



Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?

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Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?

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CONTENT

not an intro [04]

Red thread tied	[05]
The dwarf in the mirror	[06]
Sweet, fully calorific spells	[06]
The Empress's new clothes	[07]
Grown up tale	[09]
The bartender's phone call	[11]
Morning Hangover	[13]
Pared down	[16]
A leg tells its story	[17]
I'm not a fairy tale	[19]
The giving boy	[20]
Doll of plastic	[23]
The wolf's grievance	[24]
Contemporary Cinderella	[25]
Tiger's "I"	[28]

notes [32]

a few words bout the writer [33]

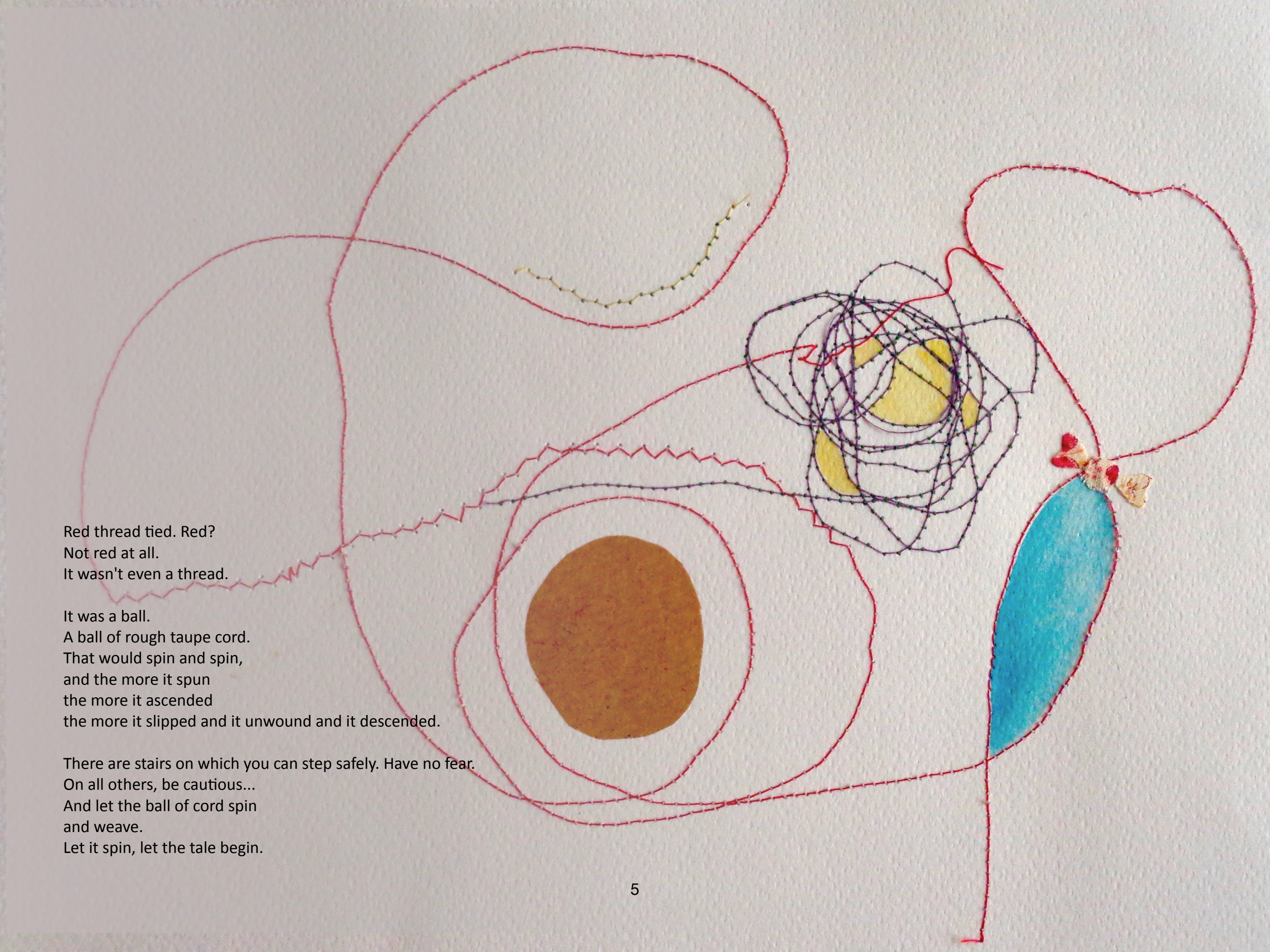
back cover [34]

