

Zacharias Mbizo:
Nocturnal Call
Dream Worlds 2



Nocturnal Call is the second volume of "Dream Worlds" by Zacharias Mbizo after *The Hidden Chamber*. The texts in this volume once again look at one's own self in the mirror of dreams, thus gaining a new perspective on life.

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About Zacharias Mbizo:

Zacharias Mbizo, who has been publishing literature since 2015, is part of the "Ecartist" circle of authors around the blogger Rother Baron. Following the novella *Luckless Homecoming – The Dead Man Who Solved the Murder of Himself* and the fantastical story *The Agnes Well*, he has published several books of literary miniatures with LiteraturPlanet. *The Literary Corona Diary* was followed in 2022 by the texts on the *Ukrainian Apocalypse*.

Nocturnal Call is the author's second volume of "dream worlds" after *The Hidden Chamber*. Like the texts in the *Literary Corona Diary* and the *Ukrainian Apocalypse*, the *Dream Worlds* are also written in the style of "literary miniatures". As such, the author describes "texts that are located between short story, literary reflection and poem". The frequently used "you" form in these texts is for him "a way of creating greater intimacy – to empathise with the characters, to put oneself in their shoes".

A brief introduction to the logic of dreams and their traces in literature can be found in the foreword to volume 1 of *Dream Worlds (The Hidden Chamber)*.



Feather Flight

In the cage you painted a long time ago, a bird moved in this morning - at last! How many days have you waited silently behind a tree for its arrival, how often has your heart beaten in unison with its wings when a leaf twinkled in the evening sun, how many times have you crept despondently away when once again nothing but the labyrinthine shadows of the lattice pattern filled

the cage, when nothing but the melancholy of the evening wind sang through the cage.

Now that the bird has finally answered your plea, you hastily closed the door of the cage with your brush. Then you changed the latticework into green foliage, painted a tree for the bird and chose the most beautiful of the branches as its throne. Finally, you added the dust of the sun and the whisper of the wind, the singing of the crickets and the warm breath of summer.

Now it's time to wait again: Will the bird intone a song? Will it carry you off – singing – into its flight? Will it give you a feather that might enable you to translate its song into your own language?

(based on Jacques Prévert: Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau)



Midnight Dance

At midnight, your thoughts begin to flutter restlessly through the one-eyed sky. In their search for nourishment, they indiscriminately snatch at any apparition that entices them. In the somersaults they make, they become unfaithful to themselves and merge into those many-faceted images that they reject during the day.

And yet, the wild pirouettes they perform are closer to you at this moment than the

soldierly order to which they willingly submit in the light of the day.

Only at dawn do your thoughts become calmer. Silently they drift towards the shadowy net that the forest has spun on the horizon and dissolve into bizarre shapes. When you open your eyes, they slowly sink back into you.



Night Prayer

In the evening the monastic oaks
raise their skeleton of dancing branches
in secret prayer.

Their swinging silence,
a frozen ring of dances,
makes your soul ascend
into the nothingness of night.

A monk who awakes in the dark,
the eyes caught in the net of the night,
you wait for the sign,
even though you know:
it will never reach you.



Blackbird Song

One day in spring, like the other blackbirds,
you intone a song. An echo is your song, an
echo of all the reawakening scents, on
whose wings the memories flow back into
your heart.

These ancestors of the present moment are
nameless, nameless and faceless, like
dragonflies that light up briefly in the sun
and vanish the next moment in the shim-

mering light. And yet you have the feeling that you have to lend them your voice.

The song you sing is a song without words. And yet your melodies form a language in which the speechless is given a voice.

But now, as the wave of the evening gushes into the chalice of the night, you feel a secret fear creeping into your song. A restlessness takes hold of you that makes your voice first tremble and then falter. For you know that as soon as the shroud of the night covers the horizon and the lament of the tawny owl is heard, your voice will break. And then, the images of the past will dissolve into grimaces and maraud inside you like an army of undead demons.



Bumblebee Flight

On the wind of a thunderstorm you ride into the middle of the yellow canola cloud. The carpet of scent embraces you, you are a bumblebee, you cling tightly to a blossom, sucking from it the bittersweet nectar of eternal return.

You are so immersed in your activity that you don't even notice how the sky darkens, how it freezes into a black wall that finally crashes down in front of you as a flashing guillotine blade.

