



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

ill-treated,
 both in your work and, I don't know, there can be so many things. And they
 try to stop you from getting... I can't say there are any limits
 to everything that can happen to people from that side.
 Now those are rather, I think, rather macabre thoughts you have?
 Well, they aren't thoughts, they are something real.
 They are something real?
 Yes, they are. You can look into it and check that I'm right.

Before my memories there was my mother and she didn't think about me then.
 Then I wasn't capable of parasiting or affection or even being conveyed as an
 absence. Nice and quiet for her, for me sensationless; I can't see that as text.

There was something wrong with my eyes. Operations, toys, squash, the sound
 of the TV from inside the bandages, blindness can strike
 [----]

Or the Song that angels once sang to shepherds in the night

At the same time, the women's organizations in Stockholm were fighting for a
 Women's House which led to a split between the Women's House Group (the
 old organization) and Every Woman's House. Social commissioner Mats Hult
 (Social Democrat) was involved, as well as a number of women politicians
 from the same party. The house the politicians had promised to the women
 went to the breakaway group Every Woman's House and was to be a sort of
 centre for abused women, although there would also be special activities for
 women. A Gunilla Rudling had a leading role, and an Inger Segelström. They
 visualized it as a HOME FOR BATTERED WIVES. The Women's House
 Group as a WOMEN'S CENTRE. Therein lay the conflict and that was where
 the name came from. The word separatism had made my father a) happy? b)
 sad? c) indifferent? "Why should the strong survive/ and only the weak not
 thrive?"

Because I can a) write and b) have power over the word.

(Imploded knots)

I am no polyglot, no linguistic nomad. I am white and calm. My family is
 white and calm, simmering
 I have whiteness in my whiteness from the calm corner of home
 Around such a non-castrated figure

Apathy and aggression are biological functions. We were here first
 We were arbitrary in relation to the landscape cars, mopeds, EPA tractors
 sausage and mash. *L'immigrée blanche* within ourselves / water / glassy
 corpses / self-identical with grandmother, her mother, the chickens in the yard,
 the Co-op, the chapel, the Sons of Temperance and old, fucked-up Social
 Democrat guys, old pear split lollies, other dung dung. The factory or this
 working class is stupid. The working class is dead. The working class is white
 in the face.

The working class has prejudices

Or gays are xenophobic or

I am a racist like my grandmother. Or I despise that working class I grew up
 with. I have whiteness in my whiteness from the calm corner of home

My mother has no mother tongue,
 but the gift of other tongues. I want what is good and not evil and keep passing
 passing
 Blood's identity blood's drop sconelets keep passing passing passing, run like
 rain
 I am allowed to sit right at the front. Together with myself my history and it
 is lovely and quiet: beautiful snow, ugly black sky, chocolate milk, Walnut
 Whips and black Magnum *slave to love*.

Is your raiment spotless /
 Is it white as snow / Are you scoured /
 In the Redeemer's blood

I smoke a chocolate cigarette and blow out clouds. Mum has her sewing circle
 this evening
 I admire the Church's charitable thinking. It is practical action, not so much
 talking. It's bloody awful that society lets things go so far that someone else
 has to set up soup kitchens, but that's how it is. The Church is getting out into
 prisons and providing cooked food. And you don't have to be sober to get in.
 You have worth simply by existing. That obviously appeals to people who
 come from a fractured existence. God's well-spring has plenteous water
 Birgitta. Gunilla. Maj-Britt. Gunvor. Ingegerd. Kerstin. Lisbeth. Siv. Majken.
 Eva. Anita. Britta. Rigmor. Dagmar. Ulla. Elisabeth. Vera. Coffee and biscuits
 and piano playing and prayer. We are like blurred photographs. We are old or
 the taste through death is called death. Elective homelessness expresses a kind
 of situated heterogeneity, but here we sit and know nothing. Crochet, knit,
 embroider for those who are worse off than us or have nothing. I say: Sweden
 has changed, hasn't it? It's not the same now as it was 20–30 years ago?
 Nothing is really like it used to be.
 Forests, lakes, the vascular net of roads. Everything is in flux. My place of
 birth, as I remember it, is dead. Kiss miss all this are dead matter.

(Supersaturated stories.)
 I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing, of being condemned for hate speech when
 I really mean *love things*.
 I want to be able to say it all for *love*. White is the colour of purity, black is
 anguish and night
 The truth comes to me
 The truth loves me
 This is the light of the soul
 Jesus Christ died for our sins' sake, and rose from the dead
 Not all Muslims are terrorists, not all workers are stupid
 Not all blacks have AIDS, not all men are rapists
 Not all gays have AIDS
 Not all women are afraid of being raped (?)
 Not all lesbians are ugly and hate men.
 Not all men buy sex, not all white men are turned on by children
 Not all white women would like above all else to be fucked by a big black
 cock
 We sit here white in our hammock and look out over the lake: Grandma, Mum
 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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