

**FATHER WATCHES DAUGHTER**

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*Transl. by Nathan Fields*

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**CHARACTERS:**

Man (in the second part Father)

Woman

Daughter

Son/ Voice of Son

Father

Classmate

Son of Classmate (silent role)

Sweetshop Owner (silent role)

Classmate II

Older Woman

Girl

Cyclops (silent role)

Voice of Ho Chi Minh

Voice of Caregiver

Dancing Cloud

Chorus

**1.**

WOMAN: Do you have everything?

*/pause/*

WOMAN: Are you ready?

The Man is standing in the middle of the kitchen,

in his arms he is holding his month-old Son.

WOMAN: Keys? Water? Insurance card? Apple? Ball?

The Man is standing in the middle of the kitchen and cannot/does not want to move.

Is he paralyzed?

WOMAN: Your Daughter is dressed, brushed, has her shoes on. She's excited.  
Our sun, the Man thinks.

Or did he say it out loud?

*/pause/*

WOMAN: Did you say something?

I have everything, the Man answers.

I'm happy, the Woman says.

MAN: The building we live in stands on firm subsoil. The apartment is furnished. We took a thirty-year mortgage.

WOMAN: I'm happy.

MAN: Yesterday afternoon

sleeping on the trunk of the cherry tree

was an oleander hawk-moth.

The building we live in, the Man continues in his thoughts, stands in a garden.

MAN: The subsoil is firm. Devonian volcanic rocks, Silurian shale.

WOMAN: You mustn't miss this wonderful day.

As pretty as a picture, as they say.

Yes, the Man answers and continues thinking:

MAN: Are there really conditions here for the life of the oleander hawk-moth?

WOMAN: Where will you go?

Maybe in the Southern Alps, if anywhere...

MAN: To the stream, to the playground, for ice cream.

*/pause/*

The Woman suggests that the Man call his Father.

Doesn't he feel alone? the Woman asks.

I don't know, the Man answers.

MAN: Father *is* alone. Mother moved to the countryside.

Call him, the Woman repeats, I'm happy, the Woman repeats.

MAN: She constantly repeats that she's happy. My wife...

WOMAN: I'm happy.

The Daughter is bored; she is kicking a wall.

Stop that, the Man-father says to his Daughter.

The Daughter looks at the father-Man and laughs.

She obeys him.

WOMAN: But sometimes the universe collapses on me. I can't manage it all: your work, the kids...

MAN: My Daughter has already reached the door handle and is opening the door to the apartment.

The Woman suggests that the Man should spend more time handcrafting or fishing, she even imagines how nice it would be to own a real motorcycle.

The Man says nothing and hands his sleeping Son to the Woman.

WOMAN: Did you feed the fish?

MAN: It's really hot in here.

WOMAN: How are your ears? Does your head hurt?

That tea that I made, the Woman explains, should help you.

WOMAN: But you have to drink it every day. It balances the pressure in the ear canal.

MAN: My Daughter is running towards the stairs.

WOMAN: What about the fish?

MAN: The stairs are steep.

Say good-bye to your Son, says the Woman.

WOMAN: It's important.

The Man kisses his Son on the forehead, but he is listening to the quick steps of his Daughter.

Be careful, call, the Woman reminds him.

MAN: My ears have started to ring.

The Son woke up and screamed like the mythical pterosaur.

He takes after you, the Woman says. And also reminds him:

drink a lot of water.

WOMAN: Do you have water?

MAN: Yes. I have everything,

the Man answers.

**2.**

FATHER: Assholes! Fuckers!

The Man is holding the telephone in his right hand, listening to his Father's cursing.

He is observing his Daughter in the garden.

FATHER: They fucked everything up!

MAN: I can't hear you very well.

The Daughter is trying to climb up a tree.

MAN: It's a cherry tree.

FATHER: Everyone wants to save money on reconstruction. She inherited millions and wants to save money! She hired Romanians or something like that. They glued everything crooked, the whole bathroom.

The Son's screaming can be heard from the window.

The Man does not look back.

FATHER: New tiling. A new bath tub with antique taps. Mosaics on the walls. Fancy things...

MAN: The cherry tree has been drying up very slowly. For an eternity. It cracks. But for now only silently somewhere inside.

FATHER: There's no elevator in the building. Deaf Thomas carried the cement, he's strong as hell.

MAN: Climb down! You'll fall!

FATHER: What?

MAN: We're in the garden.

The Woman looks out of the window.

She tries to look happy, but she is tired.

She's holding the Son in her arms.

MAN: She's saying something, but I can't hear her.

FATHER: She didn't want to give us money. Spinner was yelling, he has to pay alimony.

The Man suggests that his father come to the playground.

He tells him that he should relax more, that he's already old.

MAN: The Father says that he will relax in the grave. He has to earn money to leave something after he's gone.

FATHER: Everything was alright in the end, but she is a cow!

The Daughter does not listen to the Father; she's trying to climb up to the top of the tree again.

The Man suggests to the Father that they have a beer and go to the playground.

MAN: Father agrees.

The Man is looking into the grass/his own head.

FATHER: We were supposed to go to Újezd, but they didn't deliver the material.

Assholes!

MAN: I can't hear you.

FATHER: Fuckers!

The Woman closes the window and the screaming sounds quieter.

MAN: Like under ice.

FATHER: It's all fucked up!

The Daughter falls into the grass.

She looks to the Man-father to see what he will do, whether it is serious.

The Man says that nothing happened.

He lifts the Daughter from the ground and at the same time accidentally switches off the call with the Father.

The Father continues to speak for a while before he notices that his son is not listening to him.

MAN: I told you that you would fall.

When the Man stands up, something cracks in his left ear.

A branch of the cherry tree?

He presses his Daughter's hand.

### **3.**

They continue on their way.

MAN: As always, an arrangement of parallel bars, horizontal bars, variously inclined platforms and even suspended rings appears in front of us. What is that?, the Daughter asks, as if we had not walked this way many times. I do not answer.

WOMAN: You should answer her. I just read an article about communication...

MAN: Nothing, I answer.

WOMAN: It's important.

MAN: Three men are exercising on this innovative construction, in repetitive movements, suspended, supported, lifted only by their own strength. The youngest of them is probably a foreign student. Well-built, sleek, dark-skinned, wearing earphones. The pounding synthetic music with oriental motifs repels the mosquitoes nesting in the nettles at the nearby stream. He has glasses, a sleeveless t-shirt and congested blood vessels. He might die in our/this foreign country.

The Woman doesn't understand why the Man is speaking of death all the time?

WOMAN: The Man often talks about death.

