

# **In the Language of a Tree**

Environmental contribution

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A list of characters

**APPLE TREE**

**WOMAN**

**MINISTER**

*At the beginning of this text, even before it saw the light of day, two images came to mind. The first was a cone of smoke rising to the clouds and merging with them. It bears a curious tension and unrest.*

*At the beginning is its source, burning wood in a hearth casually encircled by stones, at the lower end of a garden that has been apathetically unkept, perhaps one can recognise its lush past, and the fact that its border was once lined by a creek. The chance that, once, it used to be a garden, remains merely a gloomy suspicion. There is something in the column of smoke that does not let us look elsewhere. Other senses are also activated – hearing and smell. In a while, we are able to recognise a rhythm concealed in the smoke, a word present in that vertical communication. The words that themselves create the vertical flow, this perpendicular stream, where, after an moment of focused observation, we lose sight of what is up and what is down. This was the strange first image that came to mind.*

*The other image was quite different. Press conference of a government minister. It doesn't even matter what was his portfolio. One tends to suggest a Minister of Economy or Environment, or something similar. What matters is the peculiar man, with a thick rim of dark spectacles, seated at a desk, a glass of mineral water in front of him, along with several microphones and dictaphones. His face is too familiar; hence, it doesn't require further writing. Apart from him, no one is visible, even though the room is full to bursting. We can't hear the questions, but it is clear they are being raised. It is an image of this silence. The moment a question is asked but not heard, though we can read it on the man's face. An image of silence between a question and an answer.*

*The author dares to thus perceive this text as well, and to articulate this inconspicuous reference in the first note. It is a text that takes place entirely between two facts, between two intentions, which do not even have to communicate directly with each other.*

*That they intersect somewhere is clear from the outset. Perhaps the locus of the play is the line between inhaling and exhaling, between word and silence. One can't even speak of certainty as to whether the intention is to present a full-fledged stage text, a stage play in its established conventions. Perhaps what we are about to see are not even dramatic lines per se. Rather, the following material may be perceived as a space for a kind of meditation, a space to stop in time where what matters is to assemble the tangible and*

*clear. There is a lot of silence, a lot of pauses and apparent statics. It also contains a few notes in italics. Hopefully not insensitively, they comment on certain moments from the position of the author, from the position of another plan. Nonetheless, they are written with the intention that they can (and perhaps ought to) become part of a performance as the next step along the production path.*

But those trees ... What about those trees?

Well, we can't just ...

Why? We can. I'll arrange it, you don't have to worry the least about it.

Many of them were planted by my great-grandfather.

Yes, you told me.

*A moment of silence.*

Where are you going?

To the garden.

I am waiting you.

Don't be long.

Aren't you coming with me? Under our apple tree?

*A moment of silence.*

Was it obvious that I tried to smile?

I don't know, I wasn't focusing on that.

And what were you focusing on?

Our new house.

Do you think the house can still save anything?

It wouldn't be a cheap rescue.

A cheap rescue attempt.

Are you coming?

No, it's cold outside.

You can take something warm.

No, I'm better here. Don't be long.

But those trees ...

What about those trees?

Well, we can't just ...

Those trees? We can. Don't be long.

*Possibly but not necessarily, during the dialogue between the cast who should be a middle-aged man and woman, a different plane of space, possibly as projection, depicts a situation of massive logging. Heavy equipment, metal machinery, saws, belts, wheels, chains ... Large trees are falling to the ground in their majesty; some do not fall easily, they still need to be subdued by force. What is cut from the vast space of the forest is not a negligible part, even if it may seem so. Vast number of trees fall to the ground, they are clearly fit and strong deciduous and coniferous trees with thick trunks. Even if we do not hear the sound of the image, we can sense that the situation on the screen is massive, noisy and expressive.*

*In a moment.*

*Everything grows silent. Smoke rises from somewhere. Is it not quite clear whether it is smoke from the previous event, or it is smoke that opens a new event and has nothing to do with anything so far.*

## **APPLE TREE**

Your first baby teeth came out, and my first leaves grew.

You were screaming across the mountain, as your elders used to say.

I was already then forming a living bridge with the mountain.

