its full festivity and hedonism with what would be the rape scene in the novel. In the film it was reduced to a sexy striptease by Amber Heard, conventional in that she stopped undressing before any indecent body parts would appear on the screen.

A cut-away prevented the film from taking a turn for the dark that would undermine its status as a comedy. After being thrown out of the club the film switches to mournful scenes on the beach where a broken Kemp feels like it was all his fault and beats himself up over her loss. In the book he had been depressed, but it was more the misery of having to go through the trouble of finding her again as the loss of a loved woman.

What followed completely went beyond the novel. Once again an intoxicated Moeberg appeared on the screen and introduced the inevitable drug scene that seemed to be mandatory for every film on Thompson, if it was in the material or not. The film apparently attempted to pack more than just Hunter's life during the time of the novel into the film. Instead it was designed to be a document on his entire life and in order to portray it in the right light that meant that the film had to claim that everything that Hunter was and would become had its start during his time in Puerto Rico.

There, so the movie claimed, he found his voice - thanks to his first encounter with hallucinogenics...

Sid wondered how far that claim lay from the truth when he realized that Thompson did first encounter hallucinogenics in South America, several years after writing this novel though, and it took a little longer after that that he would write his first Gonzo piece. The style that he described as: "It's what I do."

A few images of a growing tongue that could be labeled as either 'surrealist' or 'trippy', whatever sort of text you wanted to write, were followed by a conversation with a lobster that was narrated in a beautiful sounding voice-over of Depp imitating a young Hunter S. Thompson.

"Human beings are the only creature on earth that claim a God and the only living thing that behaves like it hasn't got one.", the lobster said.

In the context of the movie these words were pure gibberish! They did not hold any meaning in themselves, they were simply there to mark a great epiphany of the main character you were not meant to understand but just witness and believe.

The words definitely did not come from *The Rum Diary* and when Sid turned to his laptop the in-



ternet told him that the line had in fact been written by Bruce Robinson the director and screen-writer.

It was somewhat symbolic since the 'bad guys' are shown eating lobster throughout the film but Sid was pretty sure that this did not even begin to come close to what Thompson's 'finding his voice', had really looked like, if there was such a thing at all.

In the film it served as another polemic against capitalism destroying the American dream, which seemed to Sid like a grim simplification of Thompson's actual views.

The words turned Kemp into the hero the movie demanded him to play and after finishing a moving story on all his new and noble thoughts he took in a hurt and scared Chenault like a true gentleman.

In the book this scene had read a little different though: "She was wearing the same cloths, but now she looked haggard and dirty. The delicate illusions that get us through life can only stand so much strain - and now, looking at Chenault, I wanted to slam the door and go back to bed."

In the book he sleeps with the woman, that had just been raped and therefor can not get an orgasm, although she is technically still together with his friend Yeamon. Not quite as noble as Depp's actions in the film where he returns from the newspaper at which he confronted his boss in a moving plea for honest journalism, and lovingly cares for Chenault by getting her cloths and making her tea before soothing her to sleep with comforting words. Then he's off to write a few more honest words on his typewriter.

In the film it is she who joins him in the shower and not the other way around...

Sid felt cheated, the books portrayal of a twisted relationship between shady characters had given some comfort to him because he could find his own love live in it. But now that relationship had been forced into a worn out stereotypical mold he had seen hundreds of times and made it impossible for him to be content with the relationships he had because they did not even come close to the ideal that was being imposed by those romantic elements that had to be in every second film that came out.

The sex scene was disrupted before it could get too explicit by the blast of Hitler's voice that was being played on vynil by Moeberg, and Sid's viewing of the film was disrupted by Arletty and her friends who returned from eating and sightseeing.

"It's not what it looks like!"; Sid screamed as they came into his room and saw him sitting there without a shirt and surrounded by bottles and an empty pipe, listening to Hitler scream from the screen before him.

They were followed by T. who began to tell him about her day and about the party they wanted



to hold here in two weeks. She told him how stressed she was but when he told her to sit down and watch the film with him, she declined and went off to bed.

Sid continued the film and witnessed once again how Chenault and Kemp were disrupted by Moeberg's strange taste in albums and his message of doom that the paper was folding. But instead of turning even more bitter and eventually into a criminal who helps Yeamon, who killed Letterman, hide from the police, like Kemp does in the book, Johnny Depp takes these news as a motivator for his greatest hour and for a motivational speech.

When Chenault leaves for New York and tells him to follow he doesn't. Instead of pursuing her he pursues his new found elan for the just cause and goes through several more exiting scenes in which a cock fight suddenly decides their fate. And yet it doesn't. Once again Sid was filled with relief that the film did not have a happy ending in which an outlaw journalist beats the system and saves the day. The fact that the 'bad guys' win in the end because they simply play dirty and are more powerful felt truthful and the empty halls of the pressroom were a fitting place for a grand finale of misery.

Jet that finale was tainted by Kemp's final heroic speech about the smell of bastards, truth and ink which Depp delivered with perfect pathos preparing the audience for the final words that appeared on the screen before the beautiful image of Kemp driving a boat into the sunset: "...this is the end of one story and the beginning of another."

The words went on to inform the viewer that Kamp and Chenault got married and he became a successful journalist who fought 'Bastards'.

"The voice he found was his own...", the film claimed before displaying the iconic image of a young Hunter, drinking and writing on the beach.

"In Memory of Hunter S. Thompson 1937-2005" it said in front of the man who was revealed as the actual Kemp.

But was he?

The answer was a definite No!, but the question was: How close did this film come to capturing the Doctor?

Closer than the film he had watched this morning?

Closer than *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, which he considered watching now?

Sid got up and walked into the kitchen to fuel up on caffeine. He encountered Arletty's friend whom's name he did not recall, but he greeted her anyway and searched for a bottle opener for her so she could get to the classy french wine she had brought with her.

Sid noticed the deep grey canyons beneath her eyes and wondered when she had last slept. She



asked him what he had been writing and he told her of Thompson whom she of course only knew as Raul Duke from Gilliam's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. When she asked what he was doing later on he replied that he was thinking of rewatching that film in order to compare the two and she told him to tell them when he was about to start since they might want to join him. Sid returned to the blue room and ate the cereal he had made himself.

He decided he wouldn't force himself to come to any conclusions about the film and so when he finished his snack he went over to Camille's room and asked his french visitors if they wanted to watch *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

They were somewhat torn and so Sid told them they could join in at any time and started gathering utensils like a bowl of water and a plastic bottle he cut in half.

"Don't ask!" he said when he pulled out a big pottery strainer and walked over to the blue room where he sat up a construction that allowed the fumes to be sucked into the bottle in the bole so he could make the water force it into his lungs when he hovered above it and pushed it down. Then he lost himself in the film. He began to talk along to the strange ramblings of Depp who had spent several months living in Thompson's cellar, following his every move, becoming his shadow and imitating his behavior. So how come Thompson complained to him that he was making him look like an idiot?

The voices from the kitchen got too loud and Sid got up in order to close the doors before these beasts who spoke in strange tongues about who knew what, would enter his room and devour what was left of him.

He went amongst them and tried not to listen to their strange sounds as he searched for more caffeine.

But suddenly a voice reached his ear that spoke in a language that seemed vaguely familiar.

Finally he realized that Arletty was asking if he had some weed.

"Yeah sure, just come over!", he heard himself say and suddenly he found himself sitting in front of the screen next to two giggling French girls.

Why was every Thompson-adaptation turned into a comedy? Look at the freaks at the circus! Only 10 bucks each! Buy the ticket, take the ride!

Arletty kept giggling but her friends grin suddenly froze and she stopped rolling the joint she had been rolling and simply stared at the screen in amazement.

"So how is that joint coming along?", he heard himself say and Arletty explained for her friend who had apparently turned deaf: "She doesn't want to smoke it in front of this film. She's afraid it might be too much for her..."



Arletty took the joint and lit it and Sid pulled down the gas mask he had picked up from the floor. Arletty turned over, kissed the mask and breathed out.

The fumes filled the reporters lungs and he wondered whether his drug use really was a helpful influence on his writing or if it wasn't actually hindering him by now.

But he did not have a choice. This film was made for the one purpose of watching it while being under the influence and as a true Gonzo reporter he had to take part in the action, just like so many great American writers had; from Hemingway to Kerouac. Arletty's friend who was smoking as well by now handed back the joint and said: "Have another hit!"

Sid did as he was told and after swallowing the fumes that were too tainted with tobacco for his lungs, he turned back to the screen.

As Sid stared at it he began to reminisce, thinking back to the first time he had seen this film, back in the days when he used to scan the free commercial-ridden TV magazine that he found in their mailbox every week, for any movie that had anything about it that caught his attention.

Since the magazine only listed the date of the making and name of the director and the actors those were usually the grounds on which he made his decision to watch something or not.

The name Johnny Depp caught his attention and so he recorded the movie on his parents old VCR machine that was slowly dying of being inadequate and past its time.

He sat down in the early morning some summer holiday, with a cheap microwave meal he had made himself since his parents had to work until late.

It was at a time when he had just become a teenager. Life had already broken his heart a few times, but he was still optimistic and innocent. And he had no real idea what drugs actually were, what they did apart from a few tiny bits of propaganda. A few months before he had told his best friend he would never *blaze*, assuming that was just another term for smoking cigarettes, but that he might try weed once.

Since the TV magazine did not tell him that the two protagonists took drugs and the public TV station had abandoned the commentator who introduced films, a few years ago, Sid had no idea what was going on, on the screen before him. But he liked what he saw, although it took him some time to adjust to the unusual plot. He kept trying to approach it with the usual structures, assuming that the story was about to start. But it never did...

When Duke had a strange vision of the Vietnam War in his hotel suite due to the television news that showed footage of the war, Sid assumed the film was about to make a flashback to the times Depp's strange character had spent in Vietnam. But no classical war genre unfurled. Instead the madness just went on.



When Sid had seen it the second time, many years later he finally made the connection. It was on the little attic of his house where he had built himself and his friends a little retreat. One night when a few friends had visited to play board games and drink too much beer they caught it on the TV when most of the visitors had already gone. "This is great!", his American friend Y. exclaimed and Sid and he watched the film in shared joy as Sid's friend Ti. watched them with irritation.

A year later they watched the film when they smoked weed for the second or third time. The voice-over narration of Thompson's writings had taken hold of him back then just like they took hold of Sid now and he had never experienced such melting with a movie, breaking that dreadful fourth wall that usually separated the viewer and the action on the screen.

You could loose yourself in the imagination of Dr. Thompson's twisted mind.

And that was what he had done now. It was quite clear to him that the breakup with *her* had driven him to search for shelter in a dreamworld - and for some reason the dreamworld of Dr. Thompson had been at hand at the time. Not the worst dreamworld to get lost in, after all there still was the possibility of making a living out of it...

Nixon returned to the screen and flew right at Sid who had become one with Raul Duke by now. Sid remembered his graduate year and the theater course he had been in at that time. It had been a joke, everyone was focusing on the important classes and the final exams and their teacher was some intern who was more concerned with finishing her studies. In one odd class that was not canceled she told them they would focus on film this half year and each group of 4 students should make a film on the topic of the classes choice. The chosen topic was drugs and Sid decided to make a film on the experience he had with *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. He had already planned the difficult editing tricks to make the images leave the screen and fill the room, when their teacher showed up again and told them they would not be allowed to edit since they did not have the equipment at the school. When Sid found out that they actually did have enough PCs with a editing program in their school but that their teacher had just been too lazy to organize them for the class, it was already too late and their movie project had become a Blair Witch Project-type short film with a moralistic ending.

But there still was the term paper in which they had to analyze a scene of their choice. Sid decided on the scene of Duke's and Dr. Gonzo's arrival in Las Vegas and his research lead him to the novel the film was based on and his strange and intriguing author. He found out that *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* actually wasn't primarily about drug consumption but about the search for the American Dream and the harsh awakening the 70s had meant for the love generation.



It had also been about a friendship that had already occupied the first Thompson based movie: That of Duke and Dr. Gonzo, Hunter and Lazlo, Dr. Thompson and Oscar Zeta Acosta. The film ended with Thompson's heartfelt goodbye as he dropped Dr. Gonzo off at the airport: "There he goes. Gods own prototype. A high powered mutant of some kind, never even considered for mass production. Too weird to live and too rare to die."

Sid had to think of his friend Theo whom he had met 2 years ago on a rocky beach in Marseille. He had stared into the sunset for too long and barely saw the shape that came out of the light next to him asking: "I was thinking about rolling out my sleeping bag and spending the night here...you think that's a good idea?"

"Well I was thinking about the same thing just now...", Sid answered and they had spent the night sitting at the edge of the ocean, talking about the book by Thompson, Theo carried with him.

"He stays with you", he had said and the more Sid began to sink into the world of the Gonzo journalist the more he understood what Theo had meant.

Johnny Depps intense method acting approaches to capture Hunters ways had such a lasting effect that certain traits of Thompson could be seen in almost all of the movies that followed *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, including his famous portrayal of a drunken pirate.

Bill Murray had apparently sunken so deep into the quagmire of Thompson's mind that he was not able to shake off the character for several more weeks after shooting had ended. You could see it in old footage of *Saturday Night Live* episodes of that time.

Theo had been infected by Thompson's writing. And now Sid had fallen victim to his documents about a long gone era that had cast so many victims.

Just like Depps Duke, leaving Las Vegas for the desert, he was "just another freak in a freak kingdom."

He leaned back and drifted off into even stranger dreamworlds, telling himself that tomorrow would be an important day...

Sid awoke several hours later. His tired eyes scanned the room and he looked at empty bottles and coffee cups, cigarette and joint buds and books that were scattered all around him. He made himself some breakfast and then decided to spend it with Thompson. He put on *Breakfast with Hunter* and began to eat. After some hesitation he took up his pipe and told himself:



“What the hell...it’s all too late now!”

Hunter began rambling in an interview he gave to a CNN reporter in The shiny new boardrooms of Rolling Stone in Manhattan. That interview was intercut with scenes from a reading where big Hollywood names like John Cusack and Johnny Depp read Hunter’s works with admiration.

Watching uncommented video footage of Hunter was mesmerizing and finally felt like a somewhat true portrayal. Here he could explain himself by talking right into the camera. The only way his words could be reinterpreted was by editing in the post production.

Steadman was shown visiting Hunter at his mountain retreat in aspen, where Hunter showed him a book about extreme personalities he is in.

“Obsessive compulsive personality disorder”, Steadman reads, “It would be considered antisocial and therefore a disorder.”

Thompson reacts by quoting William Faulkner “A writer will walk over his Grandmother to get the book finished”

Sid paused the film to go to the bathroom and when he returned he decided to search the internet for parts of *Doonsbury* cartoons in which Uncle Duke, the character ‘loosely based’ on Hunter appears. The first picture the search engine produced showed Duke telling a black haired woman that Hunter S. Thompson had died.

Sid played the film again and it showed Steadman, talking about *his* iconic images of Hunter, claiming that the book would have been nothing without them.

Suddenly T. walked in and asked with a big smile what he was watching.

When he told her she seemed disappointed and said: “Oh I thought it was something by you or some kind of home movie.”

Sid realized that the aesthetics of the film did resemble that of a home movie which added to the intimate feel of the film. It was almost as if you really were having breakfast with the writer.

The film took you to his home, introduced the reader to his son and shows Hunter going about his daily business like reeking mayhem, fighting lawsuits, shooting or attending celebrations of his genius.

At one party shown in the film the writer Franz J. O’Rourke toasts to his friend claiming: “Someone who PHD’s will be written about as soon as all of us who actually knew him are dead.”

O’Rourke was still alive at about 65 years but Hunter himself was dead. Had the time come to write about him?



The most impressive quote from the film followed in an interview Hunter gave at his farm: "I survive by writing. Making literature out of what might otherwise be seen as craziness." What a wonderful retreat these words promised...

Sid felt tears rising up to his eye when a young Johnny Depp read the famous passage from *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* that described the breaking of the wave of the energy and naive optimism of the 60s, making the author seem like a very sensitive and gentle man.

But the scene was followed by Hunter working himself in a hate frenzy when he finds out that the 2 screenwriters who are supposed to adapt his famous book want to use cartoons for that part of the film.

Sid watched Depp as he followed Hunter around and slowly turned into him until in one moment of clarity Hunter suddenly realized what this movie could become.

When the producer said of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*: "Its just a movie...", Hunter answered: "Tell that to the mother of some kid who's stabbed in the back by some dope fiend out of Vegas and blames it on this book!"

Sid picked up his pipe and took another hit.

When the movie ended Sid went over to the kitchen where he found A. and T. sitting on the sofa side by side, starring at the screens in their laps: "You look kind of creepy there, mesmerized, wired in..."

"Sometimes we also talk to each other over the internet!", A. said and with a deep howl Sid turned around in order to flee.

"Do you also want to invite anyone to the party now?", A. asked and offered him her laptop where the haunting white and blue of a social network stared at him. He went through the list of people who were his friends, according to the label beside them and clicked on a few of their faces.

Then he sought refuge in the blue room but realized that he had some friends who had not been devoured by the internet's networks yet and so he opened his mail inbox in order to invite them. Unfortunately what he found there kept him from going through with his plans:

[REDACTED]



He decided to flee further into the dreamworlds of Thompson's mind and turned on *Gonzo - The life and work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson*.

As many of his close friends talked about the decline of the author over pictures of *Owl Farm*, Sid went over into Franz's room and got himself the bong that was standing on the floor beside his bed.

Johnny Depp's voice took over and painted a picture of Hunter as he saw him.

Sid paused the movie and turned to his typewriter.

He had just been flooded with information that he would now have to use as inspiration for some great epiphanies!

But nothing came out, the paper before him remained blank.

Could it be? Had the point come where he would no longer be able to let out that wild side of his, not even with the help of weed?

Sid put on Warren Zevon, lamenting the fact that:

**The shit that used to work
wont work now**

Then he turned back to the screen and let the movie drag on.

He would have to write himself out of this, there was no other way around it!

That was what Gonzo truly was in his eyes: A way to alter reality, to escape all these ugly aspects of consciousness. You wrote about the world that surrounded you, changed certain aspects and described everything in a poetic way that did not deny the hideous truths but made them bearable...

Sid dragged himself off the sofa, away from the documentary that felt so much like another unauthorized biography, now put on screen, and began the impossible task of getting ready to go to university.

He was nowhere near ready, barely able to put on a shirt and yet somehow he made it!

But then he realized that he might need some kind of nourishment to keep himself going and so he made himself another microwave pizza.

When the beeping of the machine informed him that the flap of pastry was eatable he sat down in front of the screen again. Arletty joined him with the words: "That looks interesting..."



They sat there and stared for a while but finally Sid told himself to break free and so he put on his jacket and hasted down to the bus stop.

He ran towards the bus and gave the driver a big smile, sticking out his student pass. But the man acted as if he was not even there and drove off. Sid sat down and looked up at the banner at the other side of the street, proclaiming: "Occupy your world!"

It belonged to one of the remaining squats of the area. Sid remembered that one block down the street a young man had been run over by a bus when he was being driven into the traffic on this street, next to which he was protesting against the eviction of one of the squats.

Another bus arrived in front of Sid and took him south. This part of town wasn't the friendliest environment for a freak from the city center. Sid remembered how T. had told him about her aunt earlier who lived in the outskirts of the city and who had talked about a voyage into their neighborhood in the following way: "All these foreigners, and all those dirty little stores they lead... and those drug addicts and freaks that roam the street there...I'm not gonna go back in for some time, thats for sure!"

And yet Sid had to intrude into her part of town now, since his film campus was located there. Suddenly the voice of the bus driver filled the air. The machine he spoke through only spat out parts of his sentences, but what could be understood caused the passengers to panic: "...oil leak... firemen on their way...don't...dangerous..."

Sid decided to ignore these strange cries of doom and put on his headphones. He saw the shocked faces slowly turn into grins and then to opened jaws of laughter and when he unplugged his ears again he heard that some child had apparently bought himself a fart-pillow which he was now using to the delight of the passengers, making them forget about all the horror they had just experienced.

The bus emptied at the giant shopping center to which the exited mob streamed in order to surrender their money and attention to other loud and crass gadgets.

Sid got out 2 stops further and bought himself a bottle of caffeine at the store across the street.

Then he drove to his film campus where he sat down on the old wooden bench behind the old villa and its grey appendix. No one ever went here because most did not know how to get to the bench that lay off the track from the seminar rooms and lecture halls to the bus stop or the cafe.

Sid desperately needed the piece and quiet. He was about to enter into a closed room for 1 1/2 hours of social behavior and forced smiles and understanding nods. No freakish behavior, no excess expression in those realms. He'd finally be informed how their term papers were supposed to look like and he would find out wether his professors requirements met the text he had in mind...



And what would he do if they didn't?

Sid did not dare to answer that question that swept over him with a wave of other anxieties and paranoid thoughts.

He got up and walked over to the room where the seminar would take place, trying to look confident and competent, hoping that that would be enough to actually make him calm and content. Sid entered and walked along the long white table at which's end his professor was sitting, his head buried inside a newspaper. He greeted him, sat down and pulled out *The Rum Diary* in order to hide behind a wall of words as well.

The room slowly filled with other students, eager to find out what they were expected to write in order to earn those wonderful credits they yearned for. His professor handed out a stack of papers with important points that should be mentioned in a filmcritique, which he elaborated throughout the session.

After the seminar had ended Sid leaned over to him and after a silent cough caught his attention he asked: "So that press screening is taking place tomorrow. I just want to make sure again: It's at 10 in the morning right?"

"Yeah! And you just write in your name and *Cargo* as your affiliation on that list they have there. . . or you just go through!"

Sid thanked him and left for the bus.

When Sid sank down on his seat he felt exhaustion taking hold of him.

He got out to change and quickly traded his empty bottle for 2 new ones at the nearby store, before going on home.

He felt relief since everything his professor had said was in accordance with Sid's plans for his text, yet at the same time he felt very uneasy, afraid that he would not be able to put all the things he had written so far together.

A young man dropped a bag of weed as he entered and an old woman next to Sid said: "You dropped something there!" She was either short sighted or she just did not care that these were illegal drugs she had just helped the man with. Sid realized that drugs were everywhere in this town. When he left the bus he walked past one of the shady casinos of his neighborhood which were, according to his friend Maa, being used for drug trafficking. A couple of police cars had assembled around the building and Sid heard a few violent screams. But he was too tired to pay attention. Instead he walked back home where he fell down to the sofa and went on to watch the documentary on Thompson he had started earlier.

The film went on to show different documents of Hunters life, it relied heavily on footage from



Breakfast with Hunter, but it just couldn't keep from putting them into context, some kind of narrative that there was consensus about. And of course the film, just like Perry's biography, told of the authors decline.

The film ended with images from Hunters funeral followed by the end credits and then haunting silence. Sid just remained in front of the screen, unable to move. There was only one topic on his mind. He could not help it, [REDACTED]

He was crashing at rapid speed and there was only one responsible thing to do. When he was just about to light his pipe again Sid was ripped out of his despair by the sound of the doorbell. He dragged himself over to the door and yelled into the little machine beside it: "Who's there?" "It's the police, open up please!"

Perplexed Sid pushed the button and stared at the machine for a few moments before going over to Franz, the only one who was home beside him.

"Do you expect any visitors who like cruel jokes?", he asked and when Franz shook his head he told him what had just happened.

Franz followed Sid to the door and picked up a broomstick that was lying around in the hallway. They went up to the top of the staircase and tried to identify the intruders. But they couldn't see anything and the voices that echoed up sounded unfamiliar.

"It's the fucking cops man!", Franz said and returned into the flat.

Sid followed and hid behind the door, peeking past it.

Finally the voices turned around a corner and turned out to be Klaus and Ja's ex-boyfriend.

"You can't do that kind of shit with the paranoia that's raging up here! I have a weak heart!"

They sat down for a few minutes and then decided to go over to the *Drugstore*.

But when they arrived at the grey building the lights were out and the door was closed. They met T., A. and Mahs. in front though and when the sky suddenly darkened and rain began pouring hard from one second to the next, they ran back to the flat for shelter.

They sat down in the blue room and Mahs. began to roll a joint.

After some hesitation Sid picked up his gas mask and Mahs. gave it a kiss.

Sid got himself a piece of paper and began to paint. He realized he had not drawn anything in a long time.

When Sid put down his pencil and looked up at the paper in his lap a melting face with dark shades stared back at him. Above it, it said: "Am I dissolving behind these glasses?"

A strange and unsettling vision he just couldn't take his eyes off, until Mahs. asked him if she could have a paper as well.



Sid caught himself smiling slightly when he watched her draw and creativity slowly spread out in the room.

The people around him started to do vodka shots with effervescent powder. Mahs. tried to paint A. but when she placed the second eye too low she cried out with frustration and was about to throw away the paper.

Sid grabbed a nearby book by Thompson and showed her a few of Steadmans illustrations.

"Proportions don't matter! Don't let yourself become a slave to realism!"; he said and pointed at the strange, warped figures on the page. But Mahs. said: "Yeah OK, but when you're sketching someone who's right across from you . . ."

Suddenly the doorbell went off again and paranoia returned.

A. went to the door and talked to the machine. But she did not get any reply, except for the sound of static.

"Remember when you open the door it's usually the police!"; T. said.

Sid gave her a confused look and she went on: "Didn't we tell you about that time the police was here?"

"No! When . . . how . . . what?"

"They wanted to know if Maa. still lived here."; T. explained and A. went on: "Yeah apparently he was searched after some concert and now they want to nail him for possession."

"It's already a few weeks back now, you were barely here at that time. . ."

"", T. said and Sid buried his face inside his hands again.

*There are people around
Making it social drinking
And not an alcoholic fit
But that kind of thinking
Makes me sick*

Suddenly there was a sound at the door, no doorbell this time, but simply keys in the lock.

The next moment Theo entered the room.

After a quick greeting he went over into the kitchen and Sid followed him with a bottle of absinth. He found him in front of the fridge, cooling some beers he got out of his suitcase.

Sid handed him the absinth and asked where he came from.



"Well it's kind of a difficult story", he answered and made wild gestures with his hands, "... but lets say Straßbourg!"

They returned to the blue room and Theo said: "I have a present for you!"

He revealed a wooden pipe with a carved face. Sid thanked him and filled it with a few green crumbs. After inhaling he handed it over to Theo.

How strangely fitting this sudden visit was. . .

Somehow Theo's timing had always been unbelievably precise!

"Do you have any plans for tomorrow 10 am yet? Would you be interested in attending a special press screening of *The Rum Diary*?"

Sid told him about his intentions in the field of Gonzo journalism and Theo answered: "Well . . . I haven't slept more than 2 hours in the last few nights. . . but I guess I don't really need the sleep. . ."

Unfortunately Theo was mainly reliable in his unreliability.

Sid would have to keep him awake until it was time to go to the screening and lure him there with drugs.

But he would have to get him there!

He would have to confront the film and it's audience with the product of works by Thompson!

"I could wear my attorneys jacket. . ."; Theo proposed.

Sid recalled the claims that multiple books and films on Thompson had made about his writing; that in order to be able to produce true works of Gonzo he had to have and accomplice who would accompany him and whom he could bounce ideas off on as well as draw inspiration from. A Steadman or an Acosta, whom Thompson always admired, since he was someone who would go even further than he.

Theo was someone like that, Sid thought as he watched the man to referred to himself as his 'old friend' in his letters. Theo went over to greet his cousin Arletty and Sid sat down before his typewriter:

what strange timing
as if we were just characters
in a work of fiction



the struggling author
and his friend
deus ex machina

The room slowly emptied when more and more of their surprise visitors left in order to catch the last subway that would get them out of this part of town.

When Sid looked up from his typewriter he realized that he was alone in his room with a small group of people at the other end of the room, talking in their native tongue.

A strange sense of déjà vu took hold of Sid who suddenly felt like he was back in France. . .

What a wonderful feeling, being among people who did not expect you to participate in their conversation and whom's words did not distract you from writing because you could not understand them.

One of the beautiful side effects of travelling.

Theo reluctantly got into the vodka and effervescent powder.

"Was it you who told me about *2001-A space odyssey*? I have another present for you!"

He went over to his suitcase and came back with a movie poster he handed Sid.

"Luckily I am prepared", Sid said and handed him the little translucent plastic bag that contained the mushrooms Sid had gotten Theo for his birthday.

"Could I interest you in a little trip, perhaps to the countryside?", Sid asked.

"Or perhaps to the movie theatre?", Theo said with a grin on his face.

"I don't know if that would be wise. . ."

"Well it wouldn't be wise. . . but it would be Gonzo. . ."

Theo's grin got even bigger.

Editors Note: What follows are transcripts of the tape recordings that have been made in the next 8 hours

Theo:...I kept one mushroom as well, so we still have one more right? And I'm thinking, well it's not quick enough...but then it might be too much...Perhaps...Because I tried that before...

Sid: Those are the trying times of our existence in this world



Theo: But maybe if we wait half an hour the two we ingested are just gonna be eaten up by stuff in our stomachs and then we take one more but it's useless

Sid: I'm not following! Whom's intestines are eating what?

Theo: Ours

Sid: Ahh it's beside the point! What's the point is...

Theo: The point is, it's pretty much that my really Gonzo side would be: Lets eat that last mushroom!

Sid: Well... Go ahead

Theo: I have one...you have one

Sid: Yeah but I...I'm...a responsible journalist

Theo: How does that go with Gonzo?

Sid: Well...

Theo: Cause even though Gonzo is not all about drugs...I don't really see the responsible thing in Gonzo...(laughing) really!

Sid: Well...

Theo: Yeah name one

Sid: You could argue that writing Gonzo is the only responsible thing to do! As opposed to objective journalism...



Theo: Yeah but actually Hunter Thompson used to live his stuffs...and then write Gonzo, like in the Gonzo end of it...Still pretty high...But...really high, because it's not really responsible. And even when he wasn't high, like on pretty much every drug on the planet...he was quite irresponsible

(Silence)

Sid: Strange taste

Theo: At the end it tastes like mushrooms

Sid: I need some caffeine!

Theo: Strange taste?!

Sid: Yeah but it flushes away the other strange taste!

Theo: Haha...Yeah but I'm not sure thats good, because it might fight against the effects!

Sid: Coffeine? Who knows...

(French talking)

(Typewriter noises)

Sid: He got up and turned to his shelf in order to take out some paint. He was just taking of his shirt so he would not stain it, when Theo appeared next to him with some bread.
"Thanks!", Sid said and his eyes fell on the little metal box which held his drugs and he realized that there was more where the mushrooms had come from. He took the plastic bag over to Theo and emptied it before him.
"So: Gonzo?!", Theo asked and Sid reluctantly took out another mushroom. Then he returned to the blue room in order to paint.



The face of an...an

(French talk)

Arletty: Look at the light!