“And I speak to you in parables and fables
this is that you may listen to them
with greater sweetness”

George Seferis

The last station

1951



Red thread tied. Red?
Not red at all.
It wasn't even a thread.

It was a ball.
A ball of rough taupe cord.
That would spin and spin,
and the more it spun
the more it ascended
the more it slipped and it unwound and it descended.

There are stairs on which you can step safely. Have no fear.
On all others, be cautious...
And let the ball of cord spin
and weave.
Let it spin, let the tale begin.

The dwarf in the mirror

Why won't you reply to me?
Is it because I'm too short?
Is it because I'm male?
Is it because I'm a dwarf?
You dirty, racist mirror, you.
Even with the stepmother you haven't ignored whatever she's asked of you.

I will tell on you when Snow White comes back.
Or, even better, I will have you smash you into a thousand pieces, I don't care about the seven years of bad luck.
I'm doomed anyway. No one takes me seriously. No woman thinks I'm man enough. They all think I'm cute, but they laugh when I ask them out.

Will you ever reply to me, or will you be like my psychologist?
She just sits there, she listens, she never speaks. You'd think her mute.

But you do speak. I know. I've heard you.
No, it's not all in my head. You were talking to Snow White. I heard you. I know.
And, at some point, you'd tell her she was the fairest of them all.

No, I am not hearing voices. I am fine. There's a whole fairy tale written around
"Mirror, mirror on the wall", or am I wrong?
Could it be that my meds aren't working anymore?

Or, even worse, could they be working? I fear I am lost...
Somewhere between fiction and reality.
With Snow White nowhere to be seen.
I'm left to my own devices, alone with you.

Pericles is wagging his tail. She must be back.
I can hear the key turn. She's here. Tell me, quick.

The door is opening.
And it's leading me back to the fiction.
Do you think I should go?
What about the daily life? How about Snow White?

I'm thinking, fast. I come to a decision. I need to know: Tell me.
At long last, will I ever grow?



Sweet, fully calorific spells

I

Magica was really passionate about preserves.

At first, she harvested the rinds from the garden's citrons. The marmalade turned out greenish and bitter. Its secret, though, was the fragrant geranium. The leaves' scent perfectly complemented the citron's aroma, so much so that you could wear the marmalade as a fresh perfume.

Then she picked mandarins and added two oranges and a lemon, and also threw in some leftover rind. The marmalade was, not surprisingly, tangerine in color and bittersweet.

And then it took her hours to thicken the strawberry jam naturally. She more or less succeeded by boiling the citrus pips and some citrus rind along with the strawberries. The jam was still a little runny, but it was ruby red and sour-sweet.

She wanted to make lemon preserves, too. Her lemon trees awakened sweet village memories. She found some glowing yellow, juicy ones and added a few green limes. She used brown sugar as ever, and added less of it than she usually would. She didn't mix well with stevia and the such, she mostly thought of it all as business tricks, aimed at women, diabetics and old ladies who could soon not tell between what sugar or what a sweetener feels like. Her lemony marmalade was ready, sweet, sour and bitter, all at once.

She would so like to make preserves in all colors and all tastes.

She already had them in red, yellow, green and orange. If she could make one in blue, she could easily combine all colors and have her collection complete. The thing is, she didn't want to taint her organic preserves with artificial coloring.

