

Notes on Traces 2
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I felt a hair on the backside of my hip and pulled on it. It is my mothers hair, I thought. And when i looked at the single silken sturdy hair between my fingers, it was silver and translucent. I had noticed one string at the centre of my own head, contrasting the dark rest. Had my only grey hair fallen out and gotten stuck between my shirt and hip? Intuitively I had felt it to be there. And yet why was it so clearly *her* hair?

I glanced over at the teapot on the shelf. Haunting me. As a marker, like guide stones in the olden days, indicating a node, a crossroad, a complication of old patterns weaving themselves into new decisions. Repetition of old pain reoccurring innocently and unannounced.

Why could I look at this kitchen and see it so differently? The roof gaping open, the plastic sheet covering a rotten and broken floor. When I sat outside I could all of a sudden smell the herbs, dry and fragrant from the fallow soil after weeks of drought. After ache came clarity, misleadingly full of promise, like a nasty addiction. A price to pay for a whiff of insight, fleeting and flimsy.

The notes of the music from the small speakers intensified and drifted away, like an orgasm reaching and subsiding without bursting into a climax. I know the reality afterwards will seem as bare and squeezed as before. This moment of calmness, as if in the eye of the pain, where only by surpassing in-transparency and whirling winds of blindness lead to an eerily calm and clear sub-reality. But the markers would remain; the pot stays on the shelves, and the silver hair, now draped on the tray below, will slide away and fall on the ground, swept into the corners, where, at some point, the vacuum cleaner will suck it up.

The notes of the concert brought a last and short memory of the time I heard it played in real life, when we could lay on the ground as the hypnotic notes flooded us as tidal waves. The piece comes from where I grew up, but I could only appreciate it when I left. I don't feel the nostalgia of belonging, but I can recognise an atmosphere, or perhaps I only feign I can.

I hold onto it. Outside the kitchen window the sky grows darker and darker, the light inside brighter and shallower. The leitmotif of the music reappears as a calming hand caressing my back: old familiarity. Do you feel so good because I know you, or are you truly there for me? Maybe the distinction is arbitrary but it somehow feels like it should be the latter; maybe they are so intertwined that the one doesn't mean anything without the other. Is that why I draped the silver shaded hair on the shelf below the teapot? I want to stay in this strange and fragile reality, where dust particles seem to fall slower and a bubble is closing in around me, anything could disturb its balance, operating on the point of a needle. I am standing still and watch the constellation around me sway in slowmotion.

Moments containing vast stretches of time, from my teen years to my adolescence, to my childhood and back again to the aching moment of today. I cannot help but think about the conversations where we all of a sudden noticed that all the small shifts accumulated into change and where we, in an unguarded moment, looked back at ourselves with strange nostalgia, having to shed the sentiment quickly before it was really there.

I flash forward into a future not yet told and all my markers seem useless as they only tell stories in retrospect. I am the guardian of their relations, as a magician stringing them together in a map of uncertainty. Why do i want to shepherd them as if they can predict an outcome later, as I seem to think is right and good? The moment now seems to be filled up with herding moments so they come to fruition like a garden with every crop having special demands. Why am I waiting for the blossoms and the fruits as if they come with the right season?

The drought had made everything yellow. The rolling hills of golden grains stretch vastly over the agricultural grounds around, absurd areas of land, cultivating one crop, managed by a solitary machine marching rows back and forth all day, leaving a trace of dense dust. Hidden behind the slopes, you can see a smoke plume ominously moving. Like a creeping fire. Only centimeters underneath this smooth surface the soil is filled with rocks. On the side of the road we picked up a bullet cartridge. The past penetrates the present. It is lurking just centimeters below. During the drought, where the evaporated water left behind empty plains, objects resurfaced from oblivion and tell a tale of disturbing past. Some places, traces have been touched so many times that they lost their distinct markings; they leave a smooth surface, like a wooden

handle on a chair, or the foot of the statue of St. Peter. But not here. A silent hum fills the air, and in the scorching light, the past feels ever present.

It is now completely dark outside the windows. I will break my own bubble, or maybe I didn't: someone else did.