MAN: The second of them is bald, in a close-fitting, brightly-colored t-shirt. His eyes are closed and he blows out loudly during his carefully performed push-ups. His breath smells of the chemical imitation of mint and thyme. Maybe he is dreaming about someone and rustling perversely again and again...

*/female laugh/*

WOMAN: The man speaks very little about sex.

MAN: But the third is definitely the ugliest. He has a little island shaved on his head, his eyes are without lashes and eyebrows. He is wearing short sweat pants. His epidermis is marked with many red freckles. His skin is like a negative, rusty night sky. The muscles on his arms hypertrophy into monstrous dimensions, illogically regular star clusters, as well as the muscles on his torso, which are fully exposed and pulsating. His legs are shaved.

WOMAN: Cyclops!

MAN: Yes, one of his eyes is indeed damaged and partially closed.

WOMAN: Maybe it's glass. It scares me.

MAN: The Daughter is running freely among them, yelling out folk tunes. Her chaotic play keeps crashing into the rigidly counted series.

The Man removes a small bottle from his breast pocket and takes a drink.

WOMAN: What is that?

MAN: It helps me overcome problems with balance and the pressure in my ears.

WOMAN: I made that tea for you.

MAN: I'll have another drink to push away the after-taste of chemical mint and thyme.

WOMAN: Do you think I want to poison you?

MAN: Yes/no/maybe.

*/female laugh/*

The Woman points out that the Man should also exercise.

The Man makes excuses about lack of time, a large work-load, taking care of children.

MAN: The Man reminds her that he does not lack regular movement.

The Woman remarks ironically that his so-called work, his outings, are not actual exercise.

MAN: I do not intend to draw attention to my masculinity in a public place.

WOMAN: Wimp!

The Man develops his theory that the increase in the number of fitness centers is a reflection of the nation's intellectual stagnation.

MAN: Or are we all really supposed to prepare ourselves for war? Like in ancient Sparta or somewhere?

WOMAN: You should fuck more and think less.

The Man takes another drink.

MAN: My head gets a little pressurized.

WOMAN: I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said it like that.

MAN: The tongue is a muscle, too,

the Man remarks and demagogically asks:

MAN: Do any of those idiots know how to put together an intelligible complex sentence?

WOMAN: I just read a book about partner relationships...

The Woman is interrupted.

MAN: From a side street comes a man who is in many ways similar to me in general physiognomy.

Similar height/weight/way of walking.

MAN: He is carrying a plastic bag in his hand and heads straight for the bars, which have just become available. He sets the bag on the ground and jumps onto the exercise equipment. He lifts himself and falls again, while his trembling skinny arms, his pale hairy legs and his weak protruding belly stand out even more.

Why is he doing it?



WOMAN: No, he certainly does not look like you.

MAN: The Daughter, who until now has been running all around, starts paying attention and looks at the man who has – probably on his way from shopping – decided to stretch his muscles a little.

The other men do not pay attention to him.

MAN: It only *seems* that no one pays attention to anyone else here, but at the same time, everyone is secretly observing and comparing.

WOMAN: Don't be paranoid, sweetheart.

MAN: The man raises himself three times on his shaking arms and drops onto the ground with an exhalation. The Daughter gets scared and runs to me. She hugs my right thigh and I stroke her hair. The man takes his plastic bag and continues in the (probable) direction of his home.

WOMAN: Everything is much simpler than you think.

The three exercisers continue in their mechanical idiocy.

MAN: The Daughter raises her face to me, looks at me for a while, observes me, and then she laughs loudly. She roars with laughter so loudly that the student takes the headphones out of his ears and looks around in confusion.

*/female laugh/*

WOMAN: I like you. You know how to use your tongue well.

*/pause/*

MAN: We are leaving. The Daughter turns around one more time, I pull her away by her hand.

The Man does not see her make eye contact with the Cyclops.

The Cyclops... sticks his tongue out at her?

MAN: How did she react to it?

*/pause/*

WOMAN: Not at all.

**4.**

MAN: Do you hear the thundering?

The Man's former Classmate transforms this remark about the supposed auditory perception into a transparent social metaphor:

CLASSMATE: The clouds are gathering, buddy.

The two men are sitting with their children in the courtyard of an apartment building.

MAN: The Daughter's ice cream is melting, the sky is clear and falls on us sharply.

CLASSMATE: I hope you will come to the demonstration in the evening.

MAN: His son is trying to take too big a bite of chocolate cake. But what is his name?

Mark? Matthew? Martin?

CLASSMATE: We like this sweetshop. And their garden. It's quiet here and everything is fresh. They even have sugar-free cream puffs.

The Classmate speaks about the dangers of sugar,

about the Sweetshop Owner, who hasn't fallen behind the times even at an advanced age,

about his open homosexuality,

about solidarity.

MAN: There are fresh flowers everywhere. The gladiolus and hydrangea smell intensely. How is it that there aren't any wasps?

CLASSMATE: I hope you also voted for the Environmentalists.

MAN: Yes.

No.

MAN: There just have to be wasps here, I hear them.

Yes, two wasps are lingering under the table top.

Three are gently hovering around the flowers.

MAN: I don't see them.

But they're here.

MAN: The German wasp (*Vespula germanica*) can use its sting repeatedly because it has no reversed barbs.

CLASSMATE: We must stop these corruption scandals at the office of the public prosecutor.

MAN: Bastards.

The Classmate almost claps and refers to the Attorney General's father's past and his work in the totalitarian secret services.

CLASSMATE: We have a chance to change the future of the country. There will be hundreds of thousands of people there.

MAN: The Daughter is fidgeting, she can't sit still anymore.

She dumps ice cream onto her dress with a triceratops.

MAN: Do you have to pee?

The Daughter shakes her head.

MAN: Wait, I'll lick it off for you.

CLASSMATE: The world is laughing at us...

The Daughter-Sun reaches for the ice cream.

CLASSMATE: All the speakers will be without political affiliation. We are being careful that they don't associate us with anyone.

MAN: Who?

The Man asks innocently/sarcastically.

CLASSMATE: Us/Everyone/Citizens!

MAN: The faggot behind the bar is blending something.

CLASSMATE: We are counting on you.

MAN: The children will be tired in the evening. It's hot. We haven't been getting along recently. My wife and that universe of hers.

CLASSMATE: If we don't send out a message...

Don't say ENOUGH!

Don't express ourselves...

What will you leave to your children?

You should be...

MAN: What?

CLASSMATE: Responsible.

Active/Engaged/Supportive.

*/pause/*

MAN: The faggot is preparing juice from some kind of exotic seeds and explaining to an elderly woman the beneficial effects of his cocktail.

CLASSMATE: We are gathering at the Monument.

MAN: Yes.