I felt its every shiver as a detail feels of the life of the whole. That's how it is with us – we are connected through the soil and the waters beneath the surface of the soil, and our soul is entangled in the web of our roots, which you never see because you don't want to, because you don't know how to, because you can't do it, because you don't have the patience or will, you don't have the stamina, you don't have the courage, you don't have

the time, you don't have the need, you probably don't even have the reason, because one must move forward, beyond the limits of considerations of one's own advantages.

From that mountain, the child's cry reached me, into me, back to its coordinates, over there – a short distance from the stream that flowed at the bottom of the garden.

It was where you often rinsed my red fruit, pieces of me, where you often dipped your feet and then have trodden around me.

I thus knew very well the taste of its water, its sound used to put me to sleep and wake me; when its life-giving silver had disappeared one Summer, I cried while you cursed, only for a moment, and then you put on an expression of indifference. At the time, I did not attach any special meaning to that expression. The time I'm talking about, when you screamed across the mountain, was a time I didn't yet know whether I would survive, whether – in the unpredictability and relentlessness – there would be frost that would burn me and those like me at the time, whether the weak wooden heart, which is still entirely invisible, would make it and would not stop before it moved. Yet I survived even though the Unremitting and Unpredictable came, I survived as a proof, as a seal of my days and of yours. Of those days that, once they run, there is no force to stop them. Silence alternated with noise, and in everything nothing was mirrored. And you, as yet unwittingly, reflected in me. Your elders were proud and pleased that I was also growing, they kept checking on me, from the metal bucket they were sprinkling the ground around my feet. Sometimes the idea changed in the direction that – with that little boy, we planted that apple tree. And then the view from the window, the gesture of raised hand, the question – which one, aha, there, the look out into the greenery – which was said to be here to offer solace. To rock the scattered, disjointed, restless, dissatisfied, unanchored, unbelieving human minds, to blow at their wounds, to caress them, to sew the pains of the world, to affirm them in their irreplaceability, exceptionality, in injustice.

*The smile of a tree and a small gasp, which we may not even notice with human eye.*

And there, slightly to the left, I stood, cheerful, natural, born, sunken into the ground, with such a small crown, formed only by a few thin limbs, the most convincing of which was the inkling of my form, that was yet come, that would be brought by our common future. It

was as early as then that two inconspicuous lines, my and your life line, were drawn on your right hand. No one knew, no one could say that one belonged to you, and the other to me – that little, slightly crooked apple tree. Yes, they called me Apple Tree. It's me, your Apple Tree. There might have been slight allegory in that, though, luckily, it wasn't, you could have constructed it there when you were grown up, but you didn't. Today, when it's all over, and through the smoke I'm winding my way in heavens, I am in a way grateful to you for having been ordinary, for none of my fruit being eaten by any of your Eve, for no one having been driven out of paradise for that. Even for that I hadn't turned into a long-haired maiden cursed into the bark of a tree with whom a young man with thick-rimmed spectacles fell in love. For, had that been the case, my story would have been gloomier, it might have been major, perhaps more mysterious; now no one actually knows of it, no one would think that, in the smoke, a column of these strange words is winding its way to the gate of heaven. In your first steps you leaned on me, in your first falls you looked at me, in your endless wanderings through the garden you always stopped by me.

You were often drawn to us – to the greenery, you were often driven there, for, given there had been too many twists and too many uncertainties in a human story, that story was yours. Yes, from the perspective of eternity it was a minor and negligible story, but a large one from the perspective of the minor present-day. The evolution was just and relentless to you and me. Our existences were reflected in all their coincidences and higher intentions. A bottle of spirit was buried near me on the occasion of your wedding; as I grew stronger and stronger, the bottle with a wax cap was being passed from one to another by my roots were, by my lower currents, shifting it by a full seventy centimetres. Once your elders come looking for the bottle, they will be amazed that such an item had travelled in the ground.

When the first fruit, the first apple, came out accompanied by my inaudible sighs, you talked to everyone about it with undisguised passion. Yes, you were still in your childhood, at the age when the greatest miracles happen in the nearest spots. You were enchanted by me, my fruit, by an event that, you didn't know why, seemed so significant to you. You were exploring how, in what way could an object that is beautiful, that is sweet, that brings joy and pleasure, how it could appear on one of my, still not strong enough arms. You were

oblivious of the fact that no one paid as much attention to this touching effort of a child as you did, and no one shared your astonishment. Why spoil it?

