

Holger Saarmann

“So küsste mich meine Friseurse“

Bahnsteig gegenüber

Opposite Platform

As so often, he's waiting for a train –
standing on his platform, looking across the rail.
There are plenty of people to watch, over there –
and women that he could fall in love with!

Why does he always fall in love
with the women on the opposite platform?
He doesn't notice who else is standing at his rails,
but those who travel to completely different regions.

Maybe he doesn't want to go where he's going to –
Maybe his aversion against that place is so strong
that he silently – without having realized himself –
envises them for their secret destination.

He's probably attracted by that strange faraway place's lustre,
by those lights blazing in her eyes,
As if he could conquer that faraway place
in one go with that woman.

So again, he's unhappily falling in love
with a girl from the opposite platform.
Sometimes he wonders: How can that be?
Does the lady of my life live somewhere else?

Others meet on a journey:
"Oh, you're going where I live!
Would you like to join me in the dining-car?" –
And at their destination, they are already kissing,

But he again fell in love
with a girl on the opposite platform.
The women at his track don't attract him,
but with those he would found families.

Perhaps, on his journey through life,
there has been some switch thrown the wrong way,
so actually, the poor fellow just belongs
somewhere completely different in this world.

Namely there, where those beauties go,
in cities he never heard of.
He would be the one to get them from the station,
and for his arms they would be yearning.

From time to time, there's a little hope,
like in all songs dealing with trains and stations:
Then it appears as if she smiles at him –
yes, sometimes she seems to answer his looks!
Then he thinks:

Maybe she, too, always falls in love
with the men on the opposite platform –
Maybe there have been switches thrown wrong in her life, too,
and that's why we never could reach each other.

Maybe the whole world is inverted –
But if so, how and where can it be changed?
Who tells us, where to travel best?
Who will mark the travelling day in the calendar?

Liebe neu erfunden

Re-invented Love

The moon of May was fat and heavy,
the crickets wearily fiddled.
Silver all around,
the tree above me stood in blossom.
It was warm, I sat in the grass,
my thoughts wandering.
And there, in those hours of slumber blue,
I re-invented love.

It seemed as universal
as grabbed out of the air,
as if it had been whistled
by nightingale and lark,
just to fall to my share.
It didn't leave me alone,
but I had neither girl nor pen at hand,
that night that I re-invented love.

A love, undiscovered and never sung of,
A love, unspotted by clichés, never put in rhymes.
A love without all those formula-like words,
an amoureuse exceptional case of the uninquired kind.

Keep it in mind – anyhow!
So I gathered sounds
for a melody
of considerable length.
It just came by itself.
Immediately, it imprinted on my mind
and resulted in the most beautiful love song in the world;
its words revealed how love could last eternally.

Was a song from ancient times, yet unheard by any ear,
so evident that it never occurred to anybody.
Was a song so simple that anybody could understand it,
so omnipresent that it had always been overlooked.

I sang it to myself,
blinded by the moment.
In my mind, it already
was perfectly completed.
The moon of May was fat and heavy,
and silver all around ...
Perhaps I've been sitting there for too long –
At home behind my desk, it was all forgotten.

Fi-di-bum

Fee-dee-boom

First, the key got lost;
it fell from the board on the wall
and vanished behind strips and tubes
where neither they searched nor found it.

So that door remained locked,
and no one complained about that.
While weeks and months were passing by,
nobody would ask for access.

Many winters ago, they put
the cupboard in front of the useless door
and soon forgot the chamber behind –
except for me: I still live here.

Between the junk that nobody cared for
is where I found my silent asylum.
And those who once honoured me in song,
have long since considered this childish.

Long since, I took my hat,
long since, I stopped dancing around.
If the likes of us are no longer welcome,
we fall silent – Fee-dee-boom! –
we fall silent, fee-dee-boom.

Four armchairs, stacked in pairs,
the fifth one as meant for me.
Here I have been sitting impassively for years,
with neither a meal nor a laugh.

Once, under the stairs
or a bed I used to hide,
so that, if I failed to catch the prats,
I could at least frighten them banging.

Though my feet and hands have wilted,
my ears became big and stiff.
The voices through floor and walls
are my entertaining programme.

