

María

The dream spreads itself out and glides into the consciousness. The boundary between the familiar and unknown becomes indistinct. It is a minute before daybreak. The sunrise can be conceived of, but it could still conceivably not rise, nothing is certain. There is still time, in any case. The air is full of darkness and light, with thicker and thinner patches, sometimes dissipating into nothingness. Things are still looking for their real form. Oddly enough, everything is familiar, but no word comes to mind. Did I ever know them? The words, I mean. Do they have any weight? With these thoughts, the letters sag apart and are suspended in the air. There is something very familiar in all of it, in its own inexplicable form.

Light and shadow call for my attention and lead it away from the letters. All of a sudden, everything can be seen and heard. Everything that is important is illuminated and precisely in place. Now is the time to look. It can be felt. You have to look now; later it will be too late. There is a feeling of unerring existence. What existence should be like. In the middle of it, centred in yourself. The past has not yet passed, and the future has not yet arrived. Everything around me has something to say and I know to listen.

Materials and forms move in patterns, at times diverging, then coalescing. Everything breathes as one. Long slow inhalations. The rhythm becomes slower and slower. You see and feel it. You could explain it all now if you needed to. But you don't. Not now. And later you won't be able to anymore. For a few more blessed instants, the world undulates in one rhythm. Until it laps up against a hard edge and the wave breaks. And the sun rises.

Artist:

Raymóndi

Text:

Luisa

Maria

The sky is darkening and light has nearly deserted this narrow dead-end street. Lamps suspended high above the street come on gradually, as if waking from slumber, but they can't be counted on for a while. The cables between the streetlamps pull taut, vigilantly. The bricked-in windows and doors look on, silent, perhaps understanding the scene, perhaps not. The further on you go, the narrower the street becomes, as if pulling the passerby into its embrace. The weak light sways, humming to itself, making the street toss and sway from time to time. Night is falling. Night awakes. Darkness spreads slowly and calmly. It's in no hurry. It's coming, one way or another, and everyone knows it. The street, which had been lifeless thus far with its high, compressed walls, can now breathe easier again. The walls yawn and stretch and shadows take on forms.

Thin branches cautiously extend themselves from between stones, and newly energized by falling darkness, reach toward the street ever more voraciously. It's like the branches have something to say. They've been skulking in the dark the whole day and now they're itching to halt a passerby. There is something captivating about them, like the darkness. Something repulsively dangerous and yet something enticing. A cunning and probing expression on their face, a drowsy whisper taking shape on their lips. In spite of the brisk, confident step, the road user gets tangled in the branches. Scoring the person's thoughts, the branches play their fingers over the startled passerby, who no longer remembers exactly where he was going and why. Memory blinks slowly and far away like the swaying lanterns overhead. He looks at the thorny branches spooling around him. "They're beautiful branches!" he thinks. "Beautiful...yet somehow malevolent..." And now it is too late. It is completely dark.

Artist:

Text:

Luiga

Maria

There are green fields here. Tall, lush grass that undulates in the wind. Once, water undulated here. But the water ran out and now there is grass. Light has never run out here. Bluish light. As if it didn't want to accept that undulating grass has replaced water. Light and water probably got along well. Or so it seems to me. In any case, there are no trees or shrubs or anything else here. Besides those odd houses rising in the middle of the field. Washed clean by the waving grass. White all over, empty and full of holes. As if the contents had flowed out of them and now there are waves all around.

The holes are square-shaped. Exactly alike. Like windows. Only, there's nothing to look at through them, neither in nor out. But light must like playing with them. Weaving itself among them. Sometimes I catch how the rays unfurl themselves there, with total lack of inhibition. It is a tickling feeling. Titillating and also a little sad.

Actually, everyone here feels a little lonely. Lonely or bored. No rain falls here, either. There's only light and grass and six houses. Usually with one thousand four hundred and four windows. Although it sometimes seems to me there might be more or less of them. But I guess it just seems that way out of boredom. Out of longing.