If we were the same entity, perhaps we would have cried together then. Or we would just stand together and think of the same a parent thinks of when his child makes the first step. Though we would perhaps do something common, something together, we would be able to share the same feelings, pause in them, look back, to the beginning of all this, to hear the rhythm that harmonised us beyond our intentions, perhaps you would even see the bond woven from lines similar to the cobweb that stretches from you to me. And then maybe we would have longed for just that inexistent allegory of me turning into a woman, whose curse you would have lifted with a kiss, perhaps that one with which, beneath me, you were releasing from curse your future wife, the only one of all the women you ever had whom you brought to me as to the altar, as to a place where a difficult trial had to take place. I smiled quietly, I adjusted my emerging crown, already beautiful, kept with love and care, I used to tell myself thus, I turned it up so that the smile wouldn't be visible. At the time, I was no longer that small in stature. Have you ever looked at a smile of a tree? Have you ever caught the expression of a tree?

Have you ever understood any of his emotions? Born at one time.

Spring fruit, both.

From the womb of a mother wife, you first.

From the bosom of the mother land, me the second fruit.

*The wind blows and the smoke column shakes. Consistency and constancy are broken, put off balance. The grey matter rising to the sky is shaking, it takes a while to calm down again. Only then we realise that, until now, the air was utterly calm. Unnaturally, uncharacteristically, such windless calm, which one is not accustomed to. Such motionless air in which one can hear the collision of atoms, them hitting each other, splitting, exchanging information. Air in which one hears vibrations of the atmosphere and vibrations of silence. In those instants that occur sometimes – not so often – in our lives, fundamental events are usually born. There is another sound in this wind, it is the sound of concrete being poured. When concrete, the grey matter that contains extinction, finiteness and death, falls into an excavated pit, which is already lined with grey block cubes. It is*



*difficult to identify the sound, yet there must be an effort to get as close as possible to this possibility.*

Our limbs were growing stronger in parallel stories, two legs, two arms, one leg, dozens of arms growing tall. Firm limbs, firm protrusions from the body already able to offer support, already able to hold uncertainty and fix movement.

I didn't mind you engraving a heart onto me, using that rusty fish-shaped pocket knife. You wrote something into the heart, some kind of characters, of which, I know, you make up words, that there are too many. It hurt, but I persevered, because time would heal, I knew. Our elders around us were looking at you with dismay, disappointment. Not me, I was looking at you through your eyes, then full of love and flares of infatuation. To this day, if you are attentive, you will find the sign on me. Already overgrown with life, a sign of times, a trace of time, a kind of code we can't decipher or extract from it any images, which then seemed so obvious and so expected.

Time healed it, I knew so, back then. Yet I also knew that it would be impossible to heal and rectify everything. Time.

That, which like the spirit of being, galloped beside us.

Besides all living, made of living wood, and also of living skin.

Two young people, just past the threshold of childhood, sitting under an apple tree, possibly May bloomer, in fresh blossom. We can no longer read anything in that sign. Though it is still there.

I couldn't tell from the young woman's face what she thought of it, probably nothing. I didn't want to underestimate her, I didn't want to judge her, I just wanted to let things flow, yet I couldn't even sense a hint of emotion from that face. Not a hint of connection with me.

Then you kissed and then you dropped by my feet. And again. Perhaps I showered you with my white flowers, I danced to your rhythm and those flowers, they were falling by themselves. Though I don't know whether that was the case.

You came again and again. My arms have become your hiding place. Silent conversations. Muffled laughter. Passions and pleasures. Then you came no more. It ended somehow

unexpectedly. Then the bottle with the spirit was buried and unearthed from beneath my roots. Seventy centimetres ... is that possible?! I smiled again.

