

For M, Marina Sulima, Sulimani, daughter of parents, sister of sister, friend of friends, best talker, favorite stalker, melancholy-maker, original baker, never-faker, the one who loses her gloves, forgets to lose her temper, gets up because she has to, falls asleep before she can do, lays awake too, it's true, gets drunk before she knows it, knows it and still does it, loves movies as if she made them, sometimes doesn't hate the movies that she's actually making, animates me, makes me horny, write cornily, laughs generously, snacks financially irresponsibly, carries bags way too big, says things that stick, loves storms, cares very little about norms, is scared of the New Yorker and unsure if she's ever enough of a worker, worried like any other, is there for the other, doesn't want to be a bother, never is, confesses her guilty torments, has book-sending-correspondences, sends exhibitions through a cardboard cylinder, smashes dishes when they're being boring, spreads cups around rooms as if there's leaks in all the corners, is hollander than ever dreamt, zwemt, ach ja, found a quiet confidence, lends to friends ears that mend, massages feet under carpety skies, flies only at creative diplomacy's end, understands that to be of this time is to be fuzzy like picklewater, daughter of the murky waters, thumbs stuck in the couscous-soil, or clay, is all okay, is wise and word-witty, invents things constantly, makes branches into lamps, pours vinegar over her feet, fabulates outfits like burlesque business, dreams of doglike foxes, snogs like fishtype frogness, lifts me up when nervewracked, talks me down when talking myself down, is the rock around me, the infinite sponge within, the pinch-it's-true against my can't-believe-it, the whistle of my whims.

Now, imagine when further rolling out this scroll that it contains all new instructions for a dream you have been working on for a while. This is an even more ambitious project than your previous one and you have on more than one occasion tried to simply forget about the whole thing. It will never work, you said to yourself, better people than me have tried and failed, it simply cannot be done. How is one supposed to make a dream that contains *all* of these things (you spread your arms wide, as if presenting a table full of dishes) and still have it work *as a dream*? It is true that you have made Zand, a freak-project sent in by a certain someone, into a successful movie. *Tickles the tongue*, critics said cryptically, *Zand is one of those movies that peeks in your mouth and comes out smelling all the better for it*. Others called it, simply, an understated *pièce de resistance*. But what do they know about dream production? This project here before you is of an entirely different magnitude, combining seed banks, clay soils with couscous-qualities, friends half a continent apart, a house in two places at once, criss-cross-families bearing doctor's advice. Above all: it must somehow communicate a life loved now with a... with some kind of... aah -

aah.

With some sort of -

Ach ja.

(here we see you bump up against the infamous limits of language)

(you whistle)

*Time passes. O, yes yes yes it does like to pass.*

(you press your cheek against mine---BZZzzzzzzzzZ feedback errOr)

You know what I mean, right?

(You say this out loud but... I'm not here, not right now)

To sum up, it's the project of a beautiful lifetime. What's more, the financial predictions are dire.

Talking financials makes you think of a time not even that long ago. You remember, you *must* remember, that one time you met this peculiar woman and she followed you around and at first you didn't notice, when you noticed you didn't mind, but then after not minding it for quite a while you started minding a little bit, a bit more, more still, until you snapped and stopped, turned around and said:

*What is the meaning of this?*

And she said, the peculiar woman said: *well, now, that's a most interesting question but I don't have all day.*

And you said, unperturbed: *you know what I mean.*

To which she said: *if you insist.*

And then she waited a little while. You remember the wind was quite strong that day. You remember leaves flying in between the two of you. You remember thinking the wind made this whole situation seem slightly eerie. You remember looking for a flight path, if push would come to shove. You remember feeling impatient and you remember that just as the feeling welled up in you, grew bigger and bigger, ballooning like one big impatient bomb, ready to bu--

--she started to speak again and said: *I have been thinking about your question*

and then stopped, again. Nothing. Just quiet. Looking sheepishly.

*Yes?* You nearly shouted. *And what have you thought up?*

And what have you thought up with that peculiar head of yours, you had wanted to add but hadn't. She *did* have a peculiar head, though, you can't help remembering. She had a kind, round face and teeth like a shark. Her eyes, brown as raisins, were so far apart, birdlike. Yet she was undeniably pretty. This usually only works in dreams, you remember thinking, saying things like 'and yet she was undeniably pretty' after listing a whole range of deeply strange features. Yet here she was, real and talking to you.

