



The Book of Angels

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It is difficult to find general and convincing arguments as to what words in a language should be used and how. We must simply just wait for the language to develop, adapting to the new situation with a slight delay.

WERNER HEISENBERG

I know it is so of a truth!

JOB 9:2

The Ghost of the Horse of Peter the Great

You can be a person

even if you can't see; you could even be a person if you were blind. But if nobody sees you, you are nothing.

Tuomas knows all this, resuming what he hadn't finished, thinking about the news and considering the shopping list. There's not much to think about in that, or in the news. He takes Aino to pre-school and goes to work. On his way home from work, he picks Aino up; they go to the store and then head home. Aino plays with Bratz while Tuomas prepares dinner.

So time goes on. Weeks, months and years have passed. After dinner they both start in on their favorite activities. This is the best moment of the day. Or the reason why Tuomas thinks it's the best moment; aren't all moments the best, watching his daughter cutting paper and spreading glitter and glue on it?

The nights are horrible. They are not as kind to Tuomas as they are to Aino. She sleeps deeply and doesn't wake up until morning. The moon grows behind the linden tree; a hare hops across the rocky ground. Tuomas' dreams are terrifying, full of harsh repetition, flooded with colors and sudden awakenings every three hours. Now Aino is building a house. Tuomas is reading the paper. Soon they will be going to the beach. It will be night soon. They are used to the evenings following the same routine. Still they expect each day to come with surprising twists like swans, seashells, spiders, silver-lined clouds, platinum skies or fallen peas on the grass for the crows to enjoy. And they wait to see the cow parsley dim in the summer and the glow of the city to light up the night in addition to the day.

Yellow and gold. No doubt also with some red and pink as well. Despite it being summer, the irreversible feeling of fall is in the air. If only it would get here soon so we could see the yarrow, toadflax, chives and tansies in full bloom. The willow herbs would have withered away by then.

They are at the beach. It is still June. The children argue over how the game should begin. When they understand the beginning, they also know that games follow rules that you can't count on, promises that you can't break. The trees hanging over the shore drag their lowest branches in the water, and as if by

command a boy climbs to the higher branches so he can wet them as well. Tuomas promises Aino that the sky is the same everywhere and that travelers, immigrants, and all other nomads receive a sense of calm from this. It is as if the explanation falls from the sky and no season or growth has any stake, any role, any room to explain. It just is and keeps on going the best way it can. It just is; it is, Tuomas repeats, knowing that Aino doesn't even need to understand. At the same time the ship that has just been built at the shipyard (those lovers, those fishermen over there say they built it) is setting off on her maiden voyage, gliding through the water silently and almost unnoticeably toward the open sea, sailing right past the Tallinn ferry lit by the sun, before it disappears behind the horizon like the earth itself.

A boy in golden sneakers is picking up seaweed with a stick; he writes on the sand and uses the seaweed as an eraser. The sunshine closes the boy's mouth. The boy almost completes a full sentence, but just at that moment an old woman, already or finally, using a walker, looks at them through her newly glassed balcony as if wanting to erase the sentence written in the sand with odd, unknown letters. The old woman sees them but Tuomas alone sees her, thinking that person will only live for that moment.

Yes, those are Tuomas' thoughts at that moment. Aino looks for ants and cobwebs between rocks. They are easy to find. Aino screams and wants to be held. Aino is that white one, roasted by the sun and still white. Aino knows everything and never listens. The smooth bedrock retains the heat of the sun. In front a dark green, opaque sea churned by the wind and a man wearing a cap, behind the brick apartment building where they have lived Aino's entire life. Again the boy writes in the sand and a dog that has come around the rock runs to him whimpering, thinks for a moment, and returns back to its owner. The owner is chatting with a man. They are not married. You can see that from a mile away, the ring on the man's ring finger is like an indictment and just a pale stripe on the finger would be an aggravated charge. So they want to be together in some way, even if it's just like this, even within sight of small children. Two bigger ones are climbing on the rock. This is a busy place when the wind carries the high pitched voices everywhere; only the grown-ups keep their voices down. The smaller child follows the bigger one everywhere, over sea worn broken glass, wind-downed trees, rusted iron wire, and last

year's fallen leaves as they arrive here and stop to stare, but only for a moment, only a short moment, because the little ones have a lot to do and feet full of energy; must step in every puddle and see everything even though it's been a long day and there are three pink sailboats out there of which one is blue. Catch me if you can or you're a little lamb! The dog takes off to return to its rightful place and to top it all off the rustling of the lilac bushes. The feeling that it is not enough is always present in these moments, and that the child can see it too clearly, but the opulence of the beach does wonders to smooth over these thoughts and even rescues them from the worrisome things that hem them in debt filled apartments.