Then came the festivity, the reverberations of your abode, the nerves, all this spark around the preparations for the great day. Your elders were frail by then, especially the one who had planted me. And he came that day, instead of you, when they were digging beneath me. He came slowly, breathing loud. He was gazing at the soil. The very soil he was put in to a few weeks later. Indeed, that's another story, I know. It went through my crown then: is he my creator? He is the one who took care of me, kept changing the shape of my arms, guarded my legs and hair. Is he the one I am indebted to for my life? And what if someone gave me as a gift to your young wife of a few hours, whose sign I still have engraved on me, as Gaia gave my antique sister to Hera? Though that would have to be you, Zeus, you know? And not he, the old and frail man who now stood above me, fixating his slightly absent gaze on mine and his roots. That would have to be the case. And we would also have to have the dragon Ladon in the yard, and not just the old clumsy German boxer with that Spanish name I can't remember. The one that kept fertilising us for his entire long life, but the one that was also pretty stinky. And then, some Heracles and some Trojan prince would have to come, and so on. That day my thoughts wandered in this very direction, and the soil, the soil freshly dug up, and aired with relief, trembled so beautifully, and it carried all those ancient echoes of the ages, it carried all those heroic stories when my old sisters and great-great-Aunts stood at the birth of great history, yes, I felt then like an oracle of love.

*At this point, let there be a moment of silence, a moment of short rest.*

When you came alone, you said nothing. You just stood by me, the grass was wet, and you stood by me, didn't look at me, just stood there. I knew, as a bird knows it is about to rain, I knew your elder was no longer alive. Yet, I didn't know there was much more that was no longer as it used to be.

That you have packed suitcases and boxes and opaque bags, with her, with your already wife. That your steps and your paths lead away, far from us, far from the roots, far from our days together. I didn't know you came to say goodbye then, that you had come, even

though you didn't want to come to me, near me, and you wanted to say something, but all you could do was just go there and stand. It was one of those days when fog obscures feelings and the truth, you have no way of knowing that we love fog because we draw moisture from it, because we let its soft, even if cold lips to whisper us to sleep.

Smoke came out of your mouth and, in my nostrils, I smelled odour. It was as if you were there with me secretly, as if a soldier had briefly escaped from a battlefield, as if a doctor ran from the operating room into silence for a while, as if a priest needed something to think about and to take a sip of spirit just before giving absolution. I didn't understand that moment perfectly, I know, but I didn't feel good with you then. Once you said, I remember it precisely, you were already famous, and you were known, it was known who you were, where you came from, what your roots were, what shaped you, then you said: my childhood evolved in the sign of liturgical and calendar year, in the observation of the seasons in the treetops in our garden.

You put it nicely, having embellished it a bit, as humans always do. To be better and more colourful than human reality. Then, it made an impression on many, because you were good at making impressions and exerting influence.

## **MINISTER**

*He is listening briefly, we don't hear what he is listening to, there is not much to read from his face.*

Be so kind and refrain from talking about indifference.<sup>1</sup> How did you come up with that I was indifferent and that I didn't care!

Of course, I am not indifferent, but, in short, such is the reality. I have nothing to answer for and nothing to defend. Legally, everything is fine, the forest belt was no man's land that subsequently became the property of the company you mentioned, the business you mentioned, and, as you know, everyone is entitled to deal with their assets as they please.

*Silence, he is listening.*

Moral?

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<sup>1</sup> Tranl. note: addressing a male journalist.

*Silence, he is listening.*

But that is a market, isn't it. Such is the reality, as I said before. The state has nothing to do with it! Don't shake your head, it just hasn't. No need to show me any maps, I have, mind you, more insight than you, and I don't even know what sources you draw from. Our ministry has dozens of experts on payroll who monitor and investigate the situation. And not only in this case, but all across the territory of our country.

*Silence, he is listening.*

That's quite inflated when you say sell the forest. I had no way of stopping it and, I repeat, I have no personal interest vested in it.

*Silence, he is listening.*

Of course I saw the aerial images. I even took some photos with my mobile phone. I suppose that, unlike you, I flew over that territory in a chopper. What's so funny about that? Would you like to see those photos?

*He retrieves his mobile phone and searches through the photos of the area epitomised by empty spaces of once lush vegetation; we see the photos in the back plane on the screen; suddenly a private photo of a garden with foundations of a house that appear fresh appears amidst the slide show.*

Sorry, that doesn't belong here.

*Silence, he is listening.*

Anxiety? What do you know about anxiety?!