For the duration of a wing twitch you fall out of time, and you realise: The gates of summer are wide open, you can already hear

the whirring of the scythe in the shimmering air, the canola sun is swallowed up by a dark barn, and the misty bride wraps the naked field in her robe of comfort.

As you detach yourself from the blossom and the tempest carries you away, the waving canola tentacles entice you anew into their midst. Its spicy breath penetrates your skin, its glow floods your eyes.

But can you be sure that this is the same canola from which you sipped before you fell out of time? How do you know that the moment without duration, the hole in time, has not caused you to fall into a distant future that only accidentally resembles the present from which you have dropped out?

And are you still the same being that you were before the timequake struck you? Or do you only live on in the fleeting, half-conscious memory of another being whom the maelstrom of time has carried back to the moment in which it threw you out of itself?



Cloud Images

On the highest floor of the tallest skyscraper in the city, you are so close to the sea of clouds that the manes of the waves seem close enough to touch. If you had your lasso with you, you would only have to throw it out to catch one of the winged horses and ride it towards the horizon.

As you indulge in your daydreams, the city weighs anchor and sets sail with you. Silently, it ploughs its way through the dancing foam, forming a sail into which the wind weaves its adventures.

Soon after, you reach an island not shown on any map, where you can buy a new life duty-free. The product range is extensive, the prices are reasonable. Amazed, people

stand in front of the colourful showcases. Long queues have already formed in front of the vending machines that provide entitlement vouchers.

Meticulously you check the offers. You are well aware that such a purchase requires careful consideration. But when you have finally made your choice, the ship is just setting sail again and you have to return home in your old life clothes.

Shortly afterwards, you stand again at the brightly polished skyscraper window and stare out into the sea of clouds. Only a few tattered feathers are left from the winged horses, blown apart quickly by the wind. Then the sea suddenly splits open, your gaze wanders down among the crests of the waves, and you sink into an abyss that previously you had not perceived at all.



Foehn

In the evening you pause under the giant shadow of the mountain ridges. You see them staring at you with the implacability of a silhouette suddenly flooded with a torrent of blood.

You want to turn away, but an unchangeable destiny chains you to your place: you are Atlas, you have to carry the world, its burden weighs painfully on your head.

As your gaze becomes entangled in the latticework of the trees, you feel something alien invade you, a burning worm that winds

inexorably through your veins. When you touch your forehead, you can sense the tip of its tail twitching.

At the same moment, you see the world through the eyes of the snake within you. With the lucidity of someone caught in a fever, you realise: your neighbour is inhabited by just such a snake, and his gaze is darkened by the same suspicious twitching under his forehead.

Immediately you understand what this means: it's either him or you! Now that one has recognised the other, there is no place for both of you in this world.

When you stumble back into the house, all mirrors reflect the face of your neighbour. Following a twist of the worm in your veins, you smash all the glass you can grab.

Then you shoulder your bundle and disappear into the wilderness. With the determination of a martyr, you throw yourself into the arms of the wind brides who are already gathering ominously on the horizon.



Thunderstorm

Complete, eerie silence. Then, almost a salvation, the first rumble of thunder. Another thunder, then one more, each like the echo of the first, yet bursting from its own maw, amplified by its own valley funnels. And each followed by its own army of flaming swords. Hissing, they cross their blades on the hell-black field of the sky.

A moment later, the hail begins to beat its drum of destruction. Whinnying, the wind blows its trombone, like a stallion ramming

itself into a mare. In furious gallop he drives the cloud armies before him and dances through the fiery red rain, transforming it into an image of himself. He, the invisible one, is suddenly the only one visible. Gloomily his grimace glows through the torn sky.

But just as suddenly as it ignited, the concert of forces dies away again. Only the rain harp continues to weave its barely perceptible lament around the unborn grain for a while.



Heat

On the hottest day of the year, you get entangled in the sticky web of the asphalt spider. While you helplessly row your arms, the spider drenches you with salty secretions. Your legs go limp, the blood drains from your veins, and in the end you are nothing but a pulpy morsel that the predator devours with businesslike routine.

Haltlessly you fall through the spider's maw, your breath stops, you tumble deeper and deeper into the sea of shadows. In the end you find yourself on a raft that slowly me-

anders along with you under the roots of the world.