(flashing of TV screen)

Sid: Yeah I've seen the light...

Arletty: Right?

(French talking)

(Typing)

(Theo walks to his suitcase with an empty bottle)

Sid: What are you giggeling back there

Theo: I have 25 cents of Pfand...so that's good

Sid: Congratulations

(French)

Theo: Sid!

You might be the genius

Whats the english for Pfand

Well I don't know

I don't think they have that over there!

(laughter)



Arletty: Well that's what I said

(Typing)

Theo: How do you feel?

Ohh...you

Perfect, you wanna have?

Theo: I think I got it

Sid: That was painful

(clink of glass)

Sid: Damn it

Sid lay down beside the screen for a while that played the DVD of a film by some Nordic band

(Arletty talks french)

(Sid walks into the kitchen)

Sid: What's cooking?

Theo: I don't know

(French)

Arletty: Weed

Sid: Where is the little...?

Arletty: the what?



Sid: The little thing I was writing on, have you seen it?

Arletty: I don't really know what you're talking about...

Sid: Well the things all those papers come from...so I guess it's empty now...

Arletty: Ohh...Maybe I. has it...

(Rushling)

Arletty: You look tired!

(Writing)

Arletty: This music is fabulous, by the way

Sid: What?

Arletty: This music is fabulous!

Sid: Oh yeah

It's it's...the norwegians...

(Theo hands him a plate with small bread)

Sid: What's happening? Oh no...food!

(Fench talking)

I.: Mercy!

(Theo hands some to Arletty, returns to kitchen)

(Sid goes over to the kitchen)



Sid: I just realized that that's not what it says on the cover

(points at weed leaves on baggy)

Theo: Sooo...so Gonzo?

Sid: Oh yeah I guess...

(French)

Theo: Cheers

Sid: Baeh

Theo: Yeah that's good!

(Sid leaves baggy there and walks back to blue room)

(Writing)

Sid: You look sad!

Arletty: Oh it's just this music is reall...err... I mean I'm really enjoying that!

(Sid paints a picture of an Indian in cave)

(French from the kitchen)

(go into bathroom to wash off paint)

Arletty: Hey there



(sounds of the bathroom sink)

(Arletty giggling)

Sid: What?

Yeah this is just making it worse...

(gives up washing off the paint)

Arletty: Is it starting? (mumbling with toothbrush in her mouth)

Sid: I don't know for sure...

(Giggling)

Sid: No I feel fine...You know it's this weird feeling of...well you know: What if they don't work...?

(Giggling)

Theo: Hello there

Sid: There is people in our bathroom! They must be mad I mean look at them their ...mouths are drooling...Rabies!!

(French talking)

Sid: The face of an old Indian appeared on the white sheet of paper before him. Apparently he was in some sort of cave, just beside a fire. Sid tried to write about it, but when he got out his little black book, he noticed that his hands were no longer doing what they were supposed to do. Sid could no longer hold a pen in his hand, let alone write



He went on to the kitchen and approached Theo who was talking to his 2 french visitors while they were preparing some kind of meal.

Arletty: Hey there!

(Giggling)

Sid: Yeah I'm afraid it's kicking in

Theo: I'm afraid as well...but I just don't haveto talk

Sid: You wanna cook?

Theo: Yeah I know...Just to survive, I think we have to do that!

(Screams)

Sid: What it's just a lobster!

Arletty: It's a magnet from the fridge Theo! It's shaped like a lobster!

Sid: Well don't you, don't you... remember in *The Rum Diary* there is this scene where a lobster shows him ...I dont know ...the key to everything or something....It's not in the book

Theo: No it is in the book, it's not in the movie...

Sid: Nono nono there is no lobster in the book

Theo: So its in the...yeah...

Sid: Because there is no LSD in the book



Theo: I know, I know

Sid: But in the movie he takes LSD and then he meets this lobster and the lobster...

Theo: Oh yeah! Actually yeah OK

Sid: And I always wonder...it's not Thompson's own words, is it?

Theo: No it's not

Sid: Yeah, and they sound kind of hollow and don't really make sense in the context of the story whatsoever

Theo: I did not understand why at first Johnny Depp was paying and everything like: we have to do this movie, because you know he's supposed to be Hunter Thompson's friend...So he's supposed to get his view...but no! So it was like: 'Yeah we have to put something strange in the movie'... and so they did that!

Sid: Yeah...Hollywood...or something...So what do I do with this little fucker here?

I.: Don't put it in the pot! We're boiling water for our pasta in it!"

Arletty: It's starting guys...this is so obvious

Sid: I'm at least gonna try to enjoy it

(Giggling)

Sid: I meant to walk forward...

(Giggling)

Haha



(Finally makes it)
(falls down)

Sid: Arrrrg

(Resturns to the kitchen)

Sid: Ohh shit
I made it I put on the music again

Arletty: Haha

(Sid falls down)

Sid: What? What the fuck are you looking at??

(French)

Sid: When will you see Mar next

Arletty: Ahhh...In August

Sid: Ok well can you give her that whenever you see her

(Theo looks over with an inquiring look)

Sid: He needed to write, but there was no refuge in this flat. The walls were closing in, it was just too small.

Hideous words in the kitchen spoken in a foreign tounge...Did he really enjoy, listening to people talk in a language he did not speak while he was present? Didn't it make him feel more like an outcast? Or maybe he liked to be an outcast...



Sid came to rest in a corner of the blue room. He looked around at the colorful walls, hoping that they would comfort his soul. There was the panda, or the giraffe that had been labeled 'gianda' by the woman that had drawn the black and white beast New Years Eve, two years ago. It was drawn by a stranger, just like everyone around him seemed to be a stranger these days. There was no signature beside the '2011 – gianda' label the girl had sprayed next to her work and Sid had no clue who she might have been, beside the fact that she was dutch.

Slowly tiredness approached. He just felt terribly tired in this little room. He knew he had to move, he had to get out of these 4 walls. But that meant getting dressed.

Sid put on the first shirt he found, but then threw it away again when he realized that it was the shirt he had told himself only to wear when he did not want to speak. But he would have to speak tonight. His inability to hold a pen did not leave him any other option.

Where was the shirt that said: 'Don't harm me, I'm just a harmless film-student'? It was nowhere to be found. Sid ran down the hallway to the laundry rack and began to search while holding on to it so he wouldn't fall down.

Arletty approached him and he said: What's up? Have you seen my shirt

Arletty: I think it's probably in the living room

(Giggling)

Sid: I'm in control...

Arletty: It's in the living room

Sid: Nono I'm looking for a particular shirt...the one that's...

Arletty: The black shirt?

Sid: No the one that says: 'Don't harm me I'm just a film-student' on it....

Arletty: Well I haven't seen it



Sid: Damn I need it!!

Sid gave up his search and put on the first shirt. The ground was getting shaky. The shirt was turned inside out and it was impossible to put it on while holding the tape recorder. When he finally made it he went back to the kitchen.

Arletty: What's up?

Sid: We should take a walk

T: I don't know...I kept eating those...I'm not sure why...

Sid: Common man!

T: Sitting on my chair right now...comfortable...

Sid: Fresh air and so forth...

(talking French)

Sid: **Déjà vu here...I feel like I'm back in France!**

Arletty: Yeah but you know I think... we were talking about this...you understand right!?!

Sid: I don't understand shit, you're taling in french!

Theo: Come on

I.: We know

Arletty: Don't lie to us ...don't lie to us we know! You can't cheat us...



I: We found out...

Sid: You found out what??

(talking french)

Arletty: There is still some...

(Giggling)

Sid: Are you planning to eat those?

Arletty: Yeah...can I?

T: Yeah cause She's like a ...she doesn't know stuff and she's like a fucking pig...

Sid: But you should probably stay in a conscious state in order to...

Theo: Or not

Sid: ...keep us from bouncing off the walls...?

Theo: NO why?

Sid: The responsibility thing again, isn't it? Jesus!!

T: So I'm like the devil when...when it goes like: there is an angel", (points at his left shoulder),"and there is a devil..."", (points at his right shoulder)

Sid: Jesus Christ this chair is really rocky! Anyway, I'm trying to convince you here to get out and take a stroll through beautiful Berlin...

T: Yeah but it's...



Sid: Yeah but try it! It's gonna be a lot of fun...and I kind of feel like I should get out of these 4 walls here around me...

(talking french)

Arletty (picks up one of the mushrooms): This is enough, right?

Sid: What I'm saying is lets...

(talking French)

Sid: No no wait wait! Give me the drugs, give me the attention...that's how it works isn't it? (Cough) Jesus...Look I have the drugs listen to me:

Theo: Yeah but it's not the same

Sid: What I am saying is: We should go outside for you to take it

Theo: Actually...It takes half an hour to get there so the girls could take the mushrooms now...

Sid: Yeah so lets go outside, though

Arletty:Lets wait half an hour before going outside!

Theo: See: The devil always wins

Sid: Fucking devil! Why is the fucking devil in my kitchen? For fuck's sake

Arletty: Yeah I have to...

Theo: Sorry



Sid: That's not at all what I was proposing

(talking French)

(Sid sat down on the sofa and gave Arletty a pleading look.

Sid (to Arletty): Lets go outside? Common don't be a marble statue over here! Would you please go outside with me! And then you can take...Please it's not funny, it's really not funny!

Theo: Yes it is...because it is like: The devil...

(Giggling)

Theo: Actually I was just thinking about Lucy in the sky with the devil

Sid: No no what are you talking about, it's diamonds!

Theo: Well it could be devil...

Sid: Shut up

Theo: See!

(manic laughter)

Sid: I'm serious right now: let's go outside!

I.: How could you say no?

Arletty: How?



Sid: Alright and we are putting on our shoes now...lets walk! After you...

Theo:Dont rape my cousin

Sid: Common people!

Theo: I'm talking to you Arletty!

Arletty: Lets go outside and take the drug

Sid: Oh Jesus Christ what has happened to us?

(French, laughter)

Sid: Ahh that's better, you should try on this hat

Theo: Actually I haven't brought mine...cause it was rainy back in France"

Sid: Well then we'll have to take turns?!

Theo: Or I have to find another one...

Sid: What are you doing woman??

(Giggling)

Sid: Alright, alright...take it when you need it! Where are your shoes?

(noise)

That did not entirely go as planned

(talking French)



Sid: French people follow me!

The ground was still shaky. He was being pushed back and forth through the room by forces he did not understand. The face of Mao appeared next to him, or the face of some random chinese person, Sid was reluctant to admit it but: 'they all looked the same' as some American comedian had once remarked

Sid: Come on!

(Giggling)

Sid: You're supposed to be in control here! We're moving!

Arletty: Yeah sure lets move

Sid: Why is the ground so shaky

Theo: I don't know...I don't know...Get down now

Sid: Lets get up!

Theo: I kept eating those things...you just left me with a full bag...and I'm the devil???
Knoweing who I am...

Sid: Get a grip! Get a grip!

Theo: You're the devil meeting the devil...

Sid: Take my hand...Get up...Yeah sure we're both the devil...but we have sympathy for the devil around here, right?!

I.: yeah sure!



Sid: It's gonna be just fine

(talking French)

Sid: Jesus it's irritating! Stop talking in these strange tongues!

Theo: I know you understand...

I.: You know what we're saying...

Sid: Who started that fucking rumor?

Theo: Come on...the devil

Sid: Oh of course who else...Oh devil...you always have a smile on your face...

(talking French, screaming, giggling)

Sid: Lets go people! Listen to the man with the stick!

Arletty: You got the shrooms?

Sid: I think this is...errr...yeah

Arletty: You have the keys?

Sid: Yeah...they're always bound to me...

(noise)

Sid: That was not a good idea, taking the stairs like that

(Giggling)



What? It's really not a comedy! How much more repetition do we need to get that into your skull? It's really not a comedy, stop giggling!

Arletty: You look very funny right now Sid, you have to accept it!

Sid: Alright. That way! Why is the ground so fucking shaky? How is this walking thing...?

Arletty: It's good

Sid: Yeah could you teach me?

Arletty: How to walk properly you mean

Sid: Yeah, what I don't seem like I have problems with that?

Arletty: Stop moving! Now: One leg...one...noooo

Sid: Walking is kind of hard! Fuck I'm on the floor! How can you walk like that man?

(Giggling)

Sid: Come on! That way!

Sid: We have to go past the mountain!

(giggling)

Sid: What? It's true...it's true!

Theo: I'm laughing because I just figured out where you might be going...and I remembered what we did the last time we went there...



Sid: There is a mountain...you don't believe me? Have you not looked out of the kitchen window?

Arletty: Yeah!

Sid: So you have seen the mountain?

Theo: Common we have to make a barbacue!

Sid: Yeah well I'm on my way!

Arletty: So can we take the drug?

(Giggling)

Sid: Jesus!

Theo: I guess they could because ahm...

Arletty: Yeah it's not gonna be much fun if we don't...

Theo: Yeah cause like actually I'm not gonna be able to claim that...

Sid: And I look like I'm a bum down here

Theo: You look like a guy who stole the drug...Well actually they are yours

Sid: And there is paint in my face! You take the hat! Enjoy!

Theo: I know it's gonna make me high! Because I can't see the sky anymore

Sid: Oh the sky! Pretty nice!



Arletty: You have to chew right?

(talking french)

Sid: People... anyone! Wait! Holy Jesus! Oh thank you thank you thank you...Good Sir I was just walking down the street and then this fella here (pointed at the trash can) just grabbed me! Nonononono past the mountain people past the mountain! Move along...Move along!

(Giggling)

Sid: It's really not a comedy!

Theo: Don't offer me another shroom! I'm fine...I'm not gonna eat that! I had too much already...actually...Yeah As I was saying I don't know who is the devil, because you left the entire baggy full of shrooms on the table...

Sid: I'm sorry...I did not mean to! I ahm...I need to get a grip...on my life

Theo: Actually...

(Sid falls into the bushes)

Sid: This is kind of wet
Move along
This is exhausting stuff!

I.: You look like a tree...! But I mean like connected to your surroundings...

Sid: Thanks I guess...

I.: Not like the plant



Sid: Well I guess that's the thing many people talk about...about using hallucinogenics and then you feel connected to everything around you

I.: Yeah

Sid: But somehow I don't feel that!

I.: Oh no?

Sid: I've written about it but it kinda sounds phony in my ears because I haven't really experienced it
Cause right now everything seems so spontaneous...

I.: OK...

Sid: Yeah spontaneous...well...lets go visit the grey heron then!

I.: OK

Sid: It's a bird that lives over at the lake...

Arletty: Heey
Have a cigarette

Sid: No I don't...I have in my...no I don't

Sid: I could offer you a coat thought...

I.: Oh that's sweet

Sid: You need one?



Arletty: No...

Sid: Oh too bad...cause I don't need one...it's hot!

(Giggling)

Sid: It's not a comedy...for fucks sake...

Theo: Well I'm gonna sit down!

Sid: Green is walk!

Nono No walk

Now stop

Arletty: You're doing fine

Sid: Move along, yes green

The system is working!

Stay there...lights changing...and you can...Walk!

Fuck that was close...ahhh

I got to get out of the city

Lets move along...Thats better...Trees are good...Trees...Trees...Trees yes!

Trees? Tress anyone?

Alright!

Music!

I.: I have music on my phone

Sid: You do?

And you still know how to operate it?

I.: Yeah



Sid: Well that comes in handy!
Now what would be in your library?

I.: Oh I have only 3 songs so: this one

Sid: I need the hat!

Theo: We're in the middle of a fucking island here

Arletty: Yeah look at it there are roads all around!

Sid: Well this is only a temporary stop, we have to go further on our route!

(French)

Sid: Do you french people who I apparently now lead to the attractions of my neighborhood...

Arletty: Well lets move along then

T: Yeah to the cigarette

Sid: I need the hat! Oh yes the hat, the good old hat...Well thank you sir! That is...I will pick that right up...Alright!

I.: What?

Sid: Come on move along! Arrgh
Oh Jesus, come on
Look at that

Arletty: What what are you talking about?



Sid: Summer...

Theo: Oh it's summer, look its summer!

Sid: You see the shiny happy images that come to you...

Theo: Well, I've been reading Charles Bukowski all day...

Sid: Wait...shiny happy images?

Theo: Well...

Sid: No, No move along...these realms...people. We're almost at our destination...
To your left you see the famous American Church of Berlin

I.: Oh really?

Sid: Yeah yeah they hold services in English every Sunday...

What are you laughing at?

You need a coat woman!

Nono you need a coat because I don't need one

Ahh that's better...

Hello

Nooo move along

Jesus this is exhausting

Arletty: Why are you?

Sid: This way people

Alright this is not the best spot to cross the road because we can not see where the
vehicles that are approaching, might be headed and at what speed

So we should probably hurry up while crossing the street

Thank you very much, we're almost there



Alright, our choices tonight are:
Do we go to the wasteland or to the animal zoo?

Arletty: Wasteland

Sid: Allright wasteland yeah that's probably better
This is heavy stuff
Move ahead, move along I don't know how to...

(Scream)

Sid: Look at that thing, it's spraying water, why is it spraying water? What the fuck?
What's going on over there?
Look at that

(French)

Sid: Alright is anyone else concerned about the machine spraying water over there?

I.: Yeah I am!

Arletty: No thats just...they do that every night
They spray water in the summer
It's really quite strange

Sid: Lets go to the beautiful countryside
Let's all relax a little

Arletty: Look the moon! Isn't that wonderful?!

Sid: The famous wasteland!
I'm exhausted
How about you?



I.: I'm good

Sid: Ohh that's the spirit of the youth...I guess
How old are you

I.: 18

Sid: Let me tell you: once you reach 21...it's basically downhill from there

I.: Oh no, we're all gonna get to 100, and then it's slowly downhill...

Sid: Did you say 100? Is that really the life expectancy rate these days?

I.: Yeah!

Sid: Alright we have to...arrgh
Arrgh
How is this Laughing thing?

I.: This laughing gas?

Sid: Nono laughing? I can't really remember...

I.: Well...Lets all laugh

Sid: Hahaha
Ah oh jesus
Alright
Oh, they almost turned this place into a park now! Almost all of these little garden
houses gone

Arletty: Oh this is the place with the sand!



Theo: The sand will remain because you have to pay to go there

Sid: Well no you have to pay to play volleyball or drink at the bar but...

Theo: But it's surrounded by fences...and at nighttime they close it...

Sid: Alright

I.: Beautiful! Beautiful bridge!

Sid: Are you laughing right now? No I guess not

Why is this thing so light?

I really can't laugh right now...Please teach me to laugh! I mean it! Teach me to laugh an honest laugh!

Arletty: Well...I don't know how...haha

Sid: Haha

Arletty: It's not honest

Sid: Hahahaha

Arletty: That sounds horrible!

I.: Oh wow that's beautiful

Sid: Alright lets all enjoy the view...Enjoy the view...I don't know how to enjoy the view, how do you enjoy the view?



Arletty: Yes you do, of course you do! Just look at it and feel inside yourself...your emotion. Feel the image inside yourself, like there is Pink inside you! Like there is green inside you...You know?! Like to me this is like a vessel for me! Coming out or... You know to me it's like the symbol of transcendence...you know because it reaches in the sky

I. laughs out loud

Arletty (almost crying): No seriously but it you know it reaches into the sky and it touches the earth!

Theo: You lost your english!

Sid: No she didn't! I can practically understand...You know that it was built by the GDR? And it's basically the east-German government saying: 'Look we have the bigger ...'

Arletty: Yeah I know...but this is just my interpretation...

Sid: Yeah yeah yeah

Arletty: I mean of course it's not a symbol about god or anything but...

Sid: I think it's a good interpretation

I.: I think so too

Sid: Oh jesus this is heavy...Ahhh alright...Oh shit...I'm too old! I'm getting too old for this stuff

(Yawning)

Sid: I'm tired I'm fucking tired



(Yawning)
(French)

Sid: He was getting tired. Horribly horribly tired. He felt old. He felt as if these 3 people who he called his friends were slowly dragging him to the ground. He needed to get away, so he walked down towards the wasteland.

“Bye bye, see you later”; he exclaimed when he realized that they might start missing him and get worried.

Tired, horribly tired...

He couldn't run away

Theo: Hello there

Sid: Hello there...Oh fuck I'm tired

Theo: You are?

Arletty: No!

Sid: Yeah unfortunately I am...

(Yawning)

Sid: But lets go that way

(Sid and Arletty walk down into green plants)

Sid: Oh what the fuck is this place?

Arletty: I don't know



Sid: Alright I do not know where I am anymore! But...lets...oh Jesus this is exhausting!

(Giggling)

Sid: Really why do you keep

Arletty: No but I don't see

Sid: OH I know where we are...more or less...This is pretty beautiful! Alright, alright... And I think I'm getting a hold of this loughing thing again! And enjoying the flowers and all that! This is fucking beautiful isn't it?

Arletty: It is...

(Yawning)

Sid: Still this fatigue...This horrible fatigue! How do I get rid of it? Should I throw this on the floor? I'll never find it again!

(points at his coat)

Arletty: No just put it on, you wont feel a difference

Sid: Oh yeah I see were we are

Arletty: Shall we sit down in the sand?

Sid: Uhhh hello there

(Yamnig)



Sid: Uhhhh still tired...Sorry about that...But the laughing thing is coming back I guess...

Arletty: But you can lough

Sid: Yeah alright: Haha

Arletty:No this isn't honest

Sid: Yeah I know

Arletty: You know once in psychology class we had to guess if the smile of the person was honest or not

Sid: Honest or not yeah!

Arletty: Without looking them in the eye...I mean just pictures! It was pretty interesting

DanYeah I think I did that once in my studies or something...I wasn't very good at it...
Whoa there are bats here! There are bats here!

Sid: Holy shit

Arletty: They are everywhere

Sid: Oh this is what drugs do for you! Lets enjoy it then! I do feel the urge to lie down...Oh this is wet...

(Yawning)

Sid: Damn I'm so tired



Arletty: Don't be Don't be Don't be!!

Sid: Alright! I need to swim!

Arletty: Swim?

Sid: I guess there is no way around it...yeah...

Arletty: Noooo

Sid: Yeah I do

Arletty (with panic in her voice): No you CAN'T Sid, you CAN'T SWIM HERE

Sid: Why not?

Arletty: Because there is no water, do you see any water around here?

Sid: Yeah but there is a lake...Right down at this park...you remember

Arletty: Oh yeah! But you're not seriously planning to go there are you?

Sid: I'm not sure...I'm not sure...I need to swim! But there is that bird there you know...Yeah yeah and I fucking hate the bird and I want to see it dead...but...I need to swim!

Arletty: Well...

Sid: I'm not gonna get rid of this fatigue otherwise! I guess I have to cancel my plans to go to the screening...

Arletty: Oh no you have to go there! It sounds amazing!



Sid: Alright...alright! You think it's a good idea to walk in there looking like this?

Arletty: Yeah sure

Sid: Yeah you know it's a really high class place they got there...On the website they something about...

I need the hat! It will calm me down!

(Manic giggling)

Arletty: Oh my god I'm having a hallucination! Wohohoho Hahaha

Sid: Where

Arletty: There is no boat right?

Sid: There is definitely something there...Like a boat lying on it's back right?

Arletty: Yeah that's what I see!

Sid: That is...There is something there...It might not be a boat but in your head it is one! Hence: There is a boat! That's what I was thought in my film seminar on psychological reality

Arletty: It's not a boat...Or is it? What is it?

Sid: Alright what I was trying to get across here was....Hoooo! Lets enjoy the view Let's just...hooo...They seem to be able to do it...maybe the smoking thing helps

Arletty: Yeah

Sid: But I don't smoke! I guess I'll have to smoke something thats considered a downer...



I have to go swimming! People! I do feel the violent urge to go swimming!

T: I've been swimming in the last 2 days!

Sid: I guess I'll have to get a grip

(Giggling)

Arletty: He asked me if there was water there!

Sid: Nono I meant there was water right over there at the park

Theo: Wait where is water? Am I standing on water right now?

(Giggling)

Sid: Nono

Arletty: There is no boat

Theo: Jesus walking on water

Sid: Smoking that's a reasonable...And the hat...the hat...our good old friend the hat!
Thank god for him

(tries to pick it up)

Sid: Look that way! I'm just dealing with my hat people! Ha that's how you do it!

(Giggling)

Sid: It's not a fucking comedy I keep telling you people! I'll be back...



Theo: Ok...

Arletty: Where are you going?

Sid: I'm going swimming

I.: That's not healthy

Sid: Yeah I guess I'm not going swimming...I'm going somewhere in this direction

T: Do what you have to do...I don't give a fuck

Sid: Yeah thank you, that's the right spirit! Ahhh

Theo: Just tell me where that press screening is taking place later...

Sid: Hooo you're still planning on going there hm? Well that's the spirit! Lets ask the little machine in my pocket!

Theo: Stuff is hard

Sid (sits down): Hooo...This is better! Sitting and smoking hm?! Lets try this little fucker here! He's smiling!

(Yawning)

Theo: Common

Sid: Come on, come on...Music thats right! Ohh where is that fucker? Nono I'm on it! Damn this is heavy! Nononono don't go there! Oh fuck I hate this machine! Oh thank god...What the fuck? It's talking to me! Please make it stop!

Theo (takes the touchwriter): Actually it does say stuffs



Sid (takes it back): What did you do?...Don't...Oh alright I believe that is my good friend...someone...It's that social network! Damn I I fucking hate that thing...Nooo what is it doing...oh alright...music...music...Come on you fucker! Alright alright alright...Yeah no yeah...Come on!

Arletty: Look there is a face over there!

Theo: Isn't that nice

(Sid gets up and walks away)

Sid: He set out to climb a mountain. A man needed a plan! And this particular reporter needed to find his voice. That was after all what the films that this generation was raised with, told people to do. Find your voice! If you are a young author you need to find your own voice! That is was many before you set out to do, you should follow their lead!

So Sid climbed the mountain. But unfortunately when he reached its top all he found there were memories [REDACTED]

Was he in control though? In control of himself? He had not been lately...That had driven him to this point where he found himself on top of a mountain, terribly, terribly tired.

Am I in control? I am talking into a machine that will not give me an answer to the question I am proposing, Sid thought.

Then he got tired again and told himself to walk on.

Suddenly he found a strange pink object to his feet. He picked it up, or at least he tried. A second attempt did the trick but the pink golf ball couldn't hold his attention. He tossed it away tired of its promise and walked on through the mud towards the reflection of the sky in a lake to his feet.

Sid told himself to forget about the fact that he was tired. He searched his pockets for headphones, but he could not find any.

There were stones in his shoes.



Sid kept yawning and he told himself once again that the only way out was to do something drastic.

He did not know what he had to get away from, but he did know he had to get away from something, probably from himself. Away from the dreadful voice that kept narrating his life. Away from this tiredness.

But the only possible way out he could see at this point was the nearby lake. Sid tried to ignore the horrible beast that called this lake it's home. He tried to ignore this group of people that claimed to be his friends, talking to each other in French at the side of a strange desert of mud.

He waved over to them...

Theo: I'm gonna kill you! Some day...I'll have a reason

Sid: What a horrible, horrible thing to say

Theo: Look at my shoes!

Sid: What do you're shoes have to do with my state of being alive? Could you explain that to me...Oh yes you have a pipe! You have a pipe!

Theo: And you soo...OK go first

Sid: Where is she going? God they'll pick her bones dry out there! Ahh...You have a pipe...My friend...A pipe

Theo: It kind of looks like you

I.:Lets all smile a little!

Sid: That does not in the slightest way look like me!

Theo: It has hairs...hahahaha



Arletty: It does not look like him

Theo: Ohhh come on

Sid: I was about to smoke this pipe...

(French)

Sid: Jesus you're talking in tongues again...Argh People! I was about to go swimming

Arletty: Yeah right...

Theo: See you soon!

(gets up)

T: You look tired

Sid: I do not ...well yeah I do...fucking look tired! But I'm trying to ignore that...It's getting kind of hard...Alright I'm going off in this direction then
Maybe a poem would do the trick! Maybe that had been the reason that he had...
You there!

(I. stands in the middle of wasteland)

Sid: Give me 3 words please!

I.: In english?

Sid: And if you have a piece of paper...no I have one...Yeah English would be...would be good!

I.: Half...

V

Sid: Wait a second there...Am I really supposed to be able to write on this? Again please!

I.: Half...Half...Half...Half...You know like a half...

Sid: yes

I.: OK...hihihi....Blue... moon

Sid: Alright...Oh that's quite beautiful! Well...I'll be over there! I'll work on these! You'll go your way! Or something...I guess...I'll be there...no I'll be over there! Alright He was in the possession of words

Words
Words

That was something he could work with, and wasn't that what life was all about?
Work

A man needed to work!

He felt tired again

Sid was experiencing strange flashbacks to a trip he had taken down to the town of Heidelberg where he had once considered living.

Then he saw 2 rabbits, peacefully hopping along beneath the bridge he was passing. And Sid decided to pay attention to that beauty

But when he did he felt tired.

Horribly horribly tired

Which reminded him of the chore he had placed on himself for tonight.

To go swimming in that lake which he knew lay...lay...

He had watched....

He needed to write

And by that he meant not talking into a tape recorder!

Instead Sid tried to write on the machine he held in his hand.

But when he did he just felt tired.

His mind was racing in circles.



And somewhere the definition of depression caught his attention and it made him tired.
This was an age-old struggle, the forces of good and evil he was fighting inside.
When do you give in?
When do you allow your body to speak?
Your body that demands not that you fall unconscious
It wouldn't be so utterly mean...
Oh shit he was tired
Sid suddenly saw the pipe in his hand again
Would it help if he injected himself with yet another drug?, he wondered
But then he realized that this thought
Was irrelevant since he was no longer in the possession...
Oh yes he was
Sid realized he was carrying lots and lots of weed with him
He did not know how that dreadful herb had gotten into his coat
But when he found it he was happy
He knew this drug was considered a downer by most
And yet he told himself that he would awake once he injected it into his system
He had always reacted that way and just to make sure to get that reaction Sid got out his pipe, his old, well tested pipe that he loved and hated at the same time
But was that hate really his?
A man needed a plan!
Sid did not know who had said that, it was one of those things injected into the minds of his generation.
Sid looked up and realized a man walking by. He took up his phone and acted as if he was calling someone, turning himself from a freak who was talking to himself into a freak who was talking to someone else.
That poor bastard walked into a world he had no idea of
'A man needs a plan!'
Sid repeated those words in his head. Horrible horrible repetition. How did you get rid of it? What was there? Drugs?
Possibly so...
Sid raised his pipe and realized that he did not have a lighter.



He grabbed into his pocket but instead of a lighter he just found out that the bag that had kept his supply of drugs was gone.

His plan was ruined.

His plan was ruined...

When would he be able to rest? Oh when?