No.

CLASSMATE: Eat properly, Manuel.

MAN: Manuel!

CLASSMATE: You should taste their home-made red lentil cake slices. They put cardamom in them.

MAN: I would vomit!

The Sweetshop-faggot continues to blend the shake.

CLASSMATE: You pig!

Manuel's cake has fallen onto his father's shoes and dirtied them with vegan whipped cream.

CLASSMATE: Fuck! Can't you watch what you're doing?

MAN: The Daughter watches the entire situation slightly in shock.

She does not like this tone.

MAN: I look at her gently and firmly to reassure her that we can get triceratops dirty with ice cream without feeling sorry. We have everything.

Even an extra t-shirt.

Panties.

Water.

MAN: The Daughter's mouth is completely smeared with ice cream and she continues to lick. She no longer pays attention to Manuel and his father. We say goodbye.

We'll definitely come in the evening, the Man says.

Manuel and his father-Classmate slowly leave.

I'm tired, the Man thinks.

MAN: I paid so much attention to nonexistent wasps that...

He is taking off the Daughter's panties.

MAN: They build enormous nests under the ground...

The Daughter pees into the sewer in front of the sweet shop and emotionally, in relief, she exhales the name Manuel.

Or in love?

MAN: No. First I will wipe the ice cream off her mouth and then the pee on her thigh.

(or the other way around?)

MAN: Come again, the Sweetshop Owner smiles at the half-naked Daughter.

The Man does not answer.

CLASSMATE: A wasp, Manuel! A wasp!

MAN: Manuel screams through the entire neighborhood. We go to the park.

*/thundering/*

5.

PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN.

The hand-written notice was stuck to the visiting rules board of the playground immediately after the last incident.

MAN: One naughty little bastard fell from the children's climbing wall and suffered an open forearm fracture.

WOMAN: Luckily none of us were present at that situation.

MAN: The Woman heard one invasive mother from the neighborhood talking about it.

WOMAN: She's a nice woman.

She has a foreign accent.

MAN: The usual set of retards fills the recreational attractions.

The usual chaotic roar rises to the heavens,

in which dangerously blue clouds

are gathering in the distance.

WOMAN: I don't like you speaking about them like that.

MAN: About who?

WOMAN: About children. I recently read a book about upbringing...

MAN: Don't climb on that!

WOMAN: I don't like you shouting at her like that.

MAN: I take the Daughter from the complex climbing wall, which I will burn down one fine day.

The Daughter resists, screams, she doesn't like it.

WOMAN: Why do we always have to tolerate these moods of yours!

MAN: You are incapable of predicting danger.

WOMAN: What am I incapable of?

Especially when you are busy with your endless phone calls with your mother or former friends, the Man criticizes the woman.

MAN: Or conversations with desperate Bulgarian or Ukrainian women and other social cases.

WOMAN: We feel deserted and yes, desperate.

And what about your men?

MAN: Do *men* have a right to feel abandonment and desperation?

The Daughter demonstrates silent crying.

MAN: Stop pouting!

WOMAN: Leave her alone!

MAN: You can't estimate potential versions of the future. I see dislocated shoulders, sprained ankles, knocked-out teeth and eyes and shattered skulls. I don't want to get into the situation where I will have to straighten the broken nose of our three-year-old Daughter. I am responsible for her.

WOMAN: Did you drink any water at all?

*/pause/*

MAN: I set the Daughter on the ground and take out the water. She drinks. I wipe her forehead and face.

It's humid.

WOMAN: You should relax.

MAN: At every step I have the feeling that you are following/judging me.

*/pause/*

MAN: I want to be alone with our Daughter.

*/pause/*

MAN: My Father appears behind the fence and waves.

The Daughter registers him.

MAN: She looks at me and says: grandpa.

Yes, the Man answers.

He smiles and strokes her sweaty hair.

FATHER: How long have you been here? I made broth. Deaf Thomas is going through a life crisis now.

MAN: Why don't you ever come over to our place? For lunch, for dinner...

The Father waves his hand at the Man.

He talks about the dietary habits of his friends.

He reads the notice: Parents are responsible for children.

FATHER: What kind of crap is that?

I would like to give the Daughter more freedom, the Man considers, and be more responsible for my Father.

MAN: Are children responsible for their parents?

FATHER: I'm going for beer.

MAN: Do you want some money?

FATHER: I still have enough for beer.

The Daughter runs after grandpa.

She calls him by name.

MAN: She has never addressed him directly: grandpa.

As she runs, she scares the pigeons and they fly up.

The Daughter stops and covers her face for a moment.

Then she starts running again in the direction of the pub.

FATHER: Shrouds have no pockets!



the Father notes.

MAN: At night the pigeons will shit in the sandbox.

6.

The two men sit at the stream bank. The older one is talking about something and getting upset.

The Man is watching the Daughter, who is testing the resistance of the current in the city stream with her palm.

Who is observing them? Who is speaking to them?

Water?

Wind?

Mosquitoes are buzzing in the nearby nettles.

FATHER: I only wanted to buy shoes. You can't even buy shoes these days!

The men drink beer.

Where is the problem, dad? the Man-son asks the Father-father.

The Father-father increases his cursing and waves his hand at several mosquitoes assumed to be flying around.

The stars are silent for now, it is water.

FATHER: All the normal sizes are sold out. All of the affordable shoes always sell out first. And I can't wear just any shoes. I have to try them out. Both shoes are supposed to be the same, but they are often different. I need those kinds of shoes.

The Man-father watches the Daughter at the stream.

The water in the stream calls the Man-son,

attracting his hearing before the Father-father begins again:

FATHER: My feet are not the same. One of them is smaller than the other.

One of your feet is smaller than the other? the Man-son wonders.

FATHER: I fell out of a tree. When I was a boy.

You have never told me about that, the Man-son says and sees wind in the tree tops.

FATHER: I might have been five...

*/wind/*

FATHER: I wasn't holding on tight, I mean, I was just a little boy!

MAN: You have never told me about that,

the Man-son repeats and tries not to listen to the increasing howling of the wind.

FATHER: They had to operate on me. I broke everything from the ankle down.

The Daughter leans out more and more over the water.

MAN: Her arm has disappeared up to her elbow.

FATHER: The pain was horrible. The worst pain in my life.

MAN: All of that wind, my Father's story,

the stream, the beer...

MAN: I can't concentrate on anything.

The Father-father looks at the sky.

FATHER: And now you can't even buy shoes. What crazy times these are! Some of the shoes are ugly, others are expensive...

*/wind/*

FATHER: Is it going to rain?

MAN: Why didn't you ever tell me?

The Father-father drinks his beer without answering.