I don't know how these houses got here. Did the water bring them here? Perhaps they were once great ships and ran aground here. Dried up. Or some ancient city was situated here in its dusky glory. But now only these six houses are left. Usually with one thousand four hundred and four windows. Without any doors or a living soul. One endless day. A lasting repetition. Six times one. One times six. There are no storeys, of course. Truly, nothing else. Complete aloneness. Emptiness. Grass waving in unison. And windows.

Artist:

Text:

Luiga

Maria

An announcement comes on over the building's PA, crackling out of the dusty speaker below the ceiling:

"Starting today, documents may be copied only in the following cases:

1. If big
2. If it's raining
3. If not here
4. If long enough
5. If eyes closed"

"What?" I exclaim animatedly, "what on earth is going on today?" I feel my back break out in a cold sweat. I'm completely confused. "So like, you can only copy it if it's big? What is big? How big? And if it's raining...?" I repeat back what I heard, uncomprehending. Agitated, I get to my feet and walk over to the window, peering out suspiciously. Well, it definitely isn't raining. Not even a little bit.

A big crow scowls at me from the roof of the house across the street and then, laughing, breaks into a caw, rocking back and forth. Fog seeps in from the street, along with the aroma of black tea and pan-fried potatoes. I feel my stomach churning, and my hands start trembling.

Steps approaching down a narrow, crooked corridor intrude on my deepening desperation. "It's all because I was late, I'll bet." The hairs on my neck bristle and a shiver runs down my spine. "I don't have a single copy ready yet. And-and...on top of it all, rules I didn't have even any idea about. Big, raining and...and..." The steps get louder, the hallway sounds like it is being torn asunder by the weight of the footfalls. "A few more seconds and they'll put me back in a windowless office! All those years, just thrown away!" I mutter feverishly. I see everything go black before my eyes. I try to reach for something else in the darkness. I hear the door open and

Text:

Artist:

Luisa

Maria

I still like going fishing. You wake up early, when it's still dark. You turn on the light and get a fire started in the stove. Drink hot tea. Put your overalls on and walk down to the beach. Mirror-smooth water, sun just risen, pink and flushed. From time to time, flounders jumping with big bounds. Pure pleasure to watch. You push off in a boat and row away from shore with calm oar strokes. You let the boat drift for a moment and light your pipe. The water reflects the colours and forms of the new days with remarkable fidelity. Heaven on Earth, as the saying goes. You enjoy a few more moments of the sacred solitude and the breathtaking beauty of the world and then you take up the oars again into a strong grip. There's still a ways to go to get to the nets. From afar, you hear the barking of the village dogs, their salutations to each other. The village starts quietly stirring. It is time to pull the net up. It seems especially heavy today. You tug and tug until you realize what you have caught this early morning. The net is brimming with at least ten toddlers, staring up at you with wide eyes. You definitely weren't expecting that, but what can you do, they have to be hauled up and deposited on shore. When you reach the shore, you call the neighbour to help and together you take the net up to the village green. There are two posts ready, spaced the right distance apart, for pulling the net on to. Then it's just a matter of waiting and watching. The toddlers, who had dozed off in the meantime, start stirring. First, they open one eye, then the other. They start looking around. By that time, the older village children have arrived and each group - the older kids and the catch of the day - start checking each other out. The older ones know that the little kids really like playing. In particular, a big red ball catches their attention, and they lob it back and forth with a high trajectory. The little ones really like that: they start tittering and giggling. The net shakes with their laughter - it's a funny effect, and sets them off again. As the laughter dies down, they start climbing down little by little. Cautiously but with surprising agility. The older kids have got in line and are waiting expectantly. Everyone wants one of the toddlers to take home with them but patience is in order. It's the toddlers who pick their brothers and sisters. They can't be forced. They patter around, without a care but studious, giggling, looking at things from all sides. And if you're lucky, they come and take you by the hand. Then you go home proud, and show your parents your new sister or brother.

Text:

Artist:

Utsak

Luiga

Maria

The creator feels awkward. He doesn't know what he wants. Brick and mortar no longer go together well. One is soft, flowing, the other hard and square-cornered. Why should they go together well if one wants to flow and the other seeks to be stationary? Yet the creator has a clear goal. They must become one, one way or another. But how to go about it? No answer is forthcoming, the materials are defiantly silent. Conflict can be sensed in the air. Yet the creator does not give up so easily. He has a clear goal of putting them together. "But why?" you ask. Why should they become one? The creator has reams of papers in this regard, everything is in writing. But his hands are full of work and the papers have been misplaced. He has to get by without them.