Sid felt driven and sad, horribly horribly sad. But he did not dare to put himself back at the mercy of those creatures that called themselves his friends.

Then again, he needed a lighter, and that was a hook that kept him going.

You can't return to those 3 without delivering a work of art though, Sid told himself and looked down at the 3 words he had gotten

ya

blue

aamoon

It said on his touchwriter.

Sid no longer knew what words he had gotten from the friend of Arletty whom's name he did not recall...

And he felt unable to write.

Unable to write and thereby unable to live.

He was getting into what is commonly known as "heavy stuff".

Sid realized he had forgotten what fun really was. 'How do you have fun?', he asked himself.

Just when he got up in order to go over to his friends whom he heard screaming past the hills, Sid noticed the lighter lying on the floor.

(The 3 friends return from the wasteland, find Sid on the bench)

Arletty: It's great, I love it...

Sid: Alrighty! We're all in control!

(Arletty laughs hysterically)



Sid: Ok we're not in control...

(I. joins in)

Sid: Jesus Christ!

(Arletty tries to roll a cigarette)

Arletty: It's moving

Theo: What is moving?

Sid: Shall I try?

Arletty: Oh god it's gorse actually...I can't believe I'm gonna inhale that!

Sid: That might be...a quite...well you know...one of these epiphanies...heard of them before?

Arletty: Yeah...

Sid: Maybe you shouldn't smoke it...?

Arletty: Ahhh

Sid: I don't know...I don't know...Should I smoke this though?

Arletty: Yes you should

Sid: Oh I should...aha...aha...yeah well

Arletty: You should...



Sid: Should I listen to your pros and cons or just proceed here?

Arletty: Oh proceed

I.: proceed

Arletty: and proceed for me as well!

Sid: What do you mean

Arletty: Light my cigarette

Sid: OK you go first...Hoooo OK OK OK

You! You gave me 3 words...I wrote down these words on this little machine...

I.: And then...?

Sid: And then I looked at what I had written and the fucker told me: "ya, blue, aamoon"

I.: What?

Sid: Well...

I: Oh yeah that's half, blue, moon but...

Sid: Half blue moon! Thank you!

I.: It's kind of cool like this...

Sid: Yaaa blue amon...Alright, alright! Thank you! I'm gonna...Half blue moon! Yeah!
A man needs a plan! And I have a plan...



(Giggling)

Sid: I...Goddamit! My plan was this plan and this lighter! Nonononono! Jesus Christ! Oh people...I really have to move out of this city!

I.: Try to do it again

Theo: Whats happening?

I.: Nothing...‘A man needs a plan!’

Sid: Yeah you narrate for a while!

I.: ‘I have a plan...I have a man and the plane...plan...is...’ And then you can...you can...do your speech, please!

Sid: What speech?

Arletty: Did you hear a weird noise?

Sid: I don’t know! Could you describe the noise maybe?

Arletty: Like hummmmmm

Sid: Jesus Fucking Christ!! Oh the fucking vulture is out! God damn it look at those birds!

(Giggling)

(French)

Sid: Too much input...definitely too much input! Well you wanna visit the bird?



Arletty: 'Visit the bird?'

Sid: Simple question: Yes or no?

Arletty: What is this supposed to mean?

I: How do you visit the bird?

Sid: It's over there...

I.: what is the bird?

Sid: It's giant, it's grey and it's one hell of a beast

I.: It's flying?

Sid: Yeah! Not sure if its there this morning. But it used to be every morning when I went past it jogging! So I'm gonna visit the bird!

I.: OK

Sid: See you later...or?

I.: Alligator!

Sid: See you there?

I.: I don't know where it is!

Sid: Well...follow me!

I.: follow me...



Arletty: What is this bird?

Sid: You'll see...Alright! Hey there is an empty bottle of rum...what a beautiful symbol of all that's good and true and what not...How is that coat coming along? Jesus... Alright alright yeah that's good! Argh...did you see the man passing by earlier?

Arletty: No

Sid: So you were not sitting on this bench, thinking to yourself: What am I doing here, with paint in my face, talking to myself while a guy dressed...oh yeah there is another one of those

(Man walks by)

(Giggling)

T: We look like pervs'!

Sid: Please stop laughing at the locals! It's a common thing of decency! Unbelievable!

Arletty: Oh were here!

Sid: See...She knows the bird...you know the bird...do you know the bird?

Arletty: maybe I know the bird...

Sid: Now I have this fucking family guy episode stuck in my head! God damn it, fucking cartoons!!

(Giggling)



Sid: The birds are closing in on us! Do we go straight ahead or do we take the little path here so we do not disturb the man who seems to be sleeping on that bench over there....

Arletty: Little path! Little path! Little path!

Sid: I don't think the bird is home!

Arletty: The man has a pipe...

T: and a lighter and...

Sid: Hello there! You look like a reasonable guy! Well I have to say I'm kind of relieved that the bird doesn't seem to be here, because he's something like a mortal enemy...and I'm really not looking forward to some kind of showdown this morning

T: yeah I had one of those...there was a giant bee at the house I stayed at the past month...

Sid: Oh shit!

Theo: and I tried to fight the fucker but I had to leave without catching him!

Sid: Oh no! Oh thank god it's back there...And there are no birds here either...Bench... benches were made for people to sit down on

I.: woohaaa

Sid: ...and look upon the fucking world with you know happiness and all that!

(French)

I.: Can I have a lighter?



Theo: See how good you understand french

Sid: Do I surrender this one to your care! Would you give it back to me when you're done with it!

Theo: I'm gonna do something with that lighter...

Sid: That sounds kind of dirty! I have to say! Sorry but I guess french have thing with lighters...I'm just gonna leave you to it...Could I borrow that thing? This should be...

(smokes pipe)

I.: That's a good idea!

Sid: I do believe it's working

I.: Can I try?

Sid: I'm not sure if this is still...let me fill that up for you...just one grab into my jacket...Jesus Christ

(Giggling)

Sid: There you go

I.: Thank you

Sid: Music, music suthes a mans ears!

(French)

Sid: People speaking in tongues again!



(Sid and I. go over to other side of the lake)

Theo (yelled across the pond): Sid, how would you feel about eating it?

Sid: I don't know...told myself that capturing it on film is enough...

(talking French)

Sid: What's happening? Why is everyone standing?

Theo: Everyone...half of the people around...

Sid: Oh yeah...

Theo: I guess we're gonna head home...

Sid: So much for *The Rum Diary*?

Theo: Well actually it's only 6!

Sid: That's true...it's warm at home isn't it?

Theo: I suppose so...Plus you do look like a freak...cause you're red and...

Sid: Shit I washed myself! Well I guess home is a place where I have my...yes my manager...Have you heard that A. now reckons herself my manager?! 50% of everything now belongs to her...Yeah I don't know how that happened....

Theo: as your attorney I guess 50% of everything already belong to me...

Sid: What? Nonono...nonono I've never signed a contract of that sort...



Theo: You didn't sign a contract with A.

Sid: Well there is sort of a contractual obligation that goes along with a shared drinking of well...And exchanging certain words...Right? I don't know...It's all a big hoax anyway...sadly...

Theo: Luckily you don't own a lot so...It's getting cold.

(They head home)

Sid: You got the keys? Did we lose anything along the way?

Arletty: Like what like our panties?

(Giggling)

Sid: Jesus what? Could I...could I have a look in the...

(Giggling)

Sid: IT'S NOT A FUCKING COMEDY!!! It's still there...You got the lighter?

Arletty: No I don't

Sid: Who's got the lighter? Well I guess we should take one more look at the giant teddy bear while we're at it...To your left the almighty dollar...Nono I was just pointing at the fucking thing! Come here! I'm a guide, alright?! Oh there he is...What are they doing to him? They are taking the bear with them! It's horrible! It's a travesty! Berlin is a strange town...You know...We have giant teddy bears roaming the streets...

Arletty: Oh yeah the teddy bear! Of course



Sid: Of course it's the teddy bear! Everyone knows and loves the teddy bear! But what are they doing to him? Oh they're not doing anything...I thought they were taking him away but...Well I guess it's...

Theo: What is he made of?

Sid: Yeah he's empty...Let's all hug the teddy bear common

Theo: Oh no...

Sid: He wants some love common

Theo: Not really...

Arletty: Oh he's so sweet

Sid: Anyone?

Arletty (almost crying): yeah of course...of course! Teddy Bear!!

(Giggling)

Arletty: Oh teddy bear!

Theo: He looks sad...

Sid: Yeah

Arletty: No he doesn't

Sid: Oh don't look at his eyes!

Arletty: Fuck it looks supersad!



Theo: It looks sad enough to be willing to kill somebody!

Sid: Yeah I wouldn't really call it sad...it's rather...

Theo: Well actually he's going to kill you

Sid: What is he holding?

Theo: I don't know but he's going to use it in order to kill you

Sid: God why is he here? Who the fuck left this teddy bear here? Insanity!

(They cross the street)

Damn! Doesn't that kind of thing make you wonder...Should we like help the girls to cross the street...It would be our moral obligation...

(They pass a waterpump)

Sid: Let's have some fun with the water!

Theo: Does it work?

Sid: Yeah it's Summer...Summertime

Arletty: I wonder who uses it

Sid: Noone really uses these anymore

Theo: I'm gonna take a shower...



Sid: university officially ended...today actually! I'm a free man! Holliday season! Yeah well...3 months...Out on probation...or something like that

Theo: As your attorney I would advise you to call it something else!

Sid: Yeah well...What's wrong with this town? Who locks a shopping cart to...What happened here? Who...Who...Who locks his shopping cart to the fence? What's happening in this town? People are going crazy!

(Girls giggle)

Sid: Insanity wherever you go!

Sid: What is this...what is with this town? Why would they do such a thing? There used to be a streetlamp here...and now it's this stump...It's crazy! Unbelievable!

(Giggeling)

Sid: Look at this! This is insanity!

Arletty: It is!

Sid: Look at that! Look at the plastic bag in the tree up there...It's been there for half a year now! Jesus Christ! Where do I live? And what is that?

Theo: Looks like it's a body bag...

Arletty: What the hell is this?

Sid: It definitely isn't a body! I can tell you that much...

Arletty: TV...a computer



Sid: It iiiiiisss...It is something...something...Let me put on my glasses here! Reveal yourself! You can't open the fucking bag...Anyone have a knife?

(Giggling)
(French)

Sid (opens the bag in the flower-bed): There you go! Hey it's freshly stolen TVs...

Arletty: OK

Sid: Where do I live? How did I get here? This is insane! Oh there are more where it came from...Moving on! Move along! You people have to learn when it's time to move on!

Arletty: You got the keys?

Sid: Have yo seen the bear that is looking out of that window? Oh it's not there anymore...What did they do to the bear?

Theo: Let's begin the journey up the stairs

(French)

Arletty: Oh wow what a mess

Sid: What are you talking about? Ever heard that wonderful rhyme: "God bless this mess?" It's beautiful! You call it a mess, I call it home! Come on have some decency! Alright...Lets check our supplies, is there anything here? Oh yes! Could you hand me that bottle of caffeine that is right there...Nononono! At the bottom of the fridge! I'll get it myself! Come here you fucker! Oh yeah that's the stuff! I wish I could inject it right into my fucking veins! Ahhhhh

Arletty: Let's wake Franz!



Sid: No that would be cruel! Although we do have a fire-extinguisher we could take in order to run to his room and threaten him...A little. So he would wake up and go to work or whatever

Theo: Yeah...Well we'd have to be really convincing about the extinguisher! Because it's empty...

Sid: I don't think he knows that the fire-extinguisher is empty! It's a good question: Does he know? How would he?

Theo: He was here before...so...

Sid: I guess

Theo: I guess that could be weird cause one way to find out that it's empty would be trying to use it...so

Sid: Well talking about there is only one way to find out: We would have to judge from his reaction!

Theo: I guess that would be the way to find out

Sid: It would be cruel...What are those sounds?

Theo: Girls getting naked...

Sid: Does she look dead to you...like her face...I'm sorry I don't know how else to phrase it but....

Theo: Dead...Ha!

Sid: I'm being serious...I don't know...Don't laugh about that shit! It's cruel!



Theo: Like, what do you mean...in general?

Sid: I don't know! Have you seen the circles beneath her eyes? They seem to be permanent! I mean I've seen her after sleeping, they're still there...it's horrible! Looks like they guy that looks at me from the mirror!

(Sid spills his drink)

Sid: You fucker! Oh yeah...Why hasn't anyone ever taught me how to drink?

Theo: Well I couldn't teach you how to drink that...

Sid: Heavy trip...Heavy heavy heavy...Let's see

Theo: The half naked girl who looks dead?

Sid:Nononono No I was more in the lines of: Let's see if I'm still able to handle a toilet bowl...Fuck

(Sid goes over to the bathroom and looks into the mirror)

His face...It was...Green...Colourful...Colours that marked him as a freak. A freak that would probably not be allowed in at a prestigious press screening of *The Rum Diary*. And yet he had to cover that press screening! He had to cover the state of Gonzo, its legacy, what it had been made into! At the hands of rich good looking Hollywood types.

Hunter S. Thompson's films were being shown in venues that lay centuries from the 60s he described...

He would have to take a shower!

Oh no they're talking in tounges again

What's up?



Theo: Nothing...Life

Arletty: So Sid you're still high?

Sid: Who knows?

Arletty: Because I have to know how long it's gonna last

Sid: Why?

Arletty: I'm so high!

Sid: Well congratulations...you wanna...you wanna...

Arletty: It's been too long though

Sid: Nono that's quite usual...Just enjoy this...I guess...If it works...

(Music begins to play)

Sid: Ohhh Jesus this is...quite a ...quite a trip! Oh...What are you starring at? Dude!

Theo: I was wondering if ah...

Sid: I guess I have to set up some alarm clocks or something...Well...

Arletty: I guess we're gonna try to sleep

Sid: Wait...could I get the alarm clock?

Arletty: Oh it rings at strange hours...I don't know how it works

Sid: I think I can handle...I can handle an alarm clock...You fucker!



Arletty: pssst

Sid: So I really tend to...woh oh...Where is the alarm clock? Oh that thing! I don't know how to work that machine! Nevermind!

(Sid returns to the kitchen)

Sid: Food hm?! Basic human consumption...That's probably the answer... You fucker...you owe me a fucking pizza! Common! Where is it? I'm talking to a fridge...hey

Theo: That happens

Sid: OK what else we got?

Theo(points to a sticker on the fridge): I guess...that animal does no longer exist does it

Sid: He's dead! He's long dead! Forget about him!

Theo: Now you're giving money to WFF to say that you're helping animals...

Sid (rips off the sticker): Well that's a lost cause right there! Common! Have the decency to get off my fridge

Theo: Yeah have some class...you're dead...please leave!

Sid: It doesn't wanna go

Theo: Well...

Sid: I'm not gonna be able to prepare that! What else is there?



Theo: I have to buy pizza to put it in there

Sid: Why?

Theo: At least one pizza because...I was like: I's not good! But I have to say...it was pretty good pizza...

Sid: Bread that has been earned! Rightfully earned...And thrown away because it's...

Theo: What? It looks...

Sid: Oh no don't worry, we have plenty of bread! Take this one! Oh Jesus...it's sick man!

Theo: It is

Sid: We have plenty of bread in this city...they throw it away! Have you heard of the brand new trend that is sweeping the nation? They call it 'containern'

Theo: no

Sid: And they meet in the street...The young and the restless...In order to go through the trash cans behind supermarkets! There have been books written on the subjects, guides on how to survive being poor in this city and making a living on welfare... Well it reads like cynicism, but some people use it as instructions on how to live their lives...It's strange! I don't know man...
So lets wake Franz, he has to go to work!

Theo: Really?

Sid: Or school...I don't know which one

Theo: If it's school he might be on vacation...



Sid: Oh yeah you're right! Lets wake him anyway!

Theo: We didn't know...

Sid: Yeah...They apparently just found cockroaches in Camille's room! Camille apparently never recognized them...Well cheers I guess! Tasty butter...In the US they put the butter on sticks and then they put the sticks with the butter into frying pans...and then you can buy butter on a stick at carnivals...

Theo: Maybe thats supposed to tell us something...

Sid: You know I just went to a place called the *Fusion*...I think it was last...week?! Strange place...Even more overrun with drugs and people looking for a good time... That sort of stuff! And a lot of techno music...Electronic beats to keep the minds of the young and the restless occupied. At times I had visions of the people, sure that death was imminent, but going on, raving and cheering into its face...Stuff like that! It was quite bleak

Theo: Yeah sometimes it looks like a supermarket

Sid: What does?

Theo: These places...they look like a supermarket

Sid: Oh yeah...that is

Theo: Where you could buy fun and answers...you know

Sid: Well every place is...The American dream! Hm...Butter

Theo: Put it on a stick!



Sid: Jesus Christ...It's a hideous mess! They won't ever let a freak like me into such a prestigious place Like the *Astor film lounge* where only the bright and the wealthy are allowed to feast themselves on the misadventures of freaks on a screen...

(eating)

Sid: Oh yeah have you seen A.'s heart?

Theo: Yeah I wondered who it belonged to...

Sid: Are you trying to figure out whether these 2 flaps are her boobs?

Guess I need to write! Typewriter or pen?

...Or laptop?

Theo: I know this question

Sid: Oh yes typewriter...You know it was quite a shock when the trip set in and I just suddenly lost the use of my hands...couldn't write...

Theo: Really?

Sid: My right arm and felt stuck to the floor! Lying there, pencil on the floor miles away from holding it, let alone writing with it...I'm gonna use the typewriter!

(glass shatters)

Sid: Arrrg! The stuff around here is attacking me! Something is trying to keep me... Jesus it's quite a mess...Damn I hate glass...

(long silence)

Sid: Gaarrchh...ahhh...hach Jesus...Jesus Christ...



Theo: Yeah that's why I like to live alone, because if you lived alone you wouldn't have to clean that right now...

Sid: Yeah I'm thinking about moving to the countryside for October...To a little cabin in the woods...They built a few appartments in the...well in the abandoned army base! Like 5 or six Russian headquarters now can be rented...Wrote down the number of the thing...But I wonder what the neighbors would be like? Who like living in a place like that...Could be strange

Theo:Well it's strange anyway because...

(Sid drops something)

Sid: You fucker! How the hell did this happen? Jesus fucking Christ! Writing it is! Come here you bottle! Where is my pipe?

(Sid picks up the pipe with the wooden face)

Theo: You see yourself in a mirror?

Sid: I don't know man...He's got hair

Theo: And he's got the face

Sid: The nose...yeah that is definitely mine...Comeone its not even close! Jesus look at my face! They'll never let me into the fucking press screening! This is...Ahh I guess...I guess that's exactly it, isn't it? Sums up the movie: If you're a freak you're not able to see it!

(typewriter noises)

Sid: Whooo...Ahhh...Nothing can get you as high as sitting at a desk writing...Or something like that...Lets try it!



(typewriter noises)

Sid: Ghaa...I'm missing the fucking...Ahhh come here!

(typewriter noises)

Sid: I think...I'm wondering how cruel my professor really is...I'm trying to see what kind of man he is. He told me earlier today...I guess you could call it...Ahhh...I should write him a short message wheter I got in or not...And he gave me that look...Like he was setting off some kind of social experiment

Theo: Yeah don't know...Taking those drugs later and going to the things would have been a social experiment as well

(typewriter noises)

Sid: Are you able to sleep on these?

T:: Apparently not

Sid: What is...we have to ...Have you seen a lighter

Theo: Yes I have

Sid: Ahhh got it! Ah thank you thank you...Ahh suddenly I'm rich! How did that happen? Ho...You fucker! Goddamn it...What happened to...Ah what happened in here? This...Hm...Strange...Well...ahhh...Weed is supposedly a downer...isn't it? What are you looking at?

(music, long silence)

Theo: Did you change your internet?

V

Sid: Huh? I don't know...Oh yeah

Theo: I klicked here but...

Sid: Just the button...And you need a password...OK We can do that! It's not that hard! You just have to...Oh fuck what am I doing? I know how to handle this machine! I would reccomend taking this bottle and giving it a slight...

(Sid hits his screen with a bottle)

Sid: Did that do anything?

Theo: No not really

Sid: Oh shit...Oh yeah your doing good...You go like this and what you try to do is you try to make him tell...Boooya!

Theo: Oh nice

Sid: Oh yeah! I know my way with machines...come on...I've been trained by the best! Actually I've not been trained...But by the best...

(Music, silence)

Theo: What is this strange rumbling? The floor is shaking

Sid: It does that sometimes around these parts...And I always wonder...Why the fuck is the floor moving? Right now it might be the vibrations of that thing! But to be honest I have no fucking clue! It could also be the after effects of the fucking drug...Or it might be...I don't know

Theo: Pretty sure its the *Club Mate!*



Sid: Yeah that might be it

(Music, silence)

Sid: Oh for fucks sake...Oh shit...ahm...what do I do? This is some major symbol for addiction right here!

Theo: I guess you can live with a bottle on a finger

Sid: I guess...But what a live...What a horrible fate! Or maybe not...Who knows...Oh shit! I ran out of books to fill! I need paper! Fuck! Jesus Christ!

(Music, silence)

Sid: Oh you fucker! nononono!

(rattling, rushing)

Sid: Yeah! Ah yeah

(typewriter)

(Music from the bathroom: Jetzt wird es Zeit zu leben)

Sid: Sid grabbed his tape recorder and returned to the bathroom mirror that seemed to hold all the answers, if he just knew the right questions to ask

(Ganz tief)

Sid: He looked at his face in the mirror. He looked like a foreigner. He looked like Some kind of south American thug...Strange beast! Then again...

He put on shades.

He looked like a freak!



Strange

Slightly naive, like someone who believed that wearing 1 Euro plastic glasses might bring you a more beautiful vision.

Without the glasses Sid could suddenly see his father in his reflection.

He looked at him with sad eyes.

‘Who the fuck am I?’, Sid asked himself.

He didn’t know.

Suddenly the image in the mirror looked old. Very very old and terribly tired.

Sid began to touch his face, trying to use it like some kind of mold in order to alter the way he looked. But it didn’t help. There were other ways of altering your facial expression but he couldn’t make use of those right now for he did not know how people would react to a man with a painted face in the middle of the theater. Not on screen but right between them

Who would ever transcribe this gibberish?

Who would ever find the file he was recording in the depths of his touchwriter and put it in some kind of context that enabled the reader to see that they were more than just ramblings of a crazy person on drugs?

Sid listened to the music that streamed in on him through the music machine beside the sink. It was a classic German Prophet who worked in the field of spoken word.

“Now is the time to live!” he proclaimed.

(Sid dries his hair)

Sid: He looked at the time and realized that it was running out. Would he be able to make it to the movie theater in time or would he get caught up in the preparations for attending the screening? Sid decided to wake Theo and tried to persuade him to come along. Which words might be sufficient?

(Cough)

Sid: Damn!

(clinking of glass)



Sid: Drink this! It's your fuel...So I've been told!

Theo: It's yellow!

Sid: I know that's the good stuff from Luxemburg! I guess...It's all the rage! Oh yeah water...water! Mix it with water...I've been told that's...Ah looks pretty! So... tell me: You're still up for the job?

Theo:I don't know...I set the alarm for 10...

Sid: 10 is a bit late! Now would be almost 9! And keep in mind the fact that we still have to make a little journey out there to somewhere close to the giant green lung of the city...ahh...Might consider, you know...Getting up and stuff...Looking in the mirror helps too! I've seen strange stuff in there! So I'll be there for a while! You...well.. have a drink!

Theo: Either I'm gonna be sleeping or up!

Sid: Well Then I'm gonna increase the odds of up! I guess...

(Sid turns Hendrix up)

Sid: ...he said and left for the bathroom again.

Back in front of the mirror he saw some strange baby blue sunglasses grin back at him, that he had gotten from his friend A.. They didn't quite fit today. But what did? Sid feared he might end up, showing up at the premiere naked. That couldn't happen! He decided to find a fitting shirt! And if he wouldn't find one he would make one! (No reason to get excited...)

Sid: Jesus!

He stared back into the mirror and realized that he owed a lot to the shape of his face. It was so innocent and nonthreatening in so many ways.



He went back to his crooked bookshelf and got out the book he had once read when he was young and impressionable, about different aspects of the human body and the way they talked. Body language and that sort...

It was built up as kind of a guide to reading people, but Sid never made use of the books messages because he was just not able to. He wasn't able to look at a person and then judge him in a way that would be deemed reliable by him.

There were so many possibilities of what might be going on behind the forehead of his opposite

He never dared to take a wild guess and then just go with it!

(Look for the girl with the sun in her eyes...)

Sid: When Sid looked up from his typewriter and over to the sofa he saw Theo, huddled beneath a blanket, trying to sleep. First it annoyed him to see his friend betray him like that. Sneaking out into unconsciousness and leaving him out here by himself to deal with these ugly so called 'realities' that kept presenting themselves to Sid.

But then he realized that he...

Sid opened the book and hideous pictures starred right at him.

Designed to act him in a way that would be better in oh so many ways. Most importantly better in order to make money.

(That was the day my daddy died...)

Sid: The kind of behavioral psychology that was being thought to Sid at his university and that were infecting his mind.

He ripped out a page that talked about 'The bulldog face'. Next to the picture of an old lady frowning. The little explanatory text at the bottom of the picture informed the reader that 'our intuition tells us to stay away from bulldog faces'.

Sid took the page, ripped it out of the book and nailed it against the picture he had drawn earlier, with a knife he found lying on the floor. Then he took the paint he found lying on the floor and wrote 'Smile!' on the page before him.

Afterwards he continued to dress himself.



Franz: Morning! Are you done here?

Sid: More or less! What exactly is your plan?

Franz: I need to piss!

Sid: Have fun!

(door closes, opens again)

Sid: Why are you already up?

Franz: Work...How late is it?

Sid: I don't know...

Franz: And you?

Sid: Me too I guess..

Franz: Work?

Sid: I have to go to a press screening about which I'll write my term paper!

Franz: Ahh...

Sid: He put on his shoes and his jacket and was ready to leave. The only question was: would he take Theo with him? Was he really an aid to his reporting in the state he was in, lying on the sofa unconscious? Sid realized that the fact that Theo was sleeping might get into the way of walking to the theater. So he woke him, again.

Sid walked up to Theo, singing along to Bob Dylan praising a certain Highway.

"Tell me, Quick man I got to run!"



He was interrupted half way by Franz who asked him if he was all done in the bathroom.

“I don’t know...”, Sid answered and walked into the bathroom to inspect the mess he had left it in...

“Shall I let out the water, or might we need it later?”

Franz: Man I have to take a shower, dude!!!

Sid: Well then let it out...

Franz: You let it out!

Sid: I was not done!, he exclaimed, his voice slowly rising towards the end of the sentence, “...as I said...”

Franz: Arg..this is gonna take for ever again man! Sid I need to take a shower! I need to go to work man! How late is it actually?

Sid: I don’t know...It would be...9:14...holy shit!

(Caugh)

Franz: Man...

Sid (walks up to Theo): Hey you! Do I have to use fire again...oh no there we go! So whats the score?

Theo: The score is I guess: My body needs to sleep...

Sid: And your mind?

Theo: Never but...Since a week now...Every part of body hurts!



Sid: Really? That's horrible man! Sounds bleak! Oh well, I guess you're in safety now...

Theo: When does Camille come back, do you know?

Sid: 18th...why?

Theo: Well then I can eat her sausage!"

Sid: So I have to run...somewhere...you rest and I'll...

Theo: Yeah well

Sid: Or what? Yeah...OK so what do I need? I'll need the book...What else? Some kind of head gear, right?! Oh well I guess I have to blend in with the crowd..Then again...no I don't...There we go...that's perfect! Good night...or something! See you later!

(Sid puts on his shoes)

Theo: Bye...Have fun

Sid: Oh it's gonna be one hell of a ride, if they let me in...Shit
Sid realized he needed some writing utensils and returned to the blue room.
There is a pen...Where is the sharpener? Damn it...Alright! Goodbye! Wish me luck!

Theo: I don't know if you'll need luck...

Sid: What will I need?

Theo: Well good luck!

Sid: Common what will I need?

(silence)



Sid: Alright I guess I'll have to run on luck then!

"You'll have to find out..." Theo finally answered.

"Holy shit...sounds heavy!", Sid exclaimed and left the flat.

When the door shut behind him Sid realized that he had absolutely no idea where he had to go, where that movie theater was placed.

Would he make it in time? He did not know...

He decided that his best bet would be attempting to get to zoo station and hope that the strange animals that roamed that part of town would not pick his bones dry as soon as he entered their realms.

Sid walked toward a subway station they had passed earlier.

The giant teddy bear was still sitting there at the side of the road where they had left him earlier.

Waiting for more freaks to pass by and wonder what he was doing here... His sad eyes seemed to stare over at Sid, his arms stretched out, demanding his attention, his love. But Sid had already found out that the position of the bear did not change. Even if you did give him the hug he demanded he remained the same.

Left or right, Sid wondered when he arrived at the subway station, beneath the bridge.

He chose the right path that lead him to a bright yellow train.

He got in and sat down amongst people that were heading for work. Just like him...?

Once again Sid had to think of those words his professor had said to him before he left the room:

"write me afterwards and tell me if they let you in!"

Sid wondered what strange social experiment his professor was conducting here with him.

Would he write about him in his next column? Who was Sid to him, just another subject of his intellect?

The subway dragged Sid into darkness and he wondered once again what this travelling without moving meant for his body and his mind which were being put through this experience almost every day of his existence in this city. All these little yellow wagons...Cans for dead fish stacked on top of each other, who were shipped from A to B.

Sid wondered in how far his investigations were investigations of the American Dream. Would he be able to find his answers here in Europe though? There was no possibility of him getting across that giant ocean in order to experience it first hand. Sid decided to finally have that digital con-



versation with the only American he really knew: his old childhood friend Y. who was studying in Long Island and who had contacted him a few weeks ago.

Sid got out at the zoo and the animals that called this city their home, if only temporary so, rushed past him. A sea of faces, eyes that met each other and were lost again shortly thereafter.

"When you're strange...", Jim Morrison's voice lamented out of Sid's headphones.

Sid got to the surface and was completely lost. He had to put himself at the mercy of his machine, hoping that it would guide him on the way.

Second path to the right!, Sid concluded after consulting his machine and walked down that horribly crowded place. The west of the city, a place that had been nurtured by all kinds of salesmen over the decades when it was here to symbolize all that was bright and shiny about the ways of the west.

The system, the institutions, the way of life that were in the end those of the United States of America. Sid could see that 'land of the free' all around.

When he looked to his right a store proclaimed 'Camp David'. Under that label khaki shorts were being sold at considerable prices.

Sid turned into the Kurfürstendamm, telling himself that he was close to the film lounge where the press screening was about to take place.

