

3.9.96 (5.50)

I'm writing again. Of course it isn't the first time after everything calmed down – after my secret narrative passions burnt out...

They were sometimes very short moments, when I barely had time to realise that I was sinking into melancholy's surprisingly warm (and for some reason extremely muggy) fog, from which I was awoken by the slightest movement of a chair, while sometimes they turned into longer hours of inertia during which I indulged in fantastic journeys through the world that we (you and I) had created. Once – you won't believe this – I even received an answer to a series of repetitive, virtually identical, letters that I sent you one after the other. My God, how happy it made me. Though all in all it was a very short letter.

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You know, those people who out of conviction lived a quiet life (usually in a remote provincial place from a once seen, but now forgotten, film) were happy because they could spend countless moments, hours and days thinking about a few, seemingly accidentally spoken, sentences; or simply being quiet. After that they waited a long time for the next meeting (with a person who perhaps never returned to that remote world of frozen time, well-tended lawns and perpetual tea-time) so that they could repeat that which had nothing to do with their long hours of solitude.

That phrase that I couldn't get out of my mind was probably about sugar... I wrote that and laughed out loud when I realised that a drunken Chekhov must be wandering about under my windows exerting a bad influence on me. Nostalgia, other people's memories and passions – I'm afraid that all of this is related to the early autumn wind blowing through the cracks around the windows of my yet-unfinished home, forcing me to hurry.

Why am I doing this.

6.8.98 (1.00)

"You didn't answer the phone for a long time, and I was starting to regret that I was calling. Were you already asleep?"

"Hmmm. Well, yes..."

"Never mind then..."

"OK."

Almost two years went by since I left this unfinished letter to rot in the brains of an electronic semi-conductor (where did that strange word come from?). I had even forgotten the name of the file. It moved me to think that by changing some "hardware" I could have

erased part of the history of my most beloved disease.

You know, the cause of all this is probably my forever unfulfilled sentimentality. I am constantly longing for that "real" - heart-wrenching - love. The kind that ruins you throughout your whole life and finally (like in that film "La voisine") ruins you for good. The need for it is easily recognised in such islands of harmony as my family where it seems nothing is wrong (and nothing happens). In simpler terms, I suffer from a severe lack of personal problems. Headaches, loved ones' tears, late-night discussions (in hushed tones, in the kitchen), and so on. Today, when I listened to your story (your real story) about D., I understood that that which I so hopelessly long for you have already experienced and is unlikely to repeat itself. What I really am to you is a good friend whom you keep close by you just so that you wouldn't lose him, insult him or hurt him.

11.8.98 (1.20)

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Do you know what it is to experience love and to long for the love of another? The answer: SWEET SURRENDER. Yes, that is an unexpectedly accurate slogan for the great union of my feelings. I long to collapse next to you, to feel the gentle quivers of your body, the warmth of your stomach and breasts, the heat of your face. (Surely you don't still think that all I'm talking about is sex?) For I helplessly melt in your embrace, in the whirlwind of your palms, lips and fingers. And I don't need anything else.

Of course, a good doctor would reduce all of these touches and snuggles to several missing episodes in my childhood and would suggest that I get more fresh air. But what I truly lack is your intimate closeness. Your gentle cuddles. Your kiss. The warmth of your body. Only then do I calm down (or at least I imagine that that would happen).

15.8.98 (6.30)

Why did you wake me up this morning?

Of course, you will deny that again; you'll say that you have nothing to do with it. Like every other morning. Even those mornings when I don't wake up with that awful feeling of unease somewhere half-way down my throat, when I don't hear a strange buzzing in my head, and when everything outside the window is fine - even then I see your reflection in my memory for a microsecond. Maybe that's not it. It's very hard to describe how memory works. Maybe it's the happy blink of your eyes, a movement of your hands, or simply a background (in full Fuji color) that I unconsciously absorbed from a photograph I once saw. It all probably happens like it does with those file names that rapidly replace one another when you're scanning drive C. You can't even read the first letter of most of their names, while

others for some reason you can see and remember perfectly. It's as though they consciously stop in front of your patient gaze for the sole purpose of later on returning again and again to the surface ("when thoughts get lost somewhere") during various conversations, or when reading or taking a walk.

17.8.98 (1.30)

Today, in the forest, you asked: "What can you write about there so much?" What I write aren't real love letters. They're rather... But unfortunately, I have to go to sleep.