She found the solution in her grandmother's thick recipe book. The blue tea! The tea that took its color from a blossom flowering in Thailand. She bought the tea from an organic foods store and decided to give it a try. She infused some hot water with a couple of blue flowers. A lovely azure! Once sugar was added, the color became more turquoise.

She was so excited she proceeded to throw the dried flowers in the pot along with blackberries and the required amount of sugar, she stirred and brought all to a boil. Oh she was so happy. But as soon as she squeezed in the juice of half a lemon, her jam turned fuchsia!

She should have thought of that, the lemon addition note had been right there on the tea box, how come she never read it? What could she do? You can't make a preserve with no lemon. Giving it some more thought, she found the way, it was a good thing she had taken Chemistry classes in high school. She added extra sugar and ended up creating her perfect blue jam, a blue as if born out of the forty seas and the seven oceans.

She had the glass jars sterilized, she cast her spells and meticulously, one by one, placed them upside down in the kitchen cabinet.

II

Pablo used a chair to climb onto the kitchen worktop. She knew his mom was hiding her best preserves in that cabinet. She opened the cabinet door. He could see the jars but he couldn't reach them. He looked around. No one was there. He only wanted to try that blue jam.

He had never tried blue jam before.

His mom had taken the extra security measure of hiding that jar behind the other preserves. She had made it at night, while Pablo was asleep, but the boy knew it was there. After he'd woken up in the morning, he had looked in the sink and had seen the jam's traces soaking in the water that his mom had filled the pot with.

He stood on tiptoe and stretched as far as he could. He extended his arm, too, and he almost touched it.

Before he could get a hold on it, he heard the door creaking, and the jars crashing...

Red, yellow, green, blue preserves smash and explode.

A million splashes repaint the world.

Sour, bitter, sweet, they find their way into every house.

Pablo is grounded, he is in his room. On the floor lies a pile of paintings.

The forty seas and the seven oceans.



The Empress's new clothes

She didn't feel well. She didn't feel well at all.

She took her purse, her keys, her mobile, and left like lightning.

She got off on Anexartias Street, and started walking.

Most people these days go to the mall, but no one can really walk in a mall. Or breathe.

All of a sudden she spots a gorgeous skirt on her left. Long and fitted, made of a fabric that looked hand-woven.

She sees the shop sign. "EMPERORS." She's never heard of that brand.

- Good afternoon! I'd like to try that skirt in the window.

- Sure. What size are you?

(Can't she see me, she's wondering.)

- The largest you have. XL, XXL, whatever.

- I'm afraid our largest is an M.

(She's in shock.)

- How do you mean? Not even an L?

- This brand doesn't make its clothes in larger sizes. The skirt, though, is elastic.

Why don't you try the M? It might fit.

- I don't think so, sweetheart, but you never know, right? Okay, bring me the M.

(If it fits, I'll...)

She squeezed and she puffed, and she did put the skirt on. There are no words to describe the end result. Seriously tragic.

The voice drifts in from outside the fitting room.

- Does it fit? Come out, let us see.

(Not in a million years.)

- Yes, yes, I'll be out in a moment.

She changes back into her clothes and steps out.

- What did you think? Good?

- To tell you the truth, I did manage to put it on, but the size was wrong and the fit was terrible. I wish you had normal-sized people clothes.

- ...

- Thanks. Bye.

She walks out annoyed...

So one needs some shopping therapy and stores have no sizes larger than M.

This is not happening to me.

A little further down the road is a dried fruit and nuts shop.

She buys a small bag of cashew nuts and digs in.

[Déjà vu]

All of a sudden she spots a gorgeous skirt on her left. Long and fitted, made of a fabric that looked hand-woven.

- Good afternoon! I'd like to try that skirt in the window.

- Sure. I'll get it for you.

She squeezed and she puffed, and she did put the skirt on. There are no words to describe the end result. Seriously tragic.

The voice drifts in from outside the fitting room.

- Does it fit? Come out, let us see.

- Yes, yes, I'll be out in a moment!

- Oh! It looks so great on you!

- Does it really?

- Oh yes, it's so flattering on your curves!

- But... I do believe it's