He needed a plan! First he would have to get rid of the mask he was carrying with him which clearly labeled him as a freak! He stuffed it into a pocket of his jacket and went off.

Then he saw the movie theater across the street. Parked right in front of it was a silver and blue car, which Sid recognized as that of a police officer on duty.

The car set in motion and rolled off down the road as Sid passed the street.

And as he saw it disappear beyond the horizon that was the next block.

What the hell would he say at the entrance doors?, Sid wondered as he approached the lounge. He noticed the giant billboard above it showing 4 animated characters in the fourth installment of their saga.

The place looked horribly expensive and its doors were locked.

Sid followed in behind 2 people wearing yellow shirts.

One would think that you'd remember the name of a man who had thought you your 'craft' for many months, whom's words you had read and whom you had seen on a weekly basis.

"Were you a capitalist once?"; an old lady asked the old man who had thrown Sid out of his chair.

Sid looked down at the stack of papers in his lap again from which Johnny Depp was still grinning that charming grin. Sid turned his picture over and read: "Wild Bunch Germany GmbH",



apparently the name of the company that was trying to make money out of a theatrical run of the film in this country. These poor bastards apparently weren't aware that it was almost impossible to make money with any work of Thompson's mind in that way. The only somewhat safe bet were DVD sales, since Thompson adaptations usually took some time to develop a cult following. And some of the freaks that were attracted by ideas like those of Dr. Thompson's brain, might actually enjoy owning a piece of it in a different form than as a download on their laptop.

The room was slowly darkened when Sid felt the urge to relief himself.

He quietly left the lounge and ran towards the bathroom. It's a goddamn race against time, Sid told himself as he descended a spiral of stairs and went down a hallway that finally lead him to a restroom.

He relieved himself and ran back up the stairs.

Sid heard Sinatra's voice calling out and when he opened the doors it welcomed him to Puerto Rico...

He leaned back in his comfortable leather chair and felt how the movie slowly sucked him in. A few chuckles could be heard in the mostly deserted theater hall.

Suddenly the familiar face reappeared beside Sid. Apparently his former teacher had already realized that he did not want to be part of this trip..

Sid wondered if he should do the same.

But soon he found himself glued to the screen until Johnny Depp proclaimed: "There is always an escape exit!"

Sid ran to that exit.

There was another man in the restroom. The booth at the end of the room was locked. Sid wondered if the man had heard him mumble into his tape recorder when he entered. In order to avoid a strange encounter which might demand social interaction from him Sid locked himself in a booth and waited for the man to wash his hands and leave. Then he sat down on the bathroom floor that was remarkably clean, cleaner than most surfaces Sid ate from back at his flat. When he looked up from the notes he was scribbling onto the back of the complementary press-folder Sid looked right into a face that starred back at him from the silvery surface of the toilet-paper-dispenser on the wall. It took him a few moments to realize that this face belonged to him, that this was his reflection. The mirror image he had always been told resembled him, was him. But if that was the case, if that tired face that starred back at him from the mirror really was him, why was it that people kept telling him he actually looked like the man he had just seen on the silver screen?



Sid stared at his reflection in order to find out if there really was a resemblance there, but he did not have enough time to decide whether it was the shape of his face or his behavior that caused people to make remarks like that.

Before he got to a conclusion the lights went off and Sid was left in complete darkness.

When the lights went on again a few minutes later, they preceded the arrival of another gentleman who quickly washed his hands and left again.

For a brief second the term "narcissistic personality disorder" crossed his mind, but he chased it away and kept staring at his mirror image.

Another man entered the restroom and sat down in the booth beside him. Sid heard him mumble silently as he relieved himself, apparently assuming he was alone. When the man left and went back to his comfortable leather chair with the built in wine cooler and the footrest, Sid decided to follow him, telling himself not to give in to the promises of the giant screen that had been placed in front of these comfortable armchairs.

But on his way back to the theater hall Sid encountered the old man who had chased him out of his seat earlier.

They greeted each other and Sid asked: "You're taking a little break from the film?"

"Yeah...it's all not quite my taste...I just dropped in...now I'm reading the plot in this thing they handed out!"

All of the sudden he began to tell Sid his life-story.

"You know everything in my life...", he mumbled, "That's why I'm content with the life I have lived! I never had any conflicts! I survived all of that! I was born 32, meaning at the end of the Weimar Republic...Then I was in the Hitler youth, that was alright...then the war ended...then they told us that it had all been rubbish. Then they supposedly made everything better...but they didn't...in a different way they also didn't!

So I constructed my own little world, everything else doesn't concern me!

Poverty doesn't concern me...I was once in Shanghai...I was once in India for a week...There they can drive around in a van full of dollars or Euros, throw it out the windows...but nothing happens! And here...They're all content!

These people in there, they're writing in order to make money, or to drink. In other countrys that's impossible! There they're all executed...in Costa Rica or...

I've been to South America once, as well - quickly got out of there again!

It doesn't concern me!"



"That's an interesting world view you got there...," Sid jumped in, "I think quite similar to that of the main character of the film they're showing in there...Not in the way like he is portrayed in the movie but the way he is described in the book on which the film is based as someone who is just there, doing his own thing, not really caring about the injustices that take place around him."

"Maybe I should read that sometimes...," the old man said.

"Well I can only recommend it!"

"Reading is always more interesting, reading a book instead of watching the story in the cinema! There you only see a thing very shortly...or on TV...you see a thing very shortly...but if you read you can always reread the passage...that's why the newspapers are still the authority in Germany...because the people say: then I'll read the news not in nightly television..."

The next morning I just hear...I mean I read...and then again a little later...when I read different papers I might get different opinions...Like what they're saying about the Euro now...all the magazines...it's getting worse and worse..."

First thing would be the Euro...or the President holding a speech. I take a look at the news in the morning: The President, at noon: The President, in the evening: The President...they're all being forced to do that topic, no matter what...a dead dog is a dead dog!

There it all starts! The fact that the media got so powerful! I can't understand...I mean I'm 80 years old...I've been a journalist for 45 years! I was working for the *Bild* in Hamburg.

Whenever I went in there...I always looked...you know people were wondering: 'Am I being irradiated?'

When I walked in...I had to think differently in order to make money...I got to know some colleagues who were different before, as well.

You see, when an actor...back then they made their money with young actors and not with naked girls like today...well they said: He's making 1000 Euros...Marks back then...I heard that at a press conference where I was to take pictures.

Then I look into the paper, the next day, they're saying: 10000!

Looks like my colleagues had to increase the number...later when they changed to another newspaper they could do their math again, all of the sudden. That's the difference.

That's why I always wondered, am I being irradiated here?"

"Well again, if you look at the film in there...," Sid got a word in, "the author of *The Rum Diary* was a journalist as well, he always dealt with similar problems..."



"Oh well you know...I've seen all the characters now...and now they're making a 2 hour film out of that...they could tell their story in half an hour! You know actors get a lot of money for going somewhere and then driving somewhere else, and they just film and film and film...It's just like in the old Western's, they're riding their horses, and then you see them riding somewhere else...and then you see the bad guys riding...but nothing is happening!"

The old man hammered his walking stick on the floor.

"And in the movies today, by these Americans, they're riding their cars...through New York or something...but the main plot is just very short...and then they're riding and riding and riding..."

The old man hammered with his stick again and started rambling about unconnected incidents like his sleeping pattern. Sid tried to escape his flood of words by saying: "Well, in these comfortable chairs in there you can sleep quite well, so I guess I'll go in again..."

He said goodbye and entered the theater hall.

Out of the frying pan into the fire.

Finally Sid fled the comfortable leather chair again, finally, after a long struggle with the urge to lean back and just absorb the entertainment that was offered to him without much reflection. He ran down to the restroom that had become his refuge.

After relieving himself he sat down on the ground and looked into the mirror again.

The face that looked back seemed exhausted. Worn down by the fight against his inner demons. 'Just lean back and relax, stop thinking for a while and just enjoy yourself', the screen in the comfortable lounge seemed to say.

Sid knew the arguments that were so very obvious yet violently convincing. A comfortable chair in front of a big screen was the exact thing that was being advertised as a way to escape your worries. But Sid had learned the hard way that this escapism was just an empty promise.

Sid had watched many films and series in a comfortable position similar to the one he held here. And the films did slow down the thoughts that often rushed through his head at a speed that was sometimes too rapid to bear. But the bitter truth was that instead of having many different ideas he would often end up sitting in front of the screen in despair, with all the thoughts the bright screen could not suppress since they were too miserable or concerned important things he would have to take care of for school, university or work.

The escapist films left him alone with these dark thoughts. Abandoning him after depriving him of the only weapon he had to fight it: His imagination and creativity, and leaving him with generic morals and happy endings that did not help him in any way.

Sid was glad he had been able to escape this particular exhibit of escapism, for now at least.



He went out of his booth and drank some fresh water from the tap, that somehow tasted much better than that at other surroundings since it poured into a golden sink.

Sid splashed some water into his face and then returned to the snake pit in order to continue to report from the front lines.

He arrived just in time for the LSD-scene.

He barely survived it. In panic and utter fear he retreated to the bathroom before the inevitable romance plot unfurled.

Sid splashed his face with water and stared into the mirror above the sink.

Was he still there?

Was the man that looked back at him from the mirror the young writer who was able to make sense of it all, connect dots, describe his surroundings in a way that enlightened him and maybe others?

Or had he become that creature that had looked at him from the mirror so many times inbetween film or series-watching frenzies that barely left him with the possibility of performing even the simple task of going to the bathroom.

Sid was inclined to dream up some massive conspiracy that worked on turning entire nations into slaves of consumption by bombarding them with sweet entertaining poison.

But he knew that that kind of reasoning was illusive. Reality was much simpler but at the same time much harder to swallow: It wasn't some invasion of ideology that turned people into mindless consumers of everything they got their hands on, it was something called: 'human nature', that once again revealed itself from its most hideous side like it had many times before throughout history in places like ancient Colosseums as well as in classic movie theaters.

Sid felt like Thompson had come to somewhat similar conclusions at different point in his life, yet Depp had just claimed that there was no such thing as the American dream, sounding like a textbook 'liberal'. Everything Depp made Kemp say in this film was reduced to mere talking points by the style of the film that never went below the surface of any of it's topics.

It was a shame.

Sid looked at his watch and realized that the film was nearing its end. It was time for the grand finale!

Sid went into the dark cosy hall one last time. He arrived just in time for the romantic image of Depp setting sail for the sunset in a little boat.



When Hunter S. Thompson's image faded out and the screen was no longer occupied by various fast cut scenes that demanded his immediate attention, Sid leaned back and just enjoyed the music that ran over the end credits. He felt cozy in the leather chair and yet he was able to remain conscious of his surroundings.

Maybe the line of film critic simply wasn't for him, Sid thought.

Maybe he should focus his attention to music instead at least that seemed like a reasonable alternative as he closed his eyes and just let the beautiful voice of a female singer take his mind on a journey...

The voice stopped and the lights went back on as the curtains closed before the screen.

Sid watched the few remaining grey-haired creatures that huddled together and exchanged dates for further press screenings they could attend. More hours of entertainment and fun they could spend in comfortable leather chairs.

Sid listened to them complain about the bad synchronisation until they left and he followed their example.

He walked out of the hall into the beautiful foyer where a bar offered fine puerto rican rum to which the various reporters now tended.

Sid walked out onto the street and desperately searched for a bus that would take him out of this nightmare. This ugly scenery that presented itself to him.

All these impressions flooding his mind.

So many shiny happy faces behind sunglasses, sipping alcohol out of big glasses that were decorated with umbrellas and fruit.

Sid made his way into the nearby subway. He did not know where it would take him since he did not really know much about this part of town that lay so close to his own flat, and yet seemed to be an entirely different world.

When he saw the sign of the U1, though he realized that he had come to the right place.

In two minutes a subway would appear that would take him back into realms that were a little more friendly to a freak like him.

When the train appeared Sid got out the ravens mask he was carrying in his pocket and put it on. He got out again a few stops down the road and was greeted by a big sign proclaiming: "LSD", an acronym behind which a giant sex-shop was run. The scantily dressed women who stood in front of the store smiled at him and waved, trying to catch the strange bird that had just come out of the subway. Sid gave them a friendly croak and went on down the busy, run down street, down to his flat.



All the surreal sights he had passed earlier this morning on his way back from a raving mad trip, were still there. The giant teddy bear still looked at him with its sad pleading eyes. The bag with the stolen flatscreens was still right beside a tree. The streetlamp that had been ripped down was still just a stump in the ground. And the plastic bag still hung in the same place in the treetops above, that it had occupied for the last year.

Could you feel at home in these strange surroundings?, Sid asked himself. He did not know.

He got out his key, opened the door and began the long journey up the stairs to the top floor where he lived.

It was exhausting as always. But these stairs had kept Sid somewhat fit, physically healthy even, or at least healthy enough for his purposes.

Finally he reached the top and got into his flat where he was welcomed by T. and A.'s tired faces, sitting on the kitchen sofa.

"Where the hell do you come from?", T. asked and starred at him with a strange mixture of surprise and indifference. Sid pulled up his mask and explained himself before turning to the doors of the blue room.

They were closed.

Sid opened them and found Theo's worn out body huddled into a ball on the sofa. He felt sympathy for the man who was in a position he himself had been in many times before. Stranded on a strange sofa somewhere in the middle of the continent, desperately hoping for some rest on a long, fast and eventful trip through these times of uncertainty.

Sid prepared him a sleeping berth in the loft bed in the vestibule next door. Then he went over to Theo and kindly awoke him with the words: "I need to be alone in order to write! But just go over to the loft bed and continue your dreams there!"

Theo looked at him with understanding eyes and dragged himself out of bed, carrying his writing machine beneath his arm as he went over to his new accommodations.

Sid closed the doors behind him and sat down in front of his laptop. He looked at it for some time, then he turned it on and opened a new plain white digital piece of paper that stared at him in anticipation of some final words of wisdom.

Do I have to write a coherent conclusion to all of this, some definite summary of my epiphanies from the last weeks and months of bending the concept of 'research'?, Sid asked himself.



He picked up *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail* that lay on the floor before him and opened it at the last chapter.

The book did contain an epilogue, but it consisted of nothing more than more of the same as-
sociative rambling that made up the rest of the book.

Sid realized that he would probably never really find a proper definition for Gonzo. But he had reached a conclusion on the question he had set out to answer: What did pieces that reached public perception like *The Rum Diary* turn Hunter S. Thompson's revealing thoughts and views into?

His experiences with the perception of the Doctor had shown him that he was what he had proudly proclaimed to be many times throughout his life: A freak.

Sid wondered whether Hunter had ever fully understood what exactly it meant to be a freak in the society that arose out of the ruins of the 60s. Maybe he had and maybe that was what killed him in the end:

It was an increasingly cruel world in which Freaks were exhibited in front of the masses.

At it's worst that meant that people would look at them and try to laugh loud enough to silence their own freakish worries for a while.

But at the best works that consisted of Hunters strange rambling and visions could be viewed by a least some fraction of society in a way that encouraged further thoughts.

These intellectuals could see his work as a product of it's time and space. Nothing more, but nothing less.

And just like it was up to every member of society to choose whether they wanted to use Hunters works as the basis of rampant fun and mindless entertainment or as food for thought, so can you dear reader decide how you want to read these words by yet "another freak in a freak kingdom."

Sid saved the parts of his article he had already saved in digital form on his flashdrive and went over to the kitchen. On his way he picked up a bottle of absinth and sat down next to A. On the sofa.

After lighting some sugar he blew out the flames and took a sip. Then he offered the glass to A. She shook her head and he asked: "Why...is it too early in the morning?"

She noded and he went on to say: "But there is cause for celebration! I just finished my film critique!"

"What really finished all of it?"



"Well technically...I still have a few notes I have to turn digital and a few transcripts I have to make out of the times when I just mumbled something into my tape recorder...but yeah after that it's done!"

He offered her the absinth once more but she shook her head once again: "It's still too early"

"Yeah I guess you're right...I'm done with Gonzo for now!", Sid said and reached for the bottle of caffeine that was standing on the counter before him.

Then he returned to the blue room where he began to sort his notes.

When he skipped out in order to go to the bathroom he saw A. Still sitting where she had been before and asked her: "You called yourself my manager recently haven't you...?"

"Yeah"

"Well could you maybe...well your not my editor so I guess I'll have to do that myself...but could you maybe check in on me every 3 minutes to see if I'm still productive?"

A. promised she would and Sid returned to the blue room. Once again Theo had found his way onto the sofa and Sid threw him out yet again. Then he proceeded with sorting his notes.

Soon frustration began to close in on him when his machinery refused to function the way he wanted it to.

A. finally appeared in the door, dressed in nothing but a towel. Sid looked down at the clock and realized that she was more than 40 minutes late.

When he asked her about it she claimed that this had been some sort of trick to keep him productive, but he knew that it was meant as a joke. He forgave her since her hair was still wet, providing her with a somewhat stable alibi.

"See you in another half an hour!", A. Said and Sid wondered how long that would be this time...

It actually was about half an hour this time, but a few minutes after she had appeared in his doorframe and asked if he was still being productive, she appeared again and told him that she was going over to the park and then a gallery.

Sid was left alone with the fatigue that slowly kept approaching...

Finally he fell into some kind of twilight state in which he remained for some time until something awoke him and drove him to put down the laptop and put on the *Sigur Ros* DVD.

Sid stretched out on the sofa and closed his eyes.

After several more moments in twilight Sid got up again and began to piece together the notes that he had written on his typewriter yesterday.

He began to put every piece of paper out on the floor before him, trying to sort them according to their content.



Then he switched back and forth from photographing them and sending the texts that lay hidden in the depths of his touchwriter to his laptop where he tried to combine the two into something coherent. It took him several hours and finally, as the sun sank outside Sid decided to continue his work tomorrow and got ready to go to bed.

Sid awoke, tried to return to his dreams, awoke again and repeated this pattern until he finally looked at the time on his touchwriter and realized that he had slept for more than 12 hours. He put on soothing echoes that were performed in a city frozen in stone and lay there for a while, with his eyes closed and his thoughts floating free and unforced behind his eyelids.

When the song was over Sid went on to take a shower. He put on the spoken-word group singing about the fourth dimension which had guided him yesterday morning and shown him images in the mirror that left an impression he would not forget so soon.

After his shower he walked over to the mirror. But when he wanted to look in he could barely make out his contour in the fogged up silvery surface.

He walked over into the kitchen and made himself some breakfast. When he went over to the blue room with his bowl of cereal he took another look into the bathroom and noticed that the mirror was no longer clouded by mist.

“Look at yourself in the mirror”, the voice from the music said once again and Sid did as he was told. First he saw himself and yet did not see because he kept looking away, his mind wandered off and a little stain on the glass caught his attention and made his reflection go in and out of focus. But then Sid began to see his face slightly morphing again. It looked like he was wearing a mask which he could take off and alter whenever he wanted to. A mask that bore quite a resemblance to his fathers face...

The song ended and Sid returned to the blue room where he sat down in the windowframe, ate his cereal and listened to the violinist across the street. Afterwards he went back down to the notes that lay spread out across his floor and continued to bring them in order.

When he sent himself the first text and opened the mail inbox on his laptop he found a message by Maria. who asked whether she could send the text he had written about the *Midsummer-night's Dream*-Open Air she had organized, to her friend Gi. who had lead through the evening and who was now compiling a page with photos and other documents of the evening on a social network.



"She asks if we can put parts of it up on the internet.," Maria. wrote and after some hesitation Sid told her to go ahead and do it.

He felt a little uneasy about placing his words in an environment like that were people who might stumble across it usually had the attention span of a dog hunting for squirrels. He took his flashdrive and went over to the kitchen where he handed it to A. and asked her if she could read the story. "Maybe you have any ideas of what I could do with it...I was wondering if I should ask S. if he could set up a separate website with me we could then link with that social network..."

Then he returned to the blue room where he began to read the words he had written that midsummernight, once again.

About half way through he stopped, feeling tired and anxious about putting these words up on the internet...

He went over to the kitchen to make himself some coffee and found A. still sitting on the sofa, reading his text while chatting with her friends over the social network that was opened in another window beside it.

'Well, that's fitting', Sid thought and returned to the blue room to keep on sorting his notes.

When he came back out a few hours later to get himself something to drink A. was still sitting on the sofa in the kitchen and exclaimed: "You'll have to do an internship!"

She gave him the address of a newspaper and Sid reluctantly wrote it down before fleeing back into the blue room to continue working on transcripts.

Theo walked in at one point and asked if they should go somewhere tonight, and where.

Sid remembered an invitation he had gotten from F., to a film screening that was taking place at some bar. But Sid knew that S. was invited as well and so he had no choice but to write him

When he replied Sid told Theo they could go and he replied he would cook something before they would leave.

About an hour later he told him that dinner was ready and Sid went over into the kitchen and sat down with the others.

Theo pointed him to his plate with the part of the dish on it, that did not contain meat and Sid noticed the glass of wine beside it.

"I suppose it matches the food and is an important part of the overall experience?," he asked and Theo nodded.

Sid took a bite of the spinach and a sip of the wine and it tasted quite good.



But once he finished his meal he asked Arletty if she wanted the rest of his still more than half filled glass.

His Gonzo days were over.

But some of the experiences he had had in the past days and weeks would stay with him for ever. For example when he got into the bathroom and looked into the mirror after washing his hands. It wasn't as intense as it had been yesterday but he could still see his face morphing into that of his father.

Arletty entered the room and noticed the distant look on his face as he stared at his reflection. He told her what he was seeing and she stared at him in disbelief.

"You're still tripping?"

"I guess it's some kind of after effect or a flashback or something. . ."

"A friend of mine once took mushrooms and he told me that the hallucinations lasted 3 days!"

"Let's see how long it will last. . .", Sid said and they returned to the kitchen.

When Arletty told the others about Sid's vision I. looked at him in amazement and asked: "You see your father?"

Theo patted him on the back and said: "I hope your father is good looking then. . ."

When they finished eating they went out and walked down to the subway that took them a little further east.

They got out at the big square beside the shopping center that was so aptly placed across the street that bore the name of Karl Marx. "Wow I never saw this stature before!", Arletty exclaimed and pointed at the two dancing golden figures in the middle of the square.

"I guess it's because I know I'll be leaving soon...I see things with different eyes."

Sid put his arm around her shoulders and asked: "How do you feel about it?"

"Well I'm trying not to think about it..."; Arletty answered, "So far denial is working quite well for me."

They arrived at the little bar and got in. Sid couldn't see F. anywhere but they sat down anyway and turned to the screen where an American actor that was known for taking comedic roles frowned back at them.

After a few minutes Sid recognized the film that he had seen a few years ago.

A few minutes later he found himself laughing.

He remembered how he had told Arletty yesterday morning that he was no longer able to laugh and the grin on his face grew even bigger.

Another couple of minutes later his eyes filled with tears. Jet another emotion he had not really



been able to express. Sid felt a tear slowly rolling down his cheek as the strange family pushed their little bus down the street in order to get it in gear, and it felt good. It was almost a cleansing experience. Sid remembered how A. had told him that she was there to watch a sad movie with him, [REDACTED] "So you can cry and let it all out..."

Why was it that their generation needed to watch other people express emotions in order to project their own pain on them?

The film ended and his friends got themselves beers at the bar.

Arletty's friend Jo. joined them and they walked on to another bar down the street. They sat down outside in order to finish their drinks, but a waiter appeared and told them that they were closing their tables outside and that they should go in.

After they got themselves more drinks they sat down in the smoke filled cellar.

Sid leaned over to I. and said: "Give me 3 words!"

"Sweaty. . . table and outside!"; she said and Sid went to work, hoping he would be able to write something this time.

He was...

*in this town
you're no longer able
to sit at a table
outside
past midnight
if you smoke in a bar
you'll get in a fight
when will they outlaw
being too sweaty
when will they outlaw
being happy?*

He handed her the paper and she thanked him with a big smile when she read it.

Arletty leaned over to him and asked: "You wanna go to Prague tomorrow with Theo and me?"

"What? Well. . . why so sudden?", Sid mumbled.



"Well I'm gonna be in France again soon and much further away. . . And I've never been there but I hear a lot of good things about the city!"

"Well . . . supposedly it's the 'new Amsterdam!'"

"Have you ever been there?"

"Yeah two years ago. . ."

"Well that's quite some time ago! I'm sure it has changed by now!"

"Well . . . Let's see what Theo has to say about it. . ."

"Oh he'll come along! He's gonna say no first but I know how to work him! He just wants to feel desired so if I talk to him for some time he'll come around!"

Theo returned from the bathroom and Arletty began to talk to him in French.

Sid took up his touchwriter and searched the internet for any possibilities to hitch a ride.

He found a man who was going there the next morning and wrote him a short text. Technically he still had university tomorrow, but he did not have to attend the seminars he had tomorrow.

Apart from that he had a dentist's appointment he had already cancelled and rescheduled two weeks ago for the concert festival.

Would he still be able to cancel it on such short notice?

Sid felt how he was slowly getting tired and when Jo. asked if he knew how he could get home Sid told him to follow him to the bus station. The rest of the group came along. They arrived at the station but their bus left before their eyes.

They went across the street to take a different bus and change a few steps further, but the bus was late and when they got out to get into the bus across the street it left before their eyes once again.

"Lets go somewhere where it's warm till the next bus comes!"; Arletty said and started walking down the street.

She ended up in front of a casino and began ascending the stairs that lead up to a hall full of screens, bathed in blue light.

The rest of the group followed her despite Sid's pleading.

The place was full of machines with sad and tired men and women in front, pushing buttons automatically.

They sat down around one of the bright screens and Theo began a game of roulette. With the few cents he had left in his pocket.

A woman appeared beside them and said: "We're closing this hall in half an hour, but you can go over to another one, 3, 5 and 2 are open all night!"



“There is more than one hall?,” Sid said and began to stroll through the casino. He walked down a hallway, past endless halls filled with more machines and catatonic gamblers, glued to their colorful screens. The further he came, the more desperate the figures before the screens looked, they were lost inside this maze, unable to get back outside without passing dozens of screens that sucked them back in. . .

Finally they left again when it was time to catch the next bus. Theo had won 20 cents while Arletty had lost a few Euros.

They went back home in a crowded night bus and Theo almost got into a fight with an old man that yelled at him because he was standing in the door and kept it from closing. Sid remembered how he had once read that people had a sphere around themselves that they considered their comfort zone and if it was intruded by strangers that caused a considerable amount of stress.

People who grew up in cities usually had a smaller comfort zone than people from rural areas but in this bus it did not matter where you came from, because people were pushed together so close that you could feel your neighbor breathing down your neck.

Somehow they survived the journey though and returned to the flat where A. was already waiting for them.

The group kept on drinking and Sid said goodnight and goodbye to I. who would be leaving for Athens in a few hours.

He sank down on the sofa in the blue room and fell asleep quickly.

Sid heard the doorbell, but somehow he was unable to get up. He was not wearing anything beside boxer shorts and he was too tired to put on his pants and walk over to the door.

He heard T. open it and as always Sid felt a wave of fear wash over him, expecting the worse to appear behind that door.

And this time his fears came true.

He heard the voice of his neighbor who began yelling at T., telling him that they had finally gone too far with the noise last night and that there would be terrible consequences.

Sid did not understand what T. answered and suddenly he was not even sure if it was really their neighbor yelling back.

Sid panicked but when he finally did get up he saw the door being slammed shut before T. who turned to him with an angry grin on his face.



Sid noticed A. in the kitchen and begged her to accompany him down to their neighbors door to try to save the situation.

When they did they were welcomed by two young men who told them that their neighbor was their uncle. Apparently there were some sort of celebrations unfolding and when their neighbor appeared in the doorframe he was holding a glass in his hand.

He told them not to come too close to him and walked down the stairs. From his save position one story below he began a rant about all the terrible things he would put them through. He knew that they were living here illegally and he would use that knowledge to make them pay for all those sleepless nights they had caused him.

Before either of them could get a word in and inform the man that they would be moving out soon anyway and that it was in his own interest not to complicate the proceedings, he went past them and shut his door before their noses with a bang.

The sound echoed back and forth in Sid's head and filled it with terrible pain behind his temple. It mixed with some sort of electronic beep that grew louder and louder until Sid could no longer bear it anymore and woke up with a scream.

He found himself on the sofa in the blue room and when his eyes fell on the sign above him, urging him to 'Dream on' he realized that the nightmares were back, which turned his day sour before he was even awake. Like countless times before he was unable to move, unable to face that dreadful reality in which these nightmares had their cause. Sid felt the grey approaching and it brought with it memories (redacted) there did not seem to be any escape, no way out of the nightmares of existence and suddenly even the act of breathing seemed like a terrible chore for Sid.

He was forced to remain motionless and frozen until the anxiety and pain passed.

But finally he rolled himself over and fell to the ground where he found a pair of pants he put on. Then he dragged himself out of the room and past the kitchen where he saw A. sleeping on the sofa with her phone beside her head that kept beeping in a shrill, maddening tone. Sid wondered how she was able to ignore it as he put on his shirt and left the flat.

He went down to his neighbor's door and rang the bell twice.

No one was home.

Sid went back upstairs in resignation, devastated and afraid that he would not be able to perform this task again.

When he went back into his flat he saw T. standing beside A. in the kitchen, asking her if the beeping phone was hers. She was holding it right into her tired face and finally A. was no longer able to ignore it and opened her tired red eyes.



Sid made himself breakfast and sat down on the sofa next to her and T. who began telling him all the things that were bringing her down these days.

She told him stories like that of her ex-boyfriend's former roommate who was looking for someone else to share the flat with. He had apparently invited only women and chosen the one that had been willing to sleep with him the same night.

This had happened in the infamous district in the east of the city where T. was considering to move next month. The more stories she told about her future neighbourhood, the more Sid's misery grew and with it his inability to get up from the sofa.

T. told him of her fears of becoming one of those superficial creatures and asked Sid if he could visit her regularly once she had moved in order to bring her back to the ground.

Sid promised he would be there for her and A. who had held that position before told them to seal the agreement with a handshake.

Afterwards Sid finally got up again and dragged himself over to the blue room where he sat down in front of his typewriter and tried to write himself out of his miseries:

she is beautiful and tall
talented and intelligent
everything I always wanted to be
yet she can't see
how lucky she is
instead she envies me

Sid went over to the open window and looked outside. As he let his gaze wander over the green treetops below and inhaled the fresh air he wondered what would happen if he took a look in the mirror.

He walked over to the bathroom and put on the music that urged him to "Look at yourself in the mirror - who do you see?"

He still saw his father and after staring at the mask that stared back at him from the mirror he realized that reality was something of his own making, that he could alter it by changing himself and his interaction with his surroundings.