*/pause/*

The Man looks up at the sky.

MAN: Maybe...

*/wind/*

The Daughter loses her balance and one foot steps into the stream.

**7.**

It's best to be prepared.

Examine every possibility.

Accustom your psyche to the possibility of danger.

What assurance do you have that a storm won't come, or a hurricane or floods,

or that there won't be a toxic chemical leak,

a nuclear explosion,

that the person next to you won't start shooting,

stabbing with a knife,

that they won't throw acid?

That you won't run into an armed paramilitary unit?

Prepare yourself!

Always have enough drinking water,

a pocket knife, matches, bandages, disinfection,

a whistle, spare batteries, a map of the locality,

determine a crisis plan,

acquire and store a supply of food in your home,

the gas tank of your car should always be half full.

Write down the telephone numbers of those close to you.

Is your house situated in a safe place?

Do the surroundings provide sufficient shelter?

Specify evacuation points,

walk together to the specified evacuation points.

If you are a parent, study the evacuation plan of the school your child attends.

Always have an overview of emergency exits and escape routes.

Plan how you will help children, the elderly and the sick.

## 8.

Two men are sitting on a bench.

Although the visiting rules of the children's playground prohibit the drinking of alcohol, the Man takes out a small bottle and offers it to the second man.

They drink together like men who know each other well, but who haven't seen each other in a long time.

The result of some coincidence, or choice?

Fate?

CLASSMATE II: In Cambodia, I ate a spider as big as my fist.

MAN: He has a thick, black, full beard, long hair and deep semi-circular wrinkles around his eyes.

And rough hands.

MAN: It's already raining somewhere in the distance, I can smell it.

The Daughter is spinning around on the carousel with other children. An Older Woman is standing by them, probably the grandmother of one of the boys.

It's going to be a dry storm. It's more dangerous, says one of the men.

CLASSMATE II: I experienced one like that in Chile. Lightning started the whole village on fire.

I met our Classmate so and so, the Man says.

Oh, our Classmate so and so, the second man laughs.

Yes, so and so. The men drink.

MAN: His son's name is Manuel.

The men laugh.

The men drink.

OLDER WOMAN: Is this your child? Hello, is this your child?

The Man tells the other man about his work.

About his project.

MAN: I regularly walk through all the old places we used to go. Bear Lake, Frog Valley, Sky Pond, Pee-Pee Spring... I photograph all the changes. Different seasons and times of day, I record changes in vegetation, the movement of fauna and every overturned stone. I store all the information in a database and I'm developing an application for smart phones.

CLASSMATE II: In Alaska I made a camera from a paper soap box. I took pictures of the mating rituals of moose. The moose looks like a dull and peace-loving animal, but it is more dangerous than a bear. Every tourist can take a picture of a grizzly.

OLDER WOMAN: Is this your child? Whose child is this?

The Man looks around.

The Daughter is not on the carousel.

The Daughter is on the slide.

She is standing at the very top.

MAN: She gazes into the top of the decorative cherry tree.

CLASSMATE II: In Nepal, I caught hemorrhagic fever. A shaman buried me in dirt for an entire night. In Japan, I experienced a tsunami right when I was with a prostitute. I stood naked on the roof of the building; then a helicopter came to pick me up.

OLDER WOMAN: You are not allowed to drink alcohol here. Read the visiting rules.

MAN: Excuse me, I have problems with pressure.

CLASSMATE II: I can confirm that. He's just had a brain operation. I am his assistant from the national program Humane Humanitarian Humans.

The Older Woman winks.

*/thundering/*

OLDER WOMAN: Is this your child?

MAN: Yes, that is my daughter.

OLDER WOMAN: She's blocking my grandson. He wants to slide down and she is just standing there.

MAN: There are things she has to think through, that's simply how she is.

OLDER WOMAN: Tell her to slide down immediately. Immediately.

Immediately, the older woman continues and flashes of lightning illuminate her dried skin.

I could also beat my daughter, the Man suggests ironically.

MAN: I would really like to beat someone up today.

The second man laughs, the Older Woman goes to complain.

CLASSMATE II: And who, you bitch?

*/thundering/*

MAN: We'd better go.

Don't tell me you're afraid of her, the other man says.

MAN: The storm is approaching.

CLASSMATE II: It will be nothing in the end.

MAN: The clouds above us are like cliffs. Sometimes a person would jump. Come to the pub.

CLASSMATE II: I have to catch a plane. Can you believe I've never been to Africa?

The men say goodbye.

The second man leaves with only a light pack, in sandals and with his full beard.

The Man takes a drink.

The phone starts to ring in his pocket. He switches it off.

He looks around.

The Daughter runs to him and wind plays in her hair.

MAN: Where's grandpa?

The Daughter says a few words in an imaginary language.

They leave in the direction of the pub.

Along the way, the Man secretly throws the phone into a waste basket.

## 9.

The Father-father comes out of the pub carrying two beers.

FATHER: Where have you been?

MAN: On the playground. We came to get some shelter.

FATHER: Let's have a smoke. Do you still smoke?

MAN: Yeah, but never in front of the kids. On trips, when I'm alone...

FATHER: Watch out for ticks.

Suddenly the Father's face becomes very serious.

There's a television on in the pub.

It is estimated that two thousand people have already gathered at the demonstration.

*/TV jingle/*

FATHER: A tick was climbing on me right here in the city. I went to the toilet, I open my trousers and see a tick crawling on me down there. Right there. And these are no longer only our ticks, but even African ticks.

MAN: Dad...

FATHER: Spinner was in the hospital last year for that. He was on medication and couldn't drink at all. Please, don't let your Daughter run into the street.

MAN: I'm watching her.

The Man calls to the Daughter, who runs up and he gives her something to drink.

The Daughter is touching the pole of a street light.

FATHER: Hey, there's piss all over that!

The Daughter is startled as if she has done something bad.

The corners of her mouth bend downwards.

The Man takes her into his arms and gives her kisses on her hair.

FATHER: There's dog piss all over it, those beasts. Dogs and ticks are my arch nemeses.

*/TV jingle/*

FATHER: And wasps.

MAN: I guess we have to go home. The Daughter is tired.

FATHER: It's totally black. It's already raining somewhere, I can smell it.

MAN: We'll make it home.

FATHER: It's going to start raining any minute. There'll be hail, too.

The people gathering for the demonstration are not afraid.

To be safe, though, some of them take out rain ponchos.

Those who came with children have large umbrellas, tea in thermoses and an extra sweater.

They are prepared for the worst.

FATHER: Let's get some shelter inside.

MAN: At least we could wash our hands.



Suddenly, lightning strikes a high voltage pole.