*He is sitting and listening. In that sitting and listening, in that room full of people, where another question is raised referring to a specific law on environmental protection, to illegal logging, to the business that reigns supreme, to crimes consecrated by the government, to once-exuberant forest that is gradually turning into a lunar landscape because of human interference – in all this that is flowing and reeling and dramatic and emotional (it's all slightly theatrical, green and tilted to the left, at the same time, it contains some humour and gravity) there are sentences that resonate in his ears without prior warning, the mind starts to wander, as only mind can: so we'll just cut down those trees – how do we cut them? – well, we'll cut them down, chop them – some have been there for a hundred years – please don't exaggerate, a hundred years – so, eighty, that's life, everything changes, the landscape and the space – but those trees are healthy, they give fruit, we benefit from them – Do you want to blackmail me like that? – Someone will report us – Are you afraid, you?!*

*I'm not afraid, but ... – if you're dealing with logging at the ministry, you don't use this messianic talk – what the hell are you bringing here? – so where are we to build? are we to purchase a plot, even if we have one already?*  
*we can still live here, with my mother – I don't want to live here, with your mother, I want to live on my own and I agreed to be close to your mother because she has grown weak, that was a major concession on my part – now, would you kindly step back with that garden – my father would never agree to something like that – your father is no longer alive – Minister, would you respond to the question?*

I'm sorry, I got lost in thought. Would you repeat the question? No need to repeat the whole question, just the end.

## **APPLE TREE**

Perhaps, if the children came, the offspring, like when a new sprig is born of my branch, and with it the hope of someone to carry on the future, a hope that the path they started long before us would continue, that there is someone to pursue it.

You no longer came together, you only came alone from time to time, seldom, I didn't know, I didn't understand, I had no strength to guess. Whether at least one of those days

when my flowers rained on you was still alive, when you engraved two characters with that little fish-knife and imprisoned them in the heart, when you promised with human promise that never, which in your language means sometimes, maybe, perhaps.

Here I wish to be silent again briefly, if there is anyone who dislikes my silence or is displeased with it, let them try to perceive music at this point, the chorus of trees can sing to them, the harmony of the forest can be heard, the world chorus can sound.

*After a while, Apple Tree speaks again. If, at that point tears fall like rain, as the saying goes, we would have no reason to wonder.*

No one knows when it happened, or how it could have happened, we may pretend we don't know whether it happened at all, whether it happened like this, but yes, it did happen, plain and simple, too straightforwardly and too indubitably.

The SOUND already induced such anxiety that perhaps only comes once in a lifetime. And it doesn't matter whether it is a person's life or that of a tree. Yes, I recalled those few occasions when you came to see us, the garden, our green world, and looked at it all with such a strange detachment. It was slightly suspicious even then, but since then there has been plenty of splendour and nature in the flow of the year, a flower, a bee, fruit, frost, and the relief that it was forgotten. You, too, began to come more often, it seemed. Sometimes you would just stand there, full of thoughts, full of something that couldn't be read. And sometimes you touched me just like that, you never did it before, even at times of greatest happiness and harmony. I used to tell myself, right, that's how things probably are in your human realm. That it is full of those suspicious twists, as you say – of paradoxes. In turn, we need and have few constants. And then I remember those moments when a man walked among us with a kind of device that made sounds, like the little chickens that used to come to us to graze the grass. I was poking them with leaves, sometimes hitting with apples, they jumped, bounced, hopped; we all used to do it, the keenest of us was the old plum tree by the fence. We called her Rosie, no one knows why.

Why am I saying all this? What for?

*The words pause again briefly. The situation freezes, whatever is going on at that point, comes to a halt. Everyone is silent and keeps observing. And exploring the limit of silence. The words start to flow again momentarily, it is the instant when we want to use a word or a sentence or a materialised idea, to outshout something, we want to outfight it, we want to stand up to what is inevitable. It's precisely the moment we always remember.*

That is how it came about, he came up with it – the tiny gooseberry bush that used to grow next to her, the bush must have heard it from the neighbours, heard some human cub saying Rosie, the bush liked it so much that it thus started calling this old, respected, by then noticeably inclined lady. That was where the yellow creatures liked to go best, wandering around Rosie, feeling the undercurrents, perhaps even sensing wisdom there, or perhaps they were just cheeky. I don't know whether it got on Rosie's nerves, or whether it was just a show they put on for the rest of us, but sometimes she shook off so many purple plums just to try to hit the tiny body of that bizarre creature on two matchstick legs.