Although it is completely dark around you, you can still see what is happening above you, on the other side. As if through a funnel, you look at the sprawling cities, proudly protruding from the plain.

Unfortunately, the sky-high buildings cannot withstand the swaying ground and crumble to dust, from which new dwellings soon grow up again. The mighty merry-go-round of buildings is spinning so fast that you get all dizzy from it.

Suddenly it becomes brighter again, fountains of light gush up in front of you, the fire eats its way under your eyelids, the flames are flickering restlessly in your chest. This must be the center of the earth! Or have you just arrived at the other side of the planet?

Then you realise: what you thought were mountains of flames turns out to be a chain of skyscrapers on closer inspection. But they

cannot resist the heat, they melt into a viscous mass that drags other chains of skyscrapers with it, with which they unite to a huge wave of liquid rock. Sluggishly, the dark wave rolls towards the sea, where it sinks into the tides with a sighing hiss.

This must be the end of the world, you say to yourself. But when you open your eyes, you only blink into the dreamy face of the evening sun. Sleepily she wraps her arms around you and whispers a lullaby in your ear.



Behind the Gates of the Waves

Immediately after the wave gates of the lake had closed over you again, you realised that you had slipped into a world that was completely alien to you. Never before had you seen anything like this.

The inhabitants here were the exact opposite of the people you were used to. It almost seemed to you as if they were a different species. Their movements were much softer, more cautious than those of their relatives on the other side of the water.

Since the medium in which they lived made it impossible for them to communicate with words, their only means of expression was dance. Thus, every emotion was immediately transferred into soundless music – speaking to each other was the same as dancing with each other.

The soundless music of these dances was harmonious by nature. Not only that the common dance required an inner agreement, an eavesdropping of the foreign emotions, as it would be impossible in the ping-pong game of the word language. A bad word – if it could have been uttered – would have simply burst on its way to the recipient in this medium that endowed every expression of life with the hovering indeterminacy of the owl's flight.

Even the facial expressions of the sea people were much softer than those of their cousins on land. Every smile led the person to which the smile was directed into the innermost chambers of the smiling person -

whereas you had often enough experienced the smile as a mask that locked out the person smiled at of the innermost realm of the smiling person. But in this underwater world doors did not exist. People flowed freely around each other, and every touch involved the whole person.

With somnambulistic self-evidence they accepted you in their midst, as if you had always been a part of them. You willingly joined in their round dance, a footnote in a great, all-pervading harmony.

Like the embers that slowly eat their way through a burnt log of wood, the movements of the dancers warmed you so that soon you no longer noticed the coldness of the lake. A feeling of liberation, even redemption, spread through you.

Only when you wanted to return to the surface and did not find the way immediately, when in surfacing you had the feeling that in reality you were not surfacing at all – or rather: that you were immersing into a world

that was just as alien to you as the one you were about to leave –, only then did you remember, shivering, the weathered writing above the gate to the underwater realm: Ophelia's shores ...



Indian Summer

The smile that recently had run away from you suddenly lay at your door again. Shivering, it asked to be let in, so that you took pity on it and unlocked the door. When it followed you into the kitchen, you even warmed up some old memories for it to help it regain its strength.

In the evening, the smile lay down next to you in bed and purred around your dreams.

It's been a long time since you slept so soundly.

The next day, the smile had disappeared. At first you thought it was waiting for you in the kitchen, but you didn't find it there either. To your own surprise, you weren't sad about this at all, and you didn't feel the urge to search the streets for it. You sensed that it was still there, even if you could no longer see it.

Later, when you went outside, you found the smile again. It gleamed on you from the faces of the oncoming people, with delicate threads it overcame the walls between you and them and spun you all into a cocoon of cheerful serenity.



Fog Home

Here, in the eternal cave of fog,
is where you are at home.

Here, where the things free themselves
from the corset of their shape
and flow into each other,
where they are interwoven
in a carpet of drops
that permeates everything.

Here, where every path
is getting lost in vagueness,
where behind every turn of the trail
the unexpected is waiting for you.

Here, where the tears
of not understanding any longer
dissolve in the haze
of that which has not yet awakened.



Misty Truth

Fog ... Is it a veil covering reality, or is it only your own vision that is clouded?

In the cones of light from the street lamps the fog appears to you as dancing dew. But if you go closer, it parts before you like an invisible sea, and you only feel its damp, cold breath on your skin, like something that has always been around you without you ever noticing it.

