AN ILLUSTRATED

LESBO-WESTERN

BY ANGELOS SPARTALIS



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To summer girls



BACK COVER

Maria, the timid daughter of a major-general, and high school senior in a Greek provincial town in the late 1980s, is in love with her childhood friend and classmate, the tempestuous Stella. Alarmed by small-town gossip, the major-general hurriedly forces his daughter engagement to a trusted subordinate officer. Straight after graduation, he sees that Maria gets married and swiftly sends her off to Athens. Stella, violently separated from her beloved Maria, burns all bridges and escapes to study in the colourful Netherlands. A chance encounter between Maria and Stella seven years later in Amsterdam at the Van Gogh Museum is where our story begins.

A draft of a modern tragedy or the story-board for a film, the fragmentary story of Maria and Stella by Angelos Spartalis is a kind of a contemporary –less elegant – Romeo and Juliet. Structured and numbered in the manner of Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and of the unfinished poem "Woman of Zakynthos" by the national poet of Greece Dionysios Solomos, this is not a compact, well-rounded rhythmical narrative. There is no literary pretence in this anarchically illustrated hybrid Lesbo-Western. All in your face!

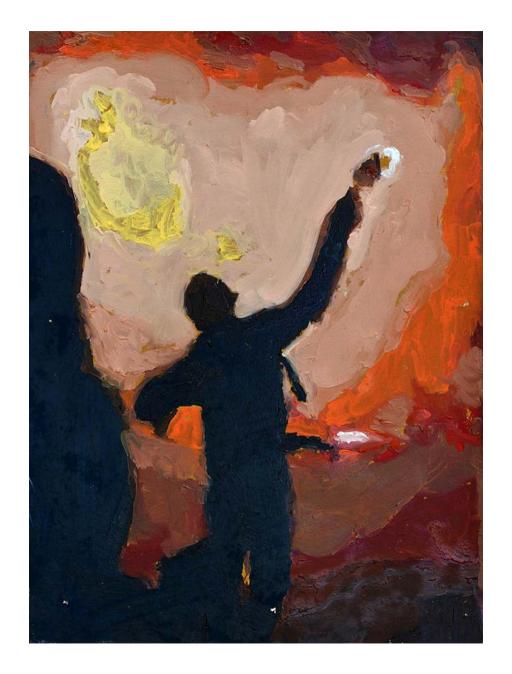


For only I, who take without giving and you, who give without taking, can truly love each other.

CHAPTER I



I'm sleeping and dreaming in my hammock. You will fall.



- 1. **[Entrance]** This will be the story of Maria and Stella as recomposed through studying and comparing the following information:
- 1a. [Publications] All relevant articles from current affairs and crime reports in the newspapers were indexed.
- 1b. [Diary] Maria's illustrated diary, a copy of which was kindly granted by the German philosopher Dr Max Vida, was thoroughly examined.
- Ic. [Narrations] Narrations by friends and relatives of the two girls were transcribed, including by captain* of Armoured Corps, Mr Aristotelis Magkanas, who had the following qualities:
- 1c.1. [Husband] He was Maria's first and only legal spouse.
- 1c.2. **[Lover]** He was -under quite odd circumstances- Stella's lover too.

^{*} Potentially unknown or obscure words and phrases used for the first time are marked with an asterisk and explained in detail in the Glossary* in the end of the book.



- 2. [A chance encounter, the second kiss] It took place in Amsterdam.
- 2a. [Maria in Amsterdam] Maria was in Amsterdam because of her husband's participation in yet another NATO* exercise.

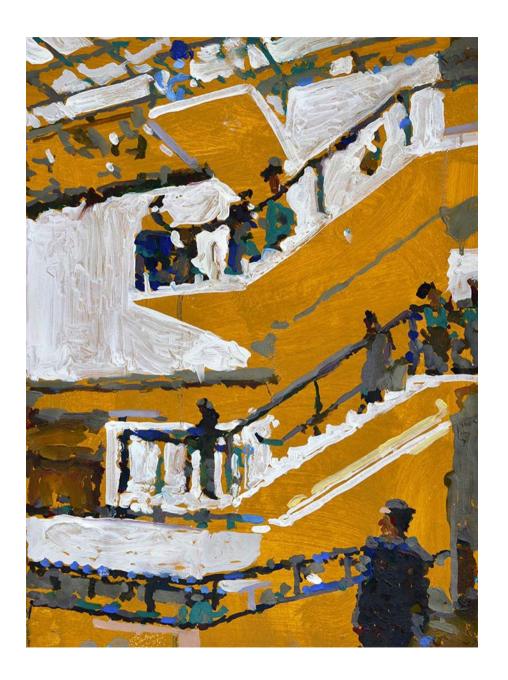
The captain was travelling a lot, both in Europe and the USA, and he visited Amsterdam at least twice a year on business trips. Maria never accompanied him although she'd really love to. It was the first time after seven years of marriage —and after her father's decisive intervention—that Maria would at last be joining her husband abroad. When she first set foot in the Netherlands, the calendar read 1st January 1997 and Amsterdam was blinking heavily decorated with a billion festive lights.

During her ten day-stay in the Dutch capital, Maria visited all major museums and galleries. She really loved the Van Gogh* Museum and she returned there every day, again and again. She spent most of her time in front of her favourite painting, The Starry Night*. She claimed that every time she could see something different in this magnificent painting by the Dutch master. Something more, something all the more deep and fine. But the captain doubted that this was even possible. He said that to him it sounded more like some kind of mental disease. He had an overall plan to alienate Maria from painting as soon as possible. But it's not as if he was a monster.



2b. [Stella in Amsterdam] Stella had been living in Amsterdam for seven consecutive years except when on short holiday breaks in Athens, in Exarchia.* She never returned to Crete, where she grew up. She started studying Maths -she was extremely talented-but, soon, her disputes with the professors, who were of lower mathematical intelligence compared to her, made her switch to a different discipline and keep maths only for herself. She completed her basic academic studies in Sociology and continued with a Master in Aesthetics*, in the UvA* School of Sociology and Psychology. "Music and poetry as composition tools in Adorno's* critical discourse" was the title of her Master's dissertation. Passionate about the arts, she was happy in Amsterdam, a city with important museums and up-to-date galleries. During her regular visits to the Van Gogh Museum, she too -just like Maria- could see something all the more deep in her cherished Starry Night.

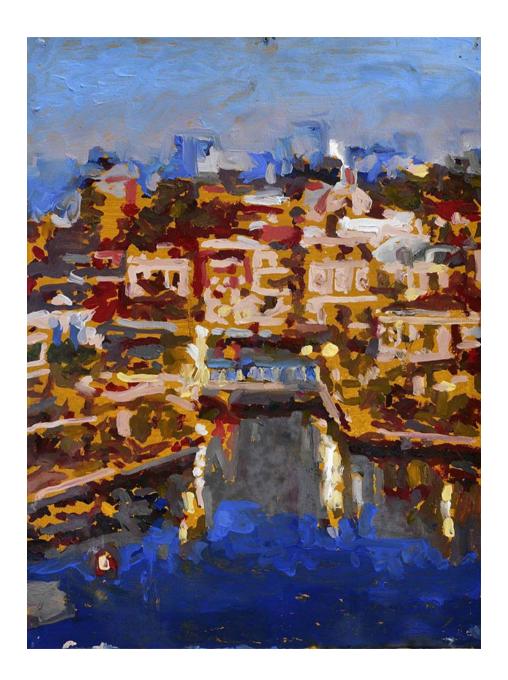
In addition to studying and visiting the museums and galleries, Stella would also swim regularly in alcohol and dive in LSD.* She loved extremes, and Amsterdam in the early '90s was the kingdom of extremes. She rode a red Ducati* motorcycle and always carried around an engraved Colt revolver.* She made loads of money dealing drugs. At some point, she even pretended she was a hooker. On Sundays she prostituted herself behind a luxury window* in De Wallen* only to experiment and not because she was short of money. She was looking for female customers, but she slept with men too. Anything kinky that would come her way. In any case, to avoid any misunderstanding, she made sure that she devoutly showed off her unshaved legs and unshaved armpits. Her cunt was like a bush.



2c. [Maria and Stella in Amsterdam] They bumped into each other on the top of one of the many staircases in the Van Gogh Museum. Where else? In front of the Starry Night. To grasp how big a coincidence, how rare a moment this was, one should know that this painting, which both girls so adored, is not among the permanent collections of the Van Gogh Museum. And yet, there it was –on temporary loan from the New York Museum of Modern Art– so that it would become the ultimate setting for the girls' chance reconnection after so many years. And so, that day Maria would indeed see that something else, that more, deeper and finer something.

Stella could already see it loaded as she was from two shrooms* that distort the perception of space. It all started with a five second pause without any words. And then, a sudden explosion of a kiss with tongue, like a snake bite. An erotic attack from Stella to Maria. Who responded. Reservedly, but she did respond.

Everything was yellow.



3. [The first kiss and other past events]

3a. [In high school] Maria and Stella were born in 1973 in Eastern Crete, the largest island of Greece. On the exact same day and time in Agios Nikolaos -or just Agios, as locals call it- a beautiful coastal provincial town with a lagoon. Childhood best friends and classmates -Maria was the best student in the class, Stella was the school troublemaker- the two girls had kissed on the mouth before, in the past, a long time ago before the kiss in Amsterdam, in their junior year, only once, in the school toilets. But right after this first kiss and until graduation, when they were separated, they never spoke to each other again. Maria out of cowardliness, Stella out of contempt for cowardliness. They only looked each other in the eyes from a distance. That was something at least but not enough. So many years of friendship were erased in an instant because of an acrobatic kiss. Cause Stella had already come out and was prone to all things forbidden, while Maria was extremely prissy.

3b. [In primary school] PASOK* came to power in 1981 and, in a general context of modernisation, it immediately abolished (a) school uniforms, (b) the stick with which teachers had the right to hit students, (c) polytonic orthography and (d) criminal prosecution for adultery. Back then, Stella was with Maria in the 3rd grade of primary school and she was really happy about it because in the 1st and 2nd grade she felt really oppressed having to wear that blue prison uniform with the white collar and being too often spanked with the stick on the hands. Maria had absolutely no problem with the school uniform, she was actually rather sad to say goodbye to it. And as for spanking that made one's hands red, she wanted it although she didn't know it yet. Every time the teacher hit Stella, Maria's mouth would become wet. But such a good and obedient student she was that she never got the spanking she so much desired at school, and neither would she now.

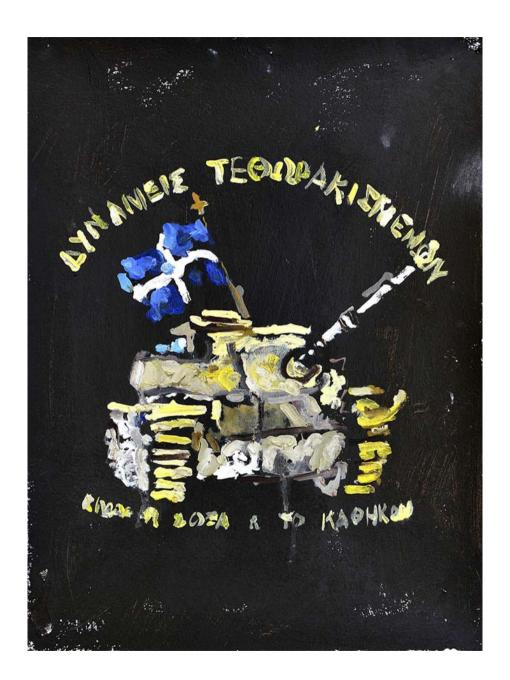


3c. **[Fishing spots]** There were two great fishing spots in Agios, and the girls -before the turmoil caused by their first kiss on the mouth- used to go fishing there regularly. Not only to kill innocent fish. But also to sit side by side and be alone, just the two of them. With a fishing rod, popping corks and dough baits on the hook.

The first fishing spot was the lagoon in the centre of Agios where all nearby restaurants and hotels used to discharge their waste at the time. The connection to the main sewage network did not take place until many years later. And since too much shit means too many fish, the girls' little baskets were full in a trice. But they never fried their trophies. They threw them to the cats.

The other fishing spot was the slaughterhouses outside Agios that later were converted into the rehearsal studio of the municipal philharmonic orchestra and then to a mooring marina for sailing boats and luxury yachts. From the death rattle of pigs to the fanfare of amateur trumpet players, and from that to photo models giggling on the sailing boat prow, it was a cheap future, the nonsense of a wealthy society.

Right there, back in the time of the slaughterhouses that Maria and Stella were old enough to remember, the blood and the intestines of the slaughtered animals fell into the sea and were baits for lots of fish. The little baskets of the lovestruck girls were full and cats were really happy again.



3d. [Betrothal and nuptials] Engaged at 17 and married at 18 to a military officer. This was the dramatic outcome of Maria's love acrobatics. Her father couldn't stand gossip and tittle-tattle: Maria and Stella were inseparable since they were little without -evershowing the slightest interest in little boys. And they kept hugging on the couch while playing ATARI.* And they kept holding hands while fishing. Hence? And what's more, they were seen kissing on the mouth in the school toilets by some tattler girls who were lurking. Fuck. "If you ever speak to her again, you'll have to go through me", screamed the major-general. Then, endowed with a big fortune and abundant youthful beauty, Maria was quickly engaged without posing any considerable resistance to her father's orders.

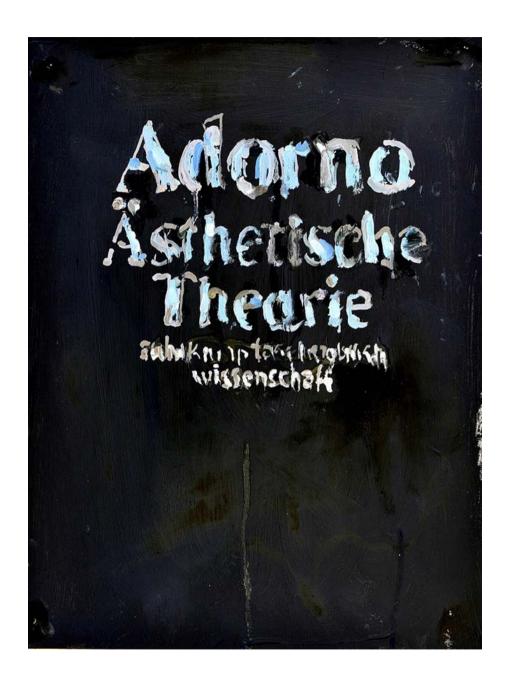
On the day she turned 18, the major-general married off his daughter with his trusted subordinate officer, an Armoured Corps captain, Aristotelis Magkanas. Maria laughed and celebrated forcibly in front of 2,000 spiteful guests. The golden wedding made the front page of the local newspaper "ANATOLI". Right afterwards, Maria, the newlywed husband, the parents and their only living grandma moved all together to a safe neighbourhood far away, in Papagou*, in Athens. The couple lived on the top floor in a freshly painted penthouse, and right below them lived the bride's parents and grandma. The house in Agios went dark. Stella, disappointed, also left Agios and vanished; she went to the Netherlands to study without anyone knowing. Only her grandpa who raised her knew. He covered her initial expenses, although it did not take Stella long to become more than financially independent thanks to her shrewdness. And so, seven years passed, and here we are in 1997.



- 4. **[On the staircase of the Van Gogh Museum]** The two girls slowly pulled back after the sudden kiss. Seven years in the dark is no short time. Stella grabbed her Maria from the shoulders and looked at her proudly. Maria wanted to cry but she held back her tears. Stella realised that and wanted to laugh but she held back her laughter.
- 4a. [Maria] Good with words but even better with glances, Maria, only with a glance and without uttering a single word, was the first to say:

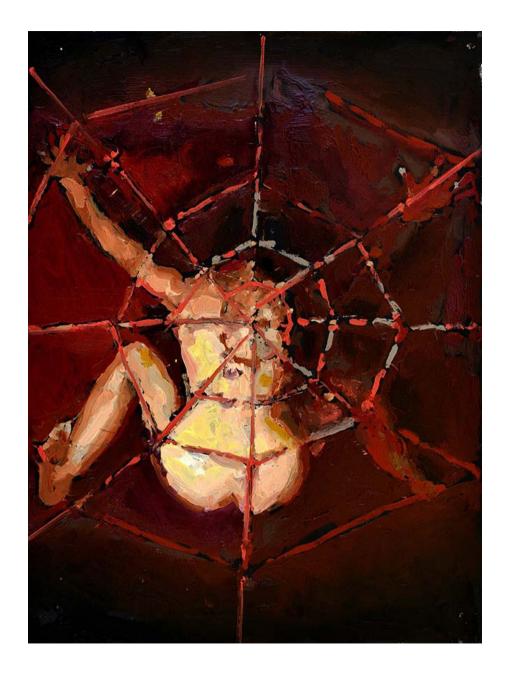
"I want you".

- 4b. **[Stella]** Taken aback by Maria's boldness -this was a very different Maria from the one she knew- Stella said: "There are people who increase lust by reducing military service, who prolong orgasm by shrinking shyness, who draw pleasure by initiating melancholy. You. Your erotically bold kindness overpowers the state". Stella went on talking moving her head back and forth and begged Maria: "Give me a little something, something, anything, something yours to keep on me, give me a little something, anything, something, anything, something yours to keep on me, give me a little something, something, anything, something yours to keep on me. What goes on goes on, it goes, what goes on goes on, it goes, what goes on goes on, it goes".
- 4c. [The one high-as-a-kite and the one boozed up] Maria had left her Stella drinking beers, raki and smoking joints and, all of a sudden, seven years later, she found her soaked in LSD. However, lushed up as she was after having had two G&Ts at the museum's cafe-bar-boozed up-, she found all the crazy stuff Stella was saying normal. She shouldn't have.

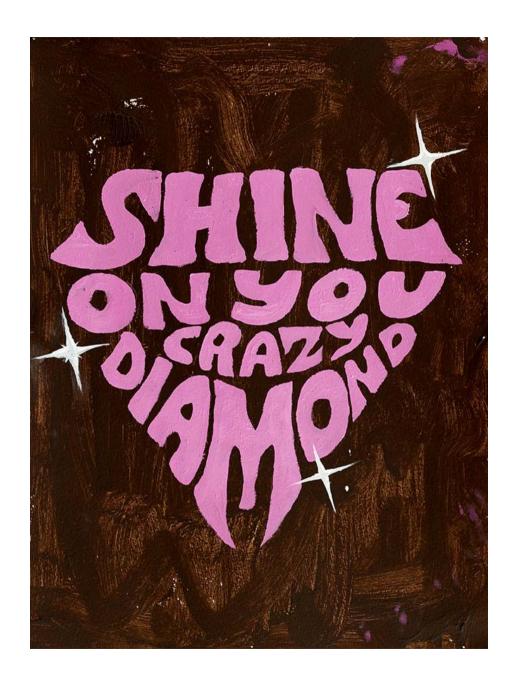


5. [The phone call / Il tumulto universale della città!*] With Maria's golden chain wrapped around her left ankle three times, Stella was waiting for the phone call at the university's library. She looked as if she was studying her books but that was not the case. Her mind was wandering. She couldn't focus on studying. Maria had promised her that she would call in the afternoon to go for a glass of wine. It didn't happen. Stella thought it over and over again. Maria didn't call her. Although she had promised to, she didn't call her. So what, no big deal. She would call her. It wasn't like her at all to beg. But for Maria she would do it. Stella called Maria. Many times.

In vain.



6. [A few words about Stella] She likes girls. And when girls say they will call in the afternoon to go have a glass of wine, she laughs warmly, gives them a wet kiss on the neck and fades away, like a ghost in the small square of the village, like an angel receding into the distance on the central avenue of the big city. Girls rarely call, nor would they ever answer her calls, out of cowardliness hidden in the bones in the face of the love of angelic creatures. But when she meets the girls again by chance, she does not make a scene, she does not drop any hints, she does not raise her eyebrow, she does not even ask; she is equally warmly warm in her body that is like an arrow. It's no big deal. She leaves aside the momentary awkwardness, the systematic betrayal she suffers and turns on an invulnerable tenderness. And this is when girls fall in love with her. This is her love mechanism that seems innocent, but it's not. It's her web.

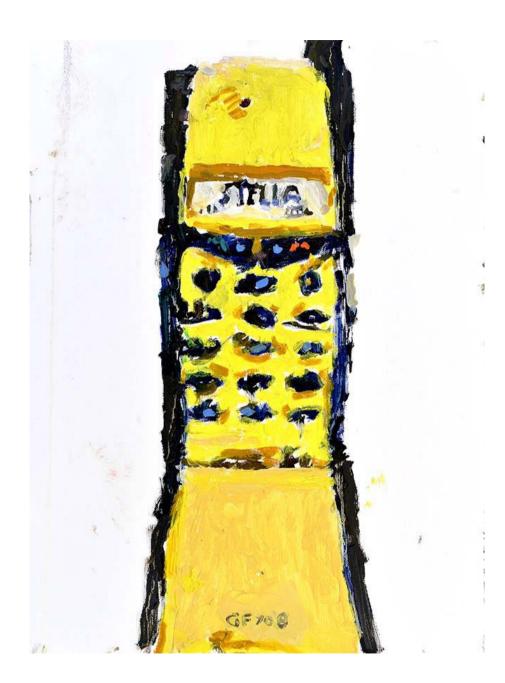


7. [A few more words about Stella / Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen*]

7a. [Stella sober] Here, there, everywhere, she never pauses, restless in a cruel world -both on the inside and the outside- a single girl who resists is enough. Travelling in new things and in freedom, overturning the establishment but holding unchanged in her hand -both on the inside and the outside- "the universal constant of beauty that will save the world" (said prince Myshkin*).