In the mirror, I watch myself fade.
One of us is getting blind, but who?
Took over the upholstery's colours;
I almost can't see myself anymore.

Barricaded, faded-out and forgotten,
shrivelled, withered and crooked,
A remain that does neither know, whose one,
nor he knows why –Fee-dee-boom! –
Why did he fall silent? Fee-dee-boom!

Grey light seeps through the hatch,
the furniture turned grey from dust.
But my haunting will turn no one outside to grey,
since they are too loud to hear.

No longer could I dwell there,
with ignorance all over the house!
For generations, there has been a lack of
appreciation for my romp and dance!

No longer I like to shake and rattle;
there is no room for dancing in here, anyway.
I am not looking for other ways,
anyway, it is all in vain.

My little sack was eaten by moths,
it had become too heavy for throwing.
Those ancient goblin quirks
had frightened nobody long since.

Instead of making noise and chasing,
I hang around futile and mute.
The key is in my pocket,
but I do not walk abroad – Fee-dee-boom! –
I do not walk abroad, fee-dee-boom!

Though, in rare moments, when the morning
enlightens the chamber with bronze,
I know: No room will forever be hidden
and no door forever be blocked!

I hear a child, hear how it cries, how it whimpers
and hum my old characteristic tune.
One day, again, I will be master of all rooms –
a Bogeyman never dies!

The Bogeyman is called Butzemann in German, but by the name of Manducus, this goblin has already been known in the Antic Rome.

Gleisbesetzer

Railway Blockers

Count off, are we enough?
This night, our train will arrive.
To welcome it, we want to be on the spot a little earlier.
It's not a friend who comes at this time.
There's no station around.
Our path, that we only guess approximately
in the dark, leads us over gravels, grass and tar.

And the train carries a freight
which frightens and infuriates us.
The state needs a whole army to safeguard it.
And many a "soldier",
a democrat in his heart,
knows that it's vulgar what he must do
and would prefer to be on our side, if possible.

Be a human, show your face!
You don't need your helmet!
Come, leave the stick and be fair!
Shall I be cold here and do nothing?
Comrade, let me pass!
Otherwise, my place on the rail will remain empty,
What a pity if this were because of you?

Let there be rain, snow or ice:
We will leave this track only
being carried away, no sooner!
"Father state" may forgive us:
We will be disobedient!
We traveled here, a thousand, maybe more,
and if this train comes, we'll put each other crossways!

Join us! Join us!
We will be train conductors,
aggravating the adherence of the schedule!
Until, by the resistance of the world,
the train stops at the last buffers,
we'll come here, over and over again,
be it unauthorized: We direct the traffic!

For decades, the operators of nuclear power stations were permitted by the changing governments to deposit their radioactive waste in shut down salt pits in sparsely populated areas, such as the storage depots Gorleben (in the Wendland area). Since the 1990s, the blockade of local railway lines became a mediagenic form of protest when the Castor train arrived. This song is my statement of solidarity with those who participate in the ecological resistance and do not fear the presence of 100.000 police officers

Treppen Stairs

In nostalgic mood, I quietly look back
on school sports as the most marvelous lesson:
The jogging track stretched out in the April forest,
upon it, we were running our lap.

And Freya, the cutest, ran next to me
and asked me: Why hurry?
The others followed the curve, but we
climbed the steep slope.

We lay in the grass, being fond of each other.
The winners of the race were André, Max and Jörn.
And so, at the age of 10, I learned that, to life
there are other things than striving for the podium.

The path of life leads us over stairs:
Some conquer them while others drag themselves.
Crucial stairs, this I know, I came across
at the age of 10, at 20 and at 30.

One listened when Freya started to sing,
so, feeling flattered, she kept on singing.
Soon, there was a band, winning in contests,
and I was the guy at the guitar.

At the abitur ball, our total repertoire
gained us a giant applause.
So, Jörn's uncle, who was a manager, said:
Freya, I'll launch you in great style!

She talked about the charts and laughed: Go along!
I answered: I'm doing Folk with Grit now.
So, obliged to the true and beautiful,
at 20, I refused to storm up the stairs to glory.

