



WORKS AND DAYS

Hana Miletić, David Lieske, and a short story by Estelle Hoy

I have a girlfriend who talks like what she has to say is too urgent for punctuation. Which it never is. She's brittle, even on a good day, so it's easier just to let the words wash over you until either— it turns into an artwork hovering in inscrutability, or it calcifies. She tells me it's her third attempt in overcoming depression in that overly effete way people do when talking about depression. She insists on coming to my motel room in Kreuzberg to tell me all the ways she'll beat the darkness this time and plonks herself down on one of the twin beds. She sprawls out like it's the analyst's couch and I don't have the heart, or maybe desire, to tell her she's lying on a cum stain I didn't properly clean up that morning.

I'd picked up some teenage lolita figure at the commi K-Fetish bar on Weserstraße the night before; she was reading Agamben under socialist lighting, popping benzos in her Club-Mate when she thought people were looking. I liked pre-raphaelite waifs with equestrian posture who over-identified with everything—the sub-proletariat qua excluded social class, for example. I was running late for a tennis match with the curator from ----- who wanted to suck my cock. I'm no rule-mad person so it didn't seem like the worst thing in the world and besides, I'd wanted to take up a sport. Lacrosse maybe. Labour intensive activities weren't usually my thing but train rides from Zagreb to Berlin every second Tuesday reading astrology's fascinating science in Der Spiegel was hel-la depleting. I was low key wondering how to thread in some Agamben when I hit on her.

'Remembrance restores possibility to the past, making what happened incomplete and completing what never was.' I maybe said.

She chucked a Deutsche Mark under the ashtray in some ill-informed Reichsbürger move and linked her arm through mine. 'My mother was a Jew', she said, like that explained something. Marta was an artist photographing car number-plates made from moving-box cardboard in the former Eastern Bloc. It was important to her that she only did group shows.

Reaching for another Agamben quote in response, I realised I only knew one. I had a lot more cul-tural capital before I started night tennis with the curator from -----.

I'd pushed the twin beds apart again just moments before my girlfriend showed up, announced, but I'd found a spider in the bathtub and spiders are shockingly charismatic. I put some water in the kettle with a few clumps of Ayurvedic tea, hoping it might sort out her yang excess, or qi or whatever. She was right in the middle of claiming a love affair with Wim Wenders, but who knew. Most of the stories she told me ended up true, but long, which left you in a Quaalude wake if you weren't careful. The story amped up, registering the convulsive jarring of downtown life in Neukölln— sexual betrayal, mental illness, vermin, surveillance, 90's nostalgia, things like that. Her private breakdowns. I wish she'd keep them private.

'You got sand in my fucking bed', I told her. But only in my head.

I was one of those people who thought about things too long and missed a lot of good opportunities.

Living like this, between cities, between women, between work, between sports, is a very particular culture. Every culture is first and foremost a specific experience of time. And every alteration of this experience generates a new culture. I planned a trip to Poland to decide if I was happy with myself. I have a belief, maybe even conviction, that if I leave, or change time, or read enough Spinoza, I could ma-terialise.

As usual, Agamben says it better:

'One of the lessons of Auschwitz is that it is infinitely harder to grasp the mind of an ordinary person than to understand the mind of a Spinoza or Dante.'

I guess I know two quotes after all.

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