Because a single beacon makes countless ships turn.

7b. [Stella high / Shine on you crazy diamond*] Instead of Dostoyevsky's* universal constant of beauty that will save the world, Stella -having substituted tenderness with madness- is now holding tight in her hand an engraved Colt revolver.

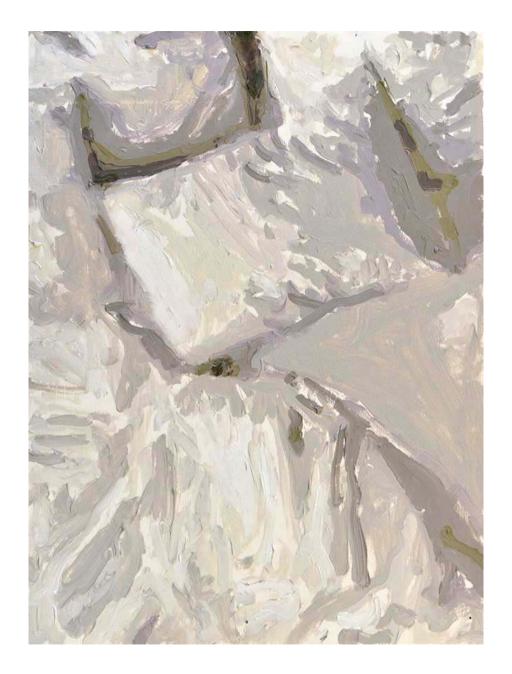


8. **[A dream in mumbo jumbo]** Maria didn't answer Stella's two first calls. She didn't answer at the last moment. She was about to pick up but then, she wimped out. Whatever doubts she may had had about whether she should meet her Stella or not were dissolved by the captain. The captain said:

"We arranged with two fellow officers to go for dinner with our ladies tonight. Get dressed".

When Stella called her twice again, Maria pressed the red button right after the first ring. Dismiss. Then she put the device in silent mode and Stella was left all alone without an answer in Maria's purse for hours. The dinner that followed was a torture for Maria; she had never been so bored in her life. The same night, totally wasted, when sleep mercifully took over her body, she saw a dream in mumbo jumbo:

Dr-eam(ink)-ing [sic] the black-red waves, I hastily entered the sleep you were travelling your hair was like two sheep and a carriage was dragging it forwards and backwards and sideways, click-click, the wheels were old the gears were ungreased at the table the man who did not remember if he remembers with a glass of wine and a flower on his ear and I say to him "go away" and he says "you're joking, right?" and we all sat together to have a word or two and words became ten and two and I say to him "I want her, sush" and he says "wow". You entered dreaming, you're leaving dreaming. It was in Amsterdam. In 1989. Yes? No. In 1997. Yes.



9. **[Early on Sunday morning]** With the dream still vivid in her mind, Maria opened her eyes in the arms of the captain -he was brawny- and said to herself: "A cursed place's caress is made of glass". It was Sunday, 5 January 1997, and the captain woke up in a bad mood. He cursed his luck, because, supposedly, he had to go to work on a Sunday and what's more, stay overnight. A lie. Here's what would happen: (a) the captain would go on an all day and night bender with hookers and strippers. (b) Maria would be left alone for hours in the hotel room, tossing and turning in bed, without being able to muster the courage to answer any of the consecutive love calls. (c) Stella would make the consecutive love calls.

At 7 in the afternoon -that in January in the humid Netherlands is more like a heavy night- the coward Maria decided to let chance decide for her and finally left the hotel. On Sundays the Van Gogh Museum was open all day until midnight. If she met her Stella there, it would be a good sign, she would dive deeper in love, all the way till the end.

Stella had been there since morning when the museum opened. She was waiting for her Maria. She only left for two hours at noon to deal some drugs and two hours in the afternoon to fuck behind the window. As Stella was leaving for the window, Maria was entering the museum. When Stella returned to the museum, Maria had just left for the hotel; it was the first night she would be alone. When the clock struck midnight, Stella who hadn't slept for two days and nights, blasted from three stimulating shrooms and a bottle of gin, started screaming and the guards kicked her out -with great difficulty. And so another night passed in Amsterdam. Triumphal for the captain, harrowing for the two smitten girls.



10. **[Early Monday morning]** Stella received a call from her lawyer and was astounded by the news: her beloved grandpa was dead. A quick trip to Athens where her grandpa had lived for the last five years. Hasty tidying-up and a funeral with very few attendees. By thinking of Maria Stella defeated grief. The thought was something like this:

People love invisible things
And I love you
And every moment I'm thinking of you
Even now
That I'm balancing high up on the wobbly ladder
Studying the dusty items in the attic one by one
Everything is useless now
Thus, invisible.

I climb down the ladder and I firmly open the valve on grandpa's oxygen bottle

After grandpa's death

To let the oxygen escape, to empty the bottle

To avoid an explosion

That will blast grandpa's dusty things up in the air

Everything is useless now

Thus, invisible.

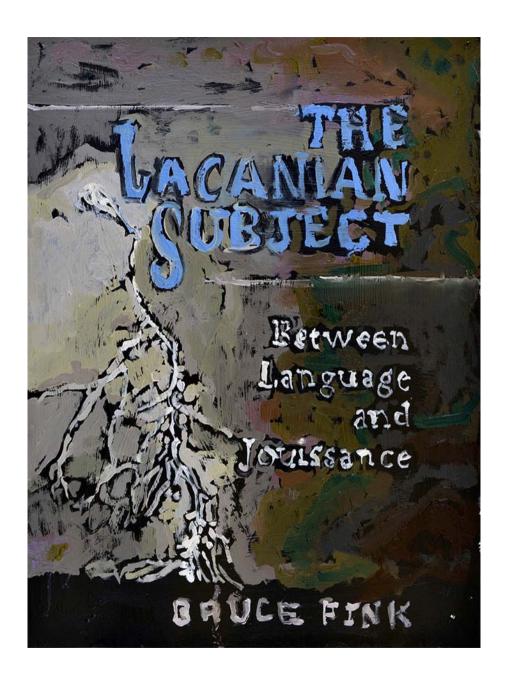
People believe in invisible things
And I believe in you and make the sign of the cross
And I say: Oh God, make her want me like I do
And then, at last
I can scorn her, mock her
But she will yearn for me even more with an unquenchable lust



I will tell her sweet nothings that I don't mean
I will fuck around
And she will be hurt
But she will be hoping.

And if you hear my wish, oh God You are an evil God and you exist And I'm made in your image.

People hope for invisible things
And I hope for you
And contrary to the laws of Physics
I see you everywhere
And always.



11. [And three days passed, and Stella went back, or if you're lucky, you'll find a way] The captain was a career officer with a degree in Engineering from NTUA* and a Master in the Resistance of Materials from MIT*. His otherwise wide range of knowledge did not include psychology. So, when a colleague mentioned Lacan* during a coffee break -as if it was the most common topic in the world- he felt uncomfortable. He only knew a couple of things about Freud. He didn't lie though, he was honest about these things. He said: "I'm not familiar with the topic, sir". And he changed the subject. He was an expert in changing the subject.

This incident explains why Maria was in the library of the University of Amsterdam next morning. The captain asked her to find and make a copy of Lacan's work (instead of pootling around in the streets all day and spending a fortune shopping, enough is enough). The parenthesis was not spoken out loud but it was explicitly implied, by glances and posture.

Maria's visit to the library was an authoritative order by the captain disguised in a kind request.



12. [In the library of the University of Amsterdam]

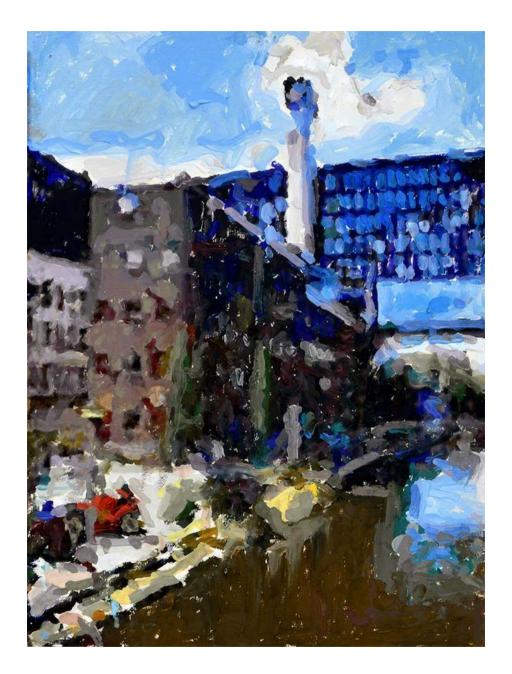
12a. [Thoughts are songs] Maria made copies of some excerpts from simplified introductions to Lacan's work. She read some of the pages diagonally. She was stoned from a joint, one of those freely sold at the time in the streets of Amsterdam by hawkers with wooden trays hanging from their necks. "Hash-hash, cokecoke!", they were touting their merchandise. Maria's thought took the form of a song. It went something like that:

All people yearn
To see invisible things
And so I yearn for your love
Like a sparrow yearns for water
Wherever you may roll, I follow
And my prissy inner world was overturned

Love is being Where you shouldn't be because It is dangerous or illegal or painful

.

12b. [The appeal of being superstitious] Maria counted the photocopied pages and there were thirteen of them. She thought it was a jinx and went back to the photocopying machine to copy at least one more. These defining seconds changed our story critically because they allowed the girls to meet once more.



14. [Another chance encounter] Maria bumped into Stella once more outside the library of the University of Amsterdam. The university was busy -had it been three seconds earlier or later, the encounter may had never happened. But it did. And don't you imagine a quarrel, quite the opposite. Stella did not leave any room for awkwardness. She hugged Maria warmly and completely, no piece of her lust for her was missing, there was no crack at all. What the fuck? Maria had dismissed so many calls, and now Stella was right there, unfaltering. Big ups.

Maria, mesmerized by the kindness and tenderness that enveloped her -without any hesitation- stuck her mouth on Stella's mouth. For ten whole seconds. One hundred students saw them and passed by them, Maria didn't give a shit any more. And after that, she slowly pulled her body away and stared at Stella deep in the eyes. "Now you pounce on me cause you're better at this", said her eyes. "After a tender kiss, anything goes, like in the world of dreams where nothing is forbidden..." answered Stella.

The ice was broken.



15. [The university was big, the streets had names] They met on the junction of Injured street and Stretcher-bearers street. How else? She, wounded by armoured loves, scarred by commitments and all alone deep inside, a forgotten apple. And the other one, holding a degree in carefreeness with honours but reproachable conduct. How else? The apple stared at the reproachable one, and she hastily grabbed the apple by the hand. She led her to the toilets of the university and slapped her for staring and kissed her for staring. How else? And licked her hard. How else? Rhythmically and methodically. How else? Until she triumphed over her tight body, melt all her ice cream and avoiding to assume any political responsibility for her terrorist attack -how else?- left her hot like milk and disappeared. Despair fed exploitation. How else? In other words, Love, the revolution of melancholy.



16. ["The subscriber you have called has defeated you"]

For the whole day Stella did not answer any of Maria's consecutive calls. Savoring it triumphantly. It was her turn not to answer. At some point, she received a message: "I'm leaving tomorrow and you will lose me -he is on duty again- come over tonight and fuck me". Stella didn't answer that message from Maria either. And the following afternoon, Saturday, 11 January 1997, at 18:00, the day and the time of the girls' common birthday, Maria got on the plane and returned to Athens with the captain. To the penthouse at Papagou. Pissed off.



- 17. **[Waiting]** Sahtouris* says: "Days go by, snow stays". No sign of Stella.
- 17a. [The first night in Athens, this Tim Burtonesque* nightmare-visited Maria:] "Before we part I need to take you inside me and keep you there", said the blue cook and opened her mouth. She devoutly took the yellow pianist's finger, as if it was a prince's sceptre, as if it was a love rank, and bit it off and swallowed it without chewing it along with the engagement ring. "I'm the one who made you, I'm the one who ate you, now go". And off she went. With her head bowed. Defeated. Crying.



17b. [Nightmares] Many more nightmares tormented Maria in the first three months after she returned to Athens from Amsterdam. Stella, a dead princess at the bottom of the ocean, Stella, a cannibal climbing plant. Everything in black and white.

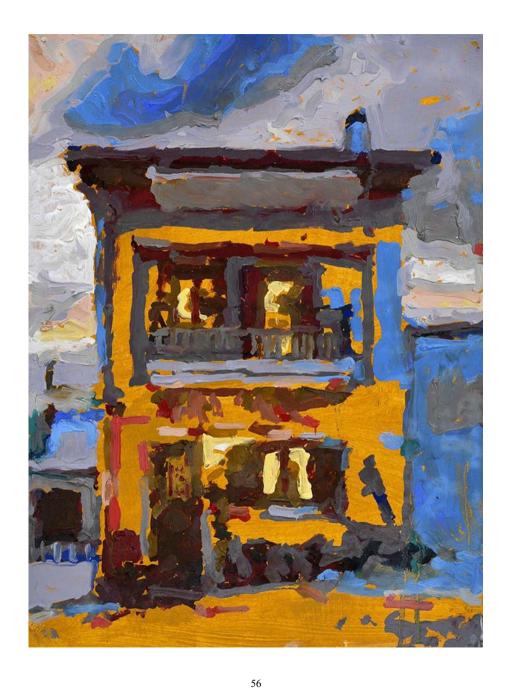
Then, her nightmares became sweeter. We left Tim Burton (Maria's favourite director, she knew all his films by heart) and moved on to South Park* (Stella's favourite animated series, she knew all lines by heart). Stella, round and orange, Stella, with huge eyes. Everything in colour. And so, three more months passed, six in total since the girls' last separation.

Stella was still not answering Maria's frequent calls and emails. Delete. But Maria insisted and would keep insisting.

CHAPTER II

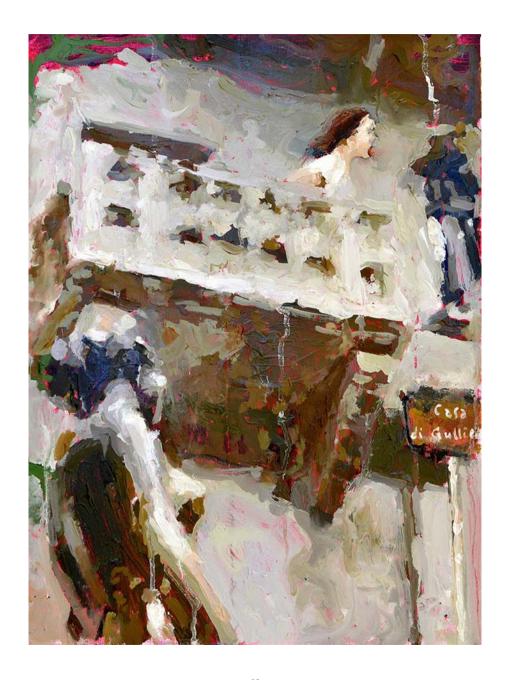


We may have thrown an equal number of Molotov cocktails* but we are not the same. It will happen.



18. [Back to the family house] The captain would be out of Athens for the whole month of July 1997 due to professional engagements. Meanwhile, Maria's father had decided to sell the family house in Agios and someone had to tidy it up a bit. So, following the orders of the major-general -her father- and despite the initial objections of the captain -her husband-, Maria went to Crete again. All alone, faced with the deserted smells from her childhood bedroom. There, one night, the most beautiful of all, Stella visited again Maria in her dream and whispered the following in her ear:

"Beauty is a pulse, tack-silence, tack-silence and all over again. It suffers cardiac arrests, one moment it is, one moment it is not, it is not a stable condition – I mean beauty is a variable process and therefore, and as beautiful turns towards more beautiful, you can see right in there life sprouting again in the form of a hungry crocodile -me wanting to eat you-like in a French documentary about Victoria Lake in Africa or some police story, cops and anarchists clashing with Exarchia square in the background, in the hot heart of Attica, it's all the same - fine, more or less, cause there are some slight differences. Your teeth, for example. They are not as sharp, and your heart, I think, beats sweeter and this is why there'll be a filmworthy fierce battle between the two of us. I forgot to tell you that I saw you too in the dream, you have a blonde daughter who's wearing a strawberry floatie, the sea is cold, her hands are warm, you are twenty seven and she doesn't have your eyes, she doesn't have any eyes at all. For good games are played like life and whoever loses dies and oh! What the fuck. They killed Kenny* again. You bastards! Call me".

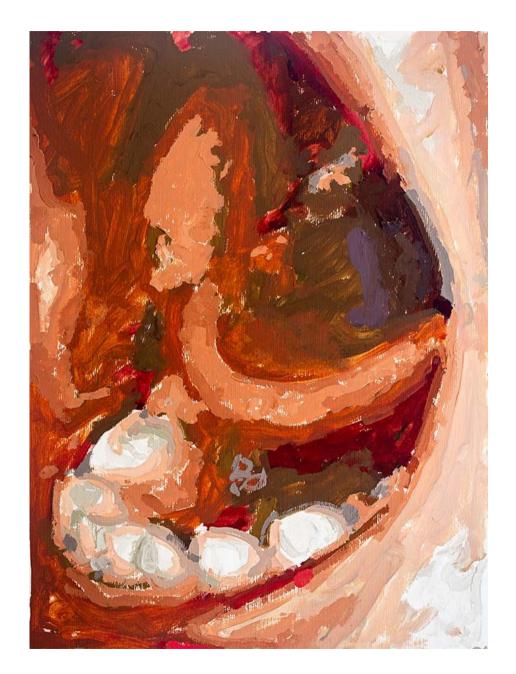


19. **[Casa di Giulietta*]** Determined that the dream she saw last night was a telepathic sign, as soon as she woke up Maria called Stella again. Maria was very well-mannered in everything, hence in phone calls too. She never let the phone ring more than five times. She thought it was rude. But she always made an exception for Stella. And the ring time was over and again "The subscriber you have called has defeated you". She got all riled up and cursed her weakness and her fate.

If only she knew what other inconceivable thing had happened... Stella, after seven consecutive years in self-exile, had also returned to her deserted family house in Crete for the summer holidays. And now she was secretly watching her from across the street, hidden behind the light blue curtain in the kitchen. Stella was watching Maria fit to burst with frustration on the balcony like some stupid Juliet.* She was watching her and she was laughing.



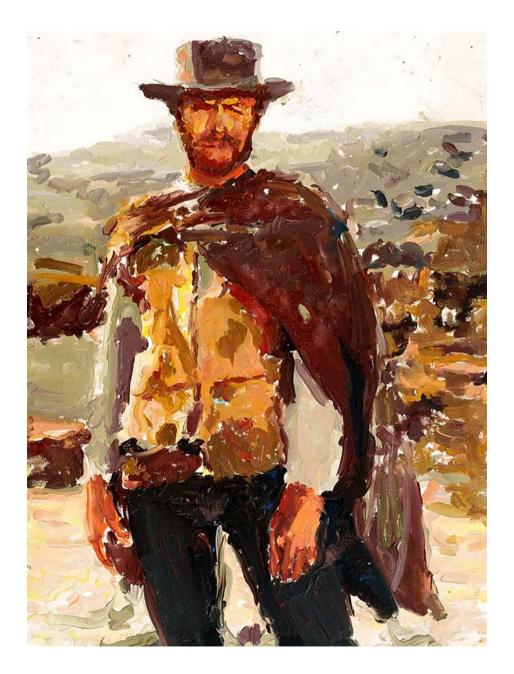
20. [And then, a sudden summer rain and a litre of raki upset Stella and her thoughts became something like that:] A well-fed hunter bang-bang is not the best, but they still hunt. This is why women who have been loved oh-yeah don't cry when the summer flickers and bounces. When a sudden downpour plink-plink interrupts the heat of the relentless sun. Like a power cut. Zzzzhn-zzzzhn in a foolish wedding party in the USA. Due to network overload. Due to the execution of a death row inmate on the electric chair bzz-bzz in a nearby maximum security prison. And the next day, the same. All over again. Here's an advice: a well-fed hunter bang-bang shouldn't hunt. A well-fed hunter zzz-zzz should rest and snore. And women who have been loved ohyeah should cry a little but meaningfully, like summer clouds. Now we're talking.



21. [And why not hunt?] Before the rain stopped, Stella went hunting. She walked down the stairs of her house slowly and stood in the middle of the street. The water was already running in little rivers. The smell of the wet ground. She cupped her hands around her mouth and shouted "Mariaaaaa!" like she used to. The other one froze. Three really long seconds passed: one, two, three. Then again "Mariaaaaa!", a second challenge to a duel. "Mariaaaaa!". And a third one. Now it's more like a Clint Eastwood* film. In Maria's family house silence was falling like a lorry falling off a bridge. And when the lorry crashed into the river, instead of a strong splash, Maria screamed: "You fucking cunt!". She didn't use to talk like that, she learned that from the captain. And she flew down the stairs, to kill risking to be killed.