And they did precisely the same beep beep beep sound as the machine makes now.

The guy then made some marks, stuck something somewhere, made a note in such a strange lighting device. The sound, the one I'm talking about, I don't mean the beep beep beep.

But it was the vrrrrrrr, grrrrrrrr, drrrrrrrrr, vrrrrrrrr, plus the roar and smoke, and the sense of metal and the sense of iron teeth and the sense of such a strange smell that is among machines, that tends to be in an inanimate environment, the repulsive scary SOUND came from the yard, that's where it all started .

*The movement of the Apple Tree halts in a gesture that resembles ballerina's dance pose. Before our attention shifts to the Minister, we must become aware of this image, perhaps even remember it straight away.*

## **MINISTER**

But I couldn't ...

I couldn't ...

Do understand!

About it I have no ...

Please don't keep interrupting me, let me speak, I also let you. All this that you're trying to suggest here is a construction, it's a conspiracy, an aggressive media game. Those dances of yours again, your covert pressure. After all, you, too, have a responsibility, how long is this media dictate to last?

*Some laugh.*

*Some cough.*

*Some might whisper something.*

*Some are quickly jotting down what has been said.*

*Some repeat it in their dictaphone.*

*Some leave ostentatiously.*

*But all feel uncomfortable.*

I don't think there's any point continuing this spiel! Thank you all for coming. Have a nice day.

*He gets up, he wants to leave. Yet it all stays fixed in motion. Someone said, perhaps so strongly that he outshouted all the outraged and disillusioned voices of the journalists: YOU CAN'T LEAVE YET! YOU'VE GOT TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS. Or was it just his impression?*

*Who would shout at him, the Minister, young and in the saddle of time, who would do such thing? No one would dare to. None of those here. Who are they, what can they know? What do they have to tell him? Are those to be vox populi?*

*Ha! Yeah, right! They are said to be the conscience, to shape public opinion, their pathetic fads?! Ha and once again, ha! He sits down and listens, the next question is asked very slowly and clearly. He takes a deep breath before answering. It comes to his mind, now*



*obviously – right now, as the Opposition lady looser said recently in a live broadcast – Minister, this line is over, you are at the end of it! In live broadcast, just because she stood up for everything live and green, for everything alternative, she said this line was over. You bet, babe. Here I am, here I stand, in halted motion, half-sitting, half-standing, perhaps, still, I'm here. At the end of the line, you say! At the end of my story?! You bet! He's on the throne, he's in the limelight, he knows how to do it. He pursued his goal honestly and doggedly, and now – just for nothing, for a few weeping journalists, for some remorse, reproach, he won't get off his horse! From the stallion he tamed that is galloping him to Avalon! That's all, precisely, indeed. He fixed the rim of his outrageously expensive spectacles and smiled. He smiled! He knew his smile used to do the trick, that it had the power to disarm, they may not buy it now, but he is still capable of it. He still knows it in a situation when, at first glance, it looks as if he were on his knees, crawling on the ground, yes, perhaps half-seated or half-standing, but still on his feet! He smiled. He took a deep breath. And sat down again. And what did he do? He was silent. They were expecting him to speak, and he was silent. Ha!*

## **APPLE TREE**

They arrived armed with chainsaws and axes.

*Cut. She says the next sentence in a different voice, a voice that doesn't belong to her, that doesn't seem to come out of her, that emerges within her.*

*The following lines will alternate like this, an encounter of these two worlds, one of which comes from a deep subconscious and does not clearly belong to this world:*

**In large matters stunned ...**

They kept falling, metals and wood roaring, something live was spurting.

**not inanimate and not even a woman ...**

There were two but armed like a hundred-headed army.

**penetrated at any moment ...**

We weren't enough. No one was enough, deep breath wasn't enough

**a drop of blood on his old hands ...**

even exhalation. Everything remained just in between, on the interface

**who is looking, a heart, head ...**

and unfinished. Blood, invisible blood, something in the sawdust

**in pure shapes it lags behind ...**

still moving, something live that is to slowly dry out,

**she didn't quite step off the catwalk ...**

from the roots they crack and shoot the umbilical cords.