The song ended and he returned to the blue room. When he sat down in the windowframe again he saw his neighbor and her daughter approaching on a bike.

He waited a few minutes until she got in and then went downstairs to ring her doorbell again.



Again no one opened.

He was about to turn around but then he heard her voice at the door below him, talking to her downstairs neighbor, excusing herself for something he did not quite understand.

Sid went back up to his flat where he sat down on his doorstep and waited for her to finish her conversation.

Finally she said goodbye and he heard her walk up the stairs and unlocking her door. He went back down and when he rang this time, she opened the door.

"I guess I have good news - we're moving out", Sid said and she looked at him with big eyes.

"Oh...OK..."

When Sid told her that they would have to leave at the end of September she gave him a sympathetic look and asked: "Have you already found something new?"

"Well No...A. is moving to South Africa, T. might have something in Friedrichshain...I don't know yet where people would want me...", Sid replied and his neighbor told him that their landlord company had lots of flats they were offering all over town.

"Yeah I don't think I'll be able to handle those guys again...", Sid replied and she gave him a concerned look: "But it's not because of our complaints is it?"

"Well...I guess I just generally need a place where I feel a little less boxed in and where I'm able to breathe...", Sid said and went on to tell her about the party they had planned next week.

"Well you know we weren't the ones who called the police last time!", the woman said and Sid thought "Yeah there are many more people all around who keep me from living my life the way I want to!". But he just looked at her with sad eyes and said goodbye.

"Good luck on your search!", the woman said and Sid wondered whether the twinkle in her eye was one of relief or triumph.

Sid returned to his flat and put on some music in the blue room, no longer concerned that she might complain to the landlord company. He walked over to his laptop and continued to work on his notes.

After a few hours he heard T. return from her trip to the credit protection agency where she needed to pick up papers so she could get herself a flat. She had barely been able to get herself to go there and asked Sid if he could come along. But apparently she had made it on her own eventually.

Suddenly Sid remembered that she would have her birthday this weekend and that she had asked him to give her the poem he had written for Mar., copied by his typewriter, so she could hang it on the wall of her new flat.



Sid had send her the words after he had told her that he had written Mar. a poem a few weeks ago and T. had asked if she could read it. Sid did not know how he felt about other people than Mar., reading these words.

He had given them to the girl at the devils mountain because he felt like the last lines of the poem were directed at her as well, but he did not want to ask T. if she could nourish his love once he would be able to love again...

Had she understood how he meant those words?

Had he really understood them himself?

Sid went over to his typewriter and began to copy the text, carefully making sure that he wouldn't misspell anything.

When he was finished he pulled out the paper and drew a fox and a grey heron next to the words.

Then he continued sorting his notes until it was time to go to the dentist. When Sid went over to the bathroom in order to brush his teeth for the first time in almost 2 weeks, he encountered Arletty who had just gotten up.

She told him that she had found a ride for them to Prague this evening, but when Sid asked if she had convinced Theo to come with them she slowly shook her head.

"Would you be very devastated if we didn't go?", Sid asked and Arletty replied: "Well it's just that I had this idea of leaving everything behind for a few days and you know...just going!"

Sid told her he understood but added that he had to be back in town on Saturday morning in order to film at Nathan's place.

She looked at him with sad eyes as he left the flat to go to the doctor down the street.

He went up the stairs in the run down building at the end of his street where his dentist had his practice and remembered his first visit. The nervous young man had taken a quick look into his mouth and said: "Oh I see back there you had a bridge done..."

Sid told him that he never had any kind of reconstruction in his jaw and finally the man believed him and after a quick checkup he released him again and called in the next patient from the crowded waiting room who began to yell at him in a foreign language.

Sid had almost forgotten about the tooth he had cracked at that concert more than a month ago, but now he wondered if he should really trust this man whom's only competent trait seemed to be his white coat.

But the voice that called him in was that of a woman. She told him to sit down and began penetrating his teeth with sharp metal objects. She did not notice the cracked tooth until he told her



about it, prompting her to get out some kind of polishing machine. Sid tried to endure the procedures by taking pleasure in the pain she caused him and once he closed his eyes [REDACTED] it actually ceased to hurt that badly.

After she was done with him the doctor showed up and after he had a quick look he told him they should do some x-rays on his jaw. Sid had to place his head in a shiny white machine and bite on a plastic plate before him. The machine began to revolve around him with a sound that sounded almost like carnival music. The doctor looked at the results on a screen and told him that everything looked just fine.

"You could get your wisdom teeth pulled...", he said and gave Sid a big crooked grin, "I never did it and look what happened to me!"

Sid wondered once again why he trusted a man with his dental health whom's own teeth looked like they were slowly rotting away, but he just thanked the man and returned home where he continued to sort and write.

A few hours later Theo came in and told him that dinner was ready. While they ate Arletty and him argued about the trip to Prague and finally Arletty wrote their ride that they could not come because of an emergency in the family.

T. came in and asked if they wanted to come along to exhibition at the university of art and so they went to the subway after they finished their meal.

At their destination they met a friend of T. who looked vaguely familiar but whose name he just couldn't recall.

They walked down to the university and after T. and A. had finished their cigarettes they followed the crowd that swarmed into the building.

Suddenly Sid noticed another familiar face in the crowd: S. grinned at them and waved them over. [REDACTED] he told them he was waiting for Cléo with whom he was supposed to meet a woman here who would design the costumes for their next film.

He gave them a quick introduction to their surroundings and told them that the major was here as well, still pushing his creative economy concept.

He wished them fun and they went on into the halls that were filled with people and artworks. Sid was overwhelmed by a flood of images and sounds, countless impressions that kept streaming in unfiltered and raw, without mercy.

Soon their little group split up and Sid wandered alone through the colorful halls.



It was all too much and Sid began to wonder whether he could only enjoy this kind of environment under the influence of drugs

A girl in front of him was suddenly approached by a young man who began to kiss her on the cheeks and her forehead. After he was done with her he did the same with Sid who stumbled on and almost tripped over a woman in black that lay on the floor before him.

Sid hastened outside and stumbled into a reporter who slowly walked backwards in front of the major, photographing his every move.

Finally he came to rest in front of a little stage on which a small paint splattered child sat and played the drums.

After a little rest Sid began to search for his friends and after hastening through endless corridors full of colors and light he finally found T. who introduced him to her friend Ji., a student at this institution who was exhibiting some video installations and pictures of her swimming under water. T. had described her as 'a really interesting person! I spent one year in a room with her in boarding school...it was a really intense time!'

Unfortunately Sid wasn't able to make himself a picture because shortly after meeting her he lost the group again.

He kept hastening through the endless rooms, unable to take anything in, focus on any particular artwork and let himself be inspired by it. . .

But as he looked around he noticed that no one seemed to pay particular attention to the paintings, sculptures and installations around them. Instead they were talking, chatting, socializing, keeping to the golden rule of the city — see and be seen.

Finally Sid found the little group he had come here with again, sitting in the grass beside the entrance.

Sid joined them and shortly thereafter they were joined by a man who asked: "Can I sit here with you while I wait for my friend?"

He lay down in the grass beside them and began to talk about his work as an architect and then asked them what they were doing, who they were, what defined them...

Sid left before the questioning could reach him and he would have to repeat the same words he had uttered hundreds of times before, the same conversation repeated over and over again, so that it had taken on a life of its own, unfolding automatically and all he had to do was smile and nod in a nonthreatening fashion.



Sid ran out of the old prestigious building and passed an incredibly long line of people, trying to get in, on his way down the street to the subway that took him back home. When he arrived at his flat he sank down on the sofa in the blue room and drifted off into dreams almost immediately.

Sid was awoken by Franz who was leaving for work and blasting loud electronic music in the kitchen to get himself going.

Sid buried his head beneath some pillows, tried to continue to sleep and finally he was sucked back into dreams about flying cars powered by electric eels, time travel and Russian satellites. When he awoke the next time he stared up at the sign above and wondered how he would manage to dream on today.

He had to leave this town, leave it all behind and travel. His semester officially ended yesterday, there was nothing that held him here anymore. Nothing except the film they would hopefully finish tomorrow, or T.'s birthday this weekend, or their party next weekend, or the janitors visit next month, the fact that they would have to renovate, 3 term papers he had to take care of, an internship he should do in order to get into the words business...

Since he had been to the dentist yesterday the wisdom tooth that grew in the back of his mouth hurt whenever he swallowed and as he stood up he felt the room around him spinning as if he had a fever.

He dragged himself over to the shower and put on the music that held such revitalizing powers ever since it had guided him on his trip.

And when he had finished pouring water over himself it once again revealed the mask of his father on his face in the mirror.

With new found hope and energy Sid went back into the blue room and continued to sort his notes.

A few hours later he made himself some rice and beans and sat down on the sofa in the blue room to eat. He noticed the book he had saved from the rain at the concert festival and continued reading it while he ate. Once again the cynicism almost spoiled his appetite, but somehow he could not take his eyes of the pages that revealed how ugly the beautiful and famous really were. Finally he put the book down again and picked up the laptop in order to continue on the dread-



fully long transcript he had been working on all morning. But instead of opening the digital paper to continue writing he suddenly found himself searching the internet for the starting dates of the summer seasons of an American series he had spent the last summer with. With terror he realized that it had already started, together with another series that was just as intelligent, well made and addictive. His depression and the screen just went together perfectly...

Sid saw the little cursor slowly wandering over to the search engine, but before he could write down the place where he'd find a stream of the series and many more shows he shut his laptop and went over to the kitchen where he splashed his face with water and made himself a coffee.

Arletty entered and when he told her of his discovery she said she did not know the series.

"But don't tell me about it!", Arletty pleaded and the expression on her face became almost desperate, "Please I have way too many series, keeping me from living already! I'm addicted really!"

"I know we all are!", Sid replied, "An entire generation glued to a screen..."

"We're going to my old flat soon, you wanna come along?", Arletty asked as she left the kitchen in order to get ready.

Sid told himself he had to work, but at the same time he knew that he would probably not be able to keep himself from turning his laptop into a screen if he stayed here.

On the other hand he did not really feel like coming along to Arletty's former flat since it was raining outside and they would not be able to ascend the roof...

Instead they would sit around talking and Sid was not able if he would be able to enjoy that without the help of social drinking or smoking. He despised alcohol and he did not want to smoke any weed, at least until tomorrow. But then he remembered that they had an aerosol can they had converted into an opener for laughing gas capsules. And he still had two capsules lying in his room.

When Theo asked if he was coming along Sid got up, got himself the two small silvery containers and went along to the flat.

When they got into the bus Arletty and Theo showed the driver random papers from their pockets.

But this time they had the luck of meeting the one bus driver in the city who actually cared.

When he asked Theo if he could have a closer look at his ticket Theo turned around on his heel and yelled: "I'll take a walk!"

The bus driver began screaming but he had no choice but to drive the crowded bus on down the street.

When Arletty and Sid arrived at the flat they were welcomed by a room full of people.



"We're having a flat casting!", Fa. exclaimed and Sid began to walk around the room, shaking hands and hearing names he immediately forgot again. Sid felt uncomfortable in this competitive atmosphere and once Theo appeared he leaned over to him and said: "You think it would be weird if I asked Arletty: 'Can we ditch this crowd and get high on the roof of your former flat?'"

Theo got up and asked her and she got the machine and some balloons and told them to follow her onto the balcony instead.

They did and after they sat down Sid handed her the capsules which she used to fill two balloons.

Theo and Arletty began to inhale and Arletty started giggling. She handed her balloon over to Sid who emptied his lungs, raised it to his lips and began to breathe in and out into the balloon again.

He handed the balloon back to Arletty and leaned back to let the wave of dizziness wash over him.

Arletty and Theo's voices seemed distant and quiet as they argued about the fact that Theo was not giggling madly because he had inhaled the wrong way.

Arletty went back inside and Sid opened his eyes again to stare at the green trees before them.

"Nice balcony!", Theo said, "That's what's missing at your flat!"

"Well we used to have the roof. . .", Sid reminisced.

"But if I do move in with S. we'll actually have a whole terrace!"

[REDACTED]

"How are you doing with the whole situation?"

"Well . . . not too good I guess. . . Sometimes it seems like it might be getting better. . . [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] . . ."

"Yeah that sounds familiar. . .", Theo said and stared out at the green before him, lost in thought. After a few moments of contemplative silence he said: "Do you still have any number or address at the place you stayed at when we met in Marseille? I was thinking that we should go there again this summer. . . maybe it'll do you good to get out of this city for a while. . ."

Theo went over to the kitchen again to witness the proceedings of the casting for the new flat-mate and Sid remained on his own for some time.



When Theo came back out again he told him that they were starting the discussion about who to pick.

"It's getting ugly in there!"

Arletty wanted to meet a friend at some bar in the east and since she and Theo had not eaten yet she dragged them over to the kebab station around the corner.

Sid tried to keep them from waiting in line for more than half an hour but Arletty insisted that Theo had to experience this phenomenon.

The line was not as long as usual but after fifteen minutes waiting they found out that there was a problem with the grill. But they had already been sucked in by then. . .

"We can't leave now! We're already waiting too long!"

They started talking with the young couple that waited before them and who had informed of the malfunctioning grill.

As they went through the usual 'What do you do?', 'Where are you from?', the woman told them she was studying something with bio and medicine in the name and Sid asked: "Are you developing the new opium for the masses? The next Soma or something like that?"

"Not yet. . ."

When she informed them that her studies were the closest you could get to actual medicine Arletty started to talk of a friend of hers who had just finished her first year of medicine.

"She's become like a zombie! It's really sucking the life out of her. . . and she drinks an energy drink every morning, and when she has to learn for exams she's always on amphetamines. . ."

"Yeah, I still want to switch to actual medicine as soon as I can!", the girl replied, "It pays better. . ."

When Sid told them that money wasn't everything the couple laughed out loud as if he had made some hilarious joke. . .

"If your money doesn't make you happy you can give it to me!", the man said and Sid told him that he would if he had any. . .

In the end they waited more than an hour and the taste of the kebabs they got in the end wasn't nearly overwhelming enough for Sid to enjoy the meal he had spent so much on. . .

This time the bus driver did not give them trouble and they drove down to the subway, past multiple empty kebab stations.

The laughing gas had done what dentists all around the world were still using it for. But as they took the subway east the pain in the back of his jaw returned and slowly increased until it was even worse than before.



'I knew I'd have more trouble with wisdom teeth', Sid thought and asked himself if he could get his teeth pulled

They met Arletty's friend Le. and a couple of other people at the subway station and when she told them that they wanted to catch something to eat first Sid exclaimed: "I need some medicine!" and pointed at his aching jaw.

So Arletty told her friend they'd meet them at the pub and the three of them went along to the bar. The pain in the back of his mouth was slowly expanding and Sid's neck was beginning to swell up.

Sid sat down at a table in the corner and waited for his friends to return from the bathroom.

When Arletty returned she said: "People in this place all look like they're out of their heads on hallucinogenics! They all stared at me with really big eyes. . . I don't have anything in my face, do I?"

"Nope. . . That's the absinth. . .", Sid replied. "Apparently it's the real deal here!"

He pointed down at the plastic menu before him. "They talk about the effects of wormwood in here so. . ."

The prices were quite high though and so they all ordered a drink for four Euros that sounded promising since it had the word 'Cannabis' in its name.

The waiter appeared with 3 green glasses and they lit the sugar cubes they had dipped in the absinth.

Sid stared at the flame and was mesmerized by the deep blue that danced before him.

They were joined by Le. and her friends and the group moved to a bigger table in another corner of the room.

Sid sat there scribbling into his little black book until Le. asked him: "What are you writing?"

Sid mumbled something and then went on to say: "Well. . . give me three words!"

"Butt. . . Pussy and Dick!", she said and Sid reluctantly wrote them down and tried to weave a text around them

*In the home
of the most powerful man in the world
where decisions of war and peace unfurled
used to live a pussy called Socks
but it's owner had to move
they changed the locks*



*and he had to suffocate the butt
of the cigar he had stuck
in his secretary's vagina*

*a new man sat down behind the desk
and this meant the end
for the cat
since the President himself
became the new pet
of the sick
and evil man
who went by the name Dick*

He had neither been able to write something erotic nor vulgar and so he worked with double meanings, hoping she knew who Bill Clinton or Monica Lewinski were. . .

He handed the paper to her across the table where she had sat down after noting that he would be lost in his notes, not up for any friendly chatter.

After she had read his words she looked up at him with an expression that seemed like she regretted moving away from him.

She went outside to smoke a cigarette and Sid leaned over to Theo in order to ask: "Do I know her? Was she a flatmate of Arletty?"

"Yeah sure. You've met her lot's of times!"

Sid stared into his glass for a while and then said: "You know it seems like I did not really notice any girl [REDACTED] . . ."

Sid paused for a few seconds and then went on to say: "I guess when you think about it that way. . . my mind works in pretty sexist ways!"

"Well did you notice boys in that time?", Theo asked and Sid nodded: "Yeah. . . I think so. . ."

He tried to recall a male encounter he had in the last year but somehow his mind drew a blank.

"Well. . . maybe I didn't either. . . I guess I didn't notice anyone or anything [REDACTED] . . ."

She returned and sat back down beside him, trying to stir up a conversation about the origin of the word OK.

But Sid had already gotten lost in memories [REDACTED] again and was no longer able to say anything of importance.



So she began a conversation with Theo in French instead who jumped over Sid and sat down beside her.

Sid watched him slowly moving closer slowly moving closer to her, laughing and smiling. When he let his gaze wander he saw the exact same situation mirrored at the other side of the table, where one of Le.'s friends was talking to an Asian girl at the corner while a second man who seemed to be his twin sat at the other end by himself.

Sid turned over to Arletty who sat silently at the end of the table, and asked her if she wanted to go but she told him that she had been watching a couple at the bar for the last thirty minutes and that she wanted to see if they would end up together.

When they finally kissed she said: "OK, we can go. . . Oh I feel so happy for them!"

"Really? Somehow when I witness something like that I always end up demoralized.," Sid answered and Arletty gave him a shocked look.

They left the bar behind the two young lovers who kissed again as they walked across a red light. The girl seemed somewhat reluctant when the man tried to ram his tongue down her throat but then she took another sip from the bottle she had taken with her.

Arletty turned to him and asked: "Why can't you be happy for them?"

"Somehow I just see the drunkenness. . .", Sid said, "and I have the feeling like one of them once they wake up tomorrow with a headache and regrets. . ."

"Yeah probably", Arletty said and turned around to hug Le. goodbye.

In the time they waited for the subway Sid got out the chalk he had left in his pocket and began to draw a face on the steps. Theo approached him, asked if he could have a piece of chalk as well and began painting a blue flower on the wall beside them. In the subway Sid kept scribbling into his little black book until he suddenly looked up and saw an unkempt older man walking down the aisle. He was holding a little book quite similar to his, which he showed to surrounding passengers while he mumbled something incoherent.

Once again Sid wondered if he was seeing his own future. . .

As soon as they arrived back home he went to bed.

Sid dreamed of [REDACTED] crying, [REDACTED]

He was awoken by the sounds of a thunderstorm that was raging outside. Rain was pattering against the windows and lightning ripped through the grey that was brewing behind them.



The pain in his jaw had returned with full force and kept spreading down his neck. Sid tried to distract his troubled mind by looking at the script for the final scene of their film they would shoot today. When he found the cursor wandering off to certain streaming portals he jumped up and took a shower. Afterwards he checked his face in the mirror and with relief he noticed that his fathers face was still smiling back at him.

After he got dressed he ate some breakfast while reading more of "Noone is an island". Every bite from the sandwich he had made himself hurt like hell in the back of his mouth.

Afterwards he worked a little more on a transcript until it was time to go to the house of Nathan's parents they were using as a backdrop for their final scene.

A. and Sid took the subway west and arrived at the beautiful old building that looked almost like a castle.

They sat up the scene in a room full of books and began to film. Finally they came to the central scene in which Sid had to take a massive bite from a greasy sausage and eat it with pleasure while A. talked to him about biological and responsible farming. Apart from the fact that it was disgusting, even more so since he had not had any meat in almost a year, Sid's jaw hurt like hell as he tried to chew the giant grey mass.

As he swallowed S. exclaimed: "Shit! The memory card of the camera is full!"

They had to repeat the scene and afterwards they shot plenty more close-ups of Sid eating big chumps of ham in aspic. Nathan told him he did not actually have to swallow everything he stuffed into his mouth for the camera, but Sid just wasn't able to just spit out a meal again, for which a living being had given its life. Apart from that he more or less stayed in character during the shoot and his character loved meat.

After they wrapped up filming the others ate the rest of the props while Sid leaned back and held his stomach. The room was spinning around him and he felt like he had to puke.

Finally they said goodbye to Nathan and went home in order to celebrate Ta.'s birthday. S. came along and after buying some beer and coffee at a nearby supermarket they took the subway back to their flat.

Theo cooked something and they all sat down in the blue room to eat.

After finishing his plate Sid got out the pipe Theo had given him a few days ago. Then he picked up his little black book:



*The prince became the crow again
He looked around the room
And hoped to see a princess
She'll be here soon...*

He looked around the room and let his gaze wander over friends and friends of friends that had assembled here.

Someone had had the idea to play a drinking game in which you had to reveal intimate secrets about yourself.

Sid got increasingly uncomfortable until S. proposed another game that consisted of painting and writing, which occupied his mind for a while.

But the game went on in the corner of the room and finally sucked everyone in again; giggling about all the things they had or had not done in their lives.

Sid developed a terrible migraine and his mind began to fill with all the things he had not achieved yet.

He fled to the kitchen but their shrill voices followed him and suddenly he caught himself staring at the window before him.

But then S. came in and started a conversation he was thankful for even though it mainly consisted of cynicism and criticism of his taste in music.

At midnight Sid decided to get back into the blue room. Before he entered the drunken hysteria that rapidly progressed he made a quick detour to the bathroom. From there he heard a count-down and violent screams as the clock struck midnight.

He sneaked into the room and waited until it was his time to congratulate T..

When he did she gave him a long, heartfelt embrace and her face lit up as he handed her the poem that held his heart in every line.

He had realized the reason why he had such mixed feelings about giving T. that poem for her birthday. Because he feared that she might actually be someone whom he wanted to address with it...

And he knew he couldn't allow himself love her since she seemed like she was designed to break his heart. She was just too beautiful, looked like those flashy pictures he was bombarded with every day in the subway, telling him what women were supposed to look like and that he was not man enough to be with them, to afford them...

Yet at the same time it seemed sometimes that these women were all he yearned for...



Afterwards he fled back into the kitchen where he was still haunted by the window on which he had once started to pin papers with reasons against jumping out. . .

As he looked at those reasons now he felt like they were kind of empty and no longer sufficient.

'Inspiration,' 'writing while the sun is rising,' 'dreams'. . .

All these things seemed to haunt him now and so he turned back around and decided to flee the flat and go over to Arletty's goodbye party to which she and Theo had moved about two hours ago.

When he began to dress he caught the others attention and when he informed them of his plans they all started moaning and lamenting, except S. who told him he would come along, happy at the chance to escape the rampant drinking and giggling.

They began to wander through the night and soon they left the beaten tracks to climb fences and cross train tracks.

On the way S. began to tell him of the projects he had planned; films, plays and masked balls.

They talked about them until they reached the flat.

Sid tried to convince S. to come along but he was afraid of more of the same mindless drinking and yearning for fun.

So instead he said goodbye and walked off into the night.

Sid ascended the stairs to Arletty's former flat and made his way through the apartment until he found her and Theo on the balcony.

He sat down beside them and got out his little black book.

A guy sat down beside him and tried to figure out what he was writing by starring at his paper.

"Give me three words!," Sid demanded.

The slightly intoxicated man seemed to have some trouble with this chore and finally he exclaimed: "One two three, from New York to Germany!"

"No. . . three!," Sid demanded and the man repeated: "One two three!"

So Sid got to work:

*I can't see
what this group of people
wants from me
I can't bare
more than three
as company*



recently
two still seem to be
too much sometimes
their constant chatter
keeping me
from finding rhymes
one seems like more than enough
but lately even that can get tough
Maybe I'd be better off
with no one around me at all

He handed the poem to the perplexed young man and left the balcony without another word. After seeing the giant cue in front of the bathroom he decided to go on out and use the restrooms at the bar next door. His body processed the meat that had given him a few cramps as it worked its way through his intestines. He spent some time in the bar until he went back up and found Arletty and Theo sitting on the floor. He asked if they could go on the roof and after they had rolled themselves a few cigarettes they followed him up there only to go downstairs again soon thereafter because they were getting too cold.

Sid ascended a nearby chimney, trying to get away from the other people that had assembled on the roof, laughing and drinking.

He stared into the darkness for a while until an abyss began to take shape before him and he became painfully aware of the possibility of a 5 story drop.

So he fled the grey thoughts that began to take shape in the back of his head and went back downstairs.

The group from his flat had come over and kept drinking here.

They told Sid to sit down with them and when he did T. looked at him with pleading eyes and asked: "Is it something I have done?"

Sid realized with terror that he apparently looked as sad on the outside as he felt inside, and tried to calm her down by explaining something he did not quite understand himself: "Yeah I feel a bit down but. . . I guess it's just that that game you played was a bit too much for me. . ."

"Should I have quit it to do something else?"

"No it is your birthday; you can do whatever the fuck you want! I just. . . I guess that drinking game reminded me of some things I'd like to forget. . . [REDACTED] . . ."



T. told him how drunk and irresponsible she felt and Sid asked her if she wanted to catch some fresh air on the rooftop.

She told him she felt too drunk but when her friend Lo. overheard that there was a roof and seemed intrigued T. made the proposition: "Why don't you show her the roof?"

So Sid did as he was told and lead Lo. to the roof where they took another hit from his pipe and she began to lament that the energy drink everyone in this town seemed to be addicted to, wasn't tasty for her and growled in her stomach.

She thought about going home or crashing at their flat and finally they went back down again because Sid had convinced her that she should just do whatever she wanted with her night, that she did not have to go along with the things the others had and hadn't planned for tonight...

It seemed to him like she had lived in an environment quite similar to his that consisted of being forced to go along with the group that had decided on the basis of popular consent they would go somewhere and do certain things there...

When they went back down the stairs Sid saw Theo and A. in the entrance to the closet in which lay the secret door.

Theo turned to him and whispered: "I'm gonna miss my train...it's gonna be really a fucking hurry because I'm already way too late but A. won't let me go. She's telling me I should stay in this city..."

Sid turned to A. who had clearly been able to hear these words: "But you're going to South Africa soon as well! You can't tell him not to go!"

"I'm not telling him anything!"; A. said and looked at him in a way he just couldn't read.

He vaguely recalled that he had told Theo earlier he would accompany him to the central station and so he told Theo: "Well no actually you have plenty of time! I'll guide you to the station..."

Then he realized that A. might not be pleased to hear that he was dragging Theo away from her and so he turned back to A. and said: "...or I won't...I don't get it? Are you saying we should persuade him to stay a little longer? That it would be for the best...for him as well...for all of us?"

"I'm not saying anything!"; A. answered with another seemingly innocent or annoyed or inexplicable expression on her face that Sid was not able to read.

Sid left the two of them alone again in the corner beside the closet and went on to see what Arletty was up to. She told him that she was leaving soon and that she would take Theo with her so he would get his train.



Sid told her he would come along and sat down in some corner in order to write until Arletty showed up again and told him they had to wait a little while longer since Theo apparently still seemed like he needed some time.

Sid returned to his writings until Ta. appeared before him and asked if he would come along to the club they wanted to go to. Sid told her of his plans of delivering Theo at the station but told her he might go to the squat near the Spree later on, where Maa. was DJing tonight.

Ta. looked at him with sad eyes, telling him how much she would like to see him later in the evening but that she did not know if she would make it to Maa.'s party.

Finally Theo appeared to be ready to leave and Sid and Arletty got up to go as well.

Although Theo kept repeating that he would not be able to make his train he stopped left and right, whenever he saw someone he knew saying goodbyes that quickly turned into chatter and small conversations. But finally they made it outside and after finding out that the bus was not coming soon they began to walk back to the flat.

On the way Sid suddenly decided that if he was going to the central station anyway, he would have to undertake a journey as well.

Nervously he turned to Arletty who had asked him earlier if he could accompany her to the train station on Tuesday when she would leave this city she had called her home for the past year in order to study back in France.

"I'm really not sure I'll still be in town on Tuesday to bring you to the station as well...I really feel like I have to get out of this city for a while and I might just take my bike along when we're going to the station now and then board some train to take me out and away from it all..."

Arletty looked at him with sad eyes for a while but in the end she told him that it would be fine and that she'd find someone else to accompany her.

"The trick is to stay in the mode of constant departure while always arriving!"; Sid quoted a dream-character from a rotoscoped Texan film about lucid dreams.

Arletty agreed and so when Theo and Sid had packed and picked up their bags at the flat they split with the words: "See you soon!" and a quick embrace.

They ascended the stairs and Sid told Theo to run towards the subway while he'd get his bike from the cellar. They met up at the entrance to the station again and carried up bike and suitcase with exhaustion.

When their train arrived they got in and inspected the map, trying to find their way.



Editors Note: This is the transcript of the tape recordings that were conducted in the following 30 minutes:

Sid: Well...so we go to Brandenburg gate...

Theo: I don't know!

Sid: And then the U 55...It's gonna be fine! It's gonna be fine!
So do you think the bike will...hold up or will it just fall down if I leave it here...this should be good right?

Theo: Yeah probably!

Sid: Have a seat! No up there! There you go!

Theo: Oh yeah we're gonna make it!

Sid: Exactly! That's what sitting in this position does for you!
You know...15 Euros...how much is 15 Euros?

Theo: Doing what?

Sid: It's 15 Euros...some might call it a penalty, some might call it a fee...to smoke in the subway!

Theo: I did that several times! Never paid anything...

Sid: Well the worst scenario would be paying...but I mean even if it happens...

Theo: I don't know...never saw that!

Sid: I think its somewhere here...Well sweet...alright! If I go from the central station it takes just half an hour and I'm in the beautiful outskirts...



Theo: If it takes us half an hour it will get tricky!

Sid: Oh nonono I mean after dropping you off I just have to take a train for half an hour and then I'll no longer be in this crowded city.

Theo: Have you ever been to Latvina?

Sid: Why?

Theo: Cause I apparently have family there, which I REALLY don't know but...

Sid: Hey, family is family!

Theo: Yeah...and I was thinking about visiting them...Do we have to get out by the way?

Sid: No no!

Theo: Is this a direct one to the central station?

Sid: Nonono we'll have to change at Brandenburg gate! But we get out in...lets see... one, two, three...three stops! Then it takes 5 minutes maybe. And then...well you could run, and I could take my bike...

Theo: OK...It's gonna be hard, cause my suitcase is really heavy...