The television in the pub cuts out.

As well as the cooling and the beer tap.

The mood gets that much better.

The regular customers feel excitement/solidarity/courage.

They start ordering vodkas.

## **10.**

In the event of a disaster, always follow the instructions of authorities.

Ensure your safety first and then try to help others,

first and foremost, the elderly and immobile citizens or children.

Always protect life and health first and only then possessions.

Do not underestimate the risk; do not make unnecessary telephone calls.

Create space for rescue forces.

Do not spread alarming or unverified messages.

Alert your neighbors.

In case of evacuation, prepare food for three days for each member in the household.

If you hear a siren, find cover in the nearest building.

Remain calm.

Adult panic is quickly transmitted to children.

You will be informed about the end of the emergency.

**11.**

GIRL: I'll tell you a story.

The Girl drinks down the vodka as if it was nothing.

The Daughter is playing under the table with beer mats.

MAN: How old were you at that time?

GIRL: "At that time"? You speak like a robot.

MAN: Fifteen, sixteen?

GIRL: Fourteen.

The Man drinks vodka.

Candles are burning in the pub, which is very romantic, and everyone is drinking vodka.

Father, Girl, Man.

I was responsible for you, the Man says.

GIRL: Do you remember the name of that troop?

MAN: Dancing Clouds.

The Daughter climbs out from under the table almost pulling down the table cloth with candles and alcohol.

The Man manages to react at the last moment in order to prevent an accident:

a burning child covered in alcohol.

GIRL: Was that your idea?

MAN: I don't even know anymore.

In the beginning Sky lay down onto Earth and in the womb of Earth the Titans and Cyclopes rose up.

GIRL: That is really very romantic. A little too corny, don't you think?

MAN: It was supposed to sound Indian.

GIRL: But it didn't.

MAN: No.

Earth complained to her youngest son called Chronos that Sky was constantly impregnating her and hammered a white sickle in her insides.

GIRL: I was most excited by the night games.

MAN: It wasn't right.

GIRL: We only kissed and touched each other. Listen...

Chronos grasped the white sickle and cut off his father's genitals.

MAN: I was drunk.

GIRL: I know. I liked it.

At the moment of castration, Sky was torn away from Earth.

MAN: Do you live somewhere around here?

Chronos tossed away his father's genitals and the ground was stained with his blood.

In those places arose Erinyes, goddesses watching over the wrongdoing between relatives.

And also warring nymphs and Giants, who were never children or old men, just warriors at full strength.

GIRL: I felt grown up. Yes, I moved. It's a student apartment.

MAN: I saw you at the stream last week, but I wasn't sure.

The remains of the father's penis fell into the waves of the sea.

GIRL: I want to tell you a story.

MAN: Why?

GIRL: Because I *am* grown up now and a little drunk and because it is a story about the birth of love.

That is really very romantic. A little too corny, don't you think? The Man returns the girl's insult.

You didn't use to be so sarcastic, the Girl remarks with a smile.

MAN: I'm glad that you cut off those horrible dreadlocks. It highlights your eyes and your slender neck. Your breasts are a bit small and your shoulders are a bit boyish, but your ass is nice. I have a wife whose universe collapses, two children – one quiet and one screaming, a 30-year mortgage and fish, problems with alcohol and an abandoned father. I most like being alone somewhere in the forest. I feel happy.

GIRL: So listen. In the beginning Sky lay down onto Earth and in the womb of Earth the Titans and Cyclopes rose up.

The Man and the Girl drink another vodka.

The Girl narrates the story of the birth of love.

The Man understands her intellectual allusions.

However, these psychological mating dances seem to him

– after all these years –

a bit infantile.

But he likes the Girl anyway.

He feels awkward/proud/daring.

Between talking they touch knees lightly.

The Man wants to kiss the Girl again.

I should fuck more and think less, the Man thinks.

Suddenly:

FATHER: Where is your daughter?

Love arises out of foamy sperm and sea foam.

The Man looks at the Father.

MAN: Who?

**12.**

The Man runs out of the pub.

The Father checks the restrooms, looks under the tables, under the pool table, asks the staff.

It's dark outside.

Only somewhere on the horizon,

it seems,

it's burning.

The Man calls the Daughter's name.

The Father smokes in front of the pub.

He is watching in case the Daughter comes back.

The Man runs to the stream.

Around the arrangement of parallel bars, horizontal bars and inclined platforms.

He calls his Daughter's name.

The stream is surging.

The stars are humming.

Insects are buzzing.

Where does he run?

The Man.

How is his pulse?

Blood pressure?

Inhalation and exhalation frequency?

How large can his pupils be?

He calls.

He searches the playground.

The wooden castle.

The little plastic house.

The bushes full of dog excrement.

Human excrement?

He wades into the stream.

He investigates the stream bank with his hands in the dark.

He's sweating.

He can't breathe.

He calls.

It's not raining.

Not even lightning anymore.

It's dark.

He falls to the ground.

He rises.

Will he trip over a can? / a stone? / an abandoned doll? / a forgotten child's helmet?

He falls again.

And rises again.

He walks back to the pub.

Maybe she has come back.

Maybe she has been hiding there somewhere the whole time.

He can't breathe.

Why think about the worst immediately?

About injury.

About kidnapping.

About the death of a child.

He vomits.

He stands with the Father in front of the pub.

He tears the cigarette from the Father and inhales it furiously.

The Girl comes out of the door.

### **13.**

FATHER: There! Light!

Really.

Look: Someone is coming from the distance and shining a flashlight on the path.

The figure slowly shows an outline.

It is a large figure with broad shoulders.

A bald man.

The Cyclops!

He is holding the Man's Daughter by the hand.

The Man calls to the Daughter by name and she runs to him.

She is not afraid at all. She is fine.

Just the opposite: it seems that all this evening adventure has been very entertaining.

You should watch your Daughter better, the Cyclops says.

MAN: Shut up.

The Cyclops is not used to insults.

The Cyclops poses a rhetorical question: What did you say?

And also adds: Say it again.

MAN: Shut up, you asshole! Today I really feel like breaking someone's face.

The Cyclops' right hand reaches to his belt.

Will he pull out a weapon?

An expandable baton.

The Girl describes the situation as pointless, but no one listens to her.

The Man crouches slightly and clenches his fists.

The Cyclops raises the expandable baton above his head and indicates an attack.

Suddenly, the Father, like a ram guarding the herd, charges from his position.

He smashes his head into the Cyclops' chest with all his might.

The Cyclops is stunned. He wasn't expecting such an attack.

The Father again rams his mighty horns into the Cyclops' chest. And again.

The Cyclops bursts into laughter. The laugh is just as horrible as his appearance.