When you lift your eyes and look into the distance, there can be no doubt about the existence of this non-existent something. There the mist, that magician with the cloak

of invisibility, makes things unmistakably disappear. In the distance, the trees blur into pale shadows, silently waving their gnarled arms, like dream visions beckoning from another world. They are suddenly part of another reality, a reality in which things are no longer lost in an abundance of details, but reveal themselves to you in their true form. Only now that they are eluding you do they reveal themselves to you in their essence.

Thus the fog makes the visible invisible and the invisible visible. The spider's web, which you had otherwise passed by heedlessly, has been transformed overnight into a labyrinth of pearl necklaces, so that its predatory beauty now shines unmissably out of the bushes. And the twittering talks of the birds, the muffled prayers of the church bells, the chirping of the dew in the cocoon of the foliage – all this penetrates the floodgates of your consciousness only now that the cur-

tain has fallen on the spectacle of the outer world.

It is true, the fog tells its own truth. And if you look ahead, to where the path opens into a dark, invisible gate after only a few metres, and then to the back, where it emerges from an equally dark maw – then you will also realise who it is that is sharpening your eye for the essence of things here.



Fog Traces

The signs you have discovered in the sky do not seem to make any sense to you at first. You are sure that they are only the hoofprints left by the fog rider on his fall through the sky.

But the closer you look at the signs, the more you are convinced that there must be a secret meaning hidden in them. With great effort, you try to understand the inner logic of the signs.

Perhaps, you think, this is not a scripture in the classical sense. Maybe you have to understand the signs one by one before you can reconstruct their overall context. Or could it be that they have to be deciphered from their centre? Isn't it possible that their meaning reveals itself in a moment of sudden enlightenment, as soon as it becomes clear what holds them together at their core?

But no matter how many attempts you make, the dice of logic always rolls past the signs. And then, when you finally feel that you have caught a glimpse of their meaning, the signs fade before your eyes and are finally swallowed up by the night. To your surprise, you feel no disappointment. Instead, relief spreads through you: relief that the secret has been preserved.



Autumn Night

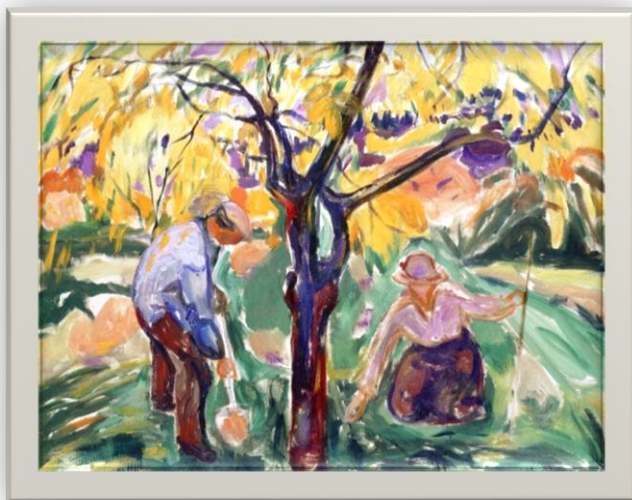
Haltlessly, the mob of memories chases past the magic lantern of the moon. As soon as one of them has revealed itself in the ghostly light, it is displaced by another and pushed back into the darkness of oblivion. Seldom do you succeed in pressing your eye to one of these creatures' peepholes and peering into its belly.

Every peephole is an abyss that sucks you down into the depths of your life. Nevertheless, you cannot refrain from creeping up on your former shells again and again. But just

as you think you are diving into one of them, another goblin-like structure pushes itself in front of the peephole, so that you avert your gaze in confusion.

Even the bewitching glance of the moon lantern, the ghostly clarity which it weaves around all things, is of no help to you. Its way of simply denying the passed nature of the past makes your own life seem even more alien to you. When you try to illuminate the cave at your back with this lantern, it is as if you were looking into a steamed-up mirror.

And so you continue staring helplessly at the dance of death in your soul's sky, watching how one structure eats its way into another, how the images slide into and out of each other, how they disintegrate and reassemble, how they create a world that is your own without you being able to feel at home in it.