Sid: Then I guess we just wait for the next one.

Theo: When is the next one? And when does it arrive...

Sid: Oh...well in one minute...so we won't make that one...but the next one will be in 10 minutes I think...And then you'll be there at 5:42!



Theo: Oh yeah!

Sid: That's reasonable right?! Well as I was saying...

Theo: Smoking in the subway eh?!

Sid: Oh wait its the next stop!

Theo: Well...smoking in the next subway?!

Sid: Actually now we have 10 minutes...so we don't have to

Theo: Well I really don't know how fast I can go with this suitcase...cause...I mean.. common, just try it...try it!

Sid: You should travel light, man!

T: I know but now I have bottles..

Sid: Alright

Theo: Which way?

Sid: I don't know

Theo: We're fucked!

Sid: No we're not, we have 10 minutes!

(They walk to the next platform)



Sid: Well...what does it say? That's not good!

Theo: I really am screwed!

Sid: Are you?

Theo: My train leaves at 5:55!

Sid: Oh 55?! That's fine! It's just 2 stops! We're gonna make it!

Theo: Yeah...then maybe we should smoke that pipe now...

Sid: hall we go up underneath the Brandenburg gate?

Theo: Nono we go there

Sid: But 'Rauchen Verboten!'

Theo: Lets go there!

Sid: Why right there?

Theo: Because sometimes the train goes all the way there

Sid: Well lets sit down

Theo: Yeah



Sid: You know S. told me a very nice story earlyer that he as a little kid always thought that if you go far into the woods or the parks at his hometown, that you would end up...somewhere in Africa because well there is wilderness in Africa so you'd take a shortcut if you go through wilderness...that the shortest way between those 2 places isn't the direct line.... and he said that his Utopia or whatever would be a place where that view would be accepted...as reasonable!

Theo: I actually really like that guy

Sid: Yeah...although sometimes he can be very cynical

Theo: I know

Sid:...that can be a bit hard to take sometimes...

Theo: Yeah I know

Theo: I don't know if I'm gonna get that train

Sid: So it will leave at 55...?

Theo: Yeah and that suitcase is really heavy...I guess I could drink one beer right now...we have 10 minutes right?!

(opens the bottle)

Theo: Ha...and I can close it again! Do you have a lighter?

Sid: Oh yeah

Theo: I never leave Berlin in quite a healthy mood

Sid: No?



Theo: But I guess it's the right way to leave Berlin...

Sid: Sounds like a legitimate view...

Theo: Common it's Saturday and nobody is around! What happened to Berlin?

Sid: Well I guess...This part of town...I mean we're right beneath the Brandenburg gate...so in this part doesn't really have a nightlife...

Theo: I actually really don't give a fuck because I don't give a fuck about partying! Sooo...but I'm just wondering because last time I was here...two years ago or something like that...two three I don't know...ahm...well there were more people here...at this time !

Sid: I guess a lot of people in this town are driven by partying

Theo: Yeah I know

Sid: And so you see them at the places where there is a party! Its really...that run in with the major really freaked me out because he looks so much like a product of this city! He's just one of them! Another partying freak, talking about: We're gonna make it big with art! Make a business out of art! And then everything is gonna be just fine...

Theo: Yeah but that's what's scaring me about Berlin!

Sid: Making a business out of it? ...yeah me too !

Theo: Because it already is...God! Really I would...I don't know how long I could have this house in Nonnenburg...I was there, working on my writings and I thought; this would be a real nice place for Sid and me to be! I actually need some privacy...and being alone...like really! Cause human people or any people or animals just work on me like vampires! They're sucking my energy out...really!



Sid: I hear ya!

Theo: And I thought well it would be a nice place for us to be...so I hope that somehow we'll manage to spend a few days there! Cause it would be really nice!
There was a woman talking to me around 10 pm, like: "oh yeah the weather is nice"
Even when I was reading with loads of bottles on the table! "Oh yeah the weather is nice"...Common! "Yeah you know when your dog eat some grass..."

Sid: I think she was 'doing you a favor'...or she was thinking she was doing you a favor...

Theo: Yeah probably!

Sid: Like: 'Oh I bet he wants company'

Theo: Yeah well...but I guess if we were 2, especially speaking in English we would be save!

Sid: I hope so... Oh look: Napoleon in Berlin! What a great time he had! What's he doing there? Stealing what?

Theo: Well lets go!

(They get into the train)

Theo: Do you see the minutes somewhere?

Sid: 6...5! So we'll be there around 52...you'll have 3 minutes!



Theo: It will be really tricky! Well I guess I won't have time to buy the ticket for my next ride here and I won't be able to do it at the stop because I'll have to run again...I'll just buy it in the train! It's 2 more Euros but...fuck it! And I don't have any tobacco... heavy enough to get to my train in 3 minutes...then I'll arrive in Offenburg and I also have 3 minutes to get to my next train...

Sid: Travelling with train can be tricky...you know I think I'm getting more and more a hold of riding bikes...although it is kind of shitty that you can't sit down and look outside and do something else beside moving, like writing. But then again there is people in the train who keep you from doing that as well sometimes...I don't know, maybe I'll ditch it somewhere one day if I get sick of it...

Theo: I have an uncle who is driving bikes a lot! Perhaps we could go to the south of France with him on bikes...it might get tricky because he's really good at biking...

Sid: Well...

Theo: But yet still it could be done I guess! He's a teacher so he would have free time... and I really like him, plus he is now dating a German girl...so he's supposed to speak the language

Sid: That's tough...hm well I guess I would do that for a girl...

Theo: The thing is I might go to at least Lyon, in France with a friend of mine but I could manage to be there like on Saturday or Sunday! So you could come there with the Mitfargelegenheit and then we could go like to Marseille or something...I'm really thinking about that

Sid: Well I'm more thinking of next week you know, because we'll have the big party on next ...what is it? Saturday?! And after that I feel really free...so what are you doing on the 26?



Theo: I'm actually going back to Sarreburg to work on my writing! But I know I'm not really gonna be able to do that because there is this girl who wants to visit me and it pisses me off! And I told her but she doesn't get it! But fuck it...2 stations right?

Sid: It's gonna be fine!

Theo: Is that a ticket-controller?

Sid: Oh no he's just the train driver! It's just two stations so he goes from that end to that end...and when he's back there he goes from that end to that end...and when he's here again...

Theo: Such a nice job...

Sid: I guess there are more interesting routes...but maybe he doesn't give a fuck about the view...well you're not supposed to as a train driver...you're supposed to deliver people from A to B and that's it!

Theo: Yeah cause the view really is nice... Argh! What is this? I don't even know what I have in my pocket!

Sid: Yeah me neither...I found something really sticky earlier...

Theo: It's the same in mine! I'm really fucked! The train won't leave!

Sid: Yeah but we're leaving now! 2 minutes! It's gonna be fine!

Theo: I'm gonna be fucked!

Sid: Maybe...maybe...you might be fucked...

Theo: Do you have any idea if I could just change my ticket if I...



Sid: I didn't even understand where you got it...Do you know the gate?

Theo: No...

Sid: Well then find out! You'll find out at the big board or what? Do you have any idea?

Theo: I really don't know...

Sid: Where is your...

Theo: Yeah its in my bag, but I guess don't need it right now

Sid: So you have to find a train that leaves at 55 and goes to...?

Theo: Offenburg... or maybe Köln...but I don't know...it leaves at 66...ahhh 56! And probably to Basel or something like that...

Sid: Oh its gonna be fine...Just get ready to run! Run run run run! Ah good luck!

Theo: Are you gonna join me?

Sid: Yeah but I have a bike so I might slow you down

Theo: Probaly not

Sid: So see you soon

(They shake hands)

Theo: Anyway but yeah please follow me

Sid.: I will!



Theo: I'm pretty sure you're gonna be faster than I will...

Sid: Oh no there are Many levels...you know the station

Theo: Yeah I know but...

(The train arrives, they jump out)

Sid: Alright we have to go all the way that way...no that way...no now its that way again... you have to go up that thing...or that thing...good luck...run!

(Sid enters an elevator)

(They meet again)

Theo: Ahhhh...quick quick quick quick quick! To?

Sid: I don't know! What was it? 5:55

Theo:56!

Sid: 56...so it's...2!

Theo: 2 yeah!

Sid: It's supposed to go to Interlaken Ost? Leipzig, frankfurt...does that sound right?

Theo: All the way back here...

Sid: Where are you going again?

(They arrive at the platform)



Train conductor: Vorsicht bitte! Zurückbleiben! Keine Fahrräder!

Sid: Get in!

Theo: Whoo!

Sid: Well goodbye! Good luck

Theo: Fuck! Call me about Marseille right?

Mechanical voice: Meine Damen und Herren bitte steigen sie ein. Vorsicht bei der Abfahrt!

Sid: That was kind of close...I have to say! New record!

Man on the platform: He wouldn't let you in with your bike?

Sid: Nono I just dropped someone of here!

Man: Berlin is a tough city hm?

Sid: Well...we're practically coming straight from a party...

'I guess I party all the time, but I never really party', he thought as he tried to find the train that would take him out of this city in the countless platforms on stories beneath and above him. He wasn't all that interested in partying the way most understood it, and yet he wanted to turn his life into some kind of constant party. But it would be a party of different sorts. Not the one that had unfurled back in his so called hometown where he had spent so many evenings that had similarities to the uglier parts of tonight to an outsider his life might probably seem like that of one who was living a constant party, just like Hunter S. Thompson's life seemed to the makers of *Where the Buffalo Roam*, like a constant party.



They see that party with their conventional eyes but they didn't see what was going on behind that grinning mouth and shades.

And that did not mean that that party that was raging back there wasn't worth something or was something you should pity. It just meant it was different! Different in a way no one could ever claim to truly understand.

It was too subjective.

After consulting a giant billboard for his options he found a train which he knew would take him out of this city since one of its stops was the hometown of his Grandparents. Another point in favor was the fact that Sid would be able to board it with his student ticket.

He rolled his bike over to the platform and after the train had rolled in he boarded it.

It took him through the city, past the governmental district and the giant TV tower into the outskirts and finally through complete wilderness right to the little central station in his grandparents neighborhood.

But this town was still too urban and grey for him at this point and after calling there and not reaching anyone he decided not to stop by at his grandparents flat but to make the journey to their little garden shed, even further southeast on his bike.

Sid drove down the street he had gone down on many times before, whenever he had visited his grandparents in the past.

As he came closer to the signal light at the point where the path he was taking lead into a bigger road he wasn't sure if it wasn't operating at the moment or if it was just the sunlight blinding him. He looked left and right in order to find out whether he could cross the road even if there was a red light he just couldn't see. There were no cars in sight and so Sid set in motion.

But when he looked back over his shoulder one last time he caught the glimpse of a police car out of the corner of his eye, that turned around the corner as the wheels of his bike touched the road. Sid wondered if he should stop or proceed and take in the possibility that he might be crossing a red light. But his indecisiveness made the decision since his bike had rolled on and reached the other side before his thoughts came to a conclusion.

When Sid drove on down the path beside a river, he looked back over his shoulder and saw that the police car was driving towards the signal light. With terror he realized that he was carrying a pipe and a baggy of weed inside his jacket and it felt as if something big and unpleasant was breathing down his neck. Had he crossed a red light? Had they seen it? Could you tell from his tired red eyes that he had smoked weed a few hours ago? Would they test him to see if he was driving under the influence?



When he turned around again he saw that the police car had followed him onto the little hiking path and was rolling down behind him, trailing him, apparently expecting him to stop. He did and a man and a woman in blue came out of the car and approached him.

"Good Morning, we're going to do a personal inspection here, would you please step away from your bike!"

Sid did as he was told and asked: "What seems to be the problem officer?"; He tried to sound casual but at the same time the tone in which he uttered these words seemed nervous and fake.

"Well we're looking for guns, knives, drugs or any other kind of dangerous criminal items."

Sid tried to tell himself that the police in his hometown usually did not seem to consider weed a criminal drug. At least in the quantity that Sid was carrying with him he was still in the ranks of the legally 'tolerated amount', which differed from state to state. But suddenly Sid realized that he was no longer in the state of the freaks.

"We're cracking down on border-crossing criminality!", one of the officers said and Sid asked:

"What you mean all those criminals are coming out of the city and into the surrounding towns?"

"No not that border! I'm talking about the border to Poland!", the man exclaimed as he starred at Sid's identification card.

"So you're a student hm? Well I'll just call headquarters and do a quick identification checkup, see if they have anything on you!"

He mumbled something into his walkie-talkie and some static and a shrill voice answered.

Sid remembered the policeman that had gotten him off the scaffold [REDACTED] telling him that he would probably not here anymore of them, but that there would be some movement in his personal files. Would these two officers search him extra carefully if they found out that he had gotten in trouble with the police before?

"Seems to be all clear over there!", the man said and Sid tried not to utter a sight of relief. Instead he said: "So you're telling me that people who do have something in their files would get in trouble now?"

"Well yeah, if there is still some open case...", the man said and the woman jumped in and added: "Basically once you're in the system it doesn't look good for you!"

"I'll still have to ask you to hand over your backpack so we can search it...and empty your pockets please!"

"Really? Are you guys allowed to do this just like that?", Sid asked but still went along and began to spread the insides of his pockets on the hood of the car.

"Yes, because of the increased border-crossing criminality the police chief has issued a perma-



ment warrant for this area!", The woman who was going through the underpants he had packed earlier, said with a tone like that was the last word.

"I don't know but somehow this seems like harassment to me", Sid said anyway as he continued to spread out his belongings on the car. Nervously he took off his jacket and placed it beside his wallet, keys and loose change, praying they would not look in there.

When he was done the policeman told him to stretch out his arms and began to pat down his body, coming uncomfortably close to sensitive areas.

Finally the man said: "Alright you can get your stuff together again!" and this time Sid let out a silent sigh, luckily as he turned away from the officers in order to pick up his jacket that they miraculously hadn't touched...

The man in blue wished him a nice day and they got back into their car and drove off.

Sid decided to stay away from the main roads on his way to the garden shed and drove alongside the river as long as possible.

Riding his bike through the deep green that surrounded him felt good and he was able to let his mind drift and unwind as his head was soothed by a cool breeze. It was exhausting but the knowledge that a cold lake was waiting for him kept him going. When he came close to the little colony of garden houses he tried to call his grandparents again, but no one picked up. He turned into the little dirt road at which's end the shed awaited him. But when he turned over the flower pot beneath his grandmother usually hid the keys he found nothing. He tried to reach his grandparents once again but no one picked up and so he called his aunt instead and asked her if she knew where her parents were spending their golden years these days.

She told him that they were visiting some friends over the weekend and that she wasn't sure when they would return.

Sid still felt a little bit like a manic dope fiend from the police raid earlier and so he did not feel like telling her that set out to his grandparents shed without an invitation after a sleepless night of partying and drug consumption.

So he claimed he was still home, thinking about going there.

"I would just go ahead and drive down there anyway." N. said and Sid answered: "Well if you think so..."

Afterwards he headed down to the lake and even though it was cold and windy he went for a quick swim.

Afterwards he tried to catch the few sunrays that broke through the clouds by sitting down on a green hill overlooking meadows and the lake.



Sid got out his laptop and began to work on his writings until he suddenly heard electronic sounds that seemed vaguely familiar.

They kept wafting over to him until he packed in his laptop again and decided to pursue them. He went down the hill on the other side and into a little forest, past a small pond, until he finally ended up in front of a gate where an old man was just letting out two cars before hastily closing it again. Sid approached him anyway and asked if he heard the music. At first the man looked at him with irritation and hostility but then he understood and answered with a bitter look that it was probably coming from the other side of the lake.

"These young people with their uz infesting our beautiful air around here!"

It looked like the freaks were slowly coming out of the city, spreading out in the land that surrounded it.

The locals tried to protect themselves from the insanity that swept over, but not even random police units could prevent innocent citizens like this old man from being confronted with a young man with dark glasses, a ripped shirt and a cowboy hat right before the entrance to the little retreat he had built himself here.

Sid walked further towards the music, into the swamps until he was confronted with another fence that reached all the way to the water, claiming the land that lay behind it as "Private Property".

Sid took one last look over the water, into the direction where he thought the music was emanating from. He considered getting his bike from the shed and trying to reach the music. But then he asked himself: Wasn't that the kind of thing he was running away from? Hadn't he fled from all those eager party freaks to this seemingly peaceful garden retreat in order to write without distractions?

Sid turned his back on the electronic sounds the wind still carried to his ear every once in a while, and returned to the little pond he had passed earlier.

At it's side he spent the next few hours working and writing until some time in the early afternoon his stomach demanded to be fed and finally he got up again to walk over to the bus stop. When the little green bus arrived Sid got in and sat down in the back of the almost empty vehicle. But a few steps further it suddenly got crowded when a group of retirees who seemed to be on some kind of trip, got in and huddled around Sid.

They were loud and made vulgar jokes and finally one of them leaned over to a young woman who sat across from him, and proclaimed: "We're coming from a bar, we're all drunk!"

An electronic female voice announced the next stop and another drunk old man said: "Oh look



we're heading for the cemetery...that's my stop!"

Finally they arrived back at the hometown of his grandparents and Sid got out in front of it and after there was still no answer when he rang the doorbell he got out the keys they had made for him and went up to their flat.

After throwing off his backpack he began to search the kitchen for something vegetarian and found a casserole he placed in the oven. As he watched it bake he got out his laptop in order to continue his work. But just when he had gotten into his writings again he heard a sound at the door and when he turned around his grandfather stood in the doorway. Sid got up to greet them and told them that he had been at their garden house earlier.

They went to unpack their bags and Sid got out his meal and sat down at the dinner table where he was joined by his grandmother who vaguely asked him what his life had been like the past few weeks.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid had trouble believing that she meant what she said.

Her lid walked in and turned on the screen that seemed to run constantly, whenever he was here. Sid fled to the balcony where he kept working on his writings until the laptop died of battery shortage and Sid collapsed on top of it, falling in some sort of in-between state, still capable of worrying about his grandmother finding him in this position.

When he regained a little more consciousness again, he awoke in a little puddle of his own saliva that had been drooling on the laptop.

He went over and made himself a bed in his grandfathers working room where he wrote a little more until he collapsed again and this time remained unconscious for a little while longer.

Sid dreamed [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



He awoke

The sounds of his grandparents TV was coming through the wall but it was still quite early and so Sid turned around again and tried to block out the voice of some anchorman talking of the demise of Europe, by pressing a pillow on his ear.

He fell back asleep, awoke again and continued this game for some time until he finally grabbed his touchwriter and turned on some music to keep him awake.

He got out his little black book and wrote:

but you broke me
and now I lie here in the corner
twitching and turning and setting off sparks
every once in a while

But the music attracted his grandparents who opened the door and greeted him with talk about the weather, ripping him out of his writings.

Sid got up, took a quick shower and sat down for the massive breakfast his grandmother had prepared for him. "You're so thin, eat something", she said and handed him a plate with cheese. So Sid ate. Afterwards he packed his bag and after his grandmother had given him the keys to the shed he went down to the bus that took him back out. Once again it was filled with people with white hair. The old lady in the seat next to him leaned over and whispered: "We've been drinking", followed by a nervous giggle. Her breath reeked of alcohol and a sore stomach and Sid got dizzy from the thick layer of perfume she was wearing.

Finally he reached his stop and walked back to the little shed.

This time he got in.

After throwing off his backpack he lay down on the little patch of grass and read *No man is an Island* for a few hours. The cynicism slowly wore off with the introduction of a new character and it got easier to bear for Sid. Still he caught himself looking up from the book again and again and simply staring into the green that surrounded him.

Finally he lay the book down and picked up his laptop in order to do another transcript.

After some time he went inside because the wind got heavier and the rustling of the trees made it impossible to hear what he had recorded. A few minutes later it began to rain heavily and he



had to bring his backpack and blankets inside where he continued the transcript as the rain outside got heavier and heavier.

After another few hours he finally finished his work and realized that it had gotten dark outside. He went outside, hoping to see some stars. But the sky was clouded and so Sid sat down and read some more of "Noone is an island" until it began to rain again and he went back inside where he made himself a bed and lay down. But somehow he couldn't find rest. He was pretty tired but his sleeping pattern was completely messed up. After rolling around for about an hour he turned his laptop back on and continued to work. Then he tried to sleep again, but his mind wandered off

He got out his little black book and tried to distract his mind that seemed to be racing in circles again:

*I'm trying to see
what it is about me
how can it be
that I rhyme solely
with see, me and be?*

Finally he fell asleep, long after midnight had passed.

Sid was awoken by a strange humming sound he thought was his phone, vibrating, telling him to get up. But then he remembered where he was and that he had not set himself an alarm clock. He tried to ignore the strange sound that still filled the air and grasped for his touchwriter. In an automatic swipe with the thumb he opened his mail inbox and found a message from his psychology professor, informing him that she had finally uploaded his grade to the internet platform where he now went with anxiety and anticipation. It took his touchwriter ages to open the page but finally Sid arrived where he wanted to be.



The grade wasn't quite as good as he had hoped but still good, and all Sid really cared about was the fact that he could close that module, get the credits and put it out of his mind. Almost. He'd still have to send his other professor a summary of the presentation he had held two weeks ago... Grudgingly Sid started his laptop and began to work on the paper.

When he looked at the little clock beside his bed he remembered that Arletty was leaving the city for a new live back in France today, and so he got out his touchwriter and wrote her a message:

Nathan once said: "It's colder since Arletty left town.". He said it because he thought your name fit a sentence like that. But I think he was right; Berlin will be colder without you.

Then he continued working on his paper.

He finished a few hours later, sent his work off and made himself some breakfast. Afterwards he lay down in the grass and read some more until the grey sky erupted and rain began to pour down.

He fled back inside and continued reading, but in the back of his head the nagging knowledge that he still had work to do distracted him.

But at the same time he feared that nothing substantial would come out of him. His head was empty, except for the anxieties and dark thoughts that ran in circles in his mind.

Finally he dragged himself over to his laptop and began to decipher a few scribbled notes and copy them into a digital format.

Sid remembered his professors request to send him a few lines about his visit to the press screening and whether they let him in or not.

Hesitantly Sid opened his mailbox, wondering if he should ask some questions about his paper.

But in the end he was too afraid that the answers might discourage him and so he just wrote him that he got in and continued his work.

He compiled all the notes he had made on the subject during the last weeks and realized that he had enough material for an entire book... How would he ever be able to compile all this into 10 pages?

He continued anyway, turning paper into data while listening to music.



Finally a song came on that reminded him [redacted] and he sank back on the pull-out couch and felt a lonely tear running down his cheek [redacted]

He plunged back into his work, [redacted]

He was ripped out of his work again when I. called and told him that she had finally found a flat and would now start to look for someone who could move in after her.

She bombarded him with all kinds of organizational matters and after they said goodbye Sid just sat there for a while, feeling unable to handle the situation. But then he picked up the phone again and called her back.

"If you should stumble upon someone who would be interested in renting my room from August on...", Sid said and T. interrupted him: "Do you want to move out already as well?"

"Well I'd still have the loft bed in the vestibule, but actually Want to travel this summer anyway..." She told him she would ask around and they said goodbye again.

He worked for several more hours until his stomach finally demanded his attention and he made himself another microwave dinner. As he ate he suddenly caught himself turning to his laptop and starting a french 'feel good comedy', he had been told to watch by various people.

After finishing his meal he kept watching until the film was over and left him in the dark.

He tried to flee into his dreams but he kept turning in his bed, unable to fall asleep. He got out his laptop again and continued to work until he finally passed out over it for a while.

He woke up again with the painful urge to save the text he had been writing on before it would get lost and then could not fall asleep again.

His thoughts returned [redacted] and he began to stare into the darkness again.

He tried to save himself by writing on his touchwriter [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sid was awoken by the sound of rain hammering against his window. He remained in the bed for a while, staring at the ceiling of cheap, fake wood and tried not to think of *her*. He grabbed his laptop and continued to write. Finally he went outside where the rain had calmed down to a slight wet mist that filled the air. Sid decided to eat out here anyway and made himself some late breakfast. When the rain got too heavy he went back inside where he continued his work, interrupted every once in a while by phases of starring into the air and thinking of *her* that got longer and longer until he could no longer focus on his work at all. When he tried to distract himself by reading, he could not keep track of the words on the pages before him either. So he turned to the last resort and put himself back into the nurturing arms of the screen, hoping



it would pull him into a different world and make him forget about the ugly grey surroundings he lived in.

He started the movie *Rushmore* and followed the quirky tales of a young student. The film fulfilled it's duty of distraction, but only until it was over. Afterwards Sid felt worse than before. He plunged himself back into his work anyway. Outside the rain was still hammering against the window and the sky turned into darker and darker shades of grey.

But finally he heard the rain calm down and when he went outside it stopped completely. He sat down in a chair on the grass and saw the sinking sun break through the grey clouds. A little bird landed on the roof of the shed and began to sing.

But still Sid felt like crying.

He made himself something to eat, stuffed it down and continued to turn scribbled notes into readable digital words on the small table on the terrace.

When it got dark the light of his screen attracted strange little insects with translucent wings and long antennas.

The flies soon covered the entire laptop and as he typed he crushed some of them that had landed on the keyboard, with his fingers.

So he went inside and after copying a few more pages he went to sleep.

Sid

awoke.

He saw how early it was and tried to go back to sleep, but when he finally did he was awoken again by his grandparents who were hammering against the window.

He let them in and went back to bed where he remained motionless, staring at the ceiling, as they walked back and forth through the room, talking to him about indifferent topics like weather and food, every once in a while.

When they left the small living room to work in the garden, Sid remained in his catatonic position for some time, unable to get up.

Finally his grandmother came back in and said: "Oh common you have to eat something, it's almost noon!"

So he got up and made himself some breakfast that he ate on the small terrace until it began to rain again.



He went back inside and continued to work for several hours. His grandparents returned home in the late afternoon and left him on his own again. Sid dragged himself over into the small kitchen in order to cook some noodles but again he was overtaken with memories and all of the sudden he was punching the only brick wall in the shed that was otherwise made of cardboard. When he stopped again and sank to the floor his fist had left a few bloodstains on the wall. He knew he was slowly turning insane. After lying there on the linoleum for a while he wiped the blood away and put a kettle with some water onto the hot plate. Outside the rain turned into a hailstorm for a while, then the sun came back out. But when Sid carried his meal to the terrace it began to rain again and another thunderstorm approached. He went back inside and ate. He did not know what it was about the kitchen, but when he returned his plate and wanted to clean up he simply collapsed again. Shivering and crying he lay on the floor while the thunder moved closer and closer. He remained on there for some time, then he suddenly got up, grabbed himself a towel and went out into the storm in order to go swimming. As he ran through the rain, down the muddy path to the lake somewhere in the back of his head the remainder of reason and sanity asked him what the hell he was doing. He pushed it away and ran faster as the wind ripped at the branches of the trees around him. All he knew was that he needed to swim. When he reached the little harbor he saw that a tree had been torn down by the forces of nature and blocked his way. He climbed over it and began to undress. The water was cold and the wind pressed hard against his bare chest. He could see lightning erupting from the dark grey above him. Somewhere he heard the scream of a bird. With a desperate scream he plunged into the waves. Sid stayed beneath the surface for a while, diving until his lungs could no longer take the pressure. When he came back up he lay on his back and stared into the grey sky above him. Even though the world seemed like it was coming to an end around him, it had a calming effect on him and finally he realized that lightning could strike any minute. He swam back to the shore as fast as he could and wrapped his shivering body into a towel. Then he returned to the shed and back to his work.



After another hour of writing the distant stares became too lengthy again and so he tried to focus them on a film instead.

He started *Being Flynn*, a tale of a struggling author and his son.

Sid realized soon that the lives of both lead characters were quite miserable and bleak. Why was it that he still wanted to imitate what he saw on the screen? Was he trying to write 'the great American novel' as well? Why the hell did he want to be a writer in the first place? Had it been grainy images like the ones he stared at now, that had put the idea into his head, glamorizing the craft of writing by making it seem bleak and yet moving and strangely desirable?

And hadn't he used the words of the main character himself, before? Had they been stuck in his head after watching the trailer?

"Life is just gathering material"

After the movie had ended Sid returned to his notes.

And finally it hit him. What had he done?

Had he really taken hallucinogenic drugs before going to a press screening and writing an article about it that would be graded? What was he supposed to do with these ramblings he had produced on the floor of the admittedly very clean restroom of the movie theater?

Sid closed the files that contained the words he had written on the subjects of 'Gonzo' and the inability of turning the written word into moving images and decided to work on something else instead.

After another hour of desperate attempts to turn his ramblings into something coherent and comprehensible he slammed his laptop shut and fell back into his bed.

He couldn't sleep. He kept turning around as the demons that lay in the dark that surrounded him drew closer and closer.

He did not know a way out anymore. He felt the urge to grasp for his jacket to get out his pipe but something in the back of his head told him that it wouldn't last, that he would be coming down from the weed again soon again. Apart from that it would prevent him from sleeping since for some reason weed wasn't a downer for him.

Sid considered going down into the small damp cellar to get himself one of the bottles of wine that lay around there.

Suddenly he found himself in the kitchen, staring at the knives that were standing in a block before him. He pulled one of them out and let his thumb glide over its rigid edge.



finally turned into one of them, Sid thought but then he suddenly realized what he was about to do and threw the knife into a corner again. He returned to his bed and pressed his eyes shut. Covering there in the fetal position he remained awake until it slowly got light again outside.

He awoke the next morning with the same desperate feeling. He knew coming here had been a mistake.

Suddenly the sound of his phone ripped him out of his catatonic stage and T. asked when the painters were supposed to show up at their flat today. Sid told her when and tried to tell her how he felt, tried to cry for help, but nothing came out. She interpreted his silence as a sign that he was still tired and hastily said goodbye again.

Sid realized that he had to get out of this by himself.

He needed to wake up.

After staring at the ceiling for another fraction of eternity he finally threw himself out of bed, grabbed a towel and stumbled down to the lake. This time there was no thunderstorm, just a little rain was falling, drawing circles on the surface of the water.

The wind blew hard and Sid was shivering even before he undressed. But he did anyway and with a desperate scream he ran into the waves.

When he came to rest on his back and looked up into the sky above it had the same calming effect as ever. But it was lost as soon as he got back out of the water and into the rain that was slowly turning into hail again.

Shivering and freezing Sid returned to the shed where he sank down onto his bed. When he realized that he was about to fall back into the hole he had just crawled out of he threw himself back out, made himself a quick breakfast and began to pack his things together.

When he fell back onto the bed he got out his little black book, hoping to find solace in a few scribbled lines:

*I have to become happy again
before I can
find someone new
that will love me*



*but I feel like the only way
for me to be happy
is finding someone
who will love me*

Sid got up again and grabbed his backpack. He locked the shed, unlocked his bike and rode off through the rain. It was an exhausting and painful ride full of memories [REDACTED]. Soaked and close to physical and mental breakdown he finally reached the subway that took him back into the city.