But it is a laugh.

The Cyclops puts away his expandable baton.

BOO!, he suddenly shouts and it startles everyone.

The Cyclops laughs and leaves confidently.

FATHER: I really felt like breaking someone's face today.

The Man laughs.

The Daughter laughs.

The Father laughs.



The Girl does not laugh and leaves emphatically/disappointedly/forever?

FATHER: Spinner is bringing me meatballs this evening. Will we see each other tomorrow?

MAN: I'll call you.

You're wet, dad, the Daughter says.

You stink, dad, the Daughter says.

The Man takes the Daughter in his arms.

The Daughter does not like it, but the Man continues to hold her.

The Daughter gets upset, the Man holds her even more tightly.

The Daughter bursts into tears.

The Man rises with his Daughter in his arms and heads for the stream.

#### **14.**

And so he sits at the stream for a long time.

The Daughter has fallen asleep from exhaustion.

It's been a long day.

It's quiet.

Dark.

Time does not tick.

The stream is not running.

Mosquitoes, wasps, ticks – everything is sleeping.

The Man drinks and smokes.

He observes the glow of the fire in the distance and thinks about poor Manuel and his conscious father.

MAN: Children have no duty to love their father. What will I leave them? Devonian volcanic rocks, fish, cherries, debts...

*/silence/*

MAN: My Son doesn't like me. Every time I get close to him, he starts pulling away and squealing. It's the beard, my wife says. You should shave more often.

*/silence/*

MAN: Even without my knowledge, the majority of my life has been formed by my father's fall from a tree. Pain and fear. And now it is forming the lives of my children.

*/silence/*

MAN: If only something happened. Something that would really test who we are.

*/silence/*

MAN: Or not. Better to keep it calm, everything as it is. Let them hate me, but let them not experience any catastrophe. Fuck everything. I'll pay the mortgage and die.

The Man finished smoking. He carefully took the sleeping Daughter into his arms and turned towards home.

He again remembered his problems with pressure in his ear canal.

Something cracked and the whole world started moving again.

## **15.**

The Woman is standing opposite the Man.

She has the Son in a sling secured to her chest.

The Son is sleeping, but from time to time a little hand or leg shoots off to the side.

The Daughter wakes up and the Woman kisses her.

The supply of electricity is restored in the public lighting poles.

The Man sets the Daughter on his shoulders.

The Daughter waves her arms, playing with a shadow.

The Man and the Woman set off towards home.

*/siren/*

Where were you, the Woman asks.

What happened, the Woman asks.

Something with your Father, the Woman asks.

Why don't you answer the phone when I call, the Woman asks.

Are you alright, the Woman asks.

Why aren't you saying anything, the Woman asks.

*/siren/*

Fire engines and ambulances drive past the Man and the Woman.

The blue light of the beacons creates a background for their shadows, as if they were wandering in from some dark sky.

Police vans and water cannons drive by.

*/siren/*

The Man and the Woman turn into the next street and see their house.

They are silent.

It is only a few more meters.

The Man and the Woman enter the garden.

Their shadows look like shrunken pulsating alien octopuses on human legs.

The trunk of the cherry tree is bare.

The Man and the Woman enter the house.

*/*

16.

DAUGHTER: The house with the garden is not ours anymore. We lost it. Mother died a few years ago. My brother left and we have no information about him. Father lives in a rented studio apartment. He resolutely refused to throw anything out when moving. He wanted to keep all the objects that could be connected to memories. He moved all of his memories into thirty-two square meters. He has his routes.

Studio apartment – Vietnamese convenience store – studio apartment. Bed – kitchen – bathroom – bed. I worry about the time when my father won't be able to live independently. I hired a caregiver. He helps him with shopping, cooking, daily hygiene. I indebted myself. My husband spends most of his time on foreign missions. He works for the Red Cross. Haiti – Kashmir – Nagorno-Karabakh. Tsunami – famine – ethnic cleansing. My younger son attends a scout troop and drama club. My older son is in judo and calligraphy courses. When I pick them up, we often get stuck in traffic. Then the cooking has to be done and preparing the children for school. My father's living space has been reduced. My father lives in the past. I'm afraid that I will fail at a critical moment.

17.

FATHER: I felt so bad yesterday that I left the door to the corridor open all night.

DAUGHTER: Why didn't you call me?

FATHER: I would feel sorry if you'd had to break it down or even chop it down. It would cost money.

DAUGHTER: We live two stops from each other, you could have called me.

FATHER: I must have eaten something bad. I'll show you something.

DAUGHTER: Call me next time. If you don't feel well, just call me.

FATHER: It's up here.

DAUGHTER: Don't climb on that chair, dad. You'll fall. */pause/* Can I help you with that?

FATHER: I found one photograph. There are some children in it and all their faces are scratched out. This is probably me and my face is scratched out, too. Do you know anything about it?

DAUGHTER: No. */pause/* I'll clean that up. There's no space to move in here.

FATHER: I'm going to Ho Chi Minh's for beer. That's not his name, but he's from Vietnam. I don't mind Vietnamese. It's a shame he has such yellow teeth.

DAUGHTER: Wait here, I'll go.

FATHER: I can't sit around here all day. I would die.

DAUGHTER: I'll give you money.

FATHER: I still have enough for beer.

DAUGHTER: Wait a second, be careful...

FATHER: Shrouds have no pockets...

DAUGHTER: ... my father notes and leaves. He leaves the door to the apartment open. I hear him shuffling to the stairs. The stairs are steep. The elevator has been out of order for several months and is probably in an irreversible state. Father trips slightly, curses, but continues. I look around the apartment. It is not safe here with all of this stuff. Everything is piled up in boxes – in the better case, or randomly thrown around in the cramped space – in the worse case. Photographs from a children's summer camp, badges from donating blood, a diploma for fourth place..., a hunting knife rolling around on the ground, beaded decorations on the table (what if he swallowed them?), our children's pictures on an electric cooker, mother's clothes in the middle of the bathroom (he'll definitely trip over them and hit his head on the toilet bowl), binders and books high up on the wardrobes, an atlas of birds and trees, an encyclopedia of Indian tribes, a book of ancient Greek myths, tourist stamps, magnets on the refrigerator, porcelain figures and pigs, mugs with inscriptions. The fridge is empty except for some moldy Dijon mustard and a small bottle of Prague vodka.

## **18.**

FATHER: It was howling again. Down there in the basement.

DAUGHTER: The caregiver brought you groceries yesterday: tomatoes, yogurts, a selection of sliced ham... Did you eat it?

FATHER: There's this group of blacks living over there and during the day strange sounds come from their doors. They think that I can't hear, but I hear fine.