Apple Eyes

The wrinkled apple you picked up from the ground last night has turned into an old woman's head in your hand. Frightened, you open your fingers to free the fruit from the prison of your fist – or is it the other way round? But the fruit is like fused to your skin, nothing can detach it.

You want to avert your gaze, but you have already lost yourself in the eyes of the old woman. They stare at you with the impas-

sive greed of a snake and the calm compassion of a hundred-year-old nun. "Weren't you expecting me?" they seem to ask you from the depths of their caves. And although you know very well that you have been waiting for nothing but these eyes all your life, you instinctively shake your head. At the same moment, the apple detaches itself from your hand and sinks into the ground beneath your feet. You clearly feel the soft embrace of the earth, its warm breath penetrating the sweet flesh and metamorphosing it with motherly care.



Stormy Day

As soon as you open the windows, the wind, indulging in the rampage of its lament outside, ruffles your hair. In a blind fury, he mistreats the slender birches and wrenches at the gnarled crowns of the oaks, like someone who has lost the dearest and now wants to call the first person to account for his loss. And you know: he will not rest until his victims are as uprooted as he is.

If he, the eternally raging, eternally lamenting, could pause for just a moment, he would realise that no one can bring back to him what he has lost, because in truth he has suffered no loss at all. But that is precisely what is his problem: he is condemned to always be on the move, to never come to his senses, to be eternally on the way towards himself, without ever finding more than the fleeting traces that his restless movement leaves in matter. Thus lamentation is his form of existence.

It is true that the rootless one sometimes retreats to higher regions or slackens in his lamentation, so that it seems to you as if he had come to rest for a short time. But when you listen more closely, you realise that his mourning is always around you, in every second of your existence, that it pervades you like the breath of the world that has condemned you to death.



November

Silently the fog-women are mourning
in the branchwork of your life.
The dream fruits have long since fallen off.
Gnawed, they melt away
on the bottom of the lake of time.

Wearied, your gaze wanders
through the cloister of the twigs.
And you realise:
what you had taken for a bouquet of paths,
is in fact only a spider's web.



Winterly Seclusion

On the coldest day of the year, you turned into a block of ice. Now you are lying as a stranger in the world, as a comet from another galaxy for which there is no place on Earth, a heap of rubble that has no feeling for what is happening around it.

Lovers kiss each other passionately on your skin, soldiers kindle their blind fury against each other, children slide laughing over your back - but you do not take notice of it. To you, the storm of events is just another swarm of comets that you watch pass by indifferently.

Just as the world is foreign to you, you are foreign to the world. Some people make themselves comfortable on you and marvel at the strange panorama that is offered to them from the small hill of your existence. Others cool their heads on you when, heated by their wanderings through the jungle of the world, they immerse themselves in your cold atmosphere. But you yourself do not exist for them, you are only the medium that makes their metamorphosis possible.

And then, finally, you feel the breath of spring brush over your ice shield. Before long, it has completely thawed away. Your skin is suddenly alive again, it breathes again, and when you are touched, the contact penetrates your skin again instead of evaporating on its surface.

Now you are part of the whole again, you think. But then you realise that the ice shield has grown into you. Even though your skin is no longer frozen, it remains an impenetrable

wall that separates you from the world. What you feel is not the world itself, but only an echo of the idea you conceive of it. And when others approach you, there is always an invisible boundary that they cannot cross. You see them talking, you see them acting, but their talking and acting does not reach you, just as they do not perceive you under the cloak of your ice shell.

Thus your thawing has only made you aware that you are condemned to congeal in a living body. You have become aware of your true nature, you clearly feel that the ice shell is only a costume that an unfathomable fate has forced upon you. But since the costume sticks to you like a second skin, you now not only look foreign to those who are foreign to you and who unsuspectingly exploit you for foreign purposes. You have also become a stranger to yourself, to yourself and your ice-block existence that encloses you within yourself.



Comet Swarms

The region in which your planet is located is one of the most inhospitable places in the entire universe. On your neighbouring planets – even they inaccessible to you – all life disintegrates in burning nebulae or under mountains of pure ice as soon as the slightest idea of it appears.

The planets that cluster around neighbouring suns are equally uninhabited. Even

from the galaxies that adjoin yours, not the faintest sign of life penetrates to you.