And the sea, yes the sea, the sea is a dream of a wasteland. The waves no longer make that biggest seventh wave and that tallest fourth wave as a ship has broken the sea's old natural rhythm. Tuomas has lived past that time as well. The smallest is hunting treasures from the sand and gets his sneakers wet before wobbling on with determination on the dangerous rocks. Aino grabs the cobweb stick abandoned by the boy and shakes the seaweed onto the sand. The kelp bladders pop when she steps on them; the blades are slimy. Why do children always find the most disgusting trash and fall in love with it? The barnacles stuck on the rocks are glowing white; they stick on boats; the old lady leaves, the boys leave. Aino and Tuomas stay, or rather they stick around like they always have here and for so many years, and for so many seasons, beaches, seas and ships being built.

The unpruned branches of apple trees reach for the sky in the yard of a private care home. A man staggers across the bridge. An old woman looks at the trees, moves, leaves, returns to the door and leaves behind a steel sign bolted above the balcony indicating it is a hospice. The geraniums her daughter brought wake up and the paper flowers in the just watered box open up, only the old woman's ragged sleep covers everything again, she closes her eyes as she lowers the motorized bed's head down and places the controller on its hook on the steel bar of the bed. The building for people on the verge or toppling is steady and strong. The woman falls asleep. If only she would sleep, if only she could have nice dreams rather than just seeing the yarn on the table or her recent accidents on the bathroom floor. Tuomas waits for her to fall

asleep. The wait is over; finally she falls asleep, and Aino continues to play with her white clamshells.

Could Tuomas lift his hand to shield his eyes, to look out to sea for the thousandth time? A woman aided by a walker had snapped a dry twig as she made her way indoors; it was a heather branch that had been decorating the geraniums the other woman's daughter had brought, hanging on the terrace from the green, plastic box. The girl leaves the beach, as does the boy, the mother, the man and another woman; they all leave.

The boats used by fishermen in bygone days to go out to the sea have disappeared because fishing is no longer a viable business; the fishermen have died, the fish have died. What remains does not interest anyone. The evening has ended. Aino and Tuomas head back home; they no longer marvel at the shells and the sand, the stones the other children have found or anything else related to the beach that is only measured by footsteps, the widths of palms, king's cubits, the length of shins or the meter kept in a museum in Paris. They have left it, they return home and disappear, not from view but from the landscape, and the landscape repeats all kinds of loves as if it had a memory.

After an evening snack, Tuomas puts Aino to bed while deciding to stay awake; what other choices does Tuomas have; not many, he would turn on the television or open a book, stay awake until sleep would come collect him. Outside the jackdaws take flight, land again, take flight again and land again, in ever-increasing numbers. Those wise birds are beginning their preparations for the night, because finally the night is upon us and the forests are getting dark and soon it will be morning before or after some broken sleep, again the sun will rise and wake them to start their daily chores all over again, like getting up, getting dressed and looking after a child.

In her sleep Aino cries out her mother's name. Tuomas goes to calm her, turning her on her side like a log and closing the door, turning off the TV and going to bed. The lady next door complained about her cold apartment, meaning her husband. Tuomas didn't have much to say to that. Apartments built in the 60's are warm compared to the changing of the seasons. They had talked across their balconies. There were pansies in the flower pots. They watched like humans, if humans would just have the patience to watch. Tuomas snipped off the dead leaves and buried

them in the soil in the pot. He went back inside, covered himself, forgetting the lady, and as the night sky got darker he fell asleep entered the world of dark dreams.

Why does Tuomas accept those shadows so eagerly, why does he feel that great anxiety when he sees them go away although they are just shadows? Why, has this already been said, why is Tuomas so surprised about the unpredictability of memories as he sees a grey-haired man walking across the street or a child holding her mother's hand? And why is he so anxious that he has no way to defend against this attack?

Because that was Tuomas' way to see and not see. Because those are the terms of being and because the rest is just guesswork.

It is almost 3 AM and everyone is asleep. It is not raining. Tuomas turns his book upside down. The TV is not on. A Saturday in June has turned into a Sunday in July and immediately fear creeps into his mind. As the first flies slam against the window, Tuomas is expecting the morning paper to be delivered; the birds begin waking up and he falls asleep in waiting for the paper to arrive.