The creator takes a brick and places it on the ground. It seems to sit well, but something's missing. How about adding some mortar, a nice amount, whatever feels right? Yes. There's something here. Some sort of change of pace, contrast, one might say. Another stone. More mortar. The wall grows. The mortar is squeezed out between the bricks by their weight. The creator is on a roll. Mortar, brick, mortar, brick. Mortar and yet one more brick. Repetition is pleasant. Were those ideas on those misplaced papers needed at all? There is so much power in hands and repetition. The wall grows. Ah, and why a wall? I don't know. Just felt right. A simple structure. It just so happened. This wall. You can conceive of a number of additions. Don't have to, but can. Imagine a window in the wall. Or door. A door leading to an interior or exterior. But that's actually not all that important. There's a wall.

Artist:

Text:

Luiga

Mort

Luigia

Maria

“Why” has never been of much interest to me. It’s a totally different story with “how”. I am a total sucker for the superficial. For its enticing mirages. In the eyes of strangers, that makes me, at best, controversial or odd. Mainly just unlikeable. But actually, I am a little piece of themselves. A collection. A mirror. I am a collection of everyone and everything that surrounds me. Or rather, not of everything, but at least of whatever draws my attention. My walking gait, for example. I discovered it recently, one pre-dawn hour. A silhouette moving on the other side of the road caught my eye. A body with an impeccable posture, walking unerringly in one rhythm. Arms and legs with smooth, machine-like coordination. One step turned into another without any interruption or hesitation. Like a wheel rolling along the road. Slowly, an invisible force keeping the balance. I don’t remember the walker, I completely forgot to see who it was. And it doesn’t matter anyway – now I’m the one who is walking like that. I’ll walk like that for some time. Then I will find myself a new gait. I am in constant change, constantly reimagining and shaping myself. I got my current pensive appearance, the one that I’m still really infatuated by, from a woman in a café a few weeks ago. Her penetrating gaze was fixed into the distance, her face itself so calm, her chin delicately upturned, head slightly tilted to the right. I fell in love with that expression and took it for myself. Sometimes I also adopt something that leaves a grotesque or sinister impression. Above all, I am interested in noteworthiness. Not good or bad, or like/dislike. For example, my handwriting, which fell at my feet while I was browsing a book. A sheet of paper torn from a notebook, containing a shopping list. Written with extraordinarily dainty, sprawling rounded letters and yet in an astonishingly earnest and aesthetic manner. I was disgusted. An awe-inspiringly powerful force in something so commonplace. A valuable find, in my collection that is me.

Artist:

Text:

Luiga

Victorian

Sinobels

Maria

I'm measuring myself. From the top of my head to the soles of my feet. 1840 mm. My head's girth is 500 mm. Half a metre. My foot is 280 mm long. My shin is half a metre long, too, just like my head in 2D projection. Funny to think. To my hipbone it's 1050 mm, to my navel 1150 mm, to my shoulders 1580 mm and to the tip of my nose 1700 mm. When I was a child, I dreamed of being 1580 mm tall, among other things, but then I grew a whole 'nother head, along with the neck. Anyhow. My arm measures 760 mm from the end of my middle finger to shoulder joint, my shoulders are 480 mm wide, my index finger is 90 mm long and it's precisely 200 mm from the tip of my index finger to the end of my thumb. Good to know. Well, enough. Those numbers have now become a room. It fits my body nicely. I sit there and stand and look and think. And then start shifting restlessly for some reason. In spite of it all, something went awry. I check everything again. It should be OK. Those expenses and revenues and all sorts of other measurements and figures. But still restlessness doesn't give me peace. Something is troubling me, something is pounding, wants out. And then it dawns on me: I didn't think to include enough room for my soul! I forgot completely about it, didn't take its measurements or anything. And now it's too late. It slips out the window and is gone. I stand there, looking on helplessly. Of course, at first it feels quiet. But then it gets boring. Bleak and monotonous somehow. I wonder where my spirit went and when it will return. Who knows where it might be by this time? On happier hunting grounds. Under some colonnade in the right kind of dim light, sitting legs crossed and ruminating as it looks up at the arches. A place with enough room to stretch out, and breathe easily. Where an air of blissful irresponsibility can be sensed, where one can just be an onlooker to the game of chance. "I want to be there, too," I sigh sorrowfully. What is a body without a soul? In my longing, I call out for it. Quietly at first, then louder. But no answer comes. Only the wind howls between the buildings as if someone were weeping for it. I have to find my soul! Getting up in a hurry, I bump my head. Looks like I measured things too precisely. No room for growth.