In regard to this incident, a few days later Maria would write down the following in her diary:

You and I had unfinished business and you dealt with it with a duel in Far West. You appeared before me just like that and out of the blue –great works of art look as if they weren't made by human hand– and talked to me in a brave language, everything was warm and nice, I was lost elsewhere, looking through you – pay attention to this– all deep and ironlike, closer, closer to your eyes, in your breath, I held your hands –pay attention to this–tight and rubberlike, closer, closer to your hands. Bang-bang and we're both dead, in the world of the invisible, don't bother, I'll see you again in the revolution of the bodies and –pay attention to this– a black flag on every mast and all vultures partying. The eyes of humans –pay attention to this– are the PIN for their love card, their hands are the codes for their love account. If you steal them, you gain access to their love capital. Steal me. Are you paying attention?



22. [Straightforward] The two girls stood opposite one another, each one with her empty family house behind her. Each one was an only child. Stella's parents died at a very young age, Maria's were in Athens, and the captain was in a camp far away, on high alert. Tanks are on standby in the summer when Turkish provocations escalate. And then, with firmness even greater than the captain's, like a master to a servant, Stella shouted at Maria:

If you want me
Give me your hand to cut it off
If you crave me
Show me your eye to take it out

For only I, who take without giving And you, who give without taking, Can truly love each other.



23. **[BLA]** And there was peace and both girls signed a Bilateral Love Agreement (BLA) that basically said "I will whistle loudly (Stella) and you will jump high (Maria)". Master and Servant.* But, Stella was loaded from two spinning shrooms and a bottle of raki and formulated the Bilateral Love Agreement (BLA) somewhat unintelligibly. Something like that:

Everything is an answer to something else. And what's missing is yours, you shall take 3 caresses and kisses, your salary. The house is the answer to the cold. Ice-cream is the answer to the tonsils surgery. And what's missing is yours, you shall take 3 caresses and kisses, your salary. The dog is the answer to the burglar. The burglar is the answer to lust. And what's missing is yours, you shall take 3 caresses and kisses, your salary. For they who lust seek to be robbed, they do not give. Loyal servants, they do not give roses to their master, it would be vulgar. Instead of a gift, they pretend to be ignorant of geometry allowing the embezzlement of small amounts from their salary. And what's missing is yours, you shall take 3 caresses and kisses, your salary. With a wellsharpened axe under the pillow -in case lust is quenched- they who lust remain silent in the face of seizing. While the agreement says clearly 100 caresses and kisses, they uncomplainingly receive only 97. And what's missing is yours, you shall take 3 caresses and kisses, your salary.



24. **[The old scandal]** It had been more than a decade since such a juicy scandal had shaken Agios. Since that time when in the upper villages the butcher —who was supposed to be in Chora for business— caught his wife fucking and moaning like a cow in the butcher shop. There was a brutal beating behind the glossy aluminium fridge and rumour has it that the butcher even tried—unsuccessfully—to sodomise his best man on the butcher table. Outside the window, all the world and his wife were fighting over a good spot to watch the retaliation. People fancied some Tarantino* style action even before Tarantino was a thing.

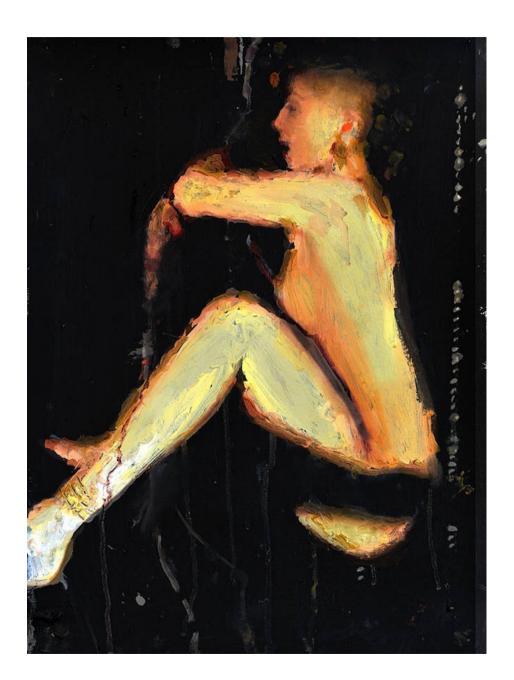


25. [The fresh scandal]

25a. **[The facts]** Two local girls kissing in the middle of the street. The major-general's daughter, a distinguished student, in the arms of the nitwit. The orphan granddaughter of that drivelling dotard. The partisan. Their tongues were going in and out. And what's more? In three consecutive long circles, not furtively, furtively would have been fine, it could be an accident, they were aiming for the cheek and hit the lips, but we're talking tongues here.

25b. [The gossip #1:] So, old rumours were true. Oh my, they are completely... that way. And the captain? A giant of a man, he won't find it funny at all. It's his father-in-law's fault and his compassion for the orphan, he treated her better than his own child. Well, you do know that this is what many people say. Yeah, I'm telling you. That he was the one who killed the couple in the end. Haven't you heard? Cause he wanted her to be his slave in his basement, not a married lady on the opposite balcony. Got it? You may say that's only rumours. Truth is that they don't look alike. Well, they don't. One is Madonna* and the other is Maradona.*

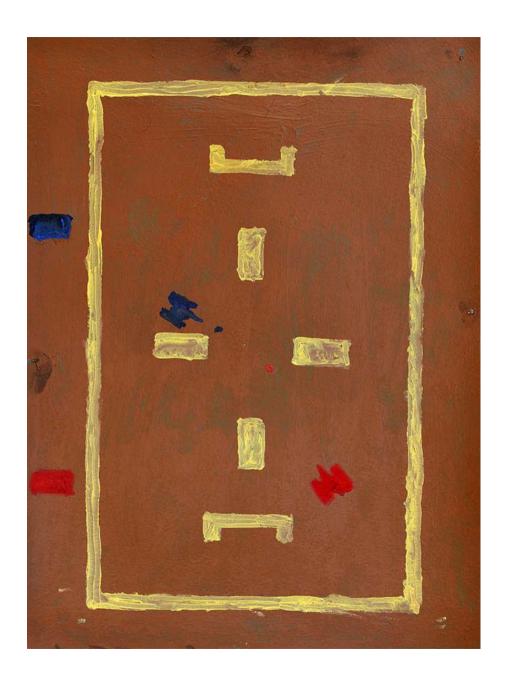
25c. [The gossip #2:] Anyways, you should kill commies when they're still young and not let them in your house playing with your kids. But what can you say?



26. [In uniform (in present tense)] He's approaching fast in his uniform, in a rush, screaming: "You fucking cunt, you lezzer!". But he's not charging into his wife's family house, no, he's crossing the street. The meddlers had put the captain wise to everything down to the very last detail. He breaks the cheap aluminium front door. Stella is standing in the hallway without batting an eyelid. Naked. Waiting for him. The captain is taken aback by her naked flesh and takes a step back. But there's more than that. Stella bears a shocking resemblance –face and body– to an unshaved horny young hooker whom he systematically fucks every Sunday afternoon that he happens to be in Amsterdam in the past few years. The awkwardness does not last long. What's the point now? Across the street, Maria runs out on her family's house balcony. She can see the whole battlefield inside Stella's family house. Now Stella's feet are moving away from the marble floor. She's on her tiptoes and keeps rising. With the captain's hand around her neck. Stella, who's breathing with difficulty, asks the captain this question:

"Do you want my demise or my rose?".

No answer. Then, suddenly, Stella stretches out her hand and gropes the captain. He misjudges her reaction and tries to pull away but this is not an attack, it's distorted lust. Stella takes his cock out. Stella jerks him off. The aroused captain slams his manhood deep inside naked Stella. He holds her firmly from her thighs –in the air– and she wraps herself tightly around him, no kissing. With her chin over the captain's shoulder, Stella is staring at her Maria, far across the street.

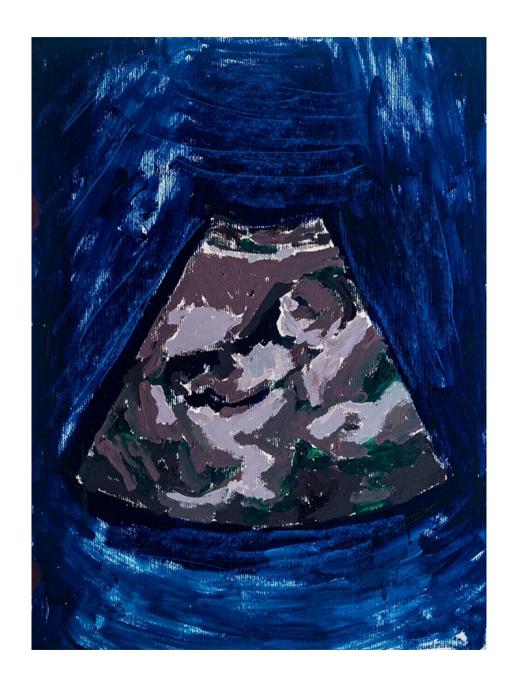


27. **[The rest of the attack and the end]** When he came, the captain threw her forcefully forward. Stella landed on the marble on her back. Athletic and muscular as she was, with the momentum she had, she rolled backwards twice and stood up. She moved aside to let the captain go out, who didn't omit to punch her in the face as he was leaving. His wedding ring tore her cheek, her nose was bleeding. Blood was running down her face like little rivers. The captain made the sign of the cross hastily and walked away. Stella, who was in pain and completely stoned, thought something like that:

"The deer is not afraid of the little death, not even the big non-death, for it doesn't know them. It runs to evade bad intentions, it can smell them. With such a defensive mechanism in its head—and with its horns—the deer frequently escapes its demise without having ever made the sign of the cross. God also blesses those who do not praise Him professionally".

Stella, staring again at her Maria on the balcony across the street, in a thunderous voice, in a assertive voice, threatened the captain:

"If you ever mess with my girl again, I'll go on the square, naked like that, with cum on me like that, bleeding like that. You got the point!".



28. **[Farewell forever]** And the captain left Agios for good, hurriedly just like he came, in his uniform, without even crossing the street. Maria said "Thank you, baby", and Stella answered "You're welcome, you'll pay me back as soon as possible". Indeed, ten days later, early in the morning on a remote beach, Stella would collect what she had lent in the most unorthodox way. Except for that short mysterious dialogue between the two girls, they never talked about this incident again, as if they had completely forgotten the captain. Without however this being absolutely true because, five months later in Aretaieio Hospital in Athens, Stella who didn't hold any other literature heroine in higher regard than Medea and the Murderess*, would tell the obstetrician:

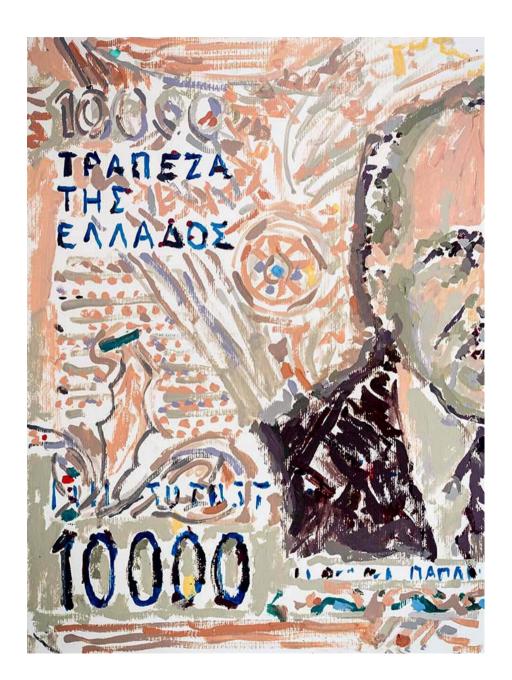
"Listen to me, doc, there's no such thing as 'it's too late now' for us. So, brace yourself and get that motherfucker's bastard out of me now. Where do I sign?".

All this happened on 3rd January 1998 in Athens, but we will go back five months, on 1stAugust 1997 in Crete. When the captain, after his fight with Stella, retreats and gets out of the picture for good. Although no one will ever ask for a divorce —Maria remained the captain's legal spouse until the day she died—the two girls will never meet him again. Not even on the phone.



29. **[Yes and no]** A nice group started forming in hidden cabins in the nearby mountains and quickly the good times rolled. With the two lovestruck girls being the life and the soul of the party along with some of the very few local homosexuals who had come out and quite a few Greek and foreign artists. With lots of alcohol and drugs. Except for this lovely group and their private wild parties, everything else was telling that Maria and Stella were like foreign bodies in Agios. But this was not their biggest problem.

29a. [Their biggest problem] After the captain left Agios, one would expect that a long period of mutual tenderness between the two lovestruck girls would follow, even though it was them against the world. Yeah, right. It was exactly the opposite. The turmoil in Stella's head from when she was a minor that Maria remembered very well not only hadn't subsided now that she was an adult but it had evolved from a simple defensive grenade to an atomic bomb over the years. High IQ, broad education, deep empathy turning circularly into cruel indifference, alcohol, LSD and anarchy. So, mix all this in a shaker until it explodes! Kisses and hugs and then, cursing and slapping and all over again. Stella's erratic behaviour would constantly push her Maria into a world of joy and over the cliff, like a roller coaster.*



29b. [The yesses] On 10 August 1997, after an intoxicating night with their new friends, with nice discussions and lots of laughing and music, with improvised poems and ecstatic dances, Maria (who sings divinely) and Stella (who sings a little out of tune but passionately) enjoyed a night swim in the sea followed by an explosive fuck on the beach. Sweet, amenable and condescending to everything—literally everything—Stella had lavishly offered pleasure to her lover. A whole night full of "yesses". To every request. What a surprise that was.

29c. [Complications] Right there, in all this tenderness and as the sun was rising, Stella disappeared. Just like that. She left the beach. She faded away in the distance. Maria stayed there waiting for her. After ten very long minutes she saw an angry man approaching from a distance; he didn't look at all like Stella for whom Maria was waiting to come back. The man stood over the speechless Maria, unzipped his trousers, took his cock out and stuffed it in her mouth. He was standing, she was sitting on the sand with her mouth stuffed. A few moments later, he took out hastily a condom from his back pocket, he put it on, he shoved Maria on the sand on her back and raped her."Where are you now Magkanas, you motherfucker, to see who's fucking your wife", he kept saying. When he finally came, he stood up, took off the condom and stuffed it in Maria's mouth. Then, Stella appeared. The man took out of his wallet and counted in her hand 10 starched banknotes of ten thousand, one by one, 100 thousand drachmas* in total. Stella put the money in her back pocket, kissed him on the mouth and he hastily disappeared where he came from. "This is how much I charged your motherfucker, 700 guilders*", Stella told Maria and helped her stand up.



29d. **[The nos]** The two girls returned to Agios early in the morning without exchanging a single word. When they arrived outside their houses, Stella said:

"I want to be alone tonight".

They parted. Each one went up the stairs of her own family house. Silence. Not even the sound of their steps. One hour later Maria called Stella. Stella pressed the red button. One hour later the same. The red button again and again. A whole morning and a noon and an afternoon full of "nos". To every request. After 12 missed calls, having stayed awake for 24 hours, Maria, exhausted, fell into a deep sleep without dreams. Stella soon followed.

29e. **[The entry]** In regard to the incident, Maria wrote in her diary:

The first 12 hours, she only said yes. Yes, yes, yes. Then, only no. No, no, no. A head-on collision of planes without safety belts and oxygen masks; even if you have washed her feet 100 times, even if you have sat far away in the opposite chair assessing the glory of your lover's youth with her short shiny hair and the muscular back, you're never trained for fractures like that. All this among cats, dogs and songs, lutes, trumpets and a smell of "our time is running out" like burnt octopus that is barely edible. Painting colours, drugs and alcohol, —no shit!— fish, sea, cold water, summers are where you are loved, winters are where you rest and now it's snowing. Snow, snow, snow. Help colours.

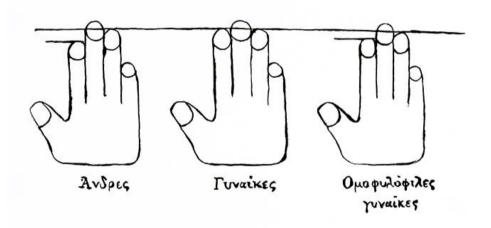


30. [Painting/ Die gesamte Wirklichkeit ist die Welt*] This was not painting. This was an attack with brushes to the canvas. Maria, extremely pissed off, was smacking the innocent cabot. Paint was splattering everywhere like small fountains. The carved wooden front door was open —as usual— and Stella entered hastily Maria's family house without ringing the bell. Just like she used to when they were little, going to primary school. She stood next to her Maria and said: "Where are we going for a swim, my Maria? Let's go somewhere far away. Oh, let's go where we were yesterday". And her Maria said: "You bitch, you left me all alone again and now you want an excursion?".

Then Stella took out the Bilateral Love Agreement (BLA) they had signed and rubbed it in. "Stella takes without giving and Maria gives without taking", said the agreement. Period. And they went again for a swim to Mikro Voulisma, which was not the locals' choice but only the tourists'.

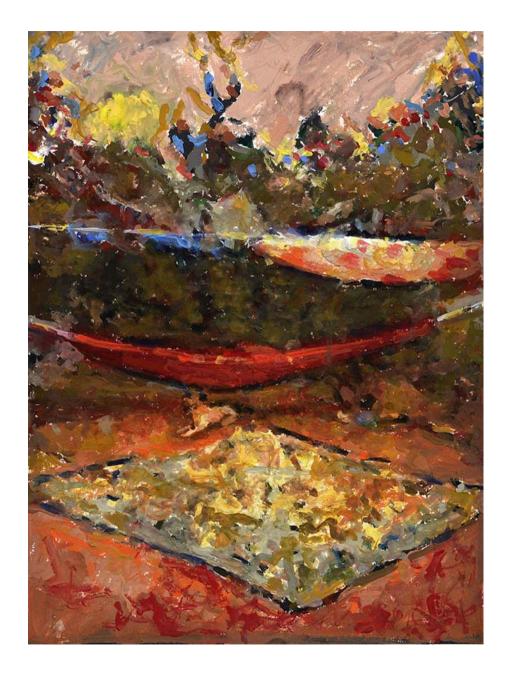
From this moment onwards, Stella would do whatever she liked. She was the boss. She also taught her Maria how to play this song on the guitar to help her simmer down:

Beautiful girls
Are a labyrinth
Easy to enter – Difficult to exit
And somewhere in between – Oh, I had a scare. (twice)



31. **[Louise* took her Thelma* and went away]** The two lovestruck girls would not even stay for a month in their native small provincial town. Everybody was gossiping about them. The story went something like that: Stella who had already come out was responsible for this perversity and Maria who was a mug, her victim. Wherever the girls might go, most people would lower their eyes. Stella got off on all that. But Maria was suffering. It was too much for her to be the centre of attention while every one was pretending they ignored her. And she cried at night. And someday Stella said: "Fuck them, we'll leave this place and go to Gavdos". And they left for the exotic island.

Note: Typically, the condemnation and persecution of homosexuality by the popolo is due to refusing to accept something that used to be well-hidden but today is openly supported by science, i.e. that homosexuality is mainly biologically determined. The percentage of homosexuals varies from 4% up to 10% regardless of how conservative or progressive a society is. This percentage does not depend on whether being homosexual is legal or illegal or even a privilege. Strange things happen in relation to this percentage. If your mother was very stressed in the last three weeks of her pregnancy, it is slightly more likely that you'll develop a homosexual tendency. If you were born a man and you have more than three older brothers from the same mother, the possibility of you being a homosexual increases up to 25% (the phenomenon of "older brothers"). If you were born a woman and your index is smaller than your ring finger, you are more likely to be a lesbian, and actually a butch lesbian, i.e one that identifies herself as masculine.