**she is defenceless, old, bare ...**

**so she stood there, undressed**

**neither a tree nor a woman**

**into the mouth of darkness looks**

**the end of the world stood at the door**

**she didn't know yet at that time...**

*Silence. After a moment of silence, she continues, where she stopped a moment ago.*

Someone somewhere cried the cry of wood.

Someone young and strong was trying to shield, how can they, the trees.

Someone old and bent whispered the first words of the prayer of the earth, and managed no more, the blow came.

Someone ripped out of the depths greater than the abyss with all its arteries and veins that confirmed that fragile life.

He did so deliberately as the suicide dips his sliced hand in hot water.

Someone just fumbled around in horror, blew,

he shuddered, bent, froze, could not resist. He had to do what he had to. The first phase of this carousel was petrifying, like the proverbial gnashing of teeth, it lasted ... it lasted ... it was so long that ... it took many minutes ... and that lasted about ...

I can't say that! Not even an estimate! I want to be silent! Get lost. Away. Enough. Be quiet!

*She fights, slashes and falls to the ground. She repeats some words over and over again.  
Shut up! Enough! Be quiet. Like when something, that worked for decades, goes wrong.  
For instance, a mechanical coffee grinder.*

How many smoke trails, how many vertical streams?!

Alright then. Deep breath and I go on, uncompromisingly as you have gradually learned it through life too. Uncompromising! Colon!

That instant, I hear the forests of the whole world scream with helplessness and be silent in helplessness. I perceive how detail perceives the whole.

I also perceive the power of the helplessness of the whole in relation to detail. Around me, the end of the world and the echoes of other ends of the world. All around me, the demise of the old and the vain waiting for the birth of the new.

Timelessness around me, halted time, a bridge they didn't yet have the time to build.

Around me, a thin blade of two millennia. Around the carousel of extinctions, which the memory of time is able to remember.

And I am in the middle. Yes. But I ... I?

I realised, did I realise?

That I'm still standing, that I'm standing, and I am ALONE.

Even without YOU, even without the kin of MINE.

No metal teeth in my legs, no screaming, no anger, no apathy, no blood beneath my fragile heels. When did it happen?

When did you become so distant? You didn't tell me anything, you didn't say goodbye, you didn't even think to come, to count the leaves on the ground, to say something about the Autumn, to compare last year's favour of the gods, as you used to say – the harvest, with this year's yield. To sprinkle me with that revolting pungent and smelly liquid, you didn't even think of that. You didn't think of ANYTHING.

*Silence. She, the Apple Tree is silent briefly.*

Alone in the soil that grew old with me, it dried up, cracked, still connected with its spring, that had not, as yet, dried up despite it all. And everyone and everything around me lays

up, doesn't live, the two PEOPLE with axes are still completing the deed of destruction, I heard the sighs of the old Rosie, perhaps she wanted to say something, whisper in exhalation, but no strength was left. I realised that I was the only one STANDING. That I am still where I was a while ago, that I didn't move, that no one moved me, that no one even touched me. GOODNESS.

Better be there wind, frost, tons of snow. Than THIS. At the very beginning, when the two soldiers invaded, they said something like – this one is – and one laughed, at the sight of me

he said it and laughed, he laughed not understanding, he shook his head not understanding, now, when the deed was done, something was still bubbling somewhere, like after a mountain explosion, and they were leaving, so he stopped by me again and looked at me, I saw the DETAIL of his face and I saw nothing in it except weariness and indifference. And I heard that from years ago – THIS is the one.

*The principle behind the following dialogue is similar to that at the very beginning of the text. It is not a conversation taken out of context, it is not even to work that way, let its staging solution be a challenge and a possibility. The cast are, of course, the same – man and woman, only the emotion is different; in relation to the whole and to the timeline, the conversation could have taken place before the introductory dialogue, though possibly also afterwards. There may also be a kind of film insert, perhaps a continuation of the opening one, lunar landscape that was born after the widespread and brutal plundering using heavy machinery.*

Do you know what I want?

I think so.

So, say it.

*Brief silence.*

You would like to return to your native house. In short, your home.

How did you know?

I'm your wife.

Yes. Still.

That's right, still. Irony?

Reality. Things don't work between us.

Don't work – awful expression.

Ordinary, true, futile. Don't work. Love. Perhaps we're just kidding ourselves.

*Brief silence.*

Did you really say that?