The path of life leads us over stairs ...

Being with Grit purely meant song, desire and ease
which inspired us sixteen semesters.
Until I happened to read in the newspaper
that Freya and Jörn were getting married.

I grinned, but Grit said that time was right,
the clock within her was ticking.
Class reunion at the Town Hall Inn wasn't far ahead;
she wasn't ready to face her old mates like this.

Since everybody would come with their husbands to be.
"Rubbish!", I said – Now, she loves André.
So, in freedom, I went on my own paths at 30,
instead of, according to tradition, sweeping the town hall stairs!

The path of life leads us over stairs,
and he who won't avoid them, may easily appear as a wit.
Though maybe I'm unlucky and my contempt will be revenged
at 80, at 70, or even already at ...
But who wants to become that old?

*According to a northern German tradition, a man who is still a bachelor at his
30th birthday has to sweep the town hall stairs until he is kissed by a virgin.*

Der Gast The Guest

No one saw him coming,
he probably came all by himself.
No one saw him leave,
no traces could be found.
Perhaps he is still near,
perhaps he never was here.

And if he was, unrecognized,
he was only having a break.
The next village? A distant country?
No man knows his home.
Could be that he slept here.
Could be that he called me.

What's left of him is a suspicion,
covered by a veil.
These days, we listen to the wind at night
pretending that's him.
Who knows if he died already –
Who knows if he ever existed.

Begleiter Companion

I entered their secret quarter
and asked them: Let me join you, will you?
I want to be a detective like you!
But they were already three together.

On sunny roads, they cycled away –
soon, I could no longer see them –
right into a world of adventure;
I remained standing in the shades.

I went through lands of forest,
dressed like a robber.
That's how I met Ronja and gang,
but they were already two together.

Waving, they rode away,
I saw the happy pair
vanish between the firs –
held back by the glade.

I went up the River Rhine,
saw on top of a steep rock
the girl with the golden hair,
and she was all by herself.

I let my boat drift towards her,
remained unharmed by the riffs.
But she preferred to stay single,
the way she was used to.

The horizon widened:
I walked through scorching sand
and saw my silent companion
whom I had not noticed before.

With him, I share my shoes,
united forever, we will walk.
He stands by the things I do,
as long as the sun will shine.

Meine Friseur

My Hairdresser

Birds' shrieking from twigs and gutters:
The dull winter was over.
March was abridged by a sudden May
the hour my hairdresser kissed me.

I almost looked like a vagabond:
My hair was matted and split.
There was no reason, neither professional nor else,
why my hairdresser would kiss me.

But when I entered the store, she was there
and said that she would release me.
Soon, the shampoo was rubbed into my hair
by my hairdresser's tender hands.

She asked, how much she was supposed to cut.
I begged: Just the porous, please,
and expected the sharp scissors now,
instead, my hairdresser kissed me.

Amazed, I asked her why she did that.
She said that she just had to.
It was peak time, and everybody watched
how my hairdresser kissed me.

But funny: In spite of that odd liaison,
no customer was indignant about it!
The saloon was flooded by the afternoon sun
the moment my hairdresser kissed me.

The radio dreamily played "Bright Eyes",
the Techno rumble was over.
People were humming and silently smiling,
that's how my hairdresser kissed me.

The news reported, Tibet was liberated,
Osama was no longer angry or evil,
the world climate and the local library were saved,
that's how my hairdresser kissed me.

No more blood and death in the news magazines,
and no reader who missed it.
Evil had just resolved, the world turned good
because my hairdresser kissed me.

Public officials and unemployed were singing
and the workers on the scaffold joined in.
Flags in fairy tale colours fluttered,
because my hairdresser kissed me.

Although I did not see the ominous connection
between these events,
I postponed all the questions, simply replying
my hairdresser's kisses.

Right in front of the door, unity was celebrated
between the laughable and the serious.
And everything happened – but nobody guessed but us –
by certain hairdressers' kisses.

Summer is near and her holidays are planned:
The two of us will drive to the coast.
A magic pair in a tourist camouflage –
Gee, my dentist, if she knew about us!