Of course, you know that you have to be careful with your conclusions. It is quite possible that only your measuring instruments are not suitable for recognising the life that thrives on your neighbouring planets and in your neighbouring galaxies. Perhaps it is simply so different from yours that your instruments – adjusted to the forms of your own life – cannot detect it. Perhaps, therefore, even your whole conception of the universe is a mirage, a curtain that covers the true nature of your cosmic environment and makes you see everywhere only the reflection of your own limited reality.

But what is the point of all these musings, now that a swarm of comets is hurtling in unalterable course towards your planet, dooming it to join its procession of the undead? Faced with the imminent end of life as you know it, there is nothing you desire more than that somewhere in the depths of

space a life form similar to your own might exist.

And so, now that you feel the cosmic swirl approaching that will absorb your planet, you seek refuge in the belief that at the other end of the universe, at a place that even the most persistent telescopes will never detect, a world exists in which the homeless images of your spirit can drop anchor as in a cosmic Fata Morgana.

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Thus, at a time when all time is past, when the fragments of your planet have already wandered for millions of years through the vastness of the cosmos and the presence of your world arrives in the presence of that

other world, the light of your life could be recognised as such and not simply registered as another cosmic firework.



Nocturnal Call

In your dream you see yourself getting out of bed and going to the window to get some fresh air. It suddenly felt unbearably stuffy and cramped in your bed, as if you were lying in a nutshell that enclosed you on all sides.

At the window you deeply suck in the fresh night air – but with the air a dark call also wafts over to you, echoing from the nearby forest. It sounds melancholic and promising at the same time, something irresistible emanates from it. Is this the call of the

forest witch who wants to make you forget that her cold embrace would make your blood freeze in your veins? Is it the desperate cry of a lost soul pleading for salvation? Or does the call only seem so gloomy to you because the eternally wailing night wind carries it to your ear?

Curious, you listen more closely. Anxiously you listen out into the night - but suddenly the call dies away, swallowed up by the silence of the cosmic darkness. Disappointed and relieved at the same time, you close the window and tell yourself that the call could impossibly have been meant for you.

When you want to go back to bed, a body is already lying on your side. But of course, you think, I'm already asleep, so how could I lie down? And yet you have the distinct feeling that someone else is stealing your sleep.

The next morning you feel as exhausted as after an arduous night hike. Furthermore, you are strangely reluctant to touch the

newspaper. The call that reached your ear at night lives on in you as a dark premonition. You feel as if you had witnessed a crime that you yourself had committed, and as if all the newspapers had to report it as soon as you opened them.

The Crow

The flock of crows you have joined has set up camp for the night in a cemetery. Because you are not yet tired, you glide down from the mighty sleeping tree to hop around a little on the gravel paths between the graves.

Although you can't remember having been here before, a certain part of the cemetery, a certain row of graves, magically attracts you. At the end, you sit on a moss-covered gravestone whose inscription is barely visible in the twilight.

You bend forward, in a curiosity incomprehensible to yourself, and look at the weathered signs on the stone. Although you cannot read, the arrangement of the signs



seems strangely familiar to you. Of course, as a crow, you have no name - yet you are sure that the signs on the gravestone form your own name.

Interesting, you think, so I was a human being in a previous life! You imagine what it would be like if you could only walk on two legs all your life, permanently chained to the hard ground of the earth. You wonder how it would feel if you could never swing up into the air on a sudden whim to look at the world from above. Wouldn't the walnut shell of your life then seem to you like a labyrinth in which you can by no means get your bearings?

Like the faint echo of a past life, a secret resentment rises within you; a resentment against your inability to escape the relentless force that binds you to the ground and that will inevitably suck you down into it at some point; a resentment that makes you destroy in a self-destructive frenzy everything that rises from this ground and makes

you cover the land instead with spawns of your offended spirit, as if you wanted to escape to heaven on them and thus escape the inexorable force that wrenches at your limbs.

Like the faint echo of a past life, a secret resentment rises within you; a resentment against your inability to escape the relentless force that binds you to the ground and that will inevitably suck you down into it at some point; a resentment that will make you destroy in a self-destructive frenzy everything that rises from this ground and make you cover the land instead with spawns of your aggrieved spirit, as if you wanted to escape to heaven on them and thus evade the inexorable force that tugs at your limbs. Before the falling night can absorb the gravestone, you flutter back to your sleeping tree, exhausted. The next morning you will rise into the air and look down with a pleasant shiver at the swarm of maggots you were once entangled in.