DAUGHTER: Where is all of the food? Did you eat it?

FATHER: I didn't feel well. That's what I told you. I probably ate something rotten.

DAUGHTER: You can't just drink beer.

FATHER: The food was expired; I threw it out.

DAUGHTER: It was definitely not expired.

FATHER: I think he's trying to poison me.

DAUGHTER: No one wants to poison you.

FATHER: The person in the turquoise shirt. That is an absolutely disgusting color.

DAUGHTER: All the caregivers wear those shirts. It's a requirement in the company.

FATHER: An absolutely disgusting person. He thinks that I don't hear, but I hear fine.

DAUGHTER: Where did you throw it out, dad? There's nothing in the waste bin.

FATHER: I'll show you something. It's up here.

DAUGHTER: Father climbs back up on the chair even despite my repeated warnings. Again he shows me the photographs with scratched-out faces. He says he's trying to find a key in all those things, he says that it all has to make some kind of sense. His life, mother's sudden illness and death, my life, my brother's disappearance.

I leave him like that, I don't resist, I don't argue. I look over the memorial objects with my father. We laugh and drink beer. Father is tired; he goes to the toilet by himself. I put him into bed, take off his slippers, stroke him. I do only the most necessary cleaning, trying to reduce the risk of injury or fire. Father has fallen asleep. I write him a message and leave. I close the door quietly, I have a system so that I don't wake my father up. I put the key in the lock from the outside, with a slight movement to the right I release the latch, close the door and let the latch gently fall into place. A voice sounds outside the open door of a Vietnamese convenience store:

VOICE OF HO CHI MINH: Tomatoes and yogurts fell from the sky yesterday.

DAUGHTER: The thick yellow fangs of the Vietnamese shopkeeper shine in the glass of the shop window.

VOICE OF HO CHI MINH: Ham, eggs...

DAUGHTER: I don't understand you.

VOICE OF HO CHI MINH: Ham, eggs, tomatoes, yogurts...

DAUGHTER: Ho Chi Minh is standing behind the counter.

VOICE OF HO CHI MINH: Do you want something? I have pâté on sale.

DAUGHTER: Ho Chi Minh recounts how the Father threw all his groceries out the window yesterday.

VOICE OF HO CHI MINH: Onto the sidewalk, onto the bus stop, in front of the door of the shop. A pretty mess.

DAUGHTER: What are you grinning about, you idiot?

VOICE OF HO CHI MINH: People joked that it was the end of the world. A good day...

DAUGHTER: They should have burned you all in those jungles.

## **19.**

Leave the shelter after the evacuation is cancelled.

If someone close to you is missing, inform the qualified authorities.

Inspect and document damage to your property.

Dispose of dead animals and contaminated food and water.

Inform yourself about local humanitarian aid.

Pay special attention to hygienic principles.

If the telephone network is functioning, contact your closest relatives.

While removing the results of the catastrophe, do not expose yourself to additional health or life hazards.

## **20.**

VOICE OF SON: Why do you always have to lie to everyone?

DAUGHTER: Don't shout at me.

VOICE OF SON: You lie to our father, to the neighbors, to the children.

DAUGHTER: About what exactly?

VOICE OF SON: *"We lost the house and the garden."* Why don't you openly say that it was his fault?

DAUGHTER: That isn't important.

VOICE OF SON: *"We have no information about my brother."*

DAUGHTER: It's the same in the end.

VOICE OF SON: You know exactly what I'm doing, where I am, you know my exact coordinates.

DAUGHTER: My brother lives in isolation. He decided to stop giving a fuck about anything.

VOICE OF SON: I decided not to participate in the lies.

DAUGHTER: My brother in his bungalow...

VOICE OF SON: ... It's an Indian teepee...

DAUGHTER: ... he lives without any civilized products. Even without a mortgage!

VOICE OF SON: I sewed my own tent cover.

DAUGHTER: From deer skins.

VOICE OF SON: From canvas.

DAUGHTER: He goes to a spring for water.

VOICE OF SON: They call it Pee-Pee Spring.

DAUGHTER: He digs up roots, plants carrots.

VOICE OF SON: I live ecologically.

DAUGHTER: He doesn't watch television or read newspapers or even books.

VOICE OF SON: In harmony with the universe.

DAUGHTER: He doesn't even have a toothbrush.

VOICE OF SON: I have a kind of spruce stick.

DAUGHTER: He doesn't even have a health insurance card.

VOICE OF SON: Completely outside the system.

DAUGHTER: What if you break your leg?

VOICE OF SON: Linden is for anxiety and hysteria, pine for asthma, birch for fevers and poisoning.



DAUGHTER: What if you break your leg?

VOICE OF SON: I'll cut a splint from a beech log.

DAUGHTER: My brother is a wimp.

VOICE OF SON: I am Dancing Cloud.

DAUGHTER: You are afraid.

VOICE OF SON: Of what?

DAUGHTER: Of everything. I sometimes wonder what you do all day.

VOICE OF SON: I usually eat mushrooms. I sing something, play on a drum...

*/pause/*

DAUGHTER: Father is waiting for me.

VOICE OF SON: If you ever want to relax, you can come. I have a dry stock. But come alone.

## **21.**

DAUGHTER: Dad, open the door. Can you hear me? */pause/* You must have the key in the lock from inside, I can't open it. */pause/* Dad... */pause/* Dad, do you hear me? Open up! */pause/* Damn it, dad, are you there?! Dad! */pause/* Hello! Hello, dad! Help! Help!

FATHER: I hear fine. I usually leave the door open because it's so hot in here. I'm making a draft.

DAUGHTER: I was worried about you.

FATHER: I probably accidentally bumped into the door on the way from the toilet. Wait, I'm going for beer.

DAUGHTER: Dad...

FATHER: I still have enough for beer.

DAUGHTER: Dad, did you shit yourself?

FATHER: I can't sit here the whole day. I would die.

DAUGHTER: Dad, how long have you been sitting in your own shit like this?

FATHER: I found something, I'll show you later. It's way up here.

DAUGHTER: God damn it! Fuck!

**22.**

VOICE OF SON: I am Dancing Cloud and soon you will hear the song about my greatness and your smallness.