I'm still trying to save it. I don't mean like a Samaritan, but simply I still want us to give things a chance.

You mean the two of us? Do you consider the two of us to be things?

*A little longer silence.*

No, I mean everyone and everyone around us. Everything we have built and what is so easy to lose. As if you click your fingers like this. So that we try to prove that we are not as cynical and callous as everyone thinks of us. Though we are both doing well, we are both growing in a sense and in certain direction, that we can still go back, together, to where we started. We can go back to those lives when we were nobody. Though, in reality, we may have been more than we are now.

*Silence.*

Why are you silent?

It touched me. My eyes are ... (*Doesn't finish the sentence.*)

You're kidding.

I'm serious.

Stop it. Though we've got to solve one issue.

What?

Where are we going to live.

What do you mean where are we going to live? At Mum's.

I don't want to live in the same house with her.

And why's that?

Is it really that hard to understand? It is difficult to explain, but I think it is quite easy to understand.

I also want to go back so we can be close. She is alone. We can be close and we don't have to live in your nursery.

*Long silence. Embrace. Initiated by the man. The woman is reluctant briefly, eventually she gives in.*

## **APPLE TREE**

What else do you want?

To pull out every piece of live meat from the soil?! Even the last one?

Align, align, smooth, loot?!

You even want to tame the ocean, lock it up in the aquarium?! To suck the oils from the depths of the earth, all the way to the very bottom

leaving nothing there,

to pour everything into the oesophagus of metal machinery that is to transport you to the remaining spots where human has not yet set foot?!

What for?!

To be even faster, to fly still higher, to jump higher,

To penetrate deeper, to force your way even further,

to still break through a million rocks underground?! What for?!

To use even thicker black glass and walls to barricade your existence?

Because of what?!

Cheer for everything?! Gleam for everything?!

To be richer, to be even more successful,

to be even more beautiful and smoother, to be even healthier and more immortal?! And more miserable?!

To appropriate the gifts of the world, all that is not yours?!

It will never be yours what is ours! And that what is everyone's! It will never be yours what belongs to the birds, you will never understand what is underground and you will not conquer the underwater world. You will never appropriate scents, you will never understand blossom or leaves fall. You will always be crashing against invisible cliffs and smash the bodies of your hungry planes against rock! You started this fight, you drove the old tribes out of their paradise, you dressed them in glitter and poured addiction down their trusting throats. You. We don't want to reciprocate, we are merely looking for a way out of the corner into which you drove us and are still pushing into.

*One last breath. And in exhalation the following:*

Then you came with her. You haven't been here for a long time. Together. And all that was on the ground you gathered, all that death, you carried it, drove it down to the corner of the garden, where the sad world had long been dry. On the pile. Together. On one big pile, randomly, you were silent, did you say anything? I don not know. It didn't take long, and it took one entire age.

That's how it stayed. On the pile, heaped, pointless, lacking logic.

A few of your days. Then the machinery again, then the metal again, then the roar again, the deep pit, all around me, everywhere where those of my kin used to stand, everywhere there was a hole, something colourless in it, something that dries and solidifies quickly, what is inanimate, what is forever, what is immutable, around me, around my feet, around my body that stood there wholly deserted, an absurd scene that can't even be invented ... and so on.

*Silence here.*

*A thousand times silence.*

*Then the image is projected.*

*A tree, an apple tree perhaps, stands in a concrete field, the concrete foundations of a house.*

*A column of smoke is still visible in the shot, raising somewhere from below. This takes a while and the sound of the words we have heard.*

*The passage is probably from somewhere at the beginning. Though it is not essential. And then, the tree, perhaps the apple tree, sets in motion.*

*The concrete cracks, the apple tree steps out, tears everything around, its movements are human, it steps out, the camera follows.*

*It walks, it walks all the way to the fire, down there, it walks.*

*It comes to the fire, the words stop. The camera stops, the image is static and harsh.*

*In silence, the tree, the apple tree, perhaps, lies down in the fire.*

*It takes a while for it to settle in there, it also takes a while for it to ignite and for smoke to rise from it. It can keep rising like this*

*as long as necessary and bearable. And unbearable. It gets dark.*

*In the dark, a few words from W. Whitman (perhaps from Leaves of Grass)*

**The End**