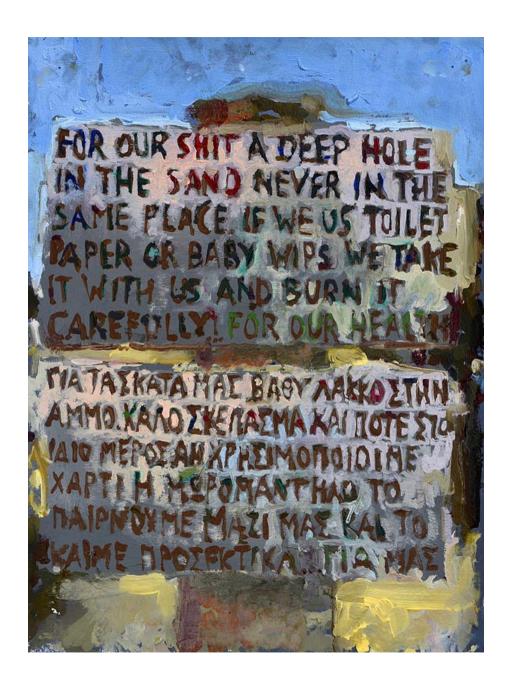


- 32. [In Gavdos, formerly a place of exile for dissidents, including Aris Velouhiotis*] From 18 August until 11 September 1997; paradise lasted only 25 days.
- **32a.** [Oxygen and rumours] A den of nudism and a summer version of Exarchia square. With true and fake liberality, the remote isolated island that all neo-hippies love is like oxygen for the two girls. They are also kind of heroines there. Especially Maria. There are lots of rumours going around: Maria. No shit, man, Maria, who was forcibly engaged before she was even 18. A minor. And when she turned 18, she got immediately married by force, man, but she dumped him in the end, no shit, it takes balls, good for her. Fact. Obvs. She ditched that AC* officer without blinking an eye. And why? For that chick, man. Her Stella.
- **32b.** [Structure and execution] The further away you go from Gavdos' port and you leave behind one beach after another, the fewer material stuff you need to get by through summer. Sarakiniko = Posh / Ai-Giannis = Sophisticated / Lavrakas = Hippie / Potamos = Hardcore. Don't even think about clothes. After Sarakiniko everyone is walking around naked. If you need water, there's a well in Lavrakas. If it's dry or you don't trust it, you have to carry bottled water all the way from the taverns near Ai-Giannis. With three pieces of cloth, you can build your den: (a) You put one high up as a shelter from the sun, (b) a hammock below that and (c) a drop cloth on the sand. Drugs are free. There is dry and canned food, unless you have a blow torch and trahanas* or money to spend at the taverns. And although one would think that in all this frugality simple political structures would prevail, this is not the case. Every beach has its king and its council that rules over it and runs it.



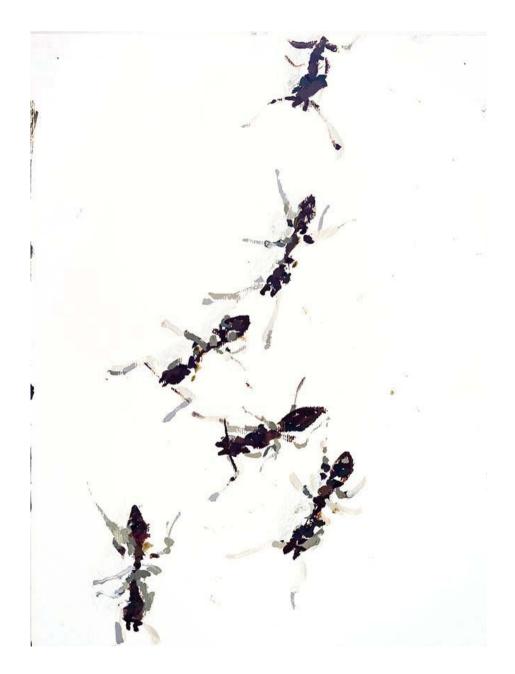
33. **[The trap]** The trap for their love had been set. In this new environment where they settled, in a campsite between Lavrakas and Potamos, in the vast cedar forest with the virgin sandy beaches around it, there were no declared enemies. Everything was perfect.

And when Stella fucked all girls in the campsite (usually two at a time) just in a few weeks and kept going for a second round, some boys who of course wouldn't dare complain to Stella, started approaching Maria with complaints and threats: "Get a hold of your bitch cause she's eating all the pussy and we don't fuck at all". By that time, Maria wasn't even receiving 50 out of 100 caresses and kisses under the Bilateral Love Agreement (BLA) she had signed with Stella but she didn't care about the body. It was better like that. She cared about the mind. Because Stella showed some love while fucking and so, she allowed to be loved back. She was never the badass chick they would both want her to be so badly. She had a small crack.



34. [The inglorious expulsion] The council of the camp decided to immediately ostracise Stella from the island. Since in Gavdos everyone is supposed to be fully liberated sexually, the accusations made were not the actual ones. They were falsely based on a recent event: a rich twat arrived at Lavrakas with his wife and kids in a yacht. As soon as he disembarked, with a cigar in his mouth, he shouted at Stella, who was accidentally passing by carrying water from the well, to get dressed and make it snappy because he didn't want his kids to see her naked. Then, Stella grabbed his wife, put her on her shoulder and vanished running into the cedar forest. When she went back to her husband and kids after 2 hours, naked and staggering, she was a different woman. And the island was crawling with cops. In other words, a temporary halt to drugs because of Stella. Stella, piss off! Stella, who was already fed up with this neo-hippie "phase" and would gladly hit the road either way, was nonchalant when faced with the accusations. As if someone else was being held accountable and not her. She actually voted "Yes" for her ostracisation, infuriating even more the boys she had disgraced. basically all boys. And then... Two foreign girls burst into tears and Maria got really upset.

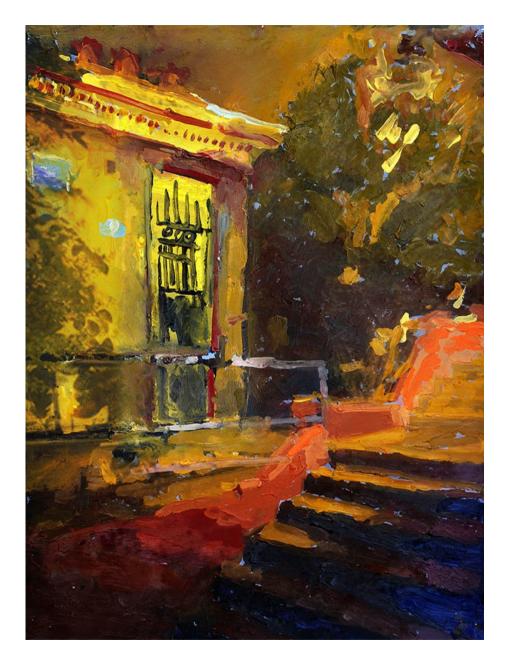
Very upset, very upset, very upset. Maria trapped in a shallow circular thought, in the loop of I HATE HER and I WANT HER (at the same time), landed on I WANT HER (exclusively) in the end, while we, today, know that I HATE HER (exclusively) would have been a much more beneficial choice. Shortly before they left Gavdos for Athens, after sobbing for a couple of hours first ("how betrayed she was feeling" etc., but without uttering a single word, only with glances), she made the mistake to seal their relationship with the wrong love confession...



35. [Here we are in Gavdos' port and Maria uttered that "Oh, you're my life!":]

35a. [Poetically and sensitively] Summer was so hot that cicadas were singing non-stop. Warm air from Libya plus the greenhouse effect were the official causes - her kiss that was full of sugar and tomato went sour, and not without a reason. With watery eyes she had just uttered "Oh, you're my life!", a bomb-like sentence that instantly and completely split the amino acids in the meat of her summer love giving it a thin and slimy coating, which in turn became sticky and stinky, transforming her love meat from tender and soft into something easy to mash. Shiny, still beautiful on photos, but ill-smelling in reality. Things were difficult. Instinctively the two mouths pulled back and the kiss was rejected. After hanging in the air for a while, this bad kiss fell nearby. Slowly, swaying charmingly like a small rotten rosy red leaf. And at some point –the ship had left the port– ants carried it deep in their nest and cut it into pieces and packed it into little sour kisses for the winter.

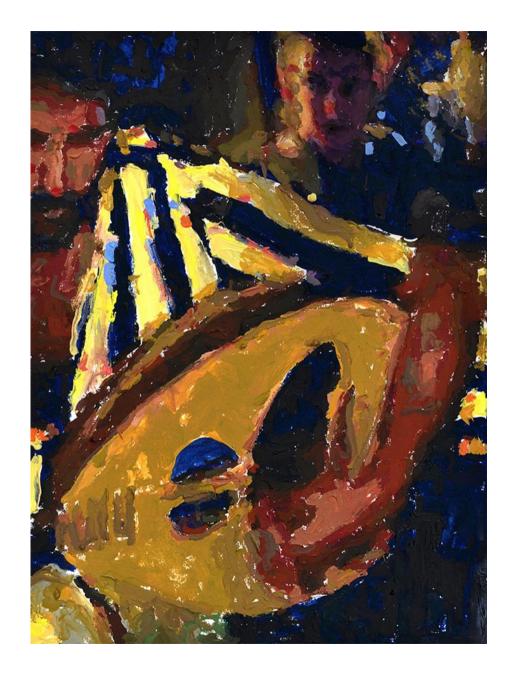
35b. [Bluntly and brutally] Maria sniveled: "Oh, you're my life!". Already pissed off by her lover's lengthy whining, Stella in an instant response punched Maria in the face and knocked her down. Blood was running from her nose and her torn cheek. Then, she had to beat up quite a few curious bystanders as well who tried to intervene. The pier resembled an outdoor saloon. Later on, leaning on the ship's gunwale, Stella asked her Maria: "Did you like it?". "I did", said her Maria, although her injuries were cold now and stung a lot.



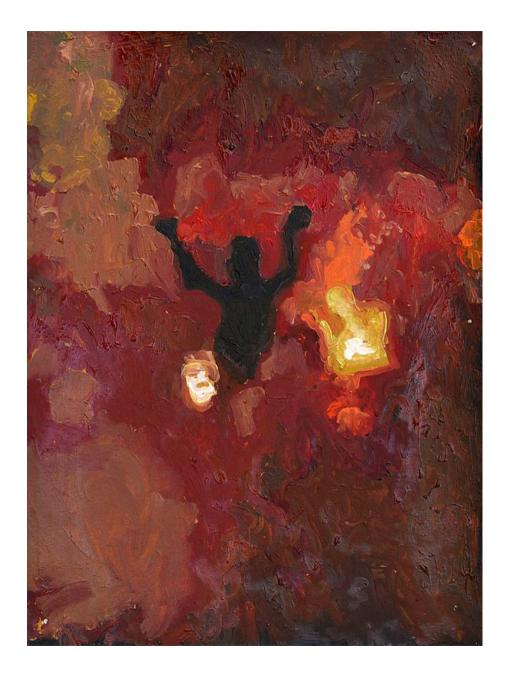
36. [And now, where to? To Athens!]

36a. **[The single-family home]** In Athens, Stella did her magic and hooked them up with a place to stay. A small old single-family house on Strefi Hill. It was beautiful. With a tiny yard. In this yard and on the steps right outside that were like an extension to the house, they used to hold gatherings (see also §36c).

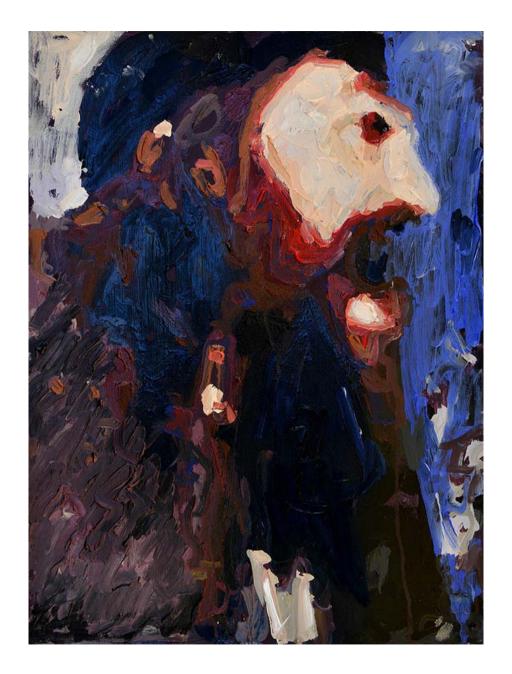
36b. [The context] Booze and drugs in Exarchia square, political arguments on the ground floor of the Blue Condominium at Floral, graffiti on Themistokleous and Kallidromiou streets, movies in "VOX" outdoor cinema, weather permitting, then "Alphaville", gigs at "Rodon", homemade food at "Barbagiannis" and raki at "Mouria", souvlaki on the ground floor of "Kavouras" and then, on its first floor, rebetika till the morning, wild dancing at Decadence and lots of beating at "Octana", squatting of the Athens Polytechnic School, dreaming around burn barrels, punk and psychedelic parties at Gkinis', massive protests and clashing with the cops. In this context, Maria's little kiss became sweet again. Very sweet. She didn't say "My love", she said "My slut". She didn't say "Make love to me", she said "Fuck my ass hard", and no way would she ever say all whining again "Oh, you're my life!". She would say "Babe, you're the one who turns my faucet on and off". And Stella's violence was limited to what was necessary for sexual pleasure -not anger- and was welcome. More than welcome. No black eyes, only a red whipped bum, scattered bites and slightly bruised tits from spanking; Maria was fine with that. The lovestruck girls made a fine-tuned couple. It was nice and warm, and then Stella decided to postpone her studies for a while in order to prolong their stay in the wider area of Exarchia.



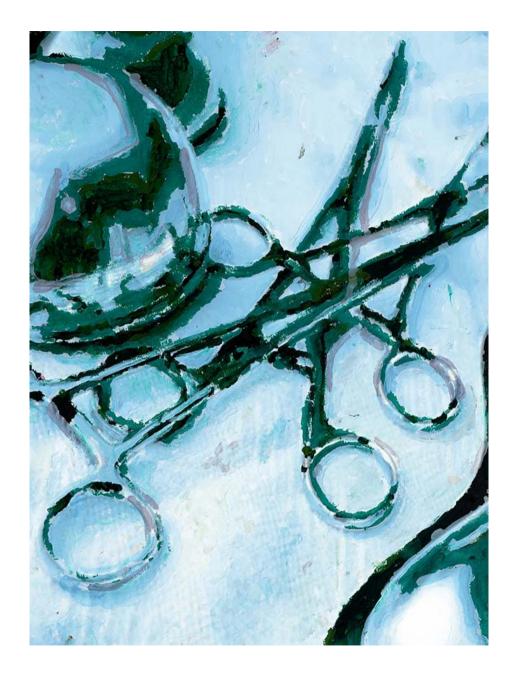
- 36c. [The gangs #1] In Maria and Stella's new house would get together groups of people with guitars, lutes, trumpets, as well as many painters, actors and philosophers. Mostly from the extraparliamentary Left. Most of them were skint. The girls —as you've probably figured out by now— were well-off. Maria came from money. Stella was dealing drugs. Opioids and LSD. While experimenting with various things, they also worked voluntarily in the filming of "Legal guardian" by the director Nikos Perakis. This is where they met many more autonomous anarchists everyone was bringing along someone— who were all indispensable for Maria to evolve and for Stella to get completely out of control. A very short list of the girls' "Court" including new and older members would be the following:
- 36c.1. **[Tzimakos]** Tzimis Panousis, a singer of sharp lyrics and a genius performer, often dressed up as a woman or a priest. 36c.2. **[Sougklakos]** Apostolos Sougklakos, a sensitive and charismatic actor, a typical character of the cult movement. 36c.3. **[Gousgounis]** Konstantinos Gousgounis, an old good photographer and well-endowed porn star, the cult king of sex, almost an MP.
- 36c.4. [Magic Alex] Alexis Mardas, an electronics engineer, crazy inventor and close partner of The Beatles.
- 36c.5. **[Tzoumas]** Konstantinos Tzoumas, an aesthete slim and slender figure, actor, dancer, radio producer and writer.
- 36c.6. [Nikos] Nikos Koundouros, a pioneering director, sculptor and intellectual, Stella's mentor since she was in school, also originating from Agios Nikolaos, Crete.
- 36c.7. [Mihalis] Savvas Xiros, an icon painter, executive member of the terrorist organisation "17 November".



36d. **[Molotov cocktails]** For four whole months, they sang, danced and threw Molotov cocktails like there was no tomorrow.



36e. **[The gangs #2]** Back then, there were still letterboxes. They were about to become extinct but they were still there. Back then, there were still sentimentalists, saints, mad ones, certainties and gangs with secrets.



37. **[On the road again]** For as long as they lived in Exarchia, Stella seemed kind of sweeter towards her Maria. Her leadership tendencies abated. She was still the dominant one but in a more rounded way, without any pointy edges. And Maria was once again fooled by her sweeter and more sensitive Stella, although today we know the real reason behind that: Stella's softening up was due almost exclusively to hormonal imbalances as a consequence of her pregnancy. A pregnancy none of the two girls was aware of. Leading a messy life full of overindulgence, Stella realised there was something wrong with her body not because of the long absence of her period or because of her little belly, which in the fifth month of her pregnancy had merely starting to show, but -in addition to many other undecoded signs- because she had become intolerant to LSD. Unbelievable. Only after that did she remember that she hadn't had her period for months. As soon as she found out, Maria, who had wrongly been told by doctors that she couldn't have children, said with naive excitement: "We can keep it if you want". Stella screamed:

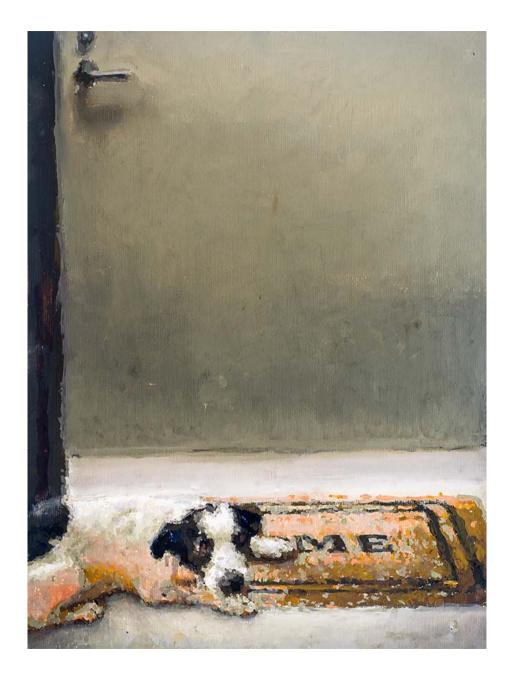
"What the fuck did you say, you dumb fuck? We ain't trading our freedom for diaper-pants, for diaper-pants, for diaper-pants...".

Every time she said "diaper", she hit Maria with her right hand. Every time she said "pants", with her left. In between, she kicked her.

With a little bit of this and a little bit of that 1997 passed, and Stella, after having the abortion, went back to the Netherlands to finish her Master's. And she took her Maria with her. She shouldn't have.



38. [This is what happens to those who keep dragging love around] Lovers leave, love stays. Like the perfume of a young pilot of a single-seat fighter prop aircraft who marches quickly (let us welcome him, flower children, in the countryside, let us imagine Antoine de Saint-Exupery*), love wears off, it is dispersed in the air molecule by molecule, it flies for a while and then, it lands on beds and floors, it also lands on its feet, in university toilets, in the streets in the night and in the countryside, in gigs and film festivals, on beaches, on front and back seats. Even if one is on their knees under the table on a secret mission and the other plays it cool eating -while being eaten – love cannot be fooled. Love is there and is spent. It does not leave unfinished business. The more it rocks, the more it sinks, it boils and pours out. Love evaporates in all positions. It peels off like summer tanned skin, like cheese on pasta. Love falls and falls and is grated and is lost in the end. Only the wax and the scraper are left. People's trials.



39. [She went / she came back /and went back again] Maria had been in Amsterdam only for three days when Stella kicked her out of her house for some trivial reason. "You sleep on the mat tonight, like a dog, and tomorrow morning, I'll feed you" was the order. Maria had had enough with orders. She didn't stay. She left. She was crying throughout the flight back to Greece.

39a. [Masochist] Maria tried but it was impossible to stop thinking about her Stella. Abuse was feeding her. And her Stella was a master in abuse –both of the mind and the body. So, in less than two weeks Maria shyly initiated communication.

First, an email: "How are you?". No answer. Then, one hundred more emails. No answer. And then, out of the blue, after the wrenching one hundred and first email, there was a hopeful answer: "I'm fine, I guess I miss you". Maria had nothing to complain about after that.

39b. [Maria, wasted after having drunk half a bottle of wine, wrote these love words in the one hundred and second email:]

I remember you like water. This. That runs. This. Fresh. This. Through our fingers. This. And we're thirsty. This. And that.

And we drink something and we spill something. This.

I remember you like a kiss too. This.

And that.



40. [Here we go again]

40a. [Nothing but interest and tenderness] Stella had taught her Maria well. Nothing but interest and tenderness from Maria towards her Stella, no nagging. But seriously, she kicked her out in a foreign country and her anger lasted only two weeks? Well done...

And so, Stella fell victim to herself. Tenderness and kindness triumphed again. Stella forged a Green Card ensuring long stay in the Netherlands for Maria and insisted that she came back. She invited her both by email (see §41a) and by phone (see §41b). Maria went back right away.

40b. [They had a nuclear start, they didn't have that other thing] Often, couples short-circuit. Bugs devour tenderness and words freeze on a black screen. A major fall out follows and they flush each other. Humiliating. For both. Even more often, after diving into their individual drainage for a while, couples emerge and meet again –nostalgically or allegedly by chance– and in a flying restlessness of unknown origin they say "Let's start over". Defying Einstein's* equations, they set up a makeshift time machine. They distort the arrow of time disregarding the main principle that, in order to start over, the start must have been impressive to say the least, if not nuclear. For both. And there must also be the will for a crucial change, a "shift". Not like camouflage; a strong jolt. For both. In order to restart love, it takes blood, it's not like Windows.*

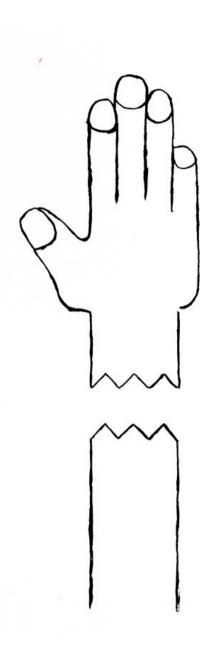


41. [Loves left hanging feed poetry]

41a. [Stella, blasted from a bottle of Irish whiskey wrote this email:]

Sticking to the evidence
I should note
That your average caring for us is increasing
As days pass by
That our upcoming encounter –if you wish so too, sweetie–
Will definitively become its promising name
First, an "en...", as in ensemble
And then, a "...counter", as in opposition, that is
A union of bodies
With the intention to resist
A "no" disguised as a "yes"
Not like the disguise of carnival-goers
More professionally, yes, like spies
Risking being arrested by the CIA*
And going to jail.