He spent the trainride staring out of the window and into his book, but he could not really concentrate on neither.

When he arrived at his destination he rode his bike down the busy street, past the flat that Iggy Pop and David Bowie had once called their home and the park which a certain fox called it's home.

He stored his bike in the cellar and dragged himself up the stairs.

He was welcomed by A. who showed him the freshly painted bathroom and the spot on the kitchen ceiling that had been covered by shining white that was a crass contrast to the rest of the room that had turned into a dirty yellow by too much nicotine.

Sid went into the blue room where he found the beds and bags of Camille's visitors.

He sank down on a chair and stared at the colorful walls around him for a while until a young man appeared in the doorframe and introduced himself, followed by a girl who did the same. Sid barely noticed them and forgot both their names again immediately. He mustered up some small talk anyway until they left again and Camille entered the room. When she noticed his distant, sad eyes she asked what was wrong and he tried to explain himself: "That garden shed I spent the last week at was the last place we had been together. . ."

"Shit. . . well then. . . Drink something!", Camille said, followed by plenty more good advice and things he would have to do. . .

Finally she returned to the kitchen where she continued her routine with A. who was more open to her suggestions and began to lament over a night she had spent with a man who claimed to love her, yet only saw her once a month.

Sid fled to the shower.

When he came back out he saw T. sitting in the kitchen.

After he greeted her he also saw a bottle of absinth standing on the table.



He followed Camille's advice and lit himself a glass.
Camille and T. gave him an irritated look and Sid yelled: "What? You told me to drink!"
"Why did you tell him to drink . . . are you alright?"; T. asked and Sid tried to explain his condition once more, then he fell into silent staring again.
His flatmates apparently did not know how to behave around him and so the kitchen slowly emptied.
When A. and T. returned from the supermarket about an hour later Sid still sat there in the same position at the kitchen table.
They tried to convince him to smoke a joint with them in order to cheer up, but when he asked if they could do it outside in a park T. began to talk about how stressful her life was these days.
Camille came in and they ended up smoking his weed without him since Sid fled back into the blue room.
Once again he told himself he would have to get out of this by himself.
He stared at the wall for an hour or two, listening to his flatmates giggling in the kitchen. Camille and A. finally left in order to buy more weed in the bushes of the nearby park and T. went to bed.
Sid got up his typewriter and tried to write himself out of his misery.
But the page before him remained empty and the white of the page stared at him until he could no longer bear it and buried his head in his hands.
Suddenly Franz passed him on his way to the bathroom and when he noticed his desperate pose he approached him and said: "Can I make a photo of you?"
He formed a frame with his hands, shut his right eye and lensed through it.
"Looks cool!"
Sid mumbled something he did not understand himself and Franz got his camera and made a few shots.
"Thanks!", he yelled out over his shoulder and disappeared into his room, leaving Sid on his own again.
It might have been one of the least sensitive things one could have done in a situation like this, but it was just so absurd that it gave Sid the energy to grasp for his laptop in order to continue to sort his writings.
Camille's guests returned home and when Sid remembered that she had told him that the man move into T. and A.'s room for the next seven months he went over into the kitchen and introduced himself as Sam. and the girl said he should call her Ba. and asked if he wanted a tea.



They began to talk and Ba. told him that he would attend his university as well in order to study law.

Camille and A. returned from their shopping trip and T. from her dreams.

When Camille rolled a joint from her newly bought weed Sid fled the kitchen again and returned to his work.

When he looked back up from his laptop it had turned dark outside.

He saved it all on a flashdrive and went over to the kitchen where he handed it to A.: "Soo 'manager'...this is some stuff I wrote at the *Fusion*...maybe you have any ideas what we could do with that...?"

He tried to explain how uncertain he was about what he had written but after stumbling through a few sentences he gave up and returned to his laptop.

When he returned to the kitchen in order to get himself something to drink T. asked if he wanted to come along to a club.

He said "yes" and they left for the subway.

On the way Camille and Ba. quickly stopped for some food, then they got into a train full of drunken tourists. When they got out at a crowded station and went down the stairs to get their next train T. turned to Sid and said: "I once fell down these stairs"

Exactly in that moment Camille, who was walking before them tripped and fell. A bold man helped her up and asked: "Do you need something to smoke?"

They had to wait for five minutes and so Sid got out his chalk and drew a face onto the stairs Camille had just fallen down.

Their train arrived and took them one station further where they waited for Sam. for a while, who had gone to meet a friend earlier.

When Camille finally reached him via phone he told her he was lost somewhere in a different part of town and that he would follow them as soon as he found his way.

So they went on to the club and after paying 8 Euros and being grabbed by the doorman, they entered the former warehouse through a gate full of green plants and bright lights.

Midnight had long passed but for the inhabitants of this city it was still early and so the club was still quite empty. After the girls had smoked some cigarettes they went to the deserted dance-floor anyway.

Sid closed his eyes and tried to get lost in the beat.



The space in front of the speakers slowly filled with people and as Sid let his gaze glide across the shiny happy faces that surrounded him he felt more and more out of place. Once again there was no room for him here.

Finally he couldn't take it anymore and so he grabbed his jacket and fled into the backyard where he cowered in a corner and stared into the grey sky above.

He did not know how long he remained in that position but when his friends came out and saw him they approached him and asked what was wrong.

T. sat down next to him, still unsure how she should behave around him, until Camille walked up to Sid and wrapped her arms around him.

After she asked him if he wanted some weed and telling him to forget [REDACTED] they went back to the dancefloor.

Sid continued to stare into nothingness for some time, then he followed them [REDACTED] and tried to dance the pain away. It almost worked. He closed his eyes and let the rhythm take over. But when he opened them again he saw the crowd around him and all the girls that were dancing so close to him and yet so far. He felt like he had to pick one of them up if he didn't want to let this night end in failure. And yet he couldn't open up to anyone. [REDACTED]

So he said goodbye to his friends and left, stumbling to the subway and back to his flat where he sank down in front of the screen. But with terror he realized that not even that seemed to distract him anymore.

Tears ran down his face until he finally cried himself to sleep.

The next morning he awoke way too early, but he couldn't escape back into his dreams since the sun was shining in too bright.

Again he was lost in vacant stares for a long time until he finally dragged himself under the shower.

When he came back out he met A. in the kitchen, who was about to watch a series.

He joined her and starred at colorful cartoon characters for a while. They stopped to clean the kitchen for the party tonight, then they resumed watching the series until A. declared it was enough.



Sid returned to the blue room where he sat down in a chair and continued to stare at the wall. Finally he got up again. He turned on a concert film by the Stones and sat down with the wooden pipe Theo had given him as a gift. After he inhaled the deadly fumes he began to cough heavily. Then he picked up his little black book:

*suddenly I am back in the moment
aware of all the things around me
that make me happy
I no longer care about the things
that lie far away
in the future
far from today
in another part of the world*

Suddenly T. entered the room, looking like she had cried black paint, worn out and tired. Sid went over to the wall, ripped a big piece of paper off and placed it on the floor. He sat down at his typewriter and told himself to write poetry instead of prose for a while:

**Writing about yourself
In the third person
Is rough
It can mess with your mind
It can treat you unkind**

Sid got up and went over to the kitchen where he found A.. She asked if he wanted to sit down next to her and watch some series about a meth manufacturer. It sucked him in for a while. Sid felt tired when he realized how many people would be there tonight. All keeping him from writing. Unfortunately last week he had made the terrible discovery that he could not survive by himself either. He grasped for his little black book and searched for answers:



Have I really gone swimming in a thunderstorm
Or was that just the book I'm writing
Why do I write about things that haven't happened
leaving out things
While making up others



is grey
hidden behind dark clouds
and symbols
that attack me
and threaten me

The party was already in full force. Unfortunately it was not the party that would unfold tonight. That party would not start in a couple of hours.

For Sid the party had long begun. But he had a feeling like it was a party that was taking place only in his head, since he was the only one who was throwing around paint, blasting loud music and moving freely...

Sid jumped up and grabbed the book about body language and a few knives from the kitchen. After hanging up a few pages by nailing them to the wall the doorbell rang and Ch. and Na. arrived.

After sitting around in the kitchen for a while T. mentioned that they would still have to go shopping. Ch. proposed that they should smoke a joint first but A. demanded that they take care of the important things first.

"I don't smoke weed at all by now!"; Na. proclaimed.

"Health reasons?"; Sid asked and she began to list the problems she had had: "I think if you have a history of mental health issues like me and find yourself unable to leave the house due to paranoia it might be a good idea to quit.

And I mean I have a grandmother who is manic depressive and a sister who's an alcoholic. . ."



"Hey, my father just called and told me that he finished a triathlon at position 300 out of 3000. . . I guess that means I can smoke my head off!", Sid said and Ch. added: "That paranoia thing is just part of the experience. . ."

They left without consuming more drugs and headed for the supermarket where Ch. and Sid opted to take care of returning the bottles that had piled up since their last party. There were a lot and when they saw the line in front of the machine they regretted choosing this chore.

After they had moved up into the middle of the line an old man approached them and asked if he could get rid of his 6 bottles before them. When they let him cut in line Sid heard a man mumble something behind them.

Another woman with just a few bottles to return approached them and when they let him cut in line as well the man behind them mumbled something again that sounded like: ". . . have to wait like everyone. . . now line's getting longer. . ."

Sid turned around and saw the anger on his face and that of the people behind him that had just been triggered by the unfortunate situation but was now slowly projected onto them.

Sid wondered how many people in this neighbourhood owned weapons and went armed to the supermarket, and decided not to let anyone else in front of them anymore.

When they returned to the flat Camille had made it out of bed and into the kitchen where she nervously waved a sheet of paper: "Look what Ba. found hanging on our door!"

T. took the notice of eviction she had hung on the door earlier and tried to calm Camille down:

"Yeah we're being evicted. . . but you already know that remember? I hung that there. . ."

The group of shoppers sat down in the blue room and Ch. rolled a joint: "Time for our reward", he said and Na. began to lament the fact that he always animated her to start smoking weed again.

Sid left the room and went back to the end of the hallway where he continued to hang up pages from the psychology book on body language.

In the form of a guide he despised the text and little informational images of world leaders and celebrities in telling poses and stickmen whom's body language you were supposed to read. But Sid hoped that in the forum of the party they might add something to the atmosphere beside the liquor and drugs that would be consumed tonight.

When he was done he returned to the blue room again where he sat down in front of his type-writer.



More and more people appeared around him and he hoped to find refuge in a few lines. But he could not hear himself think over the chatter of Na. and Ch. who remarked: "Well I would offer you smoking a joint with me but you said you stopped so I guess I'll have to enjoy it all by myself. . . unless Sid wants a hit. . .?"

After Na. had lamented the fact that it was incredibly hard to quit using drugs with him as a friend Sid said: "Yeah I guess I'll take a hit. . ."

Sid began to draw manically for a while. When he looked up again he noticed out of the corner of his eye that Na. handed the joint back to Ch.

He also noticed that a girl behind him started to read *No man is an island*.

"Oh don't read that! It's really cynical!"

"Well stop me when you find me crying in the corner all of a sudden!"

"Do you want me to show you a really painful part of the book?"

"OK!", she said and while he searched for the chapter he introduced the scene: "So the famous actress Susan Morgan has held a speech on worldwide television, trying to motivate people to donate for disabled children. This is what follows. . ."

He found the chapter of the actresses hate speech about retarded children and euthanasia.

Sid returned to the foot of the couch on which Ch. and Na. were sitting and listened to Ch. talking about a trip he had either planned or already made with a friend of his.

"He's even more out there than me. . . I mean he really is convinced that this whole capitalism thing is going down soon. . . and he's already seeing the atomic mushrooms growing around us. . ."

"You really think an atomic bomb is gonna go off soon? By whom, terrorists?"

"Terrorists don't have the expertise to plant something like that!", Na. remarked and Sid asked:

"Well we don't have two fronts locked in some cold war anymore! So who should drop the bomb? You think North Korea is gonna push the button?"

"Well they all have them, or they could built them really fast. . ."

"But Obama is working on reducing their amount. . .", Sid said and wondered how much irony lay in his words. . .

He tried to ignore the fact that the girl beside him seemed intelligent and desirable because he knew he would never be able to speak to her then. Then again, ignoring her did not really bring him any closer to her either. What a vicious cycle he was lost in again. When he finally decided to ask her for three words she was gone.



On the sofa at the other side of the room Na. and Ch. were still at it: "You're rolling another one!? If you don't stop smoking that shit soon, I won't be able to stand the urge to smoke as well!" When Sid asked about the joint he had seen in her hand earlier she explained that she had just held it for Ch.

"Even though I did not really want to touch it!"

"Why don't you drink something then?", Ch. asked and she replied: "Yeah, being an alcoholic is much better than being a paranoid schizophrenic. . ."

The nameless girl returned to his side.

Nathan arrived and after Sid had hung up a paper from the roll he had forgotten at Nathan's parents last week

As Sid listened to Nathan talk he suddenly felt his spirits sink.

He went over to the wall and began to fill it with pictures of a head that was being used as a tennis ball and a cage full of little red birds.

Sid tried to flee, over a short trip to the bathroom into the refuge he had built himself at the end of the hallway.

But he couldn't really flee because his mind was occupied with the people over in the blue room. Beside from Nathan who seemed to Sid like he would be sad or appalled if Sid didn't talk to him there still was the girl whom's name Sid didn't know and who now was lost to him, behind a wall of her friends who had arrived at the party.

Sid decided to talk to Nathan for some time about his writing, telling himself not to let it sound too much like a cry for help.

But when he sat down in his chair again Nathan was busy talking to Camille, and when he noticed Sid he first approached him but then said: "Oh...alright I'll leave you by yourself...put my chair over here...", when he saw Sid's desperate expression.

Sid turned to his typewriter and tried to save himself with some lines in ink, but he couldn't ignore the people around him. He tried to shut out their chatter until Nathan finally returned to him and said: "So you're sending out mixed signals. . .do you want me to leave you alone or. . .?"

Sid tried to explain himself and finally they began to talk about writing.

Nathan offered to lend him a book he thought he might be interested in, then he went on to tell him about a play he was developing and the fact that he was planning to put together a little group of authors who would read each other their texts and give constructive criticism.

As he began to drift off, talking about less serious and much more absurd plans of his a girl approached Sid and asked him if she could draw on the white paper he had hung on the wall.



When Sid told her to do whatever she wanted to do and she turned around to do just that Nathan said: "She likes you!"

After Sid made some helpless gestures, wondering why he said that, he said: "You think so? I can't tell. . ."

"Well I'm pretty sure. . . but there is a way to find out. . . by actually simply doing what you like to do anyway. . ."

"Actually I tried that but it doesn't work because what I want to do is to sit in a corner by myself. . ."

"No what you want to do is to get that typewriter off your lap and go over there and paint!"

Nathan went to the bathroom and Sid got up in order to sit in a corner and write.

Finally he got up again and after drinking some absinth he began to paint.

After drawing an angel with horns O. appeared beside him and tried to begin a conversation.

But finally she began to paint as well and Sid sank down beside the paper and began to scribble into his little black book.

Suddenly she was there beside him and began to talk.

"So how are you, how have you been doing?"

Sid told her that he was doing OK, as long as he kept to himself and decided to flee back to the corner.

As he got up O. said: "Didn't you say you were looking forward to seeing me?"

"Yeah but please try to understand that I can only cope with the situation if I keep to myself!"

If you want to be alone you shouldn't be here at all! We should go for a walk!"

"No really it's OK, I just have to shut myself off for some time!", Sid exclaimed and returned to his corner for a while where he tried to write into his little black book:

*Did I just loose a friend
because she couldn't understand
that my behavior was not meant
to insult her
I can't bear
being forced*



*to decide between writing
and social interaction
because the later just seems
like a horrible distraction*

Sid told himself that the only way to keep O. from hating him was to ask her for 3 words. But apparently he had burned too many bridges because when he began to roam the flat in order to search for her, she was nowhere to be found.

Sid sat down at his typewriter and Nathan joined him.

"Have you seen O.?", Sid asked and Nathan replied: "No, why?"

"I think I chased her away with my behavior. . ."

Sid fell back onto the couch next to his typewriter and starred up into the blue above him.

Suddenly he felt Nathan, pinching his leg.

Sid jumped up and exclaimed: "What?"

Nathan looked up at him and asked: "OK, how much of our conversation did you overhear?"

Sid gave him an irritated and inquiring look and when Nathan went on to say to the girl beside him: "OK the main question that comes to mind when talking about Sid is: is he a hip. . ."

Sid interrupted him with a scream and ran back to his refuge at the end of the hallway where he tried to shut out the world by closing the thin black curtain beside him.

After a while he heard Nathan who seemed to be looking for him.

When he finally found him in his corner he gave him a hand and said: "I want to introduce you to someone!"

Sid reluctantly followed him and met his ex-girlfriend with whom he wanted to open his writers-circle.

After they exchanged a few words Sid fled back to his corner.

On his way he saw O. again and wondered if she had come back because he had sent her that poem or if he had just missed her on his last search.

After scribbling manically into his little black book for a few moments he returned to the blank paper in the blue room that wasn't so blank anymore.

Every once in a while people appeared in his field of vision, some waved, others tried to stir up a conversation or just pointed at him before turning to their friends and saying: "That's Sid! He lives in this room. . ."



After drawing a moth with a human face on it's wings Nathan approached him and said: "Come, join our circle!", talking about him and his ex girlfriend Fr. Sid followed Nathan's invitation and lost himself in interesting conversations with them for some time....

Suddenly Ba. appeared beside Sid and asked: "What are you writing?"

Sid tried to explain, gave up, then just handed Ba. the paper in his typewriter.

She began to read and suddenly he felt strangely uncomfortable.

"Give me 3 words!", Sid demanded and took the paper out of her hand in order to write:

how do you reach
a creature of the opposite sex
these days?
what are the ways
to love?
is it through manners
is it by being rich?
through personality?
is it by having a big heart
is it through art
through writing poems maybe...?

Finally Nathan appeared next to him and said: "You're coming out with me and Fr.!"

"If I can leave you guys again...", Sid said and went along.

Fr. Started to talk and Sid caught himself say something along the lines of: "Me too" after every second remark she made or story she told.

They ended up beside the lake of the scavenger and Nathan lay down to sleep while Fr. kept talking.

When she disappeared into the woods for a while Sid looked over at Nathan and wondered: 'Is he trying to hook us up?'

Then she returned and got lost in her stories again...

Around 4 o'clock Nathan suddenly awoke and said: "Could we go back?"

So they did and Nathan went to sleep again.



They talked for a little longer but finally Fr. went to sleep for an hour as well. As Sid buried her beneath a blanket he was interrupted by a man that seemed vaguely familiar.

"I noticed you have a lot of Hunter S. Thompson lying around in your room. . ."

They began to talk and Sid asked himself: 'What has become of us?'

The nameless man looked at Sid with strangely sad eyes and sad: "I'm just reading *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. . . actually just started it with my first experience with acid. . . found it the next morning at a friends place. . . I spent the next day lying in bed, smoking weed and reading that book. . . hadn't really slept. . ."

Sid replied: "Oh no man. So you're being sucked in as well?", with the same sad expression behind his 3-D glasses.

Then he suddenly found himself holding a lecture about the decline of Gonzo journalism in the new millennium which's children were using it in forums like the movie theatre or the internet that had a more than sour taste to it.

At some point he realized that he had first had that impression when he read the entry in some online encyclopaedia on the subject and suddenly he asked himself if this was really his own opinion he was propagating here, or rather that of the person that had written the article. . . Was it a single person that had studied Gonzo journalism, maybe in the context of new journalism and now wrote in a highly subjective style himself? But even if he hadn't taken over the style. . . his writing was still subjective, wasn't it?

Would it change anything if more than just one person had written the article. . . maybe that was even more convoluted and subjective since in a democratic debate that was supposedly being held behind the articles, the majority probably ruled and kicked out all objectionable contents. . .

Sid stopped his lecture and starred at the young man in the red lumberjack shirt that had somehow gotten a hold of his pipe and was now trying to see if there was still more than ashes in it.

After chasing away memories of Maa. who had once told him how he had altered a page on the online encyclopaedia, claiming that some medieval rock band was mostly singing about raping ogres in their Norwegian lyrics, Sid turned back to him and said: "I'm afraid the pipe is empty. . ."

". . . Gonzo is running through the Arizona desert with nothing but a typewriter for 3 days. . .";

the man said, with the same sad and lost expression in his eyes as he handed Sid his pipe back. After they found out that they both had a surreal encounter with a teddy bear while being on hallucinogenics, Sid returned to his typewriter and wrote manically for a while. The sound of the rattling machine calmed him down and he almost got rid of that strange feeling his encounter with the fellow Gonzo fanatic had left him with.



But then the man in the red lumberjack shirt reappeared beside him and picked up a paper his typewriter had spat out a few minutes ago.

Sid wondered how much of it the young man had read before exclaiming: "This is some fucked up shit!"

Sid figured he had not read till the end of the page, where he would have found some ink letters telling a strange tale of a young man in a lumberjack shirt, reminiscing about his first contact with Gonzo journalism.

"This is some fucked up shit indeed!", Sid exclaimed when he realized the repercussions that action might have and ripped the paper out of the mans hands.

"It may need a little context and polishing, but this seems like pure Gonzo!"; the man said and after exchanging another sad look their ways parted again as Sid left in order to escape the music that suddenly took a terrible turn to the absurd.

Sid found himself at the end of the hallway, typing manically on his typewriter. From the speakers next to him he heard:

...more productive...

comfortable...

not drinking too much....

regular exercise at the gym (3 days a week)...

Suddenly he couldn't concentrate on writing anymore.

... well (no more microwave dinners and saturated fats)....

a patient better driver...a safer car (baby smiling in back seat)

Beside the strange mechanic voice that kept listing these little mementos of horror Sid could hear the sounds of people snoring at the end of the hallway.

...sleeping well (no bad dreams)...

no paranoia...

careful to all animals (never washing spiders down the plughole)...



Something incredibly surreal had just happened, but he felt like he could no longer pull himself together to bring it to paper.

...keep in contact with old friends (enjoy a drink now and then)...
will frequently check credit at (moral) bank (hole in wall)...
favours for favours...
fond but not in love...

He had tried to change the sounds the machine next to him produced, to those of Neil Young's hymns to Dr. Thompson's, but it just couldn't be done.
There was too much work he had to put into this little broken mp3-player with the cracked screen and so Sid had given up and allowed it to play music Thom Yorke had once composed out of the same struggles with modern life.

...no longer afraid of the dark...
or midday shadows...
nothing so ridiculously teenage and desperate...
nothing so childish...

But that was already 10 years back by now, wasn't it? Times had changed...probably for the worse...

...at a better pace...
slower and more calculated...
no chance of escape...
now self-employed...

Finally Sid screamed up and began to attack the little speakers beside him with a hammer he had used earlier to pin the papers on the wall with knives as nails...

...tires that grip in the wet (shot of baby strapped in back seat)...
a good memory...



still cries at a good film...
still kisses with saliva...
no longer empty and fr-

Finally something cracked and the music went out.

Sid was relieved and ran down the hallway to the bathroom in order to appease his empty but rumbling bowels as always when they had been put under sleep deprivation...

Suddenly the alarm clock of his touchwriter sounded off and Sid wondered what he should do. Hadn't he set this alarm clock in order to wake Fr. so she and Nathan could get up again and have breakfast together?

But then Sid realized that that would be cruel to Nathan who seemed like he needed to sleep badly.

Finally he did do what his former self told him to do through the machine, though, and tried to wake Fr.. He put on 'Dear Prudence' and when she continued to sleep he made a coffee.

When he finally touched her on the shoulder and asked if she wanted to wake up .

She didn't and Sid began to wonder if he should go to sleep as well.

Instead he decided to get his laptop.

Sid jumped up and went over to the blue room...

He made his way to various empty bottles and almost tripped and fell over someone who was sleeping on the ground before him.

But he didn't and suddenly he was at the other end of the room where he found a full bottle of caffeine.

When he bowed down he noticed a man who was sleeping in his bed following his every move with one opened eye and an expression that seemed like amazement or horror.

"Does this bottle belong to you", Sid yelled and the man answered: "No..."

"Alright...now it belongs to me!", Sid declared and took the bottle with him, over to the place where he had last seen his laptop.

When he found it he let out a scream of agony and horror. The gaping hole at it's upper left side had been ripped open and now exposed even more of the wires inside the machine that kept it going, although probably not for much longer.

At least the screen still turned blue when Sid pressed the button that was in a somewhat elevated position due to the damage.



Suddenly he heard the man that had watched him a few moments earlier, whispering to the woman beside him: "...too much *Club Mate* I guess..."

The next time Sid passed their bed and they now both watched him with disturbed faces he yelled: "What...what are you looking at!!!"

"Why are you still up man!"

"I have to write!"

"What do you have to write?"

"I don't know man..."

Sid figured that it might shut them up if he offered some reasonable explanation to his behavior, or what he considered reasonable...

"I'm writing my term paper!"

It did not shut them up...

"Haven't you seen...he was hammering into that typewriter all night!"

"Why are you writing your term paper during a party?"

"You get drunk and then you write something for university?!"

"I didn't 'get drunk'!", Sid tried to defend himself but the man said: "I saw you drink absinth man!"

Sid fled the blue room, telling himself to keep writing.

He sank down in front of his typewriter again, and turned up the music that was unfortunately still a depressed British singer lamenting the fact that modern life was turning him crazy.

When he returned to the blue room in order to paint the girl that was lying in his bed and in the arms of the man who still followed his every move with one open eye, said: "Can you turn out that maddening music!"

"No...", Sid said and she gave out a sight of agony.

"Why not!", she asked and he yelled: "I'm busy! Do it yourself for fucks sake! Or close the doors or something!"

She got up and walked to the end of the hallway and he could feel the hatred and contempt she had for him as she passed him. It almost suffocated him and when he saw her disappear in the bathroom he returned to his little refuge at the end of the hallway and turned the music back on.

When he saw her at the other end of the strange long room, leaving the restroom shaking her head and giving him angry looks he felt like screaming: "Where do you take the audacity to come to my house, take away my sleeping spot and complain about the fact that I'm still awake?!"

But instead he followed her into the blue room and started handling the doors.

"What is he doing now?!", he heard her say from his bed at the other side of the room.



"He's closing the door for you..."; Sid said and opened his arms in a gesture that seemed almost as if he was on some kind of stage, begging for applause.

He did not receive applause but instead she suddenly gave him a big smile and said: "Thank you, I love you!"

Unfortunately he made another girl hate him with his actions when he moved the sofa she was sleeping on in order to get the second door to close.

Sid returned to the end of the hallway with his tent in his hand which he tried to erect in the small corner.

When he finally succeeded he finished filling the paper that was still such in the typewriter in front of the entrance of his tent, then he withdrew into the safety it's thin but powerful cloth walls were offering.

He closed his eyes and tried to leave himself in the sounds that still came out of the music machine that lay now beneath the bottom of the tent.

Sid slipped into a twilight state for a moment or two until the sound of the German punk band pulled him back into a more conscious perception of his surroundings.

Fr. was standing in the hallway before him and asked: "Lets go get a coffee?!"

Sid agreed and decided to get dressed again while she went over into the blue room to wake her ex-boyfriend.

When the elegant yet horribly hung over Nathan appeared in the hallway he exclaimed: "What the fuck do you look like?"

"Where do people take the audacity to walk around in my house and tell me I don't dress appropriately?"

Nathan went into the bathroom to empty his stomach and freshen up and Sid got dressed.

Then they left in search of a place for a coffee and when they got out of the building and entered the street they encountered the giant teddy bear that somehow had come closer last night.

"Nathan did you go back out and finish your work?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well you tried to do the same last night...but you only dragged the bear for a few meters until we stopped you!"

Nathan bought him an espresso and himself a coffee and a muffin and they sat down in the sun



in front of the bright little café.

After talking about books and everything else that was on their mind this strange and deranged morning.

Afterward Nathan and F. went toward the subway station behind the glass shopping centers and tourist attractions. Sid went along until they passed the art gallery that housed art from the 60s and 70s in its cellars.

"I'll search for refuge there!", Sid proclaimed and said goodbye to his old and apparently new found friend.

"You should come along to the Batman premiere next Thursday!"

"Yeah well...I want to but I can't tell if I wont be in some abandoned building outside of the city by that time...", Sid said with a troubled look on his face.

"Oh yeah because that worked out so great last time!"

"That was different..."

"You know I don't know what your problem is: It would be free for you and I think it would be preferable to loose yourself in your own film for a week again, somewhere in the woods..."

"It was different...last time I was at my grandparents garden shed...if I leave this city again I'll go to a place where I actually feel comfortable!", Sid proclaimed and Nathan stopped his pleas with the remark: "Just let me know in advance so I can give someone else the ticket...like Fr. for example..."

"I'll try to plan my week in advance and stick to it...but I can't guarantee anything...", Sid said and after embracing both of them again and wishing Fr. good luck on her upcoming tests he went to the museum where he sat down in front of the screen that displayed 'Sgt. Peppers lonely hearts club band'

A little boy stood next to him and got lost in the colorful images until the woman in uniform that was in charge of this room today, approached his father and told him to take care of his son.

Sid went up the stairs to explore 'the box' that had just opened in the halls that had housed Richter a few months ago.

Sid approached one of the men in uniform that stood in front of the giant wooden structure and asked: "Is there anything I should know about handling this box?"

"Go close up to the wood and look if there are any worms in it!", the old man with the clean new uniform said to him with an earnest expression on his face.

After a few moments of silence he added: "You can also go around it and climb that ladder back there to peek in!"



Sid did as he was told and walked to the other end of the wooden structure where he ascended a few steps and looked into a room that appeared to be the workroom of some kind of artist. In the back of the room Sid noticed a little child crawling on top of a shelf and Sid wondered why she did not fall to the wall, since the entire room had apparently been shifted by 90 degrees. Sid starred into the box that held the warning label: "you may climb the steps at your own risk to look into the box", for a little too long and it had a somewhat mind-bending effect. When he left the museum he wondered for a few seconds why the world before him had shifted sideways.

Sid took the bus back to his flat in nervous anticipation, wondering how many degrees the mood had shifted over in the blue room by now...

He sat down upstairs in the double decker and watched the man in the seat before him pretend he was steering the bus with an invisible wheel in his hands. Sid was somewhat relieved that his movements did not actually determine their route since they would have ended up crashing into the buildings to their left and right repeatedly.

Sid got out and walked down his street, passing the teddy bear that was still sitting in the middle of the street still sticking out his arms, not any closer to his goals.