Saying, then: *I have thought about this this that you asked me about, that you asked me the meaning of, and I was wondering whether that this includes everything, all of these world wide wondrous things (she rolled her head around, supposedly seeing all these world wide wondrous things around her) or whether your this was meant in a more... how should I say it -*

- *precise* -

- *precisely! A more precise way.*

She looked at you expectantly, with her blackbird eyes. There was a little spinach between two of her front teeth. You hadn't noticed until now how close she was to you, and how despite the wind you could feel the warmth of her breath on your face. What did you mean? You asked yourself, and I'm asking you now. What did you mean exactly? It appears you had been thinking of an awful lot during those times. Your head was stormful, razorblade thoughts cutting lines across and back and across and zig and zag,

zigzagzigzagzigzagzigzagzigZAGZIGZAGZIGZAGZIGZAGZI-

Cut.

Stop, guys.

This isn't working. (*pause*)

--Nah. Nah, no no no nonono. No. This is very, *very* convoluted.

(*unintelligible reply*)

No, I don't agree. They can be *too* slow.

(*protesting noises*)

*Yes, sir* - sorry, I mean: yes, Frank, sir - yes, dreams *can* be too slow. Where is this even going? Is there some sort of a point? At least in Waiting for Godot

there's all this Biblestuff being worked in, at least there every second word they utter can be interpreted in multiple ways. There 'slow' has a point! They're waiting, but that's the *point*. Here, well... what are we doing here? This is not a dream, this is not even a nightmare. This is straight-up, undiluted, boring as all hell paranoia, I tell you!

*(insulted noises)*

Yes, Frank, I *am* serious. I mean, be real. What's next? That birdfaced woman - god, why does she even have a birdface? Who thought of that? - that birdfaced woman is going to say something like "I don't follow" and then you go something like "ah, but you *are* following me! Please don't follow me" and then Ms. Sharkteeth will go "Sorry, I don't follow. How can I stop following you if I wasn't following you in the first place?" and the dreamer, I mean *you*, you who wants someone to *have this dream*, don't you, isn't that what you *want*, Frank, for someone to *have this dream* - you will be *bored to death*, Frank. That's what I think.

*(silence)*

I'm sorry, Frank, I really am. But this has to stop. This is sick.

*(quiet sobs)*

Someone had to tell you, Frank. I'm sorry.

*(sobs continue)*

Maybe 'sick' was too strong. Pathological.

*(muttering sounds, something like 'dadasntsowndbettr')*

Unhealthy, ok? Unhealthy.

*(silence)*

Where are the concrete details? Where is the couscous, Frank?

*(agitated mumbling)*

--couscous-*soil*, alright, ok, *soil*, fine. And when is the family coming in - the *families*, I mean, there are at least, for God's sake Frank, we're halfway through the night and there's still only a birdlady talking rubbish giving absolutely no signs, hiding no hidden depths, communicating zero repressed desires and all of that would be tolerable if it wasn't all so completely boring. There's family members, Frank, *interesting ones*. Use them!

*(fart noises)*

What? What's that Frank? Do you mean to say that you can find no way to bring real drama into this? Do I have to spell it out for you?

*(a snort)*

Well, I think I do, Frank. I think I have to spell it out for you. There's *art* and a dog named spring, I mean basically named spring, forgive me for my lack of attention to details while spelling out your job to you, Frank, and there's peas and courgettes - heirloom versions, Frank! - and strangers who despite it all seem like they are trying to make something quite nice, and yes there's bullshitters and bigtalkers and people stuck in the liberal pact, yes, of course, Frank, I'm not naive, but - and this is way more important, Frank - for every

twentyfive bullshitters and every sixteen screensharingtimewasting curators there are people who are trying to restore *words*, Frank, real words *with meaning* and what's more--

*(inquisitive noises)*

well, what's more, Frank, is that they seem to love it, this restoration, they can't seem to get enough of it and then some of them are even friends, and there's *other friends*, all kinds of friends with all kinds of lives and they're all moving around, Frank, like busy, never-bored, beautiful ants that are *so smart*, Frank, such beautiful smart ants, and they're so full of life you wouldn't believe and you are telling me you can't make this project work because there would be too little *drama*, Frank? There's feelings and sensations on every damn millimeter, Frank, every little fragment I keep in my hands is literally bombarded with the glitter and goo of soulstuff.

*(unintelligible sounds, whispering)*

Ah...

*(more unintelligible sounds. They continue for longer this time.*

*It goes on for quite a while*

*and*

*still not done*

*unintelligible, whispering, noises noises, etc*

*--ah, ok, silence again)*

I see, Frank, I see. I understand.

Freshest birchwood ashes

And now I realize you will have seen all of this already, because of browsering innovations and tabs with names and the stupid fact that I named this thing so transparently.