And in this exquisite embrace of our bodies
And after so much waiting and waiting for a visa
A Green Card and a health certificate
We will tear our passports again
We will burn them along with the empty suitcases and the codes
As a promise
That we will remain together forever
In childhood.



Sticking to the evidence
I should note
That according to your average tendency
You will once more give everything to me
-hands tooWithout anything in exchange

And lest we forget
Please confirm by replying
-in writing or by phoneIf you want me.

That's all.

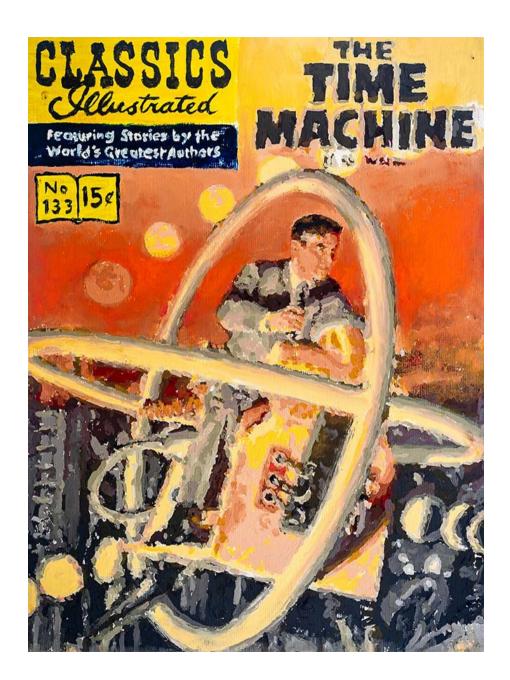
Having faith to the evidence and with a deep appreciation for your pussy

Kisses and kisses all over

Looking forward to your reply impatiently

I, your mistress and your lover

Your body.



41b. [Stella, blasted from three shrooms that visualise sound, on top of the bottle of Irish whiskey, could now see her voice in full colour and said on the phone:]

You make everything so simple and beautiful
With just one phone kiss
You loudly depict love, without love
When you hang up and disappear
Electric fuses trip all over the area
Pitch dark and silence, like a counter-party
Without any guests, without any music
-Neighbours upstairs are complaining nevertheless-

I have a fever But you

You make everything so simple and beautiful With a phone kiss

Picking tender memories out of your pouch

-What a match we were and what a match we will be-

Guessing our passions

-Where we will break up again and how many more times we will break up again-

And so and back and forth in time your thought Like LSD it governs me And drugs me.

You make everything so simple and beautiful
With a phone kiss
You concede triumph to love, always a victory
Even though fleshless, it shines
You defeat once and for all the nightmare
Of me being away from you
And what's worse
Of me Loving others.



42. [Another fresh start / How many lives can the same love have already?] The best Amsterdam! Ah, Amsterdam in the spring of 1998 was the best Amsterdam of their lives. Artsy gatherings with booze, drugs, lots of discussions and partying till late. Every Sunday noon at the Van Gogh Museum the shrooms that distort space did an excellent job: spinning stairs were turning on their own clockwise and counterclockwise, like years later in Harry Potter* films with castles and magic. Stealing bicycles just for fun and slutty and hot touching and kissing in public. They wrote the following with spray in an alley:

"Our kindness and our vision for an equal distribution of beauty is available but out of sale. It cannot be bought".

(tag: "Maria and Stella")



43. [Their favourite positions (in present tense)] Despite the tumultuous and unstable personality of Stella, they're fucking like crazy. Stella's influence over Maria is immense in all areas, all the more in love. Stella's favourite position is to lay Maria on her back on the bed and ride her over her neck. Tightly trapped between two legs and vibrating sometimes tenderly and sometimes violently as Stella's capable hands move it back and forth, Maria's cherished head moves its tongue strongly following the rhythm set by the rider. Stella comes in two minutes. Maria almost never comes. If she does, she will come only in the presence of some freshly showered young student who's experimenting; one of those young boys that Stella brings in the afternoons, usually on Fridays. Stella fucks them from behind with a red strap-on and Maria watches sitting on a chair opposite them. She touches herself and sings slowly in her fairytale-like voice, usually some ancient Greek lyrics by Sappho.* Something like that:

Οἶον τὸ γλυκύμηλον, ὅλως ἐρεύθεται (twice) ἄκρον ἐπ΄ ἀκροτάτωι, μηλοδροπεῖς δὲ λελάθοντο. οὐ μὰν ἐκλελάθοντο, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντο ἐπίκεσθαι (twice) οὐδ' αὖται γάμος, οὔτ' ἔρος πίλναται.*

This is the only way she can come but still, not always. But she loves that.

<u>Note:</u> Why don't you try singing too that excerpt in ancient Greek by Sappho along the music of the traditional Greek song "My red apple"?

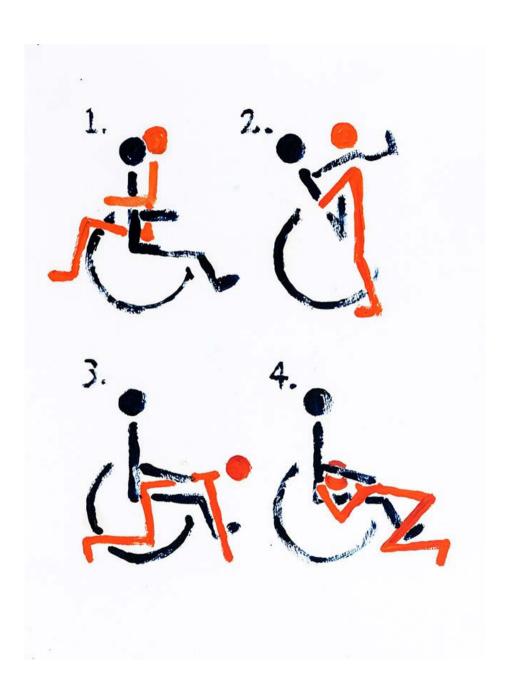
The Four Season



44. [You need a fourth person to try and get a glimpse of Verhoeven*] The three main characters of our story -Maria, Stella and the captain who has retreated- will be joined by a fourth one.

44a. [Mr Professor] Max was not like everyone else. He didn't come on Friday to learn how one can experiment in bed. He came to teach. A renowned professor of Philosophy and not just another poor skint student. Specialised in the Frankfurt School whose formulations he loved recomposing not only in academic socioeconomic-theoretical terms —as was the case before him—but mainly using clinical psychology and clinical neurobiology. An ignorant would think that he was just another economist. But in truth, he was a deep thinker with a brilliant mind with the ability to combine. "Analogies between neurobiological damage in living creatures and periodic complications of global economic liquidity—Theoretical model and clinical observations". This was his thesis topic which he completed when he was only 21 years old becoming a sensation in the global academic community.

Three decades later, Max was the first on the list of leading scientists in terms of their influence on international bibliography. His bold endeavour to link the dysfunctions of living organisms with the weaknesses of unstable mathematical economic models was directly applied to all other sciences. Max loved organisation and the ephemeral: in other words, Maria and Stella, in this order. Their basic equation: his age was the sum of their ages.



44b. **[The chair]** Before sex, Max would always give a short lecture that would also serve as the script for what would follow. The first time, Maria and Stella were naked on the bed, Max was wasted from coke and his script went something like that:

I'm selling a chair for sex games for 500 guilders in cash. It's wooden with a knitted back and a pillow. It looks like a common chair but it's not, because he sat on it once. He who was loved by 1,000 girls and 2,000 boys. In total, 3,000 bodies, all of them fanaticised with beauty, all of them wired with Kindness. Kindness is a supercomputer running a code full of bugs. Kindness never worked well, but we tolerate it because in theory it's the solution, while in practice it's the cause of all our troubles. I'm selling a chair for sex games...



45. **[Number Theory*]** Mathematical equations have their peculiarities. The equation $x^n + y^n = z^n$ (it is read "x to the power of n, plus y to the power of n, equals z to the power of n") is governed by its "n", and in the set of natural numbers (positive integers) where n=1 and n=2 the equivalent equations $x^1 + y^1 = z^1$ and $x^2 + y^2 = z^2$ have infinite integer solutions. $1^1 + 2^1 = 3^1$ and $3^2 + 4^2 = 5^2$ are two of these solutions, probably the most elegant ones. On the contrary, in the same field of numbers where n=3 the equation $x^3 + y^3 = z^3$ has no integer solutions. This was proven by the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler (1707-1773) in 1760 for n=3 and by the English mathematician Andrew Wiles (born in 1953) in 1995 for every n>3. Moving from the power of 2 to the power of 3, things change radically. Both in numbers and in love. Ghosts enter the stage.



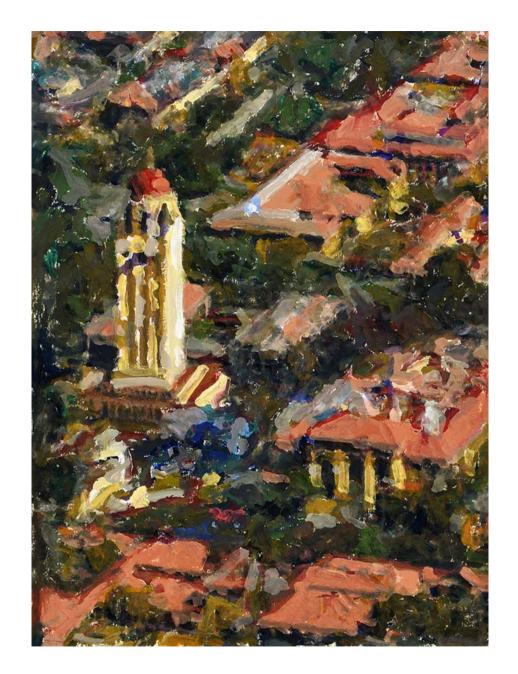
46. [The fresh hot scandal and the imminent American **nightmare**] A professor of Philosophy has it off with two lesbo chicks at the same time. This is quite scandalous even for Amsterdam in the summer of 1998. All three of them on the Ducati always with Stella driving at 150 mph. Touching and kissing in public. They even rented a house all together in the suburbs with a yard and an indoor heated pool. Six months passed like this. At some point, the dean called Max to reprimand him. Stella -among many other things- was also a student of his for crying out loud. Despite the worldwide recognition of Max's indisputable expertise in philosophical circles, the atmosphere was heavy in all other circles. In less than three months, Max from Germany and the two girls from Greece escaped from the morbid Netherlands and went to the promising USA. Meanwhile, Stella managed to finish summarily her Master's as well as sell her Ducati and the engraved Colt revolver. None of them would ever step foot on Dutch soil again. Throughout the transatlantic flight Stella had some erratic thoughts -no kidding- along these lines:

People's beauty is not an island
It's not on the map
There's no itinerary, only the search for it
A never ending quest
A distancing from fear –it is no small thing–
Always at the risk of becoming Columbus
A father or brother, a husband
A mother with a child –what a disaster–
Anyway, something settled
A representation of beauty
With beauty standing right next to it.

CHAPTER III



There are seas within the seas. It will happen.



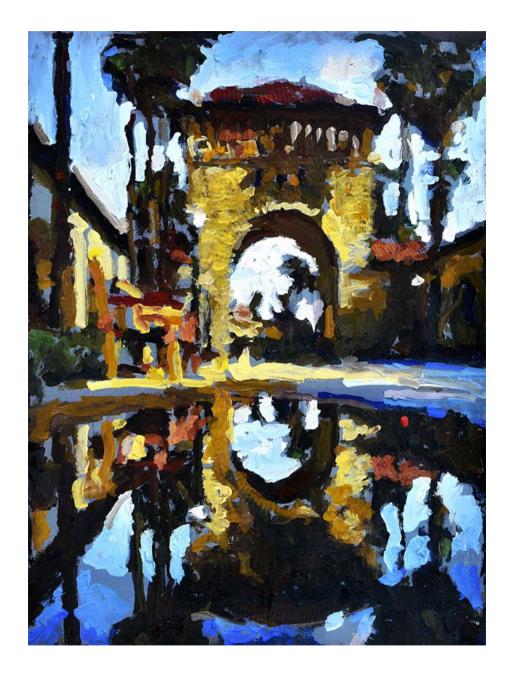
47. **[The doorbell]** In Stanford University Campus* –one of the biggest ones in the world– in California, north-west of Santa Clara county, in Palo Alto. Max stood proudly in front of the embossed bronze front door of their new house. With his arms around his Maria and his Stella. After hard negotiations, he had managed to have a term added in his contract with the university: he was allowed to host both his girls in this house since he had claimed that it was impossible for him to work without their help. And then –all thrilled– the newly arrived from Europe ultimate philosophy star turned around and said pompously to his Maria and his Stella:

On our doorbell
There are no surnames, names, father's names
Or any other credentials
There is only a picture of us together laughing
And when someone rings us (since we are the doorbell)
We don't make any ringing sounds
But we talk back
And when someone rings us persistently to collect the rent
We shout:
"Knowledge shall be redistributed
And we will hang you in the squares
You bastards!".

It was greeted with a loud applause. Laughter and enthusiasm. Maria and Stella leaned over and kissed Max's hair. Each one grabbed an arm of his wheelchair and rolled all together in their new house. The embossed bronze front door closed behind them. The beginning of the end.



48. **[The disease of the leading German professor of Philosophy Max Vida]** Spinal muscular atrophy type III (Kugelberg-Welander). It appeared when the professor was only two years old. As a child he could walk without any assistance but as the disease progressed –after he completed his historic thesis onwards– the use of a wheelchair was deemed necessary..

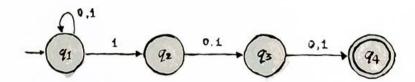


49. [What exactly was on the US menu / Die Luft der Freiheit weht* or maybe not] Maria was the official secretary of Mr Professor and Stella his official nurse, although literally everyone had heard of the Dutch gossips that had travelled all the way to the USA long before Max and his girls did. They could easily afford renting a villa outside the campus – this was also well-known – but it was a matter of power. We are who we are and we will stay right here, in the heart of knowledge.

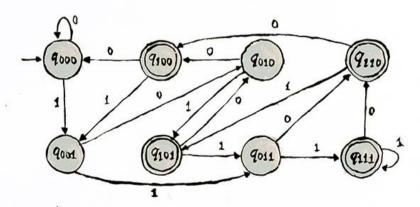
The dean had made himself clear: no touching and kissing in public in the campus and a persuasive story about the official secretaries and nurses. So far as possible.

Max had also made himself clear: to finish soon and publish his subversive philosophical psychological-economic theory based on which "economic systems respond like living thinking organisms with conscience and unconsciousness structured like a language". The result: one more Nobel prize to a Stanford academic. To him of course.

As for the two girls accompanying him there wasn't any initial plan –anything could go– which Maria found annoying whereas Stella cute. Not for long.



Σχήμα 1.1 To NFA (Nondeterministic finite automaton) N1



Σχήμα 1.2 To DFA (Deterministic finite automaton) N2

- 50. **[Theory of Computation*]** Let A be the language comprising of all strings of the alphabet $\{0,1\}$ that include symbol 1 in the third position from the end. For example $100100 \in A$ whereas $0011 \notin A$. The non-deterministic automaton N1 of four states (see Figure 1.1) recognizes A.
- 50a. **[Example]** Let's insert string 0011 into automaton N1, one digit at a time, from left to right.
- 50a.1. **[(0)011]** N1 reads 0 and remains in state q1.
- 50a.2. **[0(0)11]** N1 reads 0 and remains in state q1.
- 50a.3. **[00(1)1]** N1 reads 1 and splits in two.
- 50a.4. [Cloning] N1a remains in q1 whereas N1b goes into q2.
- 50a.4.i. **[001(1)]** N1a reads 1 and splits in two. N1a1 will remain in q1 whereas N1a2 will go into q2.
- 50a.4.ii. **[001(1)]** N1b reads 1 and goes into state q3. The string is exhausted and the three clones of N1, i.e. N1a1, N1a2 and N1b are in states q1, q2 and q3 respectively. Since in the final computational step no clone of N1 is in the acceptance state q4, string 0011 does not belong to language A.
- 50b. [Once more about elegance] It has been proven that every non-deterministic automaton has a deterministic equivalent. However, the elegance of N1 compared to the smallest possible deterministic equivalent, i.e. automaton N2 of eight states (see figure 1.2), is unrivalled. In computations and in people's lives, when everything is determined deterministically, univocally, without multiple choices, when something even apparently wrong is not put to the test, the simplest things become super complicated and even unconquerable lust can be reduced to a love bourgeois.



51. **[Murphy's Law*]** Everything that could go wrong... did go wrong.

51a. [The first days in California / The good, the bad and the ugly]

51a.1. **[The good]** Right from the first week, Maria set up a workshop in the attic and painted like crazy. Thanks to Max's unreserved support, who knew the right people all over the world, as well as thanks to the quality of her art, soon enough there was a serious prospect of Maria exposing her work in the USA some time. She was super excited about it, but it required great concentration, and Maria was not like Stella. She couldn't solve intractable mathematical problems after having stayed up all night and wasted from LSD. She needed to organise her work better.

51a.2. **[The bad]** As soon as they arrived at Stanford, Stella got herself a series of pioneering for western standards Russian and Yugoslavian* books about Number Theory. In addition, she flung herself into dealing drugs and into sexual hunting, since there was lots of delicious game in the campus. She bought a new Ducati and an engraved Colt revolver and she was quick to approach a luxury escort agency in order to offer three visits every Sunday for 1,000 dollars each plus any extras.

51a.3. **[And the ugly]** Max got down to work aiming for the Nobel prize. He changed. Fucking and excursions became scarce. He was never at home, except for a small break for lunch. In the evening he came back home exhausted. He was nothing at all like Max in the Netherlands. He was less and less like that faun who had intrigued the girls in the past. Maria didn't seem to mind about the new Max. But Stella was getting all riled up, and the first explosion was just around the corner.



51b. [And weeks went by and would never come back]

51b.1. **[A well-oiled machine]** Aiming to create a consistent and worthwhile series of new paintings, Maria had reduced drug use. She would gladly reduce sex too if her Stella allowed that. It's not that she didn't crave her body –on the contrary, she loved it– it was her frenzied rhythm that she couldn't keep up with any more.

Maria would get up very early trying not to wake up her Stella hoping to skip morning sex at least. She would make herself a coffee and go up to the attic. She would paint for four hours during which her Stella usually paid her a visit and fucked her. Then, she would do some grocery shopping, cook, set the table and eat lunch usually only with Max because Stella was out dealing drugs to students and professors or was somewhere fucking. After lunch, if Max was very stressed about his work, he gave her a quickie to let off some steam, but this too gradually became very rare until it almost stopped. In the afternoon, Maria would paint at least for six more hours during which her Stella paid her another sexual visit. Contrary to Max, Stella had a regular fucking schedule, like a stationmaster. In the end of the day, Maria lied on the couch exhausted and turned on the TV.

Everything seemed like a well-oiled machine to Maria. She was too naive to sense her Stella's discontent. Stella disdained this bourgeois tidy life in the guise of an artistic one that was a danger in the making for her beloved Maria.



51b.2. **[The first explosion]** One day Maria set the table for three in the living room. She also lit some candles and said: "Stella, baby, you haven't slept or eaten for two days. Come sit with us". No response. Stella was so lost in a Computation Theory problem that she was pacing up and down in the house all day and night long. She hadn't gone out not even to deal drugs and as a result, her phone wouldn't stop ringing. She was smoking like crazy and from time to time she would run and write down notes on a wall in the living room with a pencil that she kept on her ear.

When Max shouted that it was impossible to enjoy his lunch with a lunatic smoking like a chimney and pacing up and down with her muddy army boots on the new carpet, Stella picked up his plate, gave it to him to hold, pushed his wheelchair all the way to the embossed bronze front door, opened it, threw him out, slammed the door shut and went back to her mathematical race. Max rolled down the wide marble stairs and his chair capsized. Maria helped him get up from the dirt, cleaned him up and took him for lunch to a restaurant. "You fucking bitch!" shouted Max as he was leaving.

By that night, Stella had come up with the solution and it had become crystal clear to Max that he had to get rid of that bint for good. But without Stella taking his Maria with her, for whom he had big plans.



51c. [And months went by and would never come back]

51C.1. [The theory chase] Max's new theory was starting to take shape and the official presentation was set for 11 September 1999. We are nine months after they arrived in California and three months before the official presentation. The professor is so snowed under that he has to move his office from the central building of the university to the big living room in their house. There, he can work day and night with Maria's support who has temporarily neglected her painting in order to do all the secretarial work Max needs. Gradually, Maria becomes indispensable for Max in order to achieve his goal.