Sid went up and greeted T., A. and the other nameless girls that had assembled in the kitchen. After answering T.'s question where he had been she began to lament the fact that her ex-boyfriend Maart. had shown up last night and pressured her into talking about their relationship. "How do you feel now?", Sid asked and she said, "Well I'm high..."

A man entered and T. exclaimed: "You have to help us! You're a painter...how much paint do we need to turn this kitchen white?"

Sid fled to his tent and asked himself if he should try to sort the notes of his past night...

But then his dependence on caffeine got the best of him and he returned to the kitchen where he encountered Ba.

He wondered if she had read the poem he had handed to her last night, before leaving with Nathan and Fr..

She looked hung over and as if she had no memory of the past night and Sid decided that he was incapable of talking to her in this environment and returned to his tent where he stretched out beside the music machine that was playing the rooftop concert by *The Beatles* and began to hammer into his typewriter until Camille came out of the door beside him with a spiteful look on her face.



"What?", Sid exclaimed and Camille said: "I can't sleep with the sound of that fucking machine coming through the walls!"

She disappeared in the kitchen and when she came back out she suddenly smiled at Sid who gave her a confused look and asked: "So what do we do now?"

"Oh you keep writing and I'll drink a coffee!", Camille announced and disappeared in the kitchen again.

The girl who had complained about the noise earlier sat down next to him and asked: "What are you writing?"

Sid ignored her question and said: "Give me three words!"

"Coffee . . . opportunity . . . and fortune!", she said and he got to work.

responsible addiction

I need more coffee in my veins
to make use of more opportunities
this morning brings
stay awake and experience all those things
I'm allowed to experience these days
although in some ways
they seem less like the result
of luck good fortune
and more like obstacles
but I'll be able to manage them
as soon
as I drink some caffeine
then I'll last until afternoon...

He handed her the words his typewriter spat out and grasped for his cup.

After she finished reading and looked up at him with tired eyes he said: "Do you want some coffee?"

"Oh yes!", she exclaimed and he handed her the cold brew he had made himself a few hours ago.

"Uh . . . it's cold!", the girl said and Sid remarked: "As long as it's caffeine . . ."

Then he got up and walked over to the bathroom.



When he returned to his tent he lay down next to his typewriter and listened to the music for a while.

Sid turned to his touchwriter in order to pin down some more calming lines.

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Then he sank back into his tent and closed his eyes for a while.

Sid began to wonder if he was just rationalizing...

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Before he could enter a dark downward spiral he jumped up and went over to the kitchen where he yelled out: "YOU! You call yourself my manager!"

He pointed at a tired and confused A. and went on to say: "Can you check on me every half hour and see if I'm still working in there!"

A. said she would program the alarm clock of her phone and Sid carried his typewriter and his broken laptop over into the blue room.

He began to gather all the notes he could find flying around and tried to put them in chronological order on the paint-stained carpet.

When he touched the broken edge of his laptop he realized that he had to handle it with extreme care because it shut down and almost deleted everything before he had even really begun...

The next incident that brought him to the edge of a nervous breakdown was the fact that he suddenly saw a gaping hole in his notes with no words to fill it.

He began to search manically in the ruins of the party until he finally found the pages he had written two days ago, beside his bed.

A. looked in and said: "Concentrate!" and Sid did as he was told and continued to work.

Sid continued to get lost again and again and he felt fatigue and painful memories closing in on him.

He went over to the kitchen for pizza and coffee and after setting the machines to prepare both he returned to his notes until A. came in again and told him his food was ready.



Sid ate his pizza and plunged back into his work, growing increasingly manic and frantic, dancing around the room, searching for lost notes in corners and singing out loud every once in a while. When he went out into the kitchen to get himself more coffee he found A. and her guests glued to a screen, watching some American series.

Sid realized that that meant A. had abandoned him and when he returned to the blue room on which's floor still lay 3 pages and a touchwriter full of texts, Sid fell into a twilight state between consciousness and dreamworlds again.

Songs came on that reminded him [redacted] and he turned to stone until he told himself to turn into a crow instead. The prince with the mask finished sorting the notes and Sid saved everything on a USB-stick.

Then he went to his tent at the end of his hallway and closed his eyes.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Sid's first reaction was jumping up and beginning to punch the broken TV a few more times. Then he called Theo who picked up but told him to call back later because he was unable to hear anything.

Sid wrote him instead:

Alright not sure how much longer I'll stay conscious...I'll need to leave this town some time after Wednesday or Friday. Could I come over to France then?



Then he began cleaning the hallway so the girls would allow him to leave this flat without making him feel irresponsible.

Then he began packing, preparing his departure from the flat.

Sid found a broken video cassette, handed one roll of black film that hung out of it to A., held on to the other end and began to turn in circles, tying himself up until he could barely breathe anymore.

Afterwards he went into his tent and lost himself in the music until he slowly drifted into a dream until he got up again and walked over into the blue room.

He lay around on the couch there, not actually conscious, but not really awake either.

Instead of getting more tired he slowly awoke...

When he regained enough consciousness to go over the kitchen he found A and C sitting in front of a screen, watching a man high on space cake enjoy a walk through the hospital.

"Oh yeah...could have ended up worse..."; C said and Sid realized that he had probably just been through the same. He had not been diagnosed with cancer but the doctors had found things in his brain that had to be removed...

Sid fled to the blue room where he tried to distract himself by watching Thom Yorke and his band mates going through mental breakdowns because of their 'success'.

Suddenly Sid was ripped out of the downward spiral the movie took him on when his phone began to ring.

It was Theo with whom he somehow managed to make vague plans for the end of next week.

"Well I'm going to that concert festival with Ol. so I guess maybe you could come along..."

Theo went on to tell Sid about an evening he had spent in Paris and of waking up in a strange building without a clue how he had gotten there.

"Well damn, one of those days hm!", Sid said and Theo answered: "Unfortunately there was no one there I could grab and yell at:", he interpreted Bill Murray interpreting Dr. Thompson: "You... Where am I?"

They said goodbye and Sid put on the concert by the *Stones* again that was less depressing but also kept him from sleeping.

Finally he passed into that twilight state again and when the music stopped he slipped into a dream.



The next morning Sid awoke way too early from the chatter of T. and Camille in the kitchen and the bright sunlight that came in through the window beside him. For a few moments he was lost in the struggle whether he should get up or try to sleep some more after stuffing something into his ears. Finally he did get up in order to go to relieve his bladder and when he was in the bathroom he decided to take a shower and wake up as much as possible. Afterwards he went over to the kitchen in the search for some food. T. began to talk to him from the couch but he barely noticed her and did not really understand a word of what she was saying. After making himself some tea he began to pack in order to leave. He did not really know where he was going, he just knew he had to get out. He found out where he would have to go when he wanted to pack his weed and realized that it was gone. After searching the flat frantically he was certain that someone had found and smoked it during the party. T. asked where he was going and Sid responded that he wanted to go camping first, in and around Berlin then to France... T. suddenly began to protest and Sid left the kitchen and the flat as quickly as possible. On his way to the park he cursed his so called friends. He told himself that he did not need them, that they were only holding him back, pulling him down. He didn't need anybody. [REDACTED] After getting some cash from a hole in the wall at a nearby shopping center Sid walked over to the park where he lost it again in the bushes. After lying in the sun for a while he went down to the subway in order to drive back to the subway station in his neighborhood, in order to go from there over to the university. Suddenly his phone rang and when he picked up he heard Camille's voice acting as if everything was just fine, talking in a strange singsong: "Sid, when are you coming back?" When she realized that he wasn't really able to answer that question and that he was slowly losing it, the tone of her voice changed dramatically and she began to scream: "Sid, that's not alright, you can't just disappear! Come home, if not now, later!" When Sid returned to the subway station beneath the bridges he did not go up to the train down south but walked down the street instead, to his flat where he was welcomed by his flatmates who began to yell at him for being such a wreck. Sid sank down to the floor, to the footend of Ch., who suddenly handed him a joint.



All he really heard was A.'s remark: "You can't just shut in and hide, we have to communicate!" He couldn't just shut in...but he did.

After they had talked about the fact that the flat they used to call their home once would crumble soon Camille returned to her laptop that had crashed the day before and begged Ch. to repair it for her.

T. turned toward her screen as well and played the maddening music that had cost Sid a tooth once and once again crept into his head now filling him with the desperate feeling that he would break more body parts soon, if he didn't get away.

But he couldn't. He couldn't move. He just lay there on the floor, with his back against the wall, no longer in control of neither his body nor his mind that was racing away with thoughts.

But suddenly he found himself on the cold floor of the bathroom. He heard the knock on the door and dropped the knife he had ripped out of the wall where it had held one of the pages of the book about body language.

Sid opened the door and let in T.

He fled to the blue room which he barricaded with a couch in front of the door.

Then he sank down in a corner and got out the knife again.

But when he let it slide over his chest he noticed that it's rigid edges only ripped open the upper layers of his skin.

So he returned to the bathroom and got out his razor.

After cutting his finger in the failed attempt to get out one of the many fine layers of sharp metal that it held he wrapped his bleeding thumb in duck tape and dropped one of the broken TV's on the blades.

Still he couldn't get the razor to break.

Sid picked up his touchwriter in order to write himself out of his misery, but the duck tape he had wrapped around his thumb made it impossible to write since the machine no longer perceived his touch and he did not write fast enough with just one thumb.

Finally he ripped apart the translucent plastic and wrote. The wound on his finger left a smear of blood on the screen, whenever he touched it and in the end he could barely read what he had written, through the layer of blood that covered his words:



Then he turned back to the razor and finally he managed to get out he blades with the help of scissors that cut through the thin metal as if it was paper. He took off his shirt and carefully took the metal into his right hand so he wouldn't cut himself in the other finger as well. He did not feel anything when the blade glided over the skin on his chest. But then he saw the thin white line it left slowly turn red, until the blood ran over and began dripping to the floor.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Suddenly the doorbell rang and a girl came up to take his typewriter away so S. could use it for the film he was shooting right now.

Sid could no find a shirt, so he covered the blood that was streaming down from the wound across his chest with a red blanket.

Then he ripped out the last paper he had just been writing on and closed the casket to hand it over.

The girl introduced herself as De. and asked if she could have a smoke before she hasted on to deliver the props she had to gather from all parts of town today.

"I guess it's OK to smoke in here..."; she said as she let her gaze wander over the cigarette and joint buds that were spread out across the room.

She told him that she was a painter and had done all the artworks her sister, who played the lead character in the film supposedly drew.

When her cigarette was out she told Sid with a stressed look on her face that she could no longer stay.



It hurt to let the machine go but talking to a fellow struggling artist somehow revitalized him and after he had packed his bag he hastened out the flat and to the subway. He passed the giant bear that was back in its old spot and went up the stairs to the trains with a strange feeling of *déjà vu*.

Haven't I been in exactly the same position before? Was I running away from something else back then?, Sid asked himself and realized that [REDACTED] he had been running away [REDACTED] almost 2 months ago when he sat here at night, waiting for the train that would bring him to the last bus out of town. Ironically now, he was still running away [REDACTED] just that his flight had lead him right back [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] he was just changing at the giant zoo, trying to deal with the less than exotic animal behind the counter of some fast food store before his train left. But when he finally left with a box full of noodles he saw that his train had not arrived yet and was late [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Finally the train arrived and he jumped in.

It was crowded but Sid pulled down his crows mask in order to escape the stares of the people around him.

Luckily the cursed prince could escape again a few minutes later when he reached the station at the edge of the city from where he would have to take the bus that was about to leave.

When he went down the staircase his backpack touched the shoulder of an older man in some kind of uniform who yelled at him: "Do you have problems?"

Sid nodded and was about to list his troubles when he realized the question had been a rhetoric one.

Sid said: "Well I'm sicerely sorry I hit you with my backpack." and the man yelled: "Oh man don't start that shit with me!"

Before tension could rise any higher the train reached it's destination and Sid hastened out towards the bus stop.



Faces came rushing at him left and right [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Then he saw a bus with his number on it, but a wrong destination marked in shiny yellow letters beside the number.

After spotting a bus with the right destination and running towards it, he noticed that it was empty.

He turned around and returned to the wrongly labeled bus, got in anyway and asked the driver what was happening.

"Oh the machines on board are all acting up. Don't worry I'm going to Potsdam!"

Sid got in and sank down in exhaustion but then his music machine sang into his ear:

Jimmy...

would you please come home

the grass is green and the buffaloes roam...

He began to unwind.

As the images outside the bus windows turned from grey to green the colors that were raging inside him changed as well.

buffalo land will be your home...

Maybe he would encounter some buffaloes where he went, Sid thought and secretly prayed he wouldn't meet any grey herons.

Sid pulled down his mask and decided to turn into a crow for a while, so no one would expect him to act human anymore.

The vehicle stopped and the prince went out and entered his kingdom through a hole in the wall.

After cleaning up a little he began to sing while writing onto the wall with the yellow color he had brought along: "Welcome to Heartbreak Hotel", he read when he was finished.

"Open 24/7, rooms always available, No room service, absolute freedom"

Sid sat down and used some other paint to color his face.

Suddenly 2 men walked by and looked in.

"Hi", one of them said when he saw Sid who was just painting grey circles beneath his eyes.

"What's up?", Sid said casually and the two men walked on after waving goodbye.

When Sid approached the writing on the wall again he suddenly noticed bloodstains on the floor



and the heart they had found here last summer came back into his mind. As he walked towards it he noticed more and more blood and so he grabbed the bottle of water he had brought with him and began to clean.

[REDACTED] Sid asked himself if people came around here often in order to do something of that sort.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid pulled down his ravens mask and got up [REDACTED]. As the cursed prince walked towards the hole in the wall he could feel his heart sink [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] the attic where he sat down on the plans that still lay there from their shoot. He sat down, got out his pencil and wrote into the blue lines [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

It was as if a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. He dropped his touchwriter and it almost fell into the abyss, [REDACTED]. He had not really cared if it had fallen all the way. He could no longer write manically on it all the time.

[REDACTED]



Sid pulled down his mask again and when
he jumped out another group of people passed by.
They waved but remained silent

down to the little pier where the prince took off his ravens mask and became
the young struggling author again.

Sid shrugged and jumped into the water.
He dived as long as his lungs could bare and longer

Sid swam toward the shore where a swan was nesting



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he got out his pipe and lit it while using the data base of his camera as a music machine.
[REDACTED] the film he played displayed a former version of himself singing: "All you need is love", [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] He had once heard modern day vampires did not actually suck blood but rather life's energy out of them...Then again he vaguely recalled his professor in the Psychoanalysis course claiming that when the myths of vampires first came into existence, people believed that dead relatives came out of their graves to suck their blood [REDACTED]

Sid got to work:

I'm a cursed prince
turned into a raven
by a terrible spell
that made my life a living hell
for the days and weeks and months
I had to dwell
on this earth

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
and lift the curse that way
so I can stay
happy and free
even when everything I see
seems grey

He [REDACTED] wrote:

the mad gardener:

back at home
he had a botanical garden
in his back yard



he planted flowers,
inside a hall made of glass
in beautiful colors,
he did not care about
They were all just there to hide
that he was also growing
other plant at the side
in a dark spot in the corner
he planted "gluecksklee"
he had once found
in a strange land
which inhabitants say
it brings you luck for the day
if you find one with four clovers
beneath a balloon of glass
he had those plants
genetically modified
and soon he would harvest one plant every night
that would keep him satisfied
for ever
or so thought...



It made him incredible paranoid, as if something he had planned and yet was really taking place...
Sid decided to write in order to make sense of it all:



After the theft
of his time
he was writing as the sun was rising
one of the few things left
that kept him from jumping
he had told himself to be strongheaded
to perservere
and write himself out of here
there was no time to laugh
if he wanted to laugh later
in his life

[REDACTED]

but it wasn't far
till the end
of this chapter
even before the rapture
could capture
him

[REDACTED]

He awoke on the cold, hard floor [REDACTED] and told himself that he would have to leave for
the lake to swim and wake, and then the little canteen down the road for some nourishment and
energy for himself and his machinery. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

How could he escape?

Didn't he have some kind of plan?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid lost control . . .

Then again somehow he had made it now to the strange little canteen at the end of the road. He went in and asked for something vegan. The woman behind the counter gave him a strange look and said: "We eat meat here!"

Finally Sid sat down in a corner and told himself to sort his notes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

He wrote:

I don't know

[REDACTED]

but I need to flee

from myself

so I can be

productive

and yet free

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

What had happened? How did he get here?

Sid was sitting in front of the canteen [REDACTED] and stared into the sky above for a while.

He realized that he was caught [REDACTED] again, worse than ever before. But the poison [REDACTED] was just so good that he couldn't resist.

But now Sid was confronted with decisions again that slowly began to eat away at his heart: Where would he find a place to recharge his machinery?

How could he fight his way out of this chair he had sunken into when the woman behind the counter of the canteen proclaimed: "We're closed!"

Now Sid looked down at his backpack and realized how big and heavy it was.

Then his mind drifted off again, [REDACTED]

Sweet ignorance, sweet bliss, Sid thought [REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Sid watched the canteen cleaning lady go about her business beside him, brushing the walls with her broom. [REDACTED]

Finally he got up with the resolve to go over to the café again he had been to earlier... The café was closed as well and so Sid took the bus back home where he lay down in the ball-room and stared at the crumbling ceiling for a while, going to more strange memories from past and future...

[REDACTED]

Sid turned over to his broken laptop and tried to save his writings... Afterwards he picked up 'For whom the bell tolls', that he had finally rediscovered in the depths of his backpack and began to read conversations Hemingway's alter ego Robert Jordan had with himself.

Sid got up, gathered all his belongings and carried them upstairs into the attic where he found the plans of their movie, still lying around where he had left them. He ripped a long piece off the side of one of the plans and rolled it up. This would be his last resort, writing on a big continuous roll like Kerouac had once done, only with his typewriter.

Maybe that way he would find his way back into continuous time...

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Finally he couldn't pretend anymore that he was fine.

Everything around him was beautiful, twisted and poetic, but [REDACTED]

His dreams were on the edge of becoming nightmares. . .

Sid decided that he needed to sort his notes. . .

He tried to save himself by putting his words in order, but the battery of his machine died and he was lost.

[REDACTED]

, he wrote and then went out onto the roof. He had the feeling like he should smoke weed, and yet he knew he would not be able to keep track of what was happening around him anymore. So he filled his pipe with tobacco he had found somewhere in a corner.

But he couldn't trick an addicted mind. His head started revolting and threatened it would no longer produce creative thoughts if it's pleasure zones were not served.

He went downstairs in order to watch some TV. But the programme that was reflected on the screen of the old set they had placed in the ballroom was full of shit.



All he saw was a man with a pipe staring directly into the camera, scribbling something on a paper.

How did you change the programme on this antiquated machine?

The man fell to his side and again Sid was lost in memories of past and future.

He didn't want to know. . .

Suddenly a bat flew over him and at the same time his phone broke down.

Sid fell into a twilight state again, slowly slipping towards the edge of the roof.

Suddenly he saw two grey herons flying across the horizon.

fell asleep only to be awoken again by strange sounds out of the dark behind . . . When Sid got up to see what was happening it turned out to be some small fuzzy creature going through . . . bags in search for food. Sid chased it away and . . . continued to sleep.



But the sounds had disrupted him and when he awoke the next morning he [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] went down to the canteen so Sid could recharge his machinery and return to the here and now.

It took [REDACTED] for ever [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid began to sort his notes [REDACTED]

Sid got out his pipe, lit it, and pretended to be a writer for a while.

But finally he could no longer bear being [REDACTED]

When he plugged in his flashdrive to see what he had written his machine told him that it was broken. . . .

[REDACTED] finally he had the strength to unplug the device and try a second time.

It worked again . . . but for how long?

A man entered the little backroom [REDACTED] and turned around again, searching for another table, not so close to freakish creatures [REDACTED]

Sid continued eating [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Another man peaked in, searching for a table to eat, and turned around again to go somewhere else [REDACTED]

No wonder these people couldn't bear to be around such beauty. They were used to the ordinary, to the simple stories they read in the colorful newspapers that were lying around, or saw on the screen that hang in a corner, spewing more news about the supervillain that had come alive. . . .

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

What shall we use
to fill the empty spaces
where we used to talk...

an all too familiar voice asked.
Why was he doing all this o himself?

[REDACTED]

Why was still music in the air? How could he escape the loop?
He became a Nazi, screaming out on the balcony of the strange building of futurism.
This house was designed to make you sympathize with modernity.
Definitely still from the time this used to be a army base for the Nazis, before the soviets came



and took over. Sid considered going out but changing into a house the Russian communists had erected probably wouldn't be much different... Although the visit to the 'Plattenbau' a few days ago had been quite interesting, now that you could roam around in it happily...

Crazy...

Toys in the attict...

he is crazy...

Did the bleeding hearts and artists make their stand?

Not yet...

[REDACTED]

He was out of matches and he did not know where his weed was. All he had left was a bottle of absinth...

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Somewhere he found a stack of hash brownies he had taken along in his backpack. He wondered if he should take some but decided to wait for evening to set in. Instead he got out his pipe and after taking a hit he returned to painting [REDACTED]. The smoke still filled the air around his head and as he looked down [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There he was again, in the same position he had been countless times before. The wheel of time was spinning faster now, the *timewarp* was in full force. [REDACTED] relived the same scenarios over and over again. . .

[REDACTED]

He had to escape, but he didn't know how since the escape was mainly from himself. . .



[REDACTED]

Sid looked down at his touchwriter and discovered a message from La.:

Where are you?

He answered:

Well I'm lost...maybe I get out of here today, maybe tomorrow...maybe I'll temporarily end up in France, But eventually I will make it to Hamburg!

A little while later he wrote her again:

If I came to Hamburg tomorrow, could I stay at your place for some time and not tell anyone else I'm in town? I won't keep you from studying, I promise. I know it sounds a little strange but I am in a very strange place in my life right now...

She answered:

Good morning Sid, are you serious? I'm living in students dorms in a room that's about 11 qm big...it's gonna be tight. Haha. And I have to study a lot and my ex-box-friend practically lives next door, but if all of that doesn't bother you, why not?!

I hope you could sleep well!

I'm studying right now, and thinking of you!

His response was:

V

Well I'm lost...maybe I get out of here today, maybe tomorrow...maybe I'll temporarily end up in France, But eventually I will make it to Hamburg!

When had this conversation taken place? Was someone else in control of his phone, in control of his body, taking over from time to time to write a girl he used to desire...
The flashbacks were getting stronger...

[REDACTED]

Through a hole in the wall he walked over into another room where he found some kind of map with Cyrillic letters and arrows on it.

[REDACTED]

When he looked down at his touchwriter he read:

Hey Sid, you're not lost! I love you the way you are. But I also have the feeling like I want to escape or at least take a timeout from life for a while! I have the feeling like you are the person who understands what one can feel if one wants to get away from it all. I just think I don't have to explain a whole lot to you. That's why I need you. Always keep in mind that I'm with you!

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the fox appeared in the bowl of light the bright lantern beside the bus stop drew on the asphalt.

[REDACTED]

Suddenly there was a violent scream that crept out of the nearby bushes. Was it the sound of a fox or that of a grey heron?

[REDACTED]

Sid had written to Theo at the beginning of this strange week:

Alright not sure how much longer I'll stay concious...I'll need to leave this town some time after wednesday or friday. Could I come over to France then?

Now he finally got an answer:



Hi! Don't know yet. Might not be back before the 31st in the morning anyway. Tell you more about it tomorrow. Hard to plan too many things in such a short time.

Sid didn't know what to do... Somehow France had been his only way out of this...although now there was Hamburg. Where had that possibility come from?

[REDACTED] How had she come back into his life? What was he to her? What did it mean when she claimed she loved him? Was it the simple platonic way it had been for the past few years, at least in Sid's eyes. Why did she warn him about her ex? Somehow he felt like this was mainly her desire to break free for a while and he seemed like the one to help her with that...

Sid knew he would have to go to France. Somehow it seemed like the only way out. [REDACTED] he desperately searched for a train connection from the nearby small capital

[REDACTED]

Sid awoke [REDACTED] on the cold, glass-covered floor of the balcony.



[REDACTED]

wasn't it already Friday now?

[REDACTED]

He was doomed.

[REDACTED]

Finally he couldn't bear it anymore and so he turned to the weed brownies that were lying beside him. Suddenly the music urged him to move and he remembered that he was supposed to leave for France soon to travel to the Netherlands together with Theo



[REDACTED]

V

[REDACTED]

The paranoid thoughts that had just chased their tails in his head were gone.

[REDACTED]

his phone went off, first with a message from La. then from Theo, both asking when his path would lead him to them.

Sid didn't know and forgot about the matter again.

[REDACTED]

Time was out of order again, worse than ever.



[REDACTED]

The sun was burning down hot and hard and made it almost impossible to think straight.

[REDACTED]

She took up the plan someone had left lying on the floor and moved it into the middle of the room. The wall he was looking through, behind a secret window some mad architect had erected under a fascist or socialist regime.

[REDACTED]

The czar wanted to shout out but suddenly he was disrupted by some mechanical device that made strange noises.

It was Franz who wanted to rip him out of his dream and back into reality.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Another mechanical sound distracted him and suddenly he read something about keys that would have to be delivered somewhere into the giant metropolis up north. Why did he had to bear such burdens as a czar? he asked himself and when he looked up again towards the window he [REDACTED] the forest where strange sounds of scavengers and other raptures appeared.

[REDACTED]

Some where in the back of his head there was a voice saying in a slurred mumbling manner: "I've never missed a plane yet!" It sounded as if someone cried it out in agony, about to miss a flight.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sid went outside to stare into the forest.

Was he actually leaving this kingdom [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A passing truck had almost run [REDACTED] over but he did not care, he just kept lying there at the side of the road [REDACTED].
When he opened his eyes he saw the bus approaching and so he jumped up [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] he stumbled backwards into the vehicle [REDACTED] and the door of the bus was closed in front of his eyes, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The grim looking man behind the wheel did not have time [REDACTED] and when Sid got out his ticket and showed it to him he grunted something in a language Sid did not speak anymore and set the bus in motion. Sid was pushed to the other end by the forces of physics or emotion, stumbling down the aisle beside the window [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] he reached the back of the bus [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sid sank down, luckily onto a hard plastic chair beneath though, where he buried his head in his hands.

He wanted more, he wanted to go back [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

He jumped up in order to get out at the next stop to run down the road, back [REDACTED]
But when he approached the glass doors he realized that the bus had already taken him all the way to the old town made up of castles from countless passed generations.

An old building with a golden roof that stood behind a slightly younger, grey and simple apartment complex passed him by and suddenly the central station of metal and glass appeared before him.

Sid stumbled out of the bus and into the station, wondering where his journey would lead him. First he decided to find a restroom where he could freshen up and maybe recharge his phone. He passed through the giant crystal doors and suddenly he was surrounded by people. . . [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

Then a police sign appeared in front of him and when he hastily ran past it, further down the hallway he found a restroom.

Strange Hawaiian noises filled the sticky air of the shining porcelain rooms and Sid went into a booth to hide from the world for a while.

Then he remembered that he needed to find a place to plug in his machinery to use it to find a way out of here. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

He approached the old red-haired woman, that stood behind a small counter coordinating the masses that wanted to relieve themselves and had no choice but to give her 50 cents for it.

Sid hesitantly approached her and asked if he could recharge in return for placing money on the silver plate before her.



She nodded and when he asked: "How much does energy cost these days?" she replied: "Ahh nothing, I wouldn't even take that money for peeing, but they're making me. . ."

Sid thanked her a few times and sat down in the hallway where she showed him the energy socket.

A police man passed him with an irritated expression, but when Sid looked up and gave him an honest smile from one human being to the next he nodded and kept walking.

Sid turned to his machine and tried to find out how he would get where. . .

But he felt unable to make that decision and so he began to sort his notes instead.

Suddenly he saw the red haired woman pass him and for a second he thought she was going down to the police. But instead she went to the window and lit herself a cigarette.

For a second Sid considered going somewhere else, since in this state policemen probably still had the right to search without a reason and he still carried considerable amounts of weed with him.

But then he shrugged it off and continued to sort his notes until a bold-headed man appeared before him and told him that what he was doing was illegal.

The black shirt he wore proclaimed that he was just a hired thug, but he threatened to go over to the police station and so Sid told him he would go.

He walked around the corner and down a crowded giant glass corridor at which's sides countless stores came at him with colorful promising images and symbols.

Suddenly a giant, red 'i' appeared before him and when he approached the woman behind it asked almost mechanically: "What can I do for you Sir?"

She did not look up from the screen before her when he approached her and when he said: "I need to get to Sarrebourg in France, no matter how long it takes as long as it's cheap."

The woman punched into the keyboard before her and then silently handed him a piece of paper, still not looking at him.

When Sid mumbled: "Ahhh. . .?", she said: "Take that route! You get tickets over at the machine!"

The letters and symbols on the bright screen before her reflected on her pale face and her eyes moved slowly from left to right, not noticing Sid thanking her and turning around.

He looked down at the plan and tried to find out which platform he would have to go to.

When he finally understood what the numbers and lines on the paper before him were supposed to mean he went toward the platform 7 and waited for the first of many trains he would have to take today. . .



Sid approached the machine the mechanical woman had told him to use and touched its screen. After scrolling through endless pages of access information he finally found some special ticket that seemed to work in his case. He chose it, hoping that it would actually be valid.

When the train appeared he got in, nervously looking to his left and right trying to figure out if his fellow passengers would be gentle to a freak like him.

He did not have a clean shirt anymore and so he wore nothing but his jacket, exposing his painted brown chest. He looked at his reflection in the window across from him and realized that his long, black, unkempt hair was slowly turning into thicker and thicker strands.

The first station where he'd have to change approached fast and Sid got out and hasted towards the platform the sheet of paper in his hand told him to go to.

He got himself something to eat and ran up the stairs and down the platform toward the edge where he could smoke. But he did not reach it because suddenly a voice proclaimed his train was arriving.

Sid quickly grabbed his pipe, telling himself that there would be no paranoia since he actually did possess a ticket.

As he lit his pipe he suddenly saw a policeman sitting in the smokers area across from him.

When he saw him he just waved over, apparently assuming he was greeting a fellow tobacco addict and letting it slide gracefully.

Sid nodded back with an honest smile and got into the train. He kicked himself through the crowded wagons in the desperate search for a place to sit. The faces that came towards him seemed just as nervous and relieved at the same time. Finally getting out of the metropolis that lay in the east of the country, getting towards the southwest through beautiful landscapes that began to rush by.

Sid finally found a seat and dropped down to enjoy the sinking sun that was setting beyond deep green fields which were only intermittently disrupted by spots of grey.

Suddenly he felt the desperate urge to write