Artist:

Text:

Luiga

Maria

Under the table is a forest of legs. I am under the table, too, but only because I am small. Almost as tall as a leg. I can barely reach the tabletop. It's not my place up there, anyway. There are only adults and their things up there. I'm all about play and play things. My things are more or less the same but a little softer and simpler. And they don't work in real life. No, actually, if you play with them, they work even better. You just have to give them a little push to get going. It's hard to explain.

Incidentally, those legs I mentioned belong to my parents. They have four legs like me, but they aren't very good at playing. And the table has a good many legs as well, many more than I have. The table isn't a toy or a real thing, I don't think. The table is just a table. The adults have a bigger table. I am under the big table with my small table. Strange, I know. But actually, it's very nice down here. I like being small, by the way. And here, underneath the table, I feel especially small. Besides legs, there's also sand under the table. Sand is just sand, I think - neither real nor make-believe - but what's interesting is that you can play with it in every way. Maybe because of that, parents don't really think too highly of sand, they just say, "sand gets everywhere." But I think sand stays pretty much in one place. I have watched it.

In the big table there are holes for peeking. I think they're there so that father or mother could keep an eye on me but they are so busy that sometimes I look at them myself so that the holes don't feel totally lonely. I don't have the energy to watch them for long. Then I retreat under my table again, because the real world seems pretty dull. And a bit too big. And it's so nice here under the table in the sand.

Artist:

Text:

Luisa

Maria

It's scorching hot weather. The sun shines intrusively into my eyes, no matter where you direct your glance. The sky doesn't even have a memory of clouds. It's just one big blue. The city is dry and dusty, it's thirsting. My skin is glistening and sticky with dust. On such merciless days, I walk aimlessly about until sundown. Looking for shelter from the sun and myself, pushing on. On the left side of the street, across the way, towers a building. It has more or less an oblong shape and it's certainly oppressive looking. Weary, soulless. Especially in the penetrating sun. In front of the building is Iceland Square. An extraordinarily beautiful and comforting name. Thinking about that, I feel cooler, nourished.

Across the street from the building are some trees, benches and a greensward bordered by a low green hedge. I lean against a rough tree trunk and eye the silent building in front of which unexpectedly lively clamouring can be heard. Everyone's eyes are turned to a big poster on which a stone is prominent. A lone megalith towering in the hard northern sun. The scene with a giant chunk of stone and surrounding hubbub has a soporific, distant effect on me.

On a nearby bench sits an older woman, wearing a crisply pressed outfit and hat. Something about her demeanour suggests that she has been surveying the goings-on for some time, with a thoughtful expression, serious but resigned. A leisurely curiosity overcomes me and I take a seat next to her.

"Has this been going on a while?", I ask, looking at the scene.

"Yes," she said, not looking up, "for a while. It dies down for a bit, then picks up again. Since the morning."

Looking at the poster closer, I notice that the image on it has changed. It now has a discernible head, arms and legs. The expression is serious, the eyes fixed on the horizon. Wearing a suit, a bald pate. Lenin.

"It changes from time to time?" I ask, taking more and more interest in the developments.

Her reply is friendly but terse. "It depends where you look, from here you can make out both viewpoints."

"A weighty symbol," I venture, shaking my head.

"A symbol has power only if you believe in it, if you feed it. I don't believe anymore. When you get old, you understand: it's just stone or metal. It doesn't make time and deeds come to stop, people just keep on looking for something to hold on to with their memories and thoughts."

Text:

Artist:

Amirajam Vaidya

Srinivas Kula

Luisa