One day Stella, who's more of a burden to Max, will take a quick look to the draft new theory and will make a crucial remark on an erroneous statistical formulation. Max will be furious. Both because of his failure to identify the mistake and because of Stella's talent to sense it instantly. However, neither Max will ask Stella to help him further —he even scolded her for reading the draft without his permission— nor Stella will give a second thought to that mess in their living room.

The few hours that Stella spends in the house, she studies maths stoned in the kitchen. After Number Theory, she turns to the Theory of Computation and formulates a series of non-deterministic theorems that will make her famous after death. And when she gets bored of that too, she remembers her studies in the Humanities and decides to start a PhD at Stanford.

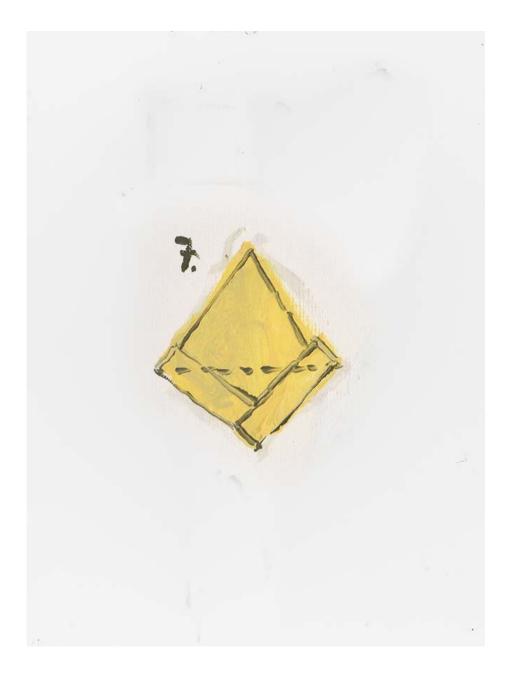


51c.2. [A short list of manipulation]

51C.2.i. [The party was over for the threesome] Stella put away her math books and closed the notebooks with her valuable notes. Enough with maths. It was time for her PhD. Only then did she hear the moaning from Max's room and became wet. Max and her Maria were fucking passionately. It'd been months since Max had made such a move. She would join them too. He might be a wanker sometimes but he always did wonders in bed. And you could tell that he was at his best from his sighs. But as soon as Stella entered the room, Max coughed twice loudly. Without stopping fucking Maria, he told Stella to not smoke inside the house –and in any case, not in his bedroom– because smoke was extremely harmful to his already delicate health. Max was one of those people who accept you just as you are at first, but slowly, deviously, try to shape you exactly like they want. But it's not as if he was a monster.



- 51c.2.ii. **[The list]** Besides smoking, below there is a list of just a few among the many –seemingly innocent additional restrictions that Max was trying to impose on wild Stella with his real objective being to control her mind:
- 51c.2.ii.1. **[Shoes]** To take off her shoes inside the house and in any case, in his bedroom. To no avail.
- 51c.2.ii.2. **[Lunch]** To attend lunch and in any case on Sundays. To no avail.
- 51.c.2.ii.3. [Music] To not listen to loud music and in any case, not when the others were sleeping. To no avail.
- 51c.2.ii.4. **[Effusions]** To avoid love effusions in public and in any case at the university. To no avail.
- 51c.2.ii.5. **[Drugs]** To not deal drugs at the University and in any case to professors. To no avail.
- 51c.2.ii.6. **[Guests**] To not bring strangers in the house and in any case, not junkies. To no avail.
- 51c.2.ii.7. [Beating] To not leave any marks on Maria and in any case not on the face. To no avail.



51c.3. **[The manipulation game was a failure]** Max had lost in his game of manipulating Stella and this is why he went all in. If this last stunt with his delicate health that is even more jeopardised due to the unbearable cigarette smoke worked, if Stella stubbed out her cigarette –if only– he would have made the first crucial step. It would be all downhill from there. But he played and lost again.

Stella, like a giant octopus, grabbed her Maria away from Max. She put her on her shoulder, tossed the butt in Max's face and walked out of the room reciting Tennyson:*

Below the thunders of the upper deep, Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea, His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep The Kraken sleepeth [...] *

She took her Maria and fucked her standing up right where the best fuck is done: in the kitchen.

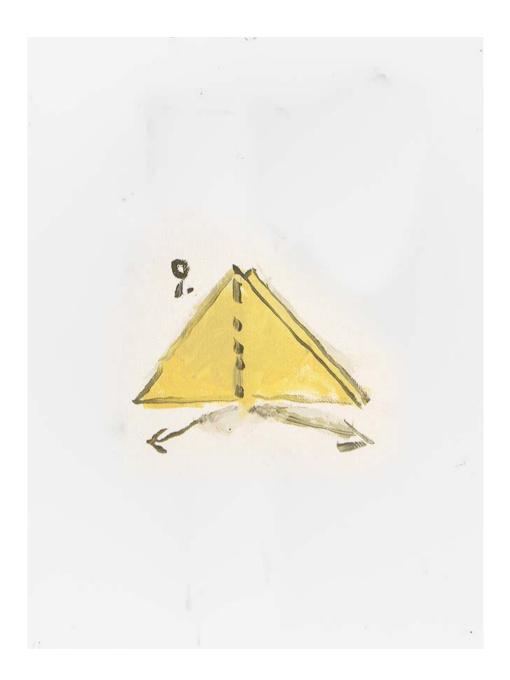


51c.4. [Next day] Stella barged into the office of the dean of the Faculty of Mathematics. They'd been having a passionate love affair for three weeks now. Stella left two notebooks on the dean's desk. The first one was about Number Theory and the second one about the Theory of Computation. Stella said: "I'm done with them. Do what you want with them". She also left on the desk a small box with the usual drugs for the dean. Then, Stella jumped over the desk and pulling her trousers down quickly, she grabbed the dean from the hair and stuck his head between her legs. This is how it always started. To Stella's surprise, the dean shoved her and got off his chair. He spat a hair from his mouth. And another one.

The first time they fucked, the dean had stated: "I love your hairy little cunt that holds water and smells like intoxicating mould and humidity, like my father's cellar". Today the dean stated: "If you want us to keep doing that, you'll have to shave at some point. I don't care about your armpits or your legs but if you want me to put your cunt in my mouth, you'll shave it".

Stella said: "You didn't mind eating it three weeks now and you fancied the trip down memory lane but now you've got a problem? Fucking wanker. You don't get to tell me what to do".

Stella kicked over the desk of the dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and popped off to the opposite office of the dean of the Faculty of Humanities —a close partner and friend of Max since their time in the Netherlands— to submit an application for a PhD.



51c.5. **[Keep your voice down]** Just a few days after Stella submitted her application for a PhD, the dean of the Faculty of Humanities entered Max's office enthusiastically. He was tall, strong and a jokester. He talked very fast and loud. He said:

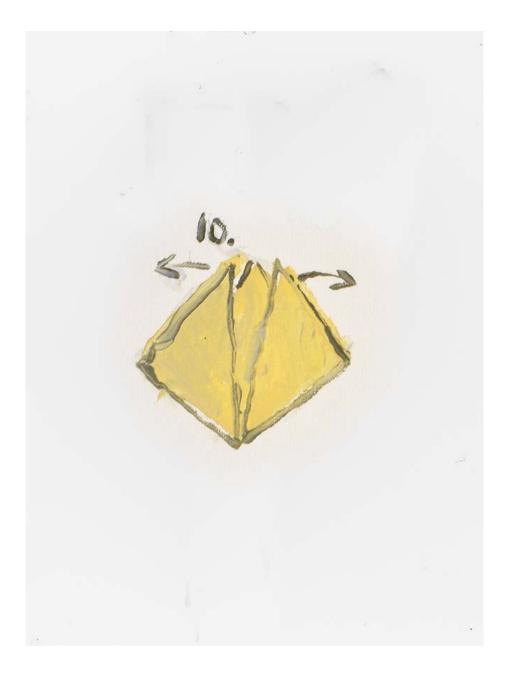
"Hey, pal, Max, with your big, strong brain. There's no one like you in the galaxy..."

The dean burst with joy and continued:

"That Stella is big trouble, but she's a genius! Her dissertation will be a sen-sa-ti..."

Max raised his hand suddenly gesturing to the dean to shut up. He whispered with a conspiratorial air the following words:

"Shut up. Close the door. Have a seat".



51c.6. **[The bug]** Stella was certain that her PhD application would be accepted. It wasn't. She paid another visit to the dean of the Faculty of Humanities demanding explanations. Oddly, she was very calm. But he was saying nothing but garbled nonsense. He was talking rubbish, he was talking fast and on top of that, he was fidgeting both with his hands and feet. Maybe he was just a prick but, just to be on the safe side, when the dean turned around to look for Stella's file and give it back to her in order to correct and refile it, Stella planted a tiny bug under his desk. Every time that the name "Stella" would be heard in that room, the bug would be activated and the discussion would be broadcasted live on Stella's mobile phone.

After that, she left all riled up and went off to fuck and beat up a Chinese girl who was all over her lately. She went back home as it was getting dark. Completely stoned. Maria was lying exhausted on the sofa in her pyjamas watching TV and drinking tea. When Stella entered the house and saw Maria like that, she felt sick. She threw up on the parquet flooring, took out her Colt and shot the TV twice. The TV was showing an American shot of a cowboy ready to draw a pistol. Stella's bullets killed the cowboy, blasted the TV, caused a power trip and went on a crazy course towards the big glass balcony door. Shattered glass everywhere and dark. Chaos. The police came over but in the end, everything was covered up.



51c.7. **[A few days later]** Max entered the office of the dean of the Faculty of Humanities in a rush. He had asked to see him urgently. In a very serious way that was unusual to him, the dean told Max:

"This time, I can't reject Stella".

The bug that Stella had placed in the room was activated. Max, obviously irritated, intensely reminded to the dean events from their common distant past in the Netherlands. Because back then, the dean also wanted to get rid of a student he had got pregnant. And his good friend Max had been there for him. Loyal.

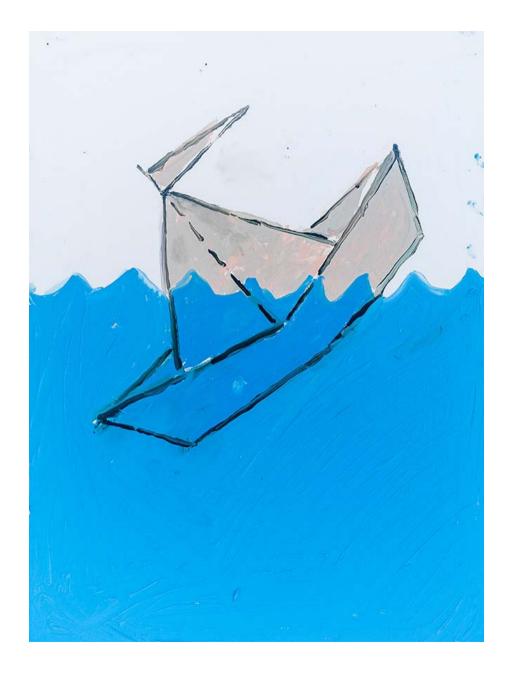
The conversation didn't last long. Before leaving his friend's office, Max said:

"Stella will never do a PhD in Stanford. She'll get bored and leave, that's what she'll do".

The dean said:

"You're such a prick".

Stella was fucking the Chinese girl holding the mobile phone tight on her ear. Having found the answer to all her questions, she came hard on the Asian soil she was riding.



51c.8. [Lust vs bourgeois love and profit / E la visione fù tolta da un' infinità di lampi, di tuoni e di scintille, ed un odore di Zolfo*]

Stella said to Max:

"That asshole friend of yours turned down my PhD again".

51c.8.i. **[What Max said]** Then, Max said that this was mainly due to Stella's erratic and aggressive behaviour. Maybe even because her initial research was erroneous or incomplete. What a prick, Stella thought and smiled. And Max went on saying:

"You're the most cunning person in the world, Stella, because you instrumentalise kindness. You're not tender, Stella. You're heartless and cruel. You spit tenderness like an octopus spits ink. To hide. And the erotic humidity you sell us is foreign, Stella, it is surrounded by water, it's not even yours. Other than that, you're all rebellious talk about this and that. Without this and that".



51c.8.ii. **[What Stella said]** Stella wasn't paying any attention at all to what Max was saying. She was thinking about her Maria's dangerous change because of that varmint sitting opposite her. A sober Maria, a Maria uptight in bed, a Maria living like a settled housewife, a Maria who was a systemic artist... How horrible. And Stella said to Max:

"Spare me the honours and offices you're hungry for. Save it for some softie idiot, you pathetic little professor. I didn't get rid of the captain to be stuck with you. If you turn my Maria's lust into bourgeois love and profit, I'll kill her".



51c.9. **[Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* (in present tense)]** Stella, who hasn't slept all night, is holding Maria in her arms. The two girls are naked. We are in Stella's room. Stella has been thinking all night long. She's looking for a way to avenge Max without losing her Maria. Whenever she comes up with some clever idea, she smiles.

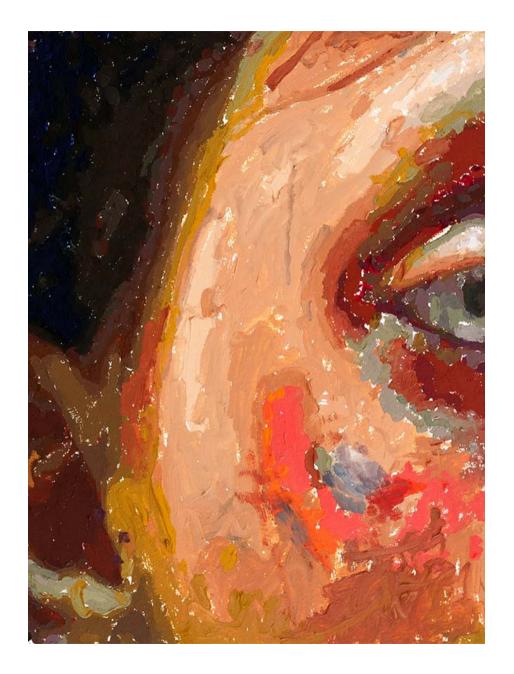
The simplest would be to kill him, someone naive might think, but Stella knew better. Stella had read the medical report in the file under the draft of Max's new theory. Max's health that seemed stable over the last years was stable my arse. The professor would eventually become completely paralysed. In three years —tops— he wouldn't be able to move his fingers at all. Or hold his head up. You don't kill someone like that, love. The rest of his life will be his biggest punishment.

Suddenly, right there in the silent room, assuming that Stella was sleeping heavily as she always was at this time, Maria lifts gently her arm, then her leg and escapes from her lover's embrace. Stella's watching through her supposedly closed eyelids –like an old film–her Maria walking away on her tiptoes. Away from her. She's watching her Maria avoiding her for the first time.

Maria slips out of the room quietly. A while later, Stella gets up and stands in front of the window. It's raining. Stella eats two flying shrooms and now she's flying carefree in the clouds. There she meets the young girl who was their music teacher for whom she and Maria had fallen in high school, in Agios, a long time ago. And she thinks to herself slowly:

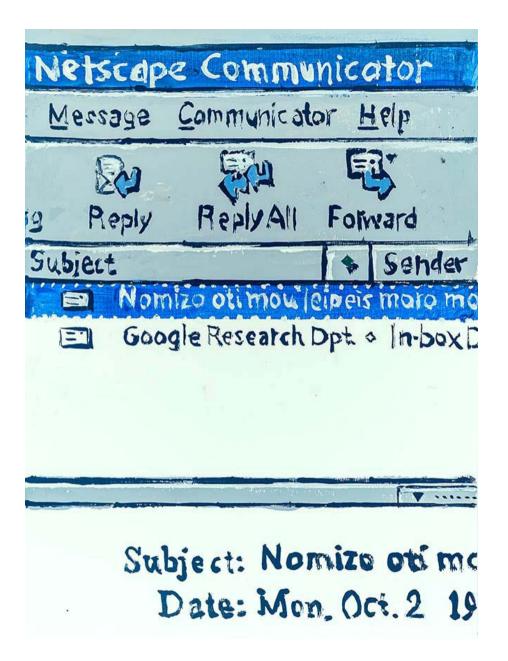


Forgotten kisses, ghosts of conservatories. In the night, the young girls who are studying music go to sleep and dream of their teachers: Miss Sofia, Miss Angela, Miss Christina. In the empty rooms of wind instruments, forgotten kisses, ghosts of conservatories slip into the trombones, the bronze bodies, they dash at the mouthpieces. Forgotten kisses, ghosts of conservatories, they strike up all night long the marches of loves that never became "something more", without notes, a dark lengthy pause until dawn.



51c.10. [The announcement] Stella came out of her room late in the afternoon and went to the kitchen of their house. Maria, who was making herself a third coffee, ran and hugged her hastily. As happy as a child, she announced that at last a famous gallery of a good friend of Max's had agreed to exhibit and represent her work. Signing an agreement was only a matter of days now.

Stella beat her up so hard that she couldn't go out of the house without wearing sunglasses for a week. On the one hand, Max's betrayal and on the other hand, her Maria's estrangement. Plus she was having one of these bad LSD trips which are not at all pleasant. Her behaviour was so undue that next morning even she told her Maria that she felt guilty and apologized. Or she was faking it. We don't know. Maria not only accepted her apology immediately but she also grabbed Stella's hands and kissed them. Tenderly. The same hands that just a few hours ago had beaten her up so unreasonably.



52. **[There was a battle plan]** Stella would leave Stanford. She would lead her former professor into believing that his plan succeeded. Man, she was fed up with constant rejection, she was fed up with Max's new theory, she was fed up with clingy Maria, so she'd leave and find someplace else to go wild.

Her Maria wouldn't follow her right away. Stella knew that well. Because of that heavy sense of responsibility that she's always carrying around like a saddle, Maria would never sell out Max before the official presentation of his new theory since she was so indispensable to him. Irreplaceable. She wouldn't dump him now, not ever for her Stella. Fine. But, right after the presentation of Max's new theory, a simple email from vanished Stella would be enough. Something like "I think I miss you, babe", and her Maria —like a dog—would run back to her and lick her feet. There was nothing in this world that Max could do to keep her Maria close to him. Or that's what Stella thought.

This was Stella's simple plan to avenge Max. And it was the best. Like in maths. The simpler the better. Simply by leaving Stanford –of which she was actually fed up and would like to go party someplace else – Stella would claim her Maria back in just three months and would leave that pathetic professor rot all alone trapped in his ailing body.







E 'EXXAVES

I LEGGES

53. [Executing the battle plan]

53a. [Meat Is Murder*] The next morning things in the house were tense and Maria's face was really messed up. Stella entered the kitchen and said: "I'm sorry. I was out of line. I'm happy for your painting exhibition". Maria grabbed Stella's hands and kissed them. Max, who was drinking his coffee at the kitchen table, looked elsewhere disgusted. "I'll be back soon", said Stella. Indeed. She was on time for Sunday lunch. Sober, without shoes, only with her socks, no cigarette. She turned down wine, she only drank water. She even ate meat. Stella, who had been a vegetarian since she was little. She was silent throughout the lunch and in the end she said:

"The roast was amazing. Thank you. But I'm fed up with you and your new theory. I'm leaving you".

53b. [Fire/ Die Gesamtheit der bestehenden Sachverhalte ist die Welt*] On 11 September 1999, the professor would present his long-awaited revolutionary psychological-economic theory in Stanford aiming to cause a sensation again and win the Nobel prize. In the presence of the entire academic community; it would be the scientific event of the year. Around three months before the scheduled presentation, on 21 June 1999, while Max was working on the crucial final formulations and fine-tuning of his new theory and Maria was co-ordinating a communication marathon, Stella said out of the blue: "I'm leaving, all the best". It was heaven for the professor who could finally have his so much desired quiet and Maria exclusively his. Max laughed pleased. But Maria started shaking.

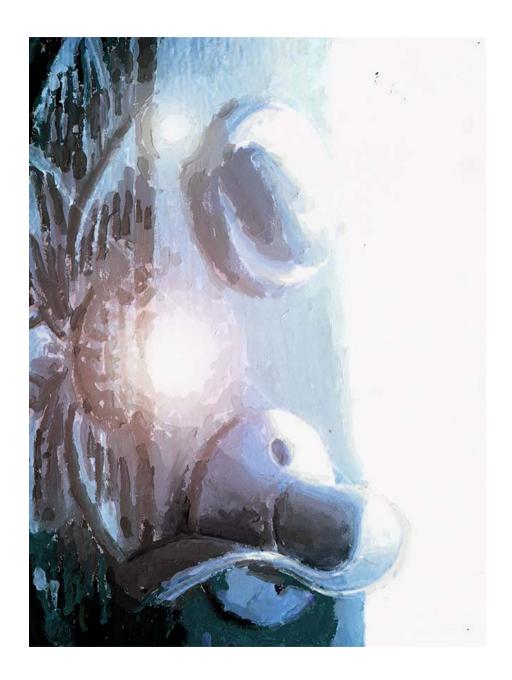


54. **[We love you and we need you]** Maria was standing behind Max's wheelchair shaking. Her heart was pounding. The hollow beat made her bones vibrate. She hastily opened a small tin box she kept in her pocket and swallowed two shrooms that make time expand. They hit her instantly and the effect was very intense. This is what happens after long abstention. Meanwhile, Max said:

"This is the best for all of us. At least for a while. After the presentation of my new theory, when things calm down, my Maria and I will decide whether we want you back".