**23.**

DAUGHTER: God damn it! Fuck! */pause/* I hug my father, I stroke his head. He's stunned, he doesn't like that tone. I lead my father to the bathroom and take off his clothes. He covers his genitalia a little, he is embarrassed. I help him into the shower and start the water. Everything slow and calm. I wash his private parts, his anus and the old skin around his genitalia. I sing some nonsense. There's water all over the floor, but it doesn't matter. I dry and dress my father, lead him out of the bathroom and sit him in an armchair. He sits there without moving. I telephone my older son and tell him that I won't manage to pick him up today. I don't panic. You will have to manage it alone, I tell my older son, for dinner you can make bread with something. You will manage it. They will manage it. Father continues to sit without moving. In the kitchen cupboard I find some instant porridge. I heat up water. I feed my father. I tell some stories from the past. Father does not speak. Then I lay him in bed. I stroke him again, I sing him some more nonsense and tell some more stories. It works and my father falls asleep. I look at him. I leave. He looks satisfied. I close the door in the usual way. We'll manage it. It will be difficult, but we'll manage it.

**24.**

*/music/*

DANCING CLOUD:

I am Dancing Cloud.

I am Dancing Cloud

And I flow through your kitchen sinks, your showers.

I flow through your sewers and your sewage treatment plants.

I fall onto the roofs of your hypermarkets, onto your sports jackets, your stylish hats.

I am Dancing Cloud

And I'm pissing into your shopping bags and designer purses.

I'm pissing on your private celebrations and public events,

I'm pissing on your weddings, graduations and your welcome to new citizens.

I am Dancing Cloud and I'm pissing on your children on their way to school,

I'm pissing on your neck on your way to work.

I'm pissing on your coffee vending machines, on your optimization and your professional development.

I'm pissing on your gross domestic product.

I'm pissing on your birthday wishes.

I'm pissing on your voting ballots.

I'm pissing into your beers.

I'm pissing into your slippers and your fish aquariums; I'm pissing into the beds of your pets.

I am Dancing Cloud and I'm pissing on your televisions and tablets,

I'm pissing into your fireplaces and garages and onto your terraces.

I'm pissing on your anniversaries while you look over your piss-covered family picture albums.

I'm pissing into your garden pools and the tanks of your SUVs.

I'm pissing on the silicone implants of your pissed celebrities.

I'm pissing on your interest rates and supplementary pension insurance.

I am Dancing Cloud and I'm pissing on your spa recreation and health retreats,

I'm pissing on your wellness procedures and seaside resorts,

I'm pissing on your vouchers and your sales coupons.

I am Dancing Cloud

and I'm pissing on your aids for the elderly,

I'm pissing into your hearing aids and glasses with dentures.

I'm pissing into your wide open thirsty mouths and eyes,

I'm pissing into your underwear soaked in fear of death.

I'm pissing on your mournful speeches,

I'm pissing into your urns, I'm pissing on your graves.

I am Dancing Cloud.

I am Dancing Cloud and I'm pissing.

Pissing, pissing, pissing...

*/fade out/*

**25.**

FATHER: Don't come any closer! Stay in the hallway with that disgusting shirt of yours.

VOICE OF CAREGIVER: I'm standing over here. Don't worry.

DAUGHTER: What is wrong with you, dad? Is something broken?

FATHER: They attacked me!

DAUGHTER: What?

FATHER: I left the door open and they attacked me and scattered everything around the place.

VOICE OF CAREGIVER: Your father fell on the stairs. He was drunk.

FATHER: I have a knife! You think that I can't hear, but I hear fine.

DAUGHTER: Calm down, dad. Come lie down.

FATHER: He is allied with the blacks. Their heads are full of ticks.

VOICE OF CAREGIVER: Your father is dangerous to himself and his surroundings. I'm calling an ambulance. The police will have to come, too.

FATHER: They stole important things from me. I almost had it, I almost figured it out. But they want my head to be full of ticks.

DAUGHTER: I put my father in bed, I take off his slippers. Father is exhausted/in shock/weak, he has a blotch under his eye and bruises on his hands. Otherwise he looks alright. Nothing is torn/broken/bleeding.

VOICE OF CAREGIVER: Your father systematically insults me.

DAUGHTER: I take the knife from my father's hand. I stroke him.

VOICE OF CAREGIVER: Your father is a demented aggressive alcoholic!

DAUGHTER: Shut up! You should have been taking care of him!

VOICE OF CAREGIVER: Aren't you afraid?

DAUGHTER: My father manages to fall asleep a short time later. The caregiver shuffles around in the hallway. He apologizes to me and I apologize to him. The caregiver requires a medical examination for my father. I persuade him that it's not necessary. I don't want to subject my father to further trauma. I behave irrationally. I'm afraid. We agree that I will wait with my father until morning. I pack some essentials for him and call the institute. I apply for social support. I don't know if I will have the strength tomorrow, but I promise everything so that the caregiver will finally leave. When we are alone, I pack his pajamas, slippers, toothbrush, a book, family photographs, soap and a sweater anyway. I don't know what else to do. I am suddenly unable to stay with my father in this mess. I have to get some air. I have to go away. I close the door behind me in the usual way. I even lock it. I then come back and unlock it in case a fire breaks out. I run through the streets all the way to our

former house with the garden. Strangers are living in the house with the garden. I climb over the fence and sneak into the garden. As quietly as possible, I climb up to the top of the cherry tree. It is dangerous. The cherry is old, hollowed out and half rotten. I'm surprised they haven't cut it down yet. I sit on a branch until dawn and then I decide. I take the mobile phone out of my pocket and lose my balance for a moment.

MAN: I told you that you would fall.

## **26.**

The rain is slowly decreasing.

The Man steps out of a train.

It is the last night train; the next one will leave in the morning in the opposite direction, to the city.

He heads down an alley of linden trees towards the village.

Past a closed kiosk with shedding hunting trophies on the walls.

He walks through a crossroads and turns onto a dirt road before reaching the village.

Just after the second hunting blind, after about a kilometer and a half, he has to turn onto a barely perceptible forest path.

Everything is in its place.

Every stone, every root, every wave in the stream,

all the branches are at the same height as they were forty years before.

The Man has no flashlight. He is walking from memory.

The Man reaches a clearing. Everything here is as it used to be.

He detaches a field shovel from his pack and digs up the turf.

Around a shallow hole he sets stones.

He breaks up dry spruce twigs, adds a piece of birch bark.

He lights the kindling with matches, slowly adding branches.

First thin ones, then thicker.

He spreads a canvas out onto the ground and leans his back against his backpack.

He drinks a beer for thirst and takes out vodka.

He lights a cigarette, observes the fire.

Sometimes he turns his head towards the slice of sky.

He blows smoke towards the stars. He takes a drink.

He is happy.

*/pause/*

Suddenly something cracks in his left ear.

A cherry branch?

Pain and freeze shoot through his body.

WOMAN: Do you have everything? Are you ready?

Everything is in its place.

The Sun, The Moon, the stream...

The Son will never learn about the death of his father.

The Daughter will have her arm in a plaster cast at her father's funeral.

*///*