The past will not go away

and the present is insurmountable. Summer vacation has begun, the newspaper hasn't come, it doesn't come here anyway. Can you remember the Isabella-yellow house? Remember the alley with the name that means hurry? Surely you remember the home with all the maps on the shelves, the important papers and the brass objects bought from nearby antique dealers? Also the carpets from North Africa and the obligatory cedar camel figurines on the windowsill. And so many glasses and plates and empty lighters in a cardboard box on the shelf on the left hand side of the kitchen.

Tallinn, June 7th. The floors creak. One step has split in half; some of the lights have burned out. This is a lovely home. A small window upstairs is ajar to the courtyard. Tuomas had latched it after the Virginia creepers. The fountain in the courtyard is dry. On cold nights the smoke from the fireplace grows like a statue for the crows until it wraps around over the rooftops like a snake eating its tail. Russian men are repairing the attic of the house across the street for wealthy people to live in; they laugh in front of the window and smoke. Tuomas waves at them, and they wave back. The courtyard is creepy when it's empty. Soon the neighbors would go about their day and quietly close their doors behind them, and two nearby churches would divide the hours into quarters, Russians and their rumors would make their way to the Alexander Nevski Cathedral, and the Estonians and their rumors would go to their own churches where a wise and peculiar, almost human scent would rise from between the headstones. Tuomas wouldn't smell it, Aino would and would move to stand beneath the the center tower.

In the alley a man wearing a jacket one size too small hides by the wall until the sun starts to slowly sweep up the city and the nascent day; imperceptible, the light sweeps away the shadows and alters them to await the night. The dust takes wing. Ships shout near and far and people stop rubbing their sides along the stone walls. Houses so tall, people so small. Tirelessly, without ceasing, without waiting they rush forward across the alleys to work, to see

relatives, some on stolen bicycles. People as far as the eye can see. Tuomas watches them through a 40-pane window, eating bread and fruit while listening to Aino's snoring.

Aino lies curled up like a cat.

When Tuomas looks at the girl, his shoulders shudder as if a ghost had walked past. As it has, but not a human ghost. It is told that this room was built on old stables where Peter the Great kept his horse. When Tuomas slept, when he managed to sleep, he dreamt of a box he had built with his own hands. He had selected the wood, planed it just right and joined the boards together. It was something like a mix between a travelling trunk and a coffin that he was supposed to use to carry his belongings and then finally himself. Tuomas woke from this dream and felt rested and relaxed. Sleep is death's sister; death is the dearest brother of wakefulness. It was a good dream; Tuomas would have wanted more like that.

Mice or something of the kind had rattled inside the walls or else Tuomas had imagined so. During the daytime Tuomas had given in to looking at the shop windows in the Old Town, after which they pressed forward. People coming out of shops and bars had stopped and looked around for a moment, eyes wide as if they were lost. The relentless rain had pounded them in the crook of the thickest tower. In the nearby park those same people were shooting bows, and Tuomas despised them for no reason, one hundred and fifty kroon and your money back for a bull's eye. It would be morning soon. Yes, it would come. Tuomas had seen its blueish glow through the cracks of the curtains; he closed his eyes and heard Aino snoring. Otherwise it was silent. Tuomas had not gotten up, turning onto his back and trying to remember his dream. Dreams are the only thing that Tuomas forgets; he remembers everything else. He cannot forget anything unless he wants to, nothing at all. Tuomas doesn't need to write shopping lists to remember what to buy; he remembers numbers, addresses, names and all the junk you encounter day by day. Tuomas is a house full of different sized rooms with varying lighting and the rooms are filled with things that correspond to things outside of Tuomas; it is horrible.

It is still early. There is a messy pile of shoes and socks in the hallway. The hallway leads to the downstairs rooms. The stairs lead up, where there are more rooms; another set of stairs go down to the basement, the room with the fireplace, a bathroom, and the

sauna. Tuomas had also dreamt about that woman with the black dog; she had been here and Tuomas had thought: How the hell did she find her way here? We haven't seen each other for a year and that year went by slowly, unlike the two when we were dating. The wait, waiting for nothing, multiplied the joy of meeting again. Tuomas thinks about her a lot. There was a time when Tuomas promised never to stop loving her.

It was too much to promise.

Because love is strong like death, aggressive and insatiable like the underworld, and its glow is the glow of fire. Kaboom, kaboom. Aino wakes up and gives Tuomas a shy look. Tuomas goes over and strokes her long hair. Aino is remembering her dreams now as well. They negotiate about breakfast. There's not much to negotiate about as the fridge is empty. They would go out to a cafe and then go to the grocery store. Tuomas would make tea. Aino wants to go to Stockmann, the fancy department store she remembers from a previous trip, and Tuomas can guess why she wants to go there in particular.