The Shadow Town

Seldom have you felt greater relief than on that evening when, after the long odyssey through the labyrinth of the forest, you saw the lights of the city flashing in the valley. At last you had reached your destination, at last you would be able to lay your head to rest.

As you pass through the city gates, however, you wonder how quiet it is in this place. From nowhere can you hear dogs barking or the roar of traffic, snatches of words or children laughing. No noise, nothing can be

heard - not even the slightest rustling of the wind in the trees. Absolute silence prevails. Furthermore, you realise that what you had taken for lights were in fact only reflections of the sunlight. Now that night has fallen, all windows have faded. If the moon did not cast a pale reflection of the day into the alleys, you would have to walk through complete darkness.

The inhabitants of the city also seem strange to you. When you ask them for a place to stay overnight, they stare past you into space, as if they did not see you or did not understand your question. Are there so many foreigners here that hardly anyone speaks the language of the locals? Or is it exactly the other way round? Are the inhabitants so used to being among themselves that they even perceive a person from the neighbouring village as an unwanted intruder?

Another thing that seems incomprehensible to you are the memorial plaques hanging

everywhere. You are not unfamiliar with this form of commemorative culture, but usually such plaques are not affixed to every house. In addition, the inscriptions tell of ordinary citizens - roofers, hairdressers, electricians, shop assistants - who, as far as you can see, have in no way rendered outstanding contributions to the community life. Nor do they seem to have fallen victim to any massacre or extraordinary natural disaster. Rather, most of them seem to have died of natural causes.

A feeling of unease spreads through you, which increases to a feverish restlessness and finally escalates into panic when you realise where you have ended up here. You rush back to the gate through which you entered the city. But what you thought was a way back turns out to be a road that only leads you deeper into the belly of the city. So you walk in the opposite direction - but even there the city proves to have no end. It almost seems to walk along with you,

spreading out wherever you go. The more you move, the more you get caught in its spider web.

The most curious thing, however, is that the deeper you penetrate into the labyrinth, the more indifferent you become to your fate; that you surrender more and more to a restlessness which you perceive less and less as such - until you finally accept the shadow city in which you are trapped as the appropriate place for you to stay.



The Siren Chant of the Dreams

In the distance, wrapped in silken robes of clouds, the dreams are lolling. They entice you with lascivious gestures, they radiate crimson-red at you. Golden jewellery surrounds them, their mute siren songs murmur seductively in your ears.

You know that you only have to reach out your hand to pick the most beautiful of them. Should you really remain at your place, a mere spectator of the glorious theatre of dreams?

They woo you, they attract you, you can hardly resist them. In the end, however, you

remain steadfast and take care not to join in the round dance of dreams. After all, you know only too well: whoever loses himself in their chalice also forgets which field he wanted to fertilise with their nectar.



The Dream Hunter

At dusk, your dreams step out of the darkness of the forest. They drink the twilight, they bask in the scent of memory herbs that the wind carries down from a land beyond the hills.

You watch them revive, now that they no longer have to hide, now that they can unfold undisturbed by the lattice of tree trunks. It almost seems to you as if they were growing, like shadows reaching out into space in the slanting sun.

Time and again it also happens that your dreams join with other dreams. They romp around each other, dance around each other, jump around each other. Sometimes you feel as if the way they encircle each other, the way they branch into each other and spread out over the fields in ever new patterns, is creating something new, a dream that encloses all dreams within itself, a dream home that offers shelter to all dreams.

So you stand there and dream yourself into the herd of your dreams. But of course you know that your idyll is fragile. It is always threatened by the dark eyes of the hunter who watches the herd from the undergrowth. He envies your dreams their peace, he cannot bear that their freedom is so much greater than his, which is always strapped into the harness of reason.

And so it happens not seldom that a shot shatters the idyll and your dreams fly back into the belly of the forest. Repeatedly, one

of them is also hit and spills its blood into the dewy grass. Then the hunter, with a bored look on his face, descends from his high seat and strolls leisurely through the meadow to give your dream the finishing shot and disembowel it.

As you mourn the death of your dream, you comfort yourself with the certainty that the hunter, by killing the dream and subjugating it to his purposes, will never obtain what made the dream a dream. After all, a dream that has been killed is no longer what it was. And so the essence of a dream will always outlast its death.

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