

Fragments from a journey

Frankfurt, Flughafen

I

The restaurant is rather empty. The blank tables, their very centres, set with salt and pepper. White Chinese women, with the air of porcelain dolls, help themselves to heaped plates of colourful food from the buffet.

II

White sausage-shaped planes are laid out in even rows, each one labelled with a brightly coloured rudder. Those waiting in the departure lounge from time to time cast hungry looks their way.

Poems

The writing of a poem is the shielding of uttered words (words with simple meanings) with additional dependencies: phonetic links, semantic relativities, visual connections - we protect them, make access more difficult, in the understanding that we are no longer in Eden, and therefore words should not go naked either. Not to write poetry means: to behave as if one were still in Eden.

Zürich

Having finished our coffees at “Beneath the Stork” hotel, we walk towards Fraumünster to see the stained windows by Chagall. The day is bright, the shapes of saints clearly visible against the sunlight - the same as the bodies of those visiting, dressed in shorts and sleeveless tops. No one is outraged by that here (they will be in Italy, a little later). The everyday and the festive mixes in an utterly painless fashion: the lady selling her baguettes packs them in paper bags adorned with the Swiss flag: the heads of stone monuments decorated with needles for scaring off pigeons - pragmatic halos.

An etching on the wall in Isabella's apartment: a black and awkward creature reaching its hand out to something yellow up above.

Thun

This city was once home to Kleist. He wanted to buy property here and settle. Wrote letters to his betrothed, asking her to join him, but she was unwilling. Later, she married another. We are only passing through.

Wallis

Due to a computer fault the train cannot pass through the tunnel and from Spiez takes an older, longer route, across a high pass. It climbs and weaves its way between peaks like the needle on an old gramophone record, the music of the mountains outside our window: grey rocks and, clinging to them, half-grey and yet half-green trees.

An older chap does not seem to hear: he sits with his back to the window, solving a crossword puzzle.

Sion

The train passes Sion. At a certain point the line of green, vineyard-covered hills breaks through into the foreground and forces the grey-brown rocks back up. The hills rise ever higher. In the end though greyness - manifesting itself as stone walls dividing rows of grapevines and protecting them from collapse - once again encroaches into our line of sight and sinks into green depths.

Sometimes, high up, a stone suddenly turns white: one then has the impression that the mountain has split and suddenly revealed a fragment of its insides, something delicate and rather not meant for our eyes.

Sierre

Roadworks outside the terminal, heat, the search for a restaurant, a Portuguese shop, a tower painted a pretty orange colour, a cathedral with a toilet inside (closed), the Rilke Museum, where we saw a few old photos and the face of Heinrich Vogeler.

Zürich

The Fludern cemetery contains the graves of Joyce and Canetti. In Kunsthaus Zürich coffee and a bar of chocolate. Inside, the symbolic paintings by Hodler (one showing four women representing the 4 seasons of the day). Leaving, we look for some place to eat. Our field of vision is invaded by cathedral towers and churches, though they were explored a long time ago, on the very first day.

Five Fairytales

The first fairytale takes place in a land where there are both seas and mountains. Right where the shoreline flatlands end and the hills sprout up with their covering of olives. A certain monk lived in a town there, with a female companion, who made pairs of boots for him. A hundred years later in one of the churches, which, seen from outside, appear completely white, someone painted a mural of their mystical marriage. A priest sitting in a booth by the entrance from time to time shouts into his microphone: "Silenzio!".

The second fairytale takes place in one of the side streets near the station Termini. They serve awful tea and greasy tomato soup. Wine is diluted with carbonated water. Having left, Justyna is crying.

The third fairytale takes place while we are discussing the name Ida.

The fourth fairytale takes place in various locations, among them the square where, among tourists, a couple of young boys are dressed as Roman soldiers. One of them has sat down behind a column, accompanied by a woman dressed in 18th century robes. On the other side of the square tables have been set up, each covered with a cloth (a single setting costs 1.5 Euro).

The fifth fairytale will take place in an unspecified location. It could be the entrance to a hotel, and perhaps on the other side of the street someone will be selling sunglasses. The light is likely to be strong.

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