28.8.98 (24.30)

At night some strange force draws me to this yellow room. It is so unlike all the other so-called rooms of so-called writers that every time a brief pause (at least as long as one sweet smile) goes by before it lets me in so that I could do what I was planning to do.

When I start I don't usually have a clear plan. The day's ghostly fragments and vibrations wander about. And nothing else. After some time I realise that I'm artificially trying to get into the tragic mood of the creative writer, that I'm unconsciously trying to make myself throw up, to extract from myself that "dear" tightness in the throat or whatever else would be favorable to the further development of the epistolary genre. In other words, I try to remember you... If still nothing happens (the signals are weak, while the receivers aren't picking anything up), I sometimes catch myself thinking, "What do I need you for anyway - what I want to do is write. (I.e., I can make do without a muse...)"

29.8.98 (19.50)

I often try to imagine that moment when I'll see you for the first time after these letters have become your property. I have no doubt that will happen eventually. What I'm really curious about is how long I'll manage to preserve this last truly really part of myself. Though the temptation is great, the only thing that keeps me from taking this step is the feeling that if I give you my writings there will be no point in continuing them. (The emptiness will come back and I'll have to go back to watching TV.)

So, what will be the expression in your eyes, your first words? Will it happen in a room full of other people, or will I meet you in a park after watching you approach from afar. I'll smile nervously and wonder how our conversation will begin. These I would say typically artistic expectations best express the essence of my "involvement". I'm waiting

for evaluation. For practically universal admiration of my talent for deep and meaningful thought, for experiencing and surviving. Though I shouldn't be at all concerned about your "impressions". Love letters are written to say, remind, convince – not to make an impression of style.

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1.9.98 (23.40)

I like women a lot. Lots of women. Young and sufficiently "ripe". Blondes and brunettes. Not just movie stars. Almost every second attractive woman that comes into my field of vision becomes the woman of my dreams. At least for a second. At least for a very brief moment. I seem to fall in love, give in, sell myself, get ready to give everything up, to leave, to forget everything – anything, so that what I had just seen would somehow become part of my reality. I am for some reason pathologically drawn to strangers, or, more accurately, to women I don't know. It doesn't matter if she's a red-cheeked twelfth-grader (holding my son's hand on the first day of school, or the mother of another first-grader standing nervously in a crowd of parents, or a manager full of confidence and feminine determination at a security systems competition – I'm ready to travel with all of them at once or with each one separately to the ends of the earth, to a desert island, or to the first empty apartment at the end of Vokiečių street.

6.9.98 (22.50)

I don't know what direction my thoughts are going in any more, where the letters of my letter are flying. After your acute confession – your opening up – my so carefully planned and preserved romanticism faded like that colored ball on the seashore. When you say that you can't stop pacing and don't know what to do, when you say that you want me, that you love me, I lose all sense of motivation and feel the pains of unending fatigue and insomnia course through my body. I don't want anything anymore, again. And I don't know what I could possibly want, (if I was somewhere else than where I am, if everything was different from how it really is...) Apparently it wasn't accidental that, during that conversation late at night in a bar, you referred to yourself as my project. That sudden feeling of apathy and disillusionment that overcame me was very similar to the one that you feel after the opening of a big exhibition, because you realise that you've accomplished that which you so longed for. Yet another goal accomplished, for which your days and nights had acquired a completely different tempo. And what comes next? An open, horribly immeasurable infinity? No. Afterwards there are usually press clippings, the comments of friends and colleagues. I just suddenly realised that I am becoming the victim of my own letters. I'll

probably meet you again tomorrow. We'll talk about all the projects in the world. Maybe about our relationship too. About everything except what is already written here.

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28.9.98 (21.30)

An exhibition is coming up. I'm unbelievably exhausted. More and more my mind is crowded with all sorts of numbers, sums of money, sponsors' names and telephone numbers. Even at night, when I lie down in bed this whole "financial mess" doesn't leave me alone. I start to get the feeling that my two projects ("Cool Places" and "Cool Places 2"*) are unavoidably fusing into one work. Into one goal. That's probably how it will be.

Kęstutis Kuizinas

* "Cool Places 2" is a parallel project of the author's. It developed alongside the original "Cool Places" exhibition concept . All of the names and situations in this text are fictional (author's note).