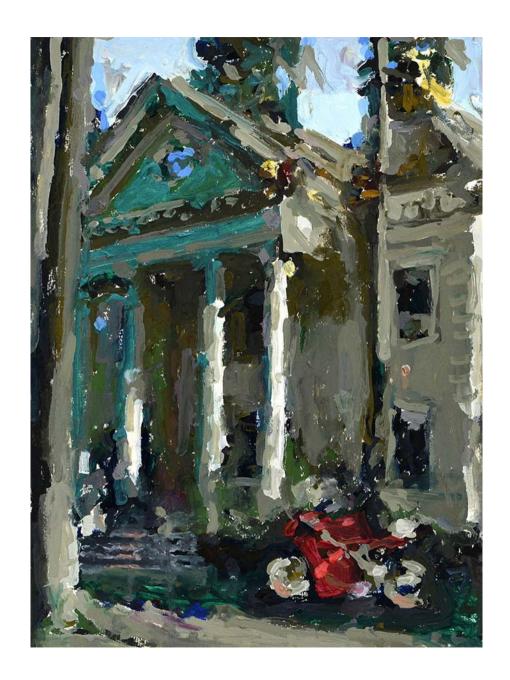
What a wanker. He was such a wanker that Stella almost admired that cripple for his audacity. She could kill him with her bare hands in an instant. She thought about it, but no. As she'd already decided, she wouldn't show him that mercy. And then the earthquake hit. Hammered as she was, Maria said to her Stella:

"We could all live happily together ever after, forever, forever and ever, for a lifetime, don't go now, we love you and we need you, stay, forever. We'll have a baby. And then another one. They'll be two of them. And we'll be happy together ever after, forever, forever and ever, for a lifetime, don't go now, we love you and we need you, stay, forever".



55. [Life like a fairytale] Stella didn't even process the scenario that Maria dared utter, the one with the two kids and the dickhead professor in the same fairytale house. If she did, she would shoot that stoned idiot in the head. She ignored it. She stuck to that: "We love you and we need you", said her Maria. Are we for real now? Look what it came down to. To bourgeois love.

Stella nodded her head as if she was saying "Now you're talking" and started rolling a cigarette. "Didn't we say no smoking in the house?", said Max coughing. Stella nodded again as if she was saying "Très bien, watch this, you fuckwit". All while rolling a cigarette, she walked slowly to the embossed bronze front door and opened it. The hot Californian sun was shining bright giving a metaphysical vibe to the scene. Stella lit the cigarette leaving the embossed bronze front door open behind her, went down the few wide marble stairs. "Fucking close the embossed bronze front door like we've said, will ya?", shouted Max and gave a nod to his Maria to wheel him outside.



56. [Watch this]

56a. [Up in flames] Max and Maria stood on the porch of the house entrance. They watched Stella climbing on the Ducati and starting the engine. The countless residents of the campus couldn't have imagined the spectacle they were about to witness. Stella turned the handlebar towards the house without blinking an eyelid and, all of a sudden, rode over the wide marble stairs of the entrance, climbed on the top and drove inside the house with the motorbike revving. Maria, in daze, took hastily Max down the wide marble stairs -the wheelchair was jumping - and ran away. A few metres later, she stopped running on the thick grass and turned around to look at their house. Through the big glass balcony door she saw her Stella parking the motorbike on its stand in the centre of their living room, her Stella with the cigarette in her mouth opening the reservoir cap, her Stella kicking her Ducati, Stella's Ducati falling down spilling gas on the parquet flooring, her Stella walking slowly towards the embossed bronze front door with her arms up, theatrically, her Stella tossing the cigarette deep in the house and jumping down all the wide marble stairs at once.

56b. [The damage] The neoclassical house that was now up in flames was of little value compared to its valuable scientific contents. All the documents, the hard disks and the computers on the four desks that were scattered in the big living room were burnt down. All valuable data validating the professor's new revolutionary theory were burnt down to ashes. All Maria's paintings were also burnt down to ashes. The contract with the famous gallery, useless.



57. [Ciao, Maria, bella, adept student, hats off]

Maria screamed to Stella:

"You riverboat bitch. Get the fuck out of here!".

And she meant it. Taken aback by Maria's boldness —this was a very different Maria from the one she knew— Stella not only wasn't distressed, but on the contrary, she was overwhelmed with a deep pleasure. The pleasure of a wise teacher seeing their student making rapid progress. Maria's reference to the parable of the River Dog from the Gospel of the Riverboat that she had taught her recently filled her with delight and joy. This controversial parable goes something like that:

You are my human. You turn on my faucet. And you turn it off. Said Joe and spat blood on the wooden floor. This was his last barking. After a fierce fight with bare teeth and feet, he collapsed unconscious on the floor, maybe even dead. His human, with a deep bite on the neck that would very quickly prove to be fatal, kicked him hard again in the stomach. Then, he stepped on Joe's head and stood high. He balanced on one leg for a minute and then, without touching at all the wooden floor, he jumped and swapped legs -crack- for one more minute. Killing what you love is hard – if you do it, do it right. Joe's human dragged him from the legs sighing heavily –the wooden floor was covered with blood – all the way to the edge of the boat and pushed him over in the river. He spat blood on the wooden floor and cursed himself in Spanish. He cried. Old Joe, his loyal life-long companion, suddenly got the rabies and went mad, made a devious attack and was now floating away, with his four legs and his tail stretched, like a black star.



58. [And then?]

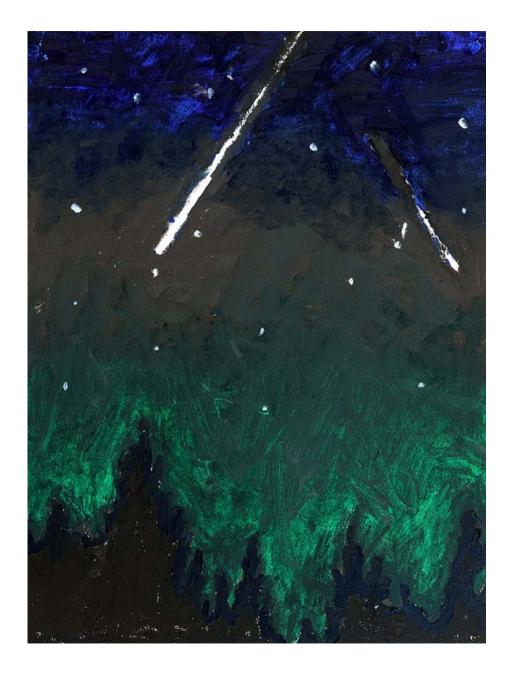
58a. [Our fire brigade] If Stanford campus wasn't that big and didn't have its own fire brigade, Stella would end up in some mental facility. With a white shirt with sleeves that are tied up to the back (that's bad) and handfuls of pills (that's good). It didn't happen. Max went straight away to the dean. The dean called the fire chief*, who was already in the know, and the crime was covered up. For everyone's sake and to the benefit of the university's reputation.

58b. **[Wanted]** Stella's lawyer was crystal clear: "Forget about summer in Greece, darling. The minute you step foot here, they'll nick you for good: using and dealing hard drugs, armed bank robbery, murder of a guard, murder of a businessman...". Stella said: "Expropriation. Not robbery. And that shite: a member of a parastatal organisation. Not a businessman".

58c. [New professional orientation] After her plan to get tanned on the Greek beaches went down the drain, Stella decided to find shelter in the garage of an American-Polish friend in the nearby city of Menlo Park. Due to a series of coincidences she will end up working in a new, small and unknown company who's very tolerant of misfit employees as long as they are creative. This was the main reason why a few years later this company —after successive innovations— would dominate the market. It would dethrone Microsoft as the more famous high tech company in the world.



- 59. **[The neighbours]** Now, Maria and Stella live in two neighbour cities in California, USA. They are close to each other without being in touch.
- 59a. [One week after the fire] Stella sends anonymously a small parcel to the dean's office of the University of Stanford. The parcel contains a hard disk and the hard disk contains Max's new theory completed. Without any mistakes. Not out of kindness but in order to expedite the presentation of Max's new theory and to be able to take her Maria away from him at last. A second anonymous parcel arrives at the Faculty of Humanities, at the dean's office and blows him up. His brains were splattered all over. The crime was never solved.
- 59b. **[Three months after the fire]** Despite the general upset, the presentation of Max's new theory will be held according to the initial planning. On 11 September 1999. On the very next day, Stella starts trying to contact her Maria again. Her goal is to bring her close to her again. She thinks it'll be a piece of cake.
- 59c. [Six months after the fire] To Stella's surprise and anger, during these long three months after the presentation of Max's new theory Maria stubbornly keeps rejecting all contact attempts. Stella sent literally 100 messages to her Maria. No reply. All riled up, she started doing night patrols on her Ducati around Max and Maria's new house. She wouldn't have rushed into taking more drastic measures had it not been for some unexpected news.



59d. [Some of Stella's 100 messages to her Maria that were left without a reply:]

59d.1. [#1] I think I miss you, babe. (no reply)

59d.2. **[#3]** Hey, kiddo, we should meet again and play cops and protesters like we used to. (no reply)

59d.3 [#7] What's up? Yeah, right. Is the wind always blowing your hair? Yeah, right. Answer if you dare. You don't dare? Yeah, right. (no reply)

59d.4 **[#31]** See where I live, what I have to put up with in order to be able to be, away from you, loving others, to be. (no reply)

59d.5 [#32] Though lovers be lost love shall not.* (no reply)

59d.6 **[#55]** ????????????? (no reply)

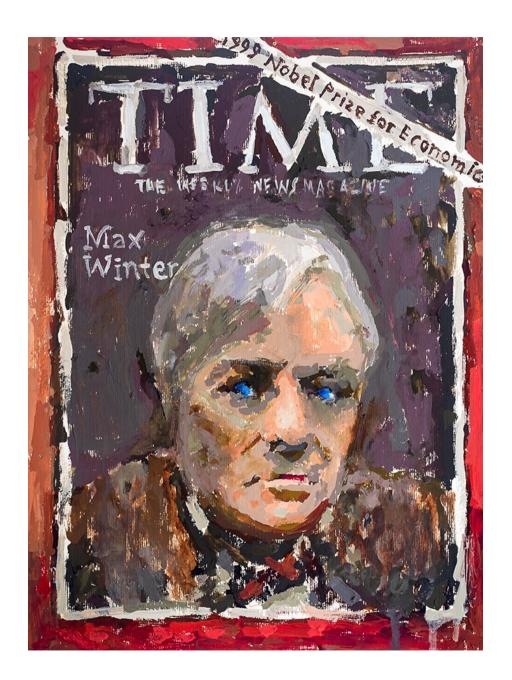
59d.7 **[#73]** Unrequited lust is like the broken radio of love. It will happen. (no reply)

59d.8 **[#87]** Wir waren zwei von Millionen von Sternen / Die sich immer mehr voneinander entfernen.* (no reply)

59δ.9 **[#98]** You're the flower of my embrace. You turn on my faucet. And you turn it off. (no reply)

59d.10 **[#99]** I changed my mind, let's go. My beauty is yours, let's go. (no reply)

59d.11 **[#100]** I want you. (no reply)



60. [WHAT?]

60a. **[What scared Stella #1]** The TIME magazine with Max's face on the cover. He had won the Nobel prize. Stella hesitated between grabbing or leaving the magazine. Finally, she opened the magazine and started reading.

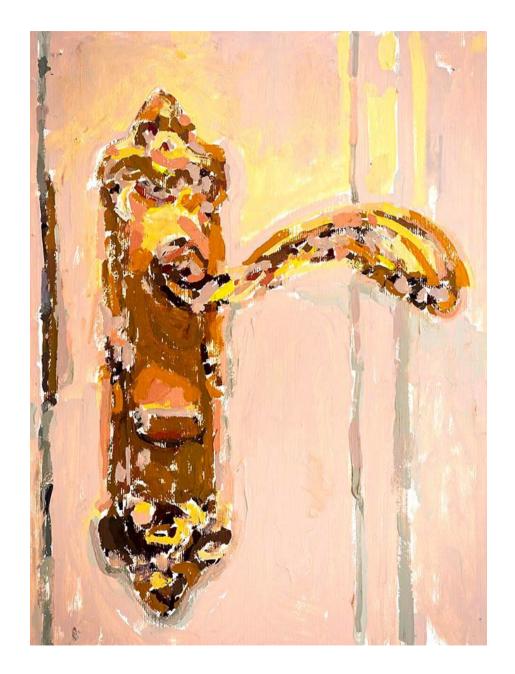
First, all the usual stuff: the early years, the illness, the persistence, the success, the fame, hard work always and again, the crucial transfer from Amsterdam to Stanford and in the end, the reward. The big award and the honours.

And now what? Keep up the hard work in order to extend his new theory and... focusing on raising his newborn child.

WHAT?

60b. **[What scared Stella #2]** According to school books, which are all written on the hoof, this world has only three dimensions: length, width and height. And yet, in the geometry of love – because there is lust – this world has at least seven directions: forwards or backwards, rightwards or leftwards, upwards or downwards and embraces. Unless the pill lands on zero and you're left all alone and in the same place until the end of time. A guard and a ghost.

WHAT?



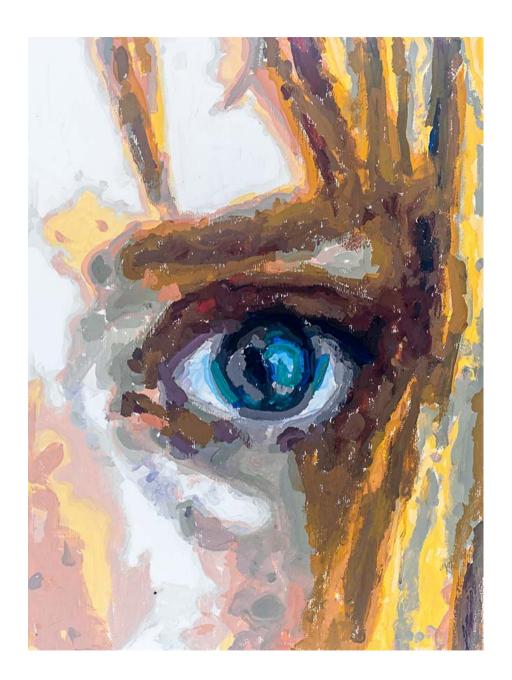
60c. **[Goodbye, office]** The magazine didn't mention her Maria, but Stella was sure that her Maria was the mother of Max's child. It was true.

"We will have a baby", her Maria had said. Stella was such an idiot for not taking it seriously and thinking that it was the drugs talking.

She calmly left the magazine on her colleague's desk –right where she found it– and went to her office. She closed the aluminium door behind her –something that no one ever did in that company– she rolled down the plastic colourful blinds –no one ever did that either– and being a pioneer once more she brought the whole place down. Computers on the floor, screens, light bulbs, windows, all shattered, pieces of paper up in the air, the bookcase overturned, everything upside down and loud screams. Then, five minutes of dead silence and Stella leaving the building. On her Ducati, fading in the distance towards Palo Alto.

Stella drops by numerous wild student parties on that day. She drinks a bottle of Irish whiskey and takes a handful of coke and, at 5 a.m., she climbs over the garden fence of her beloved Maria and hideous Max's new house. On top of that, she also eats three shrooms that sharpen the senses and barges in completely wasted. She locates with great accuracy the child room from the smell.

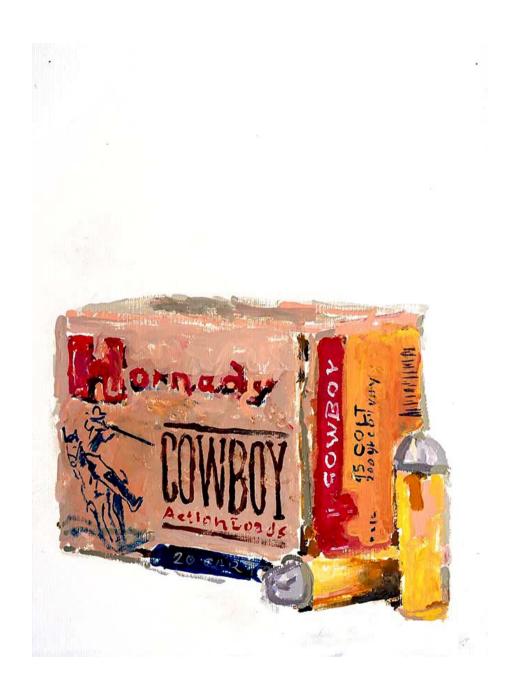
The fucking door of the child room is painted pink and the fucking knob is painted gold.



60d. [Goodbye, baby] The bullet flying from the barrel of Stella's engraved Colt revolver pierces through the crib of Maria' baby. The little pink curtain on the crib is painted in blood. Blood on the floor. Little red rivers are quickly formed flowing from the crib towards the pink door. Like little veins. The shot without silencer creates a powerful blast in the air. The blast pierces through bodies and items and finally triggers the house's soft alarm that sets the tone for the next 20 long seconds. Right then, Maria places her hand on the golden knob on the pink door of her baby's room. She grabs it from the outside while Stella's already holding it from the inside. Sensing the enemy hand, Maria will leave the golden knob. Stella will be the one to open the pink door in the end. Slowly. The child room is lit by a small pink night light. The rest of the house is blinking just like the lights on the Christmas tree dominating the living room. The two girls stare at each other for sometime, for a short or a long time. Ten seconds or one hundred and a half hours. It can't be counted. Right after that, Stella loads the Colt revolver again and offers it to her Maria. She says:

"I can't kill you myself, sweetheart".

Maria becomes wet. As she's standing barefoot opposite her Stella, she curls and stretches her toes scattering blood. Three times. Slowly. She looks down and follows the blood with her eyes. All the way from her feet to her baby's crib. In nimble little red veins. The little pink curtain on her baby's crib is red now. Still playing slowly with her toes dipped in the blood of her newborn, Maria turns her eyes slowly and faces again her great love. There's a peace in total contrast with the events. An eroticism out of time is poisoning the air.



60e. [Goodbye, Maria / E risposero Isole e continenti. Il cielo è chiuso e non ode*]

The first day of the first year of the new millennium dawns, the 1st January 2000, at 05:45, in Palo Alto, northwest of Santa Clara county, in California, United States of America.

Maria killed herself with a bullet in the head.



61. **[Goodbye, Stella]** Lying on the floor in the bedroom all this time Max is trying to climb on his wheelchair. In vain. In the end he gives up and stays still. He's trying to listen carefully to what's going on outside.

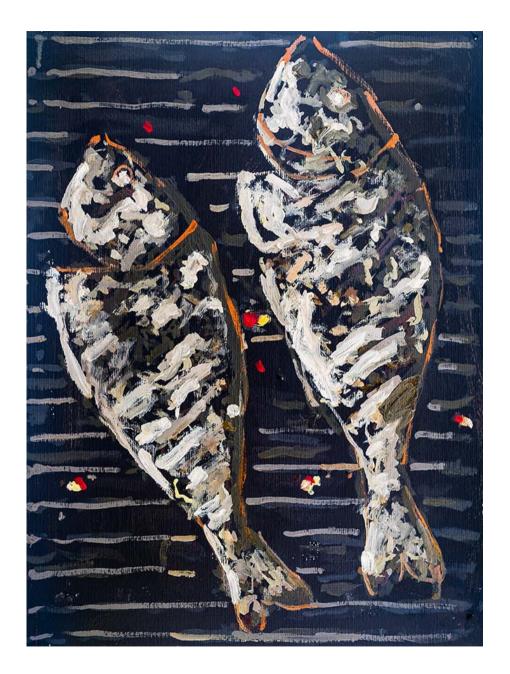
Outside the child room, Maria is lying dead on the floor. Stella is standing over her. Blasted from seven more daydreaming shrooms she says to her dead Maria:

"I didn't come to harm you. I was happy for you and I came by to tell you. I know it's late, but I was working. When all this is over, we should take the kid and go on a nice excursion to Gavdos. Huh? What do you think? We'll be naked and happy all day long. But we also need to be careful, it's blazing hot there in the summer, the baby's little, its skin is sensitive. We'll buy tons of sunscreen. We don't want it to get sunburnt. Right?".

Stella killed herself with a bullet in the head.

Her body collapsed on the floor, next to the other beloved body.

Although dead, Stella lets the gun fall out of her hand by reflex and runs her fingers tenderly through Maria's bloody hair.



62. **[The whole future will happen]** Death is a light sleep, with twitches, prophetic dreams, it is a dart in the centre, it will happen. The dead lives on as a soothsayer. But when exactly does a tree die? When its yellow leaves fall on the ground? Nah, it will happen. When its heart stops beating hard? But it doesn't have a heart, it will happen. It suffers big dreams wriggling –like a fresh fish on the grill– it sees sprouts where there's nothing but Sahara, it will happen. The dried tree, endowed with the soothsaying ability of the dead knows what the weather will be like here and elsewhere, throughout the future, it will happen. You'll see.