*Since the story is rhyme-driven, it may be funnier to follow in German.
Meanwhile, I learnt that the female form of German "Friseur" is politically
incorrect and officially must not be used any more.*

Ode ans Diesseits

Ode to the Fugitive

Your star will forever remain truth,
no matter if it fell apart long ago
and every sparkle of memory
in the universe has died.

Once, there stood a world
full of life, light and delight,
and this alone counts – believe it or not.

My name is no inheritance
to any people of eternity.
I live until I die
and won't fear the threat of oblivion.

And if, mouldring, without Christian faith,
I should see my judgement day:
I lived to see life. That's my fame –
whatever I did believe in or did not.

Let's use this day and embrace life
with arms and legs in a dance.
Let's forget about the meaning, imagine there is none
and entirely live in this world and of this world.

Value is a thing that only belongs to the mortal,
the fugitive, the limited and the unique.
One day, when your name has vanished completely,
you have outwitted God and this world.

... And even if one day your name has vanished completely,
you were there just the same – no matter if nobody knows.

Briefballade

Letter Ballad

Verses, ballads,
Songs, serenades – what for?
Lyric is just self-complacent haze!
Truth and beauty are not in need of arts!

Anything that counts, anything of importance,
I never put it in poetry.
But in my letters to my loved one,
I just let it drop – with no metrum nor rhyme.

All my letters, all those lines,
a giant work in hundred volumes,
she burned them in an act of rage and grief,
when I wrote her that I found another.

So, don't believe a word
that I'm singing to you!
Don't trust the stuff
that I forced in lines!
You better read the smoke
above her chimney,
and if the wind blows it to you,
then listen!

Bad story:
All brought to nothing!
Many a secret psalm –
no more than ashes and smoke!
What remains are poems.

Stiller Schlager

Silent Schlager

When the rain falls, the leaves rejoice.
That's what the world is like:
Water and dust.
Laugh, when the cloud bursts!
Cry in the sunshine!
Rainbows will be over you.

In the deepest night, there is still a lamp.
Maybe it also burns by day,
but you will not notice.
Therefore, go for walks at night,
look into the windows!
A light without darkness will cast no shine.

When this song dies away, it will be still.
A song needs silence,
because it wants to resound.
Listen to its echo,
when I've finished.
Without silence, music makes no sense.

Listen to its echo,
it is within you.
Without silence, music is meaningless.

Vocals, guitars, flutes (2 & 6), psalter (3), accordeon (9 & 11), percussion (2), plus all arrangements, lyrics & compositions by Holger Saarmann, except for *Gleisbesetzer*, originally *900 Miles*, a traditional railway song from the USA.

Additional musicians:

Budi: percussion & bass (1, 6, 7 & 10)

Jan Gaensslen: piano & co-arrangement (4)

Reinhild Kuhn: accordion (1, 6, 7, 10), piano (8) & vocals (7)

Vivien Zeller: Violin (2 & 5)

Most of these songs I have been carrying around with me for quite a while:

Ode ans Diesseits (1992/ 98), *Bahnsteig gegenüber*, *Liebe neu erfunden & Stiller Schlager* (2003), *Briefballade & Gleisbesetzer* (2004), *Fi-di-bum* (2005), *Begleiter & Friseur* (2006), *Treppen & Der Gast* (2007)

Tracks 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 were recorded in autumn 2008 by Phil Freeborn at *Freeborn Soundstudio* (Berlin), all others at my home studio.

Mix: Phil Freeborn & Holger Saarmann

Mix track 13 & mastering: *Noemptyfeeling*, Arne Wouk (Berlin)

Photos (hairdresser): Linde Rohde, Bremen
at *Haarschmidt (Schnürschuhtheater Bremen)*.

All other pictures & booklet-graphics: Holger Saarmann.

Kisses: Beate Weidenhammer

Haircut: Mickel Schmidt

Please notice the credits in the booklet!

Further CDs by Holger Saarmann:

Hüt dich, schön's Blümelein (2001)

Lieder, so deutsch wie der Wilde Westen" – mit Vivien Zeller (2007)

available at the online shop

Like all the articles on my website, this translation sheet is a work in progress.
I am grateful for your corrections in terms of contents and language!

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