So part of the morning goes by, and their dreams leave them in peace for the day so they can return as something different. They brush their teeth and get dressed. They see the alley behind the 40-pane window and go out. People are walking around as they always do in the morning, shy, busy, and clumsy. Only the ballerinas walk elegantly in their high heels. Tuomas digs in his pockets. He finds his cigarettes and matches and lights up. It's been six years; it's been over thirty years. Aino hops on the cobblestones. Aino's hair is flowing in the air and her low-cut socks are flashing in her shoes. It's July, and things feel incredibly painless.

The wind pushes the last of the clouds away and leaves behind a bright sky. Tuomas and Aino come to a square with one cafe and restaurant after the next, but they won't stay there. They see the sensationalist headlines, the rusting chains on the walls and trees full of green leaves; they see the tourists who wander around, friendly and different. So little time, so much to see. Tuomas and Aino, who had stayed here many times, weren't that different from the tourists. A dark haired boy in tight shorts wags his finger at his mother after she utters a naughty word on the telephone. The mother doesn't see and keeps yapping; the boy sees a car and forgets what he was doing, but then the mother hangs up and says

something to the boy in Russian that Tuomas and Aino don't hear. The sounds song can be heard through the working-class-blue door of a bar. They reach Venekuja Alley, pass the market stalls, pop into a courtyard off the alley, and step into a cafe. Aino knows what she wants; she always wants the same thing in this same cafe. They order and head to a table to wait. The day goes slowly; another spell of rain is coming. They're in no rush; they chat about this and that. They're usually in no rush; they often share the same views. And just as often they can burst into a sudden argument that quiets down just as quickly. Maybe Aino has understood that she is Tuomas' daughter and just as happily Tuomas has understood that he is Aino's father.

Joy, sometimes happiness.

Every stolen day

and every stolen night had passed restlessly and quickly. Tuomas and that woman did not argue for nothing. One time they came across an old lady with a live chicken, and once they met a donkey that was carrying wood down a mountain. In his mind, Tuomas sometimes returned to places where they had been, sometimes as lovers, sometimes as friends, often as if they didn't even know each other and as if they shared no common language. They were lovers then anyway, and secrets or love are never revealed, not because it is a secret but because love is so evident that it hides without being detected.

Aino drinks hot chocolate; Tuomas has a coffee. Thankfully not everything is painful. Church bells toll and the table, if only it's varnish weren't so worn, would be like a mirror that would show the ceiling, walls, themselves, the cafe. They can see the hustle and bustle behind the register and the other patrons in the cafe from their little corner. A bird flies in and out of the courtyard. A black, American SUV drives past with its stereo blasting. They can't see the driver through the tinted windows. Of course that woman is here now as well because Tuomas carries all his memories with him; Tuomas sees her right there where a stranger is sitting in her place. Aino browses through a comic book. She doesn't understand a word and even Tuomas only gets about half of it.

"Should we buy a kite?" Tuomas asks Aino. Aino waves at the old lady at the next table. The old lady had bought a kite. It's still unopened in its packaging. Aino doesn't bother to continue waving as the lady is not responding.

Tuomas lights a cigarette and blows the smoke away from Aino. The ashtray is full of butts and half-burned matches. Tuomas and Aino have grown together. There would not be one without the other. Aino finishes her hot chocolate and Tuomas his coffee. Soon they leave. Aino puts her Estonian comic book aside, takes her own book out of her backpack and asks Tuomas to read it.

"Who's there?"

A man says, "It's me, Postman Petchkin. I brought you a Buzzing Bee."

Jackdaw asks again, "Who's there?"

The postman repeats, "It's me, Postman Petchkin. I brought you a Buzzing Bee."

But nobody comes to open the door. The postman knocks again, and again can hear, "Who's there? Who's out there?"

"Oh nobody. It's me here, Postman Petchkin. I brought you a Buzzing Bee."

This goes on all day. Knock-knock.

"Who's there?"

"It's me, Postman Petchkin. I brought you a Buzzing Bee."

Knock-knock.

"Who's there?"

"It's me, Postman Petchkin. I brought you a Buzzing Bee."

Tuomas can't read any more. And Aino can't listen anymore either. She's exhausted from laughing as she puts the book back into her bag. Tuomas pays the bill. They leave. Aino runs across the bright courtyard and stops to wait at the gate. Suddenly Tuomas thinks that Aino doesn't belong to anyone.

"Are you hungry?" Tuomas asks as Aino grabs his hand.

"No. Not yet."

"Should we buy a kite?"

"Yes, let's. Let's buy one right now."

Aino runs ahead in the department store, runs to the escalator before Tuomas can say no. Aino knows where the toys are.

"They're not here anymore," Aino yells as she looks at stacks of children's clothes and rubber boots on the third floor.

"Maybe they are somewhere else," Tuomas says.

Soon they notice that the toys have been moved where the children's clothing and rubber boots used to be. There are some things that a child does not remember to say and an adult cannot guess; those things include everything relating to games—where everything begins and ends—not to mention hiding places. Tuomas waits and stands a little bit out of the way. He doesn't want a cigarette. A melancholy young man carefully examines the toy cars; he is paying close attention to his options as he chooses just the right one for himself. He moves over to the radio-controlled cars and compares prices. He's about the same age as Tuomas. Tuomas wants to ask if the

melancholy young man remembers the combustion engine powered gliders that flew tied to steering strings. Or the cars that used to be called remote controlled, although the distance between the controller and the car was only a couple of feet. Tuomas remembers when his father gave him an East German silver Mercedes. Tuomas played with it for days on end and would sleep with it overnight. It snowed every day. On Boxing Day Tuomas barely had the patience to go sledding; he was alone, and he had a car. These days it rains over Christmas; maybe some sleet if we're lucky; maybe it'll bring back memories. Regardless of weather, Christmases were the same for Aino and Tuomas, only the memories differ and sometimes even those are the same.

A horrible childhood, whatever that is, except for a poorly buried corpse. Isn't it just as bad for everyone? And as wonderful. They just differ in the ratio of time and that's what's important, not the alarm in the morning when you need to go to school, just pure time. And words. Horrible, horrible words shared by all, which we all have to learn over the years. Give children words and you give them death. Aino has found the Bratz and begins to examine them. She's an expert. Tuomas looks out the window to the parking lot, which is filled with hybrid cars. The banks are busy. Where are the normal people, the mortals; they are shuffling about far away out there under derelict balconies. We are all lying in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. The cars wait patiently; somehow they are more human than busy men, and so this thought falls to an obscure end despite a promising start.

Aino leaves the Bratz and moves on to the kites. Soon she notices the dragons, butterflies, frogs, eagles, boxes, beetles and geometric shapes and asks Tuomas to help her.

"What about this one?" Tuomas asks.

"No."

"What about this one?"

"No."

"How' bout this?"

"Why?"

"What's wrong with it?"

"It's no good."

"Fine, then we'll take this one."

"No we won't."

"Yes we will."

"No, dad, we'll have this one."

“Fine. That’s fine.”

They make their way to the register. Tuomas speaks English to the cashier because he’s too embarrassed to speak Finnish. Aino wants to hold the kite. It’s been packaged into a long plastic wrapper that doubles as a carrying case. After a stop at the grocery store, they continue on toward Rutu. The girl walks along with the kite over her shoulder feeling like she is in a fairytale. She was walking a lot when she was only two. Tuomas remembers when he gave away the stroller and said to Aino that they had finally escaped it. Aino was jumping for joy in the empty hallway. The shoes had been put away in the wardrobe. Tuomas remembers it well. One author said that he once thought that writing is story-telling. Then he said that he wasn’t so sure about that and to him, writing was more like the absence of a story. Writing the story doesn’t bring the story back; rather, it pushes it further away. The author did not continue this thought. Tuomas would’ve liked to have heard it in full. Tuomas felt that the author left it open on purpose so the reader could finish it himself. Tuomas wasn’t that kind of a reader, and the story did not continue. It was gone. They pass Rannamäe Road and arrive at Nunne. Aino is speaking non-stop. What a smoky, busy scene. Tuomas is not listening. He is not thinking about that woman. Aino wants a piece of amber jewelry.

“We have a kite,” Tuomas says.

“Yes, but.”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because.”

“That’s not an answer.”

“It is, but not a good one. The right answer is: Absolutely not.”

They buy the amber gem and start to make their way uphill. It was like no one was walking their way; like everyone was coming at them, making the hill feel steeper.

“Have you ever thought that a mirror shows reflections in the dark?” Aino asks.

Tuomas shakes his head.

“Dad, even if you couldn’t see anything, the mirror would show that too.” They take a right in front of the Alexander Nevski Cathedral.

On this square they are caught in photographs and on video as well. A Greek restaurant called Syrtaki and after that

it's Rutu on the left. Rutu is a short alley, maybe 100 ft or so and not many people use it if they don't know it or specifically need to go down there. Only the ballerinas go through here. Aino and Tuomas open the heavy iron gate and enter the courtyard. A neighbour has planted violets. She is an angry Estonian artist who hates people, particularly Finns and Russians, her dog, most of all herself. Tuomas took the dog out for a walk once.

After that the artist began to say hello to him. The dog has died, but still the lady says hello, as does her son who looks like he's on the brink of starvation. One time Tuomas took some food to the boy when he noticed he was home alone. Tuomas had made sushi. The boy practically inhaled the food off the plate. Tuomas had gone back into the apartment, put the plate into the dishwasher and sat down. Nothing else had happened, nothing else.

As much as Tuomas loves the Finnish language, he really doesn't have the energy to listen to Aino's non-stop yapping. Aino is always asking what she can do, and Tuomas' suggestions are never any good. That frustrates Aino, and she starts acting up to get attention. Tuomas remembers losing his temper one time and decided to drive Aino to the brink of rage. Tuomas asked Aino to come to him and said why don't you do something clever for once, why don't you paint your farts red for example.

Tuomas is upstairs looking for pens, paper and scissors for Aino; he also finds some glue and old magazines. Let the blue-eyed, brown-haired girl make do with those for a while. What does Tuomas know about children, only having the one, so specific and precious. Even so, Tuomas is lonely at the end of the day. He won't turn the TV on. He sits down on the couch and starts to read. No, this is a horrible story, you couldn't tell it, let alone read it. It's a story about a four-year-old Jewish boy called Michel. His older sister Sarah has locked him into a secret cupboard and promised to release him soon. Sarah keeps her promise, but only after escaping from an internment camp when the little brother has already rotted. No, Tuomas can't read this; he sees everything much too clearly. They would have lunch in a couple of hours. Tuomas still wouldn't be hungry. After lunch they would go out. They would head for the park to fly the kite in the shadows of thousand-year-old walls by an old Soviet athletics field, church bells would toll as if to warn of a fire to end the world, and the hot winds from the

open skies would blow the last remnants of clouds to the northwest.

Aino draws girls and cuts them out, placing them in a neat row and talking to them. Each has its own color and each color denotes a different kind of personality and sound. Aino has her own worlds, and Tuomas can't be a part of them; Aino is just like her father; she is much older than her age.

It is a very usual Monday in Tallinn. Tuomas goes downstairs and presses his forehead onto the glass. A mother of two walks down the alley. Her last name is Roosna, exactly the same as the bank robber. She lives in Pirita and sees the ruins of St. Bridget's Monastery and the star on the roof of the church every day; the star is not a red star, nor has it ever been. You have to be strong and light to survive; you have to get used to being alone and not complain. A stain is left on the window. Tuomas wipes it off with his sleeve. The floor creaks. There's a crack in the ceiling from south to north. Everything will be okay, Tuomas says, everything will be okay, he repeats and opens the window to catch a breath of fresh air. All kinds of crimes take place in this city, particularly in the evening and at night, but the days are safe and warm; the warm wind is still blowing away the clouds coming in from the sea, and the sea is beautiful.

Beautiful sea, sea forever. Who can put up with that? That's why it's good to sometimes stay within the courtyard. Tuomas remembers how the summer before last they had been at the park. It was early August, Aino was five. It hadn't rained in weeks; every morning the sky was empty. The grass was yellow, trees were dying, and the dust from the streets created a haze in the air, distorting the evening sun into bloodshot red. The press had been worried what would happen to the crops, and all of Finland had been talking about the weather, which seemed to offer no end in sight. It was a horrible summer. Tuomas remembers it well. Tuomas and that woman with the black dog were not seeing each other back then; they were *taking a break*. The woman had suggested it, and Tuomas agreed. Tuomas thought this wasn't the worst possible thing, he sat on the bench and watched Aino play alone; it looked particularly lonely as Meri and Aava were on the swings nearby (Tuomas could never remember which one was which as they were both nice, forgettable girls). They were already in school, so they wouldn't play with the younger kids. The woman had been sending messages, and Tuomas had replied to them. The

woman had missed Tuomas, but they couldn't meet. Why can't you? Tuomas had thought, grabbing Aino by the hand, and Aino had said: "This bucket is not very clean; in fact, it is very dirty."

The window was still open. The alley was empty. Nobody can see Tuomas.