63. **[Exeunt]** This was the story of Maria and Stella.

TO BE CONTINUED

GLOSSARY ENTRIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

AC (§32a): An abbreviation for Armoured Corps. The Armoured Corps is one of the combat arms and the second oldest one in the Greek Army. Its predecessor is the Cavalry.

Adorno, Theodor W., [1903-1969] (\$2b): German sociologist, philosopher, musicologist and composer, member of the Frankfurt School (officially:"Institut für Sozialforschung"), a school of neomarxist critical theory, sociological studies and philosophy persecuted by Nazism.

Aesthetics (§2b): A branch of philosophy attempting to define beauty. First, it studies whether there can be a definition of what is beautiful as well as of what use such a definition would be. For Socrates* Aesthetics (kalon/good, kallos/beauty) and Ethics (agathon) are nothing more than the two sides of the same coin: functionality.

ATARI (§3d): Term in English in the original. Famous game console by the homonymous company. It was a smash hit in the '70s and the '80s. It could be directly connected to common CRT TVs of that time and it was very famous among the youth with titles such as Pong, Breakout, Space Invaders. The word ATARI is a term from the Japanese game Go.

Below the thunders of the upper deep / Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea / His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep / The Kraken sleepeth [...] (§51c.3): Verses in English in the original. An excerpt from an early poem of Alfred Tennyson. Kraken is a Scandinavian variation of the Arab sea snake that has tentacles strong enough to grab a whole ship and a huge back that sticks out like an island, something like a giant octopus.

Burton, Tim, [born in 1958] (\$17a): American director, script writer and producer, known for his gothic aesthetic.

Captain of Armoured Corps (§1c): A cavalry officer (obsolete). A military rank in the Armoured Corps, equivalent to captain in Infantry. A platoon commander.

Casa di Giulietta (§19): Juliet's house. A famous tourist attraction in Verona, Italy, on Via Cappello 23, near Piazza delle Erbe. Between legend and reality this house was linked to William Shakespeare's* Romeo and Juliet. It has a balcony, like Juliet's house in Shakespeare's play, and in the yard there is a bronze statue of Juliet.

Cavafy, Constantine P. [1863-1933]: Greek poet. He is considered one of the most eminent poets in modern time. He was born and lived in Alexandria, Egypt; this is why he is often called the Alexandrian. He wrote his most significant works after the age of 40.

CIA (\$41a): Term in English in the original. Central Intelligence Agency. The Central Intelligence Agency of the United States of America. CIA has jurisdiction only outside the USA and not within its borders. Equivalent agencies are the SIS (MI6) in the United Kingdom, Mossad in Israel, KGB in the USSR and the Greek EYP (National Intelligence Service (former KYP, before 1986).

Colt (§2b): Term in English in the original. Colt's Manufacturing Company, American firearms manufacturer.

de Saint-Exupery, Antoine, [1900-1944] (§38): French writer and pilot, known mainly for his book The Little Prince (1943)

De Wallen (§2b): The Amsterdam red light district. In the '90s, selling drugs by the numerous coffee shops in the area and also by hawkers was considered –under certain circumstances– legal. During the same period on the streets of De Wallen people prostituted themselves behind windows, like mannequins in clothing stores. Clients would choose the prostitute they liked based on looks and cost and the latter would go behind the curtain in the window. They would let the client in the small cabin through a side door and fornication would take place. Afterwards, the client would pay the amount agreed and leave the cabin, while the prostitute would go behind the window again. There were around 300 cabins of this kind in De Wallen that were temporarily closed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Die gesamte Wirklichkeit ist die Welt (§30): The total reality is the world. (Tractatus logico-philosophicus, Ludwig Wittgenstein,* Iambos Publications, 2021, statement 2.063, p. 54)

Die Gesamtheit der bestehenden Sachverhalte ist die Welt (§53b): The totality of existent atomic facts is the world. (Tractatus logicophilosophicus, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Iambos Publications, 2021, statement 2.04, p. 54)

Die Luft der Freiheit weht (§49): The wind of freedom blows. It is Stanford University's motto. It was chosen by the first President of the institution [David Starr Jordan] and it is attributed to Ulrich von Hutten.*

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor [Достоевский, Фёдор Михайлович, 1821- 1881] (§7b): Russian novelist, philosopher, short story and essay writer and journalist. One of the greatest novelists of world literature.

Drachmas (\$29c): Drachma was a monetary unit used in the ancient Greek world and the modern Greek state until 2002 when it was replaced by Euro.

Ducati (§2b): Italian motorcycle manufacturer.

E la visione fù tolta da un'infinità di lampi, di tuoni e di scintille, ed un odore di Zolfo (\$51c.8): And the vision was interrupted by innumerable lightnings and thunders and sparks and a smell of sulphur. (The Woman of Zakynthos, Dionysios Solomos,* Oceanida Publications, 1993, p. 85, note 8)

E risposero Isole e continenti. Il cielo è chiuso e non ode (\$60e): And islands and lands responded. The skies are closed and they won't listen. (The Woman of Zakynthos, Dionysios Solomos,* Oceanida Publications, 1993, p. 57)

Eastwood, Clint, [born in 1930] (§21): American actor and director. He became famous for his role in Sergio Leone's Spaghetti Westerns, e.g. The Bad, the Good and the Ugly (1966).

Einstein, Albert, [1879-1955] (\$40b): Albert Einstein was a German physicist of Jewish origin. He received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921. He is the founder of the Theory of Relativity and is regarded by many as the most important scientist of the 20th century, among the greatest ones of all times. The influence of Einstein's discoveries in relation to the nature of space and time continues to constitute the object of scientific research in physics, cosmology and maths. His surname is often used to indicate that someone has a high IQ: "Who am I? Einstein?"

Exarchia (\$2b): A densely inhabited neighbourhood in the centre of Athens spreading around the homonymous square. A landmark building within the borders of the neighbourhood is the historic complex of the National Technical University of Athens (see also NTUA). Exarchia is the par excellence "rebellious" area of Athens. This is where students, artists, intellectuals, anarchists and many more are gathered creating as a result – mainly in the past– a space for the exchange of ideas and anarchist groups' action.

Fire chief (\$58a): An officer rank in the Fire Brigade.

Four Seasons, The [Le Quattro Stagioni] (\$44): A group of four violin concerti by the great Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi[1678-1741], each of which gives a musical expression to a season of the year (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter).

Glossary: A short dictionary containing the definition of words, phrases, abbreviations, toponyms, surnames and, in general, of any references to something that is possibly unknown or hard to understand or is in a foreign language. Usually it is found in the last pages of a book.

Guilders (\$29c): (gulden in Dutch), the currency of the Netherlands from the 17th century until 2002.

Il tumulto universale della città (§5): The universal tumult of the city. (The Woman of Zakynthos, Dionysios Solomos,* Oceanida Publications, 1993, p. 45, note 1)

Juliet (§19): see Casa di Giulietta

Kenny (§18): see South Park

Lacan, Jacques, [1901-1981] (§11): French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist who greatly influenced critical and literature theory, sociology, feminist theory, cinema theory and clinical psychoanalysis. He was regarded as the continuator and reviser of Sigmund Freud [1856-1939].

Louise (§31): see Thelma and Louise

LSD (\$2b): Term in English in the original. Synthetic active hallucinogenic substance. It causes users to deviate from their usual behavior altering the perception of reality. It causes visual and auditory disturbances without leading to addiction. The high potency of the substance is remarkable, with doses of as little as 25 micrograms being capable of producing an effect. Normally, it is consumed orally, typically in the form of pills, capsules, sugar cubes, blotters, special stickers and biodegradable sponges immersed in LSD. All the above are usually called (magic) mushrooms or shrooms. Shrooms are categorised based on the type of hallucination they mainly cause. There are shrooms that distort space and make stairs and all items in general move like jello, shrooms that make time expand with which the user feels that everything is happening extremely slowly, shrooms that visualise sound with which the user's voice, music and all sounds in general also look like a kaleidoscopic image, etc.

Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds (§51c.9): Song composed by the British band The Beatles. In June 1967, right after the release of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album including this song, there were rumours that the title was clearly alluding to the psychedelic drug LSD and that this was why BBC banned it from airplay.

Madonna [born in 1958] (§25b): Original name Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone. American musician, singer, composer, songwriter, dancer, actress and businesswoman with many commercially successful albums.

Maradona, Diego Armando, [1960-2020] (\$25b): Argentinian footballer and football coach. He is regarded as the greatest footballer of all times

MIT (§11): Term in English in the original. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is a university in Cambridge, in the United States of America. One of the most important and famous technology research universities in the world.

Molotov: Molotov cocktail (or erroneously Molotov "bomb") is an incendiary device. The term often used describing it as a "bomb" is incorrect since it is not an explosive device but only an incendiary one. It consists of a glass bottle partly filled with an inflammable liquid sealed with a cloth. Typically, a bottle of one litre is filled with 2/3 of fuel and 1/3 of oil. Then, a rag soaked in gasoline is used as a fuse and is stuffed in the neck of the bottle. The bottle is stoppled with a plug and the fuse is ignited. The bottle is thrown and, when it shatters on impact, it bursts into flames. Adding one or two naphthalene tablets at most in the mix will produce a flame one to one and half metre taller. Since it is easy to produce, Molotov cocktail is used in urban combats. It took its name from the Soviet Foreign Minister under Stalin, Vyacheslav Michailovich Molotov [Мо́лотов, Вячесла́в Миха́йлович, 1890-1986]. During the Red Army's attack against the Finns in November 1939, in a radio broadcast addressed to the Soviet people, Molotov argued that his country was not dropping bombs but "baskets" full of food to the famished Finns. Then the Finns sarcastically dubbed these bombs "Molotov's picnic baskets" and in response they used incendiary bottles against the Soviet tanks dubbing them -again sarcastically- "Molotov cocktails".

Murderess, The (§28): Novel by Alexandros Papadiamantis.* A woman kills little girls believing that in this way she relieves both them and their families from pain.

Murphy's Law (\$51): Term in English in the original. Murphy's Law is the following adage: "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong. If it doesn't, it will be proven that it'd better had". Example: If you drop a slice of bread with jam, it will drop on the side that jam was spread on. The more

expensive the carpet on which it will fall is, the more possible it is to fall. If the slice of bread doesn't fall on the side that it was spread on, then your dog who was passing by will step on it and flip it, with the carpet getting dirty again plus 100 more paws of jam all over the house. No one can force Murphy's Law to happen: When you've been waiting for the elevator for too long, at some point you'll get tired and you'll leave the heavy briefcase you hold on the floor. The elevator will arrive at this exact moment. However, if you leave the heavy briefcase on the floor on purpose –in order to make the elevator arrive earlier – this won't happen. The contemporary form of Murphy's law goes back as far as 1952, as an epigraph to a mountaineering book by John Sack, who described it as an "ancient mountaineering adage".

Myshkin, Lev Nikolayevich, [Мы́шкин, Лев Никола́евич] (§7a): Prince Myshkin is the protagonist in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel The Idiot.

NATO (\$2a): Term in English in the original. See North Atlantic Treaty Organization below

Netscape Communicator (\$52): Term in English in the original. A suite of Internet applications, also known as Netscape 4. It was released in 1997 by Netscape Communications Corporation.

NTUA (§11): The National Technical University of Athens is a Greek university institution based in Athens. It was founded in 1837 and is the oldest technical institution in Greece.

Number Theory (§45): The branch of theoretical mathematics that studies the properties of integers. A main topic studied by the Theory of Numbers and applied widely in cryptography are prime numbers.

Οἶον τὸ γλυκύμηλον, ὅλως ἐρεύθεται (twice) (\$43): see Sappho

Papadiamantis, Alexandros [1851-1911]: One of the most significant Greek authors, also known as the "saint of Greek letters" or the "greatest of the great" in the words of Constantine P. Cavafy.* He mainly wrote novels that hold an eminent place in modern Greek literature.

Papagou (§3d): The Municipality of Papagou, Athens, was founded by the Officers' Autonomous Building Organisation established in 1950 by the then government of Sofoklis Venizelos. It took its name from the Field Marshall Alexandros Papagos [1883-1955].

Papanikolaou, Georgios [1883-1962]: Famous Greek doctor, biologist and researcher, a pioneer in the early detection of cervical cancer. He is primarily known as the person who discovered the pioneering cytodiagnostic method called Pap Smear. The main purpose of Pap Smear in not to detect cervical cancer but cellular changes preceding cancer, thus, saving lives.

PASOK (§3b): The Panhellenic Socialist Movement was one of the two major parties in Greek politics until 2012. It was founded in 1974 by Andreas Papandreou. PASOK came to power for the first time in 1981.

Potter, Harry (§42): The main character of the homonymous series of fantasy novels by the British author J. K. Rowling describing a world of wizards.

Roller coaster (§29a): Term in English in the original. A train in an amusement park that carries you very high and then takes you down at a very fast speed causing awe or, in other words, the simultaneous feeling of pleasure and fear.

Sahtouris, Miltos [1919-2005] (\$17): Greek surreal and symbolist poet.

Sappho [c. 630-570 π .X.] (§43): Archaic Greek lyric poet from Lesbos –also known as "Sappho the Lesbian" – particularly famous since the Antiquity and until today for her poems. In modern times, her name is linked to lesbian love. Maria sings in ancient Greek Sappho's verses from the epithalamium "sweet apple" and the fragment "golden-haired Phoebus". These verses are also sung in ancient Greek by the dancing girls in Angelos Spartalis' film 192 Nausicaa along the music of the traditional song "My red apple". English translation of the verses: Like a sweet apple reddening / high on the tip of the topmost branch. / Forgotten by pickers. / Not forgotten. Out of reach. / She has likewise remained a virgin, Eros approaches her not.

Shakespeare, William, [1564-1616]: English poet and playwright. He is widely regarded as the most significant playwright who wrote in English and one of the greatest authors worldwide.

Shine on you crazy diamond (§7b): Song composed by the British band Pink Floyd. It was included in the album Wish You Were Here and it was released in 1975. The lyrics were written by Roger Waters and they were dedicated to Syd Barrett, the former guitarist and leader of the band. Barrett left the band in 1968 due to his chronic problems with psychedelic drugs that seriously affected his mental health.

Shrooms (\$2c): see LSD

Socrates (470 BC-399 BC): Athenian philosopher, one of the greatest minds in Greece and the world and one of the founders of Western philosophy.

Solomos, Dionysios (1798-1857): The national poet of Greece.

South Park (§17b): Animated comedy television series for adults. It was created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone. It follows four boys -Stan Marsh, Kyle Broflovski, Eric Cartman, Kenny McCormick- who live in the homonymous fictional city of Colorado in their surreal adventures. Very often, Kenny dies in an episode and reappears in the next one: "Oh, my God! They killed Kenny again". Then, Kyle adds: "You bastards".

Stanford (§47): Leland Stanford Junior University, a private research university located in Stanford, California, USA. One of the best universities in the world.

Starry Night (\$2a): The Starry Night is an oil-painting on canvas by Vincent Van Gogh. Painted in June 1889, the painting depicts the view from the western window in the painter's room at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence asylum just before sunrise, with the addition of an idealised village. Since 1941, the painting has been in the permanent collection of the New York Museum of Modern Art. It is regarded as one of Van Gogh's best works and is one of the most famous paintings in the history of the western civilisation.

Tarantino, Quentin, [born in 1963] (\$24): American film director, script writer and actor. He has filmed many extremely violent films with great commercial success.

Tennyson, Alfred, (1809-1892) (§51c.3): One of the most popular English poets, a Poet Laureate in the United Kingdom during much of Queen Victoria's reign.

Thelma & Louise (§31): In the homonymous 129 minute American drama film produced in 1991, directed by Ridley Scott and written by Callie Khouri, Thelma is a quiet housewife married to Darryl, an authoritarian and manipulative carpet salesman. Louise is single, she works as a waitress and is a strong woman with a traumatic secret from her past. The film follows the two women on their two-day break from their life that becomes a nightmare.

Theory of Computation (§50): A branch of theoretical computer science that studies whether and how efficiently a problem can be solved using an algorithm or a Turing machine*. The Theory of Computation, in conjunction with mathematical logic and linguistics, is appropriate for developing syntax and lexical analysers in order to easily create compilers.

Though lovers be lost love shall not (\$59d.5): Verse in English in the original. From the poem "And death shall have no dominion" by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas [1911-1953], from the book The colour of saying, p. 70, see also References.

Trahanas (\$32b): A type of traditional wheat product made in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean. There are two kinds of trahanas, sweet and sour. It is made with semolina, cracked wheat or flour and milk or sour milk respectively. It is cooked as a thick soup or, alternatively, it may be fried and then cooked in only as much liquid as it will absorb.

Turing, Alan, [1912-1954]: English mathematician, logician, cryptographer and theoretical biologist. He is considered the "father" of computer science due to his great contribution in the field of Theory of Computation during

the 1930s. He formalised the until then informal concept of the algorithm in a strict mathematical formulation through the so-called Turing machine. During the WWII, he played a pivotal role in deciphering the German cryptographic machine Enigma. However, his scientific contribution was never publicly recognized during his lifetime because his work was confidential. After the war, Turing was prosecuted and convicted for homosexuality and his career was destroyed. When the trial was over he was given the choice between going to prison or accepting a hormonal therapy reducing libido. He opted for estrogen injections for a year with side-effects such as breast development. Turing committed suicide by taking cyanide in 1954, shortly before his 42nd birthday.

UvA (§2b): Universiteit van Amsterdam. The University of Amsterdam. It is located in the heart of Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, and is one of the largest universities in Europe.

Van Gogh, Vincent [1853-1890] (§2a): Dutch painter. He didn't live to see his work recognized. However, after his death his fame spread quickly. Nowadays he is considered one of the greatest painters of all times.

Velouhiotis, Aris [1905-1945] (§32): The nickname of Thanasis Klaras. Journalist, politician, executive of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and leader of ELAS (Greek People's Liberation Army) which was the biggest resistance organisation in Greece during the German Occupation. In November 1942, he collaborated with Napoleon Zervas and British saboteurs in order to blow up the Gorgopotamos bridge in one of the biggest acts of sabotage during World War II. He refused to give up arms after liberation and he was assassinated by Greeks in 1945. His body was decapitated and desecrated.

Verhoeven, Paul, [born in 1938] (\$44): Dutch director, script writer and producer. In his films he mainly addresses sex and violence. In his film "The fourth man", produced in 1983 with a duration of 102 minutes, an alcoholic writer meets a mysterious woman and quickly finds out that her three previous husbands were killed in strange "accidents".

Von Hutten, Ulrich, [1488-1523]: German poet and revolutionary.

Window (\$2b): see De Wallen

Windows (\$40): Term in English in the original. The US software development company Microsoft introduced the operating environment under the name Windows on 20 November 1985 as a graphical operating system shell for MS-DOS in response to the growing interest in graphical user interfaces (GUI). The early versions of Windows were very unstable and crashed easily and, as a result, they needed constant reboots. Despite that, they prevailed in the PC market worldwide with over 90% market share, overcoming Mac-OS that had been introduced in 1984.

Wir waren zwei von Millionen von Sternen / Die sich immer mehr voneinander entfernen (§59d.8): We were two among millions of stars / That keep getting farther and farther from each other. Lyrics from the song "2 von Millionen von Sternen" that was included in the album Kommt Zusammen.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, [1889-1951]: Austrian philosopher who worked primarily on Logic. He is regarded as one of the most influential philosophers. His work played an important role in the evolution of philosophical thought in the 20th century.

Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen (§7): Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent. (Tractatus Logicophilosophicus, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Iambos Publications, 2021, statement 7, p. 128)

Yugoslavia (§51a.2): A European country in the western Balkans. It was formed after the First World War, in 1918, under the name "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes". Following the financial and political crisis in the 1980s and the rise of nationalism, Yugoslavia was dissolved and disintegrated in five states that in the end were led to a war between them.

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photo by Angela Svoronou

ABOUT THE WORK

I wrote Maria and Stella during the summer of 2021 in Crete, in my estate in Vathy, near Agios Nikolaos. The philologist Elpida Grigoraki and the graphic designer Manos Siganos offered valuable assistance. From the first draft until the completed version, the book was read and aptly commented on by a number of loyal friends and collaborators (well, they also did say a lot of nonsense that I chose to forget). I would like to thank Layia Giourgou, Irena Oikonomou, Amaryllis, Annie Shiradze, Voula Kokolaki, Erato Kapetanaki, Evi Lazoura, Theodora Samara, Nikolas Tavlas.

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Among other awards and distinctions he has won the Innovation & Digital Effects Award from the Hellenic Film Academy (2014) as well as the Golden Digital Alexander Award and the Fischer Audience Award at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival (2008). In 2014, he was selected to represent Titanium Yiayiannos Gallery at the ART ATHINA International Contemporary Art Fair with his solo exhibition "Christ Re-crucified" curated by the art historian and NKUA Professor Dr Manos Stefanidis. In 2015, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Crete and the Cultural Organisation of the Municipality of Agios Nikolaos co-organised his solo exhibition "The Apology of Socrates in Kaufbeuren" curated by the Museum's director Maria Maragkou.

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