



Hanna Hallgren

Depressive European

Chocolate cigarettes, AIDS, and homes for battered wives. Hanna Hallgren conducts a critical, poetical search for the European identity.

The joy of work has survived against all the odds,
it is we who are the bearers of the joy of work now.

The organs "liver", "kidney", "lungs" and "genitals" are metonymically joined, you say. But I don't believe it. This society is striving for something else. Free-standing parts. Entities. Take concepts such as "knifing" or "committing suicide" which answer the assertion "We have safeguarded ourselves well and we could not become disembodied", or two lovemaking women who are elastic. I can see the connections; can you see the connections? One clue might be that the organs lack lexical roots, but seem to have a directly structuring function. By not accepting the organs' phantasmic geography I cause (I know you, you see) a breach of the conversational contract. You display wonder, distance and ignorance. You don't try to put yourself in my place, so that we can seek out some common basic truth. i.e. some coinciding assumptions and points of reference that can work as a basis on which to re-establish, and thereafter maintain, meaningful communication. Let me tell you what you already know: affliction's fiery furnace tests your cool and calm in earnest. Anarchy and unity are one and the same thing. In our society, squash sometimes tastes of sperm, but sperm never becomes squash. They tear everything to bits with their big sexual organs. They do it the world over.

I say rest your tired heart

In the dark of night, let a candle burn. You met with forgiveness and love, the moment you gave him your all. I had better give you medicine. You can also tell me about your phantasmic organ universe. Are they your organs? You have a disconnected, fragmented, injured body. Pulverized. You are living with a hideous, grotesquely distorted and macabre *tableau-vivant*. I say this because I feel something for you. I want you to know that. My idiolect functions for every conceptual activity and every linguistic production of meaning. I can walk naked without being raped.

Do you mean that I am also a human being or that I also have a harbour on?

Well, I can't see that, but women can. Yes, yes, you are a human being.

But we all have harbours on. We all have skin, don't we, or how shall I put it, we all have skin on, or, yes, we do

It's true.

Yes, we have. I don't know how it has been for you, perhaps you have been

and I, mother of a mother of a child. Cows are awfully intelligent, childhood a construction
 We adults go to meet certain death, like the world we remember
 We remember we the synchronous scar on the head, horizon of understanding and sun goes down
 over the lake. To make another person happy. To feed with love,
 but was she worth all that naiveté, her group therapy in whiteness? That she be allowed to walk
 with sewn-up eyes on sewn-up streets. Sewn-up heart, lips
 Hands sewn-up fingers. Her shame at the word nigger, which is no worse than wanting to rape all men with iron bars, just things
 that hurt as much; the asymmetry between different political categories denoting cutting in different flesh. Red on the inside (what a colour, the colour of love) from transversal connections
 This means that just as she has adopted the middle-classes' neurotic illnesses, they have no further role to play. This means eternal winter or summer

in a monistic system there is no need for hysteria, for berry-pickers, for areas cordoned off for firing practice. The tanks roll winglessly. That is what I know of her Europe. A taut vein between anti- and alterglobalisation movements
 A soft wild water along the coasts

Should sorrow yet indicate several dimensions. Burn it like simple grass
 A crop rotation or burning for self-appointed archivists. Tangled glitterwhatnots. Being hurt is more complicated than being stabbed with a knife. Because the intent reaches right into the shawl. And is submitted to due process there. The knife-edged blade under the tap
 To talk yourself well, how is it conceivable to act with your speech. E.g. to demonstrate against the war. To mail-bomb. The conceivable script should be that of your nails — the tips of your fingerfists —

What role does Schengen play in her self-production? The anorexics of her own generation. Misunderstanding between head and hand. She was there when the police came for a Somali man who was being deported. He spoke steady English. He was sick and wanted to do her harm. Then patients coupled freely anyway. There was no logic to it. The AIDS treatment was deficient and dementia patients died in psychiatric units. She washed her hands carefully. But that was in the 1990s, before antiretroviral drugs. Even before the psychiatric care reforms.

I don't necessarily think human beings should go mad or resort to violence. But I can see no alternatives to medication/self-medication or faith in technological progress. As a seer, if you ask me. Neither Freud's nor Lacan's structures for language mean anything any more. Eating pearls and slops. Speaking of the construction of authenticity, the other is hard to say. Tell that to the dreams. I wake every morning with the words *harm reduction*. At best with a dog or a cat in my bed. I don't want to be a burden to society, or to my nearest and dearest. Joy is a rose in your throat, says the rosesinger. Surviving our parents' generation has become a goal, for everyone's sake. I want them to be able to live at home as long as possible. I am thankful they live in a small place, because it means a slower turnover of staff. More continuity. It's good if the staff can speak Swedish and keep the rooms looking nice. I would still rather take my life than die in great pain. Than die of some form of dementia. I think the Swedish law will change.

My father turns round, slips on the gravel. No, I wasn't supposed to see that. I take his arm, we go arm in arm. Frozen greygravel, silent winter sky. "You ought to have crampons. Promise me you'll buy a pair of crampons. The sort you strap onto your boots." My brother and my mother walk in front. His wife and children. Dogs are not allowed in the churchyard. This morning I got a Beano in my stocking and a box of Quality Street. "If I could have my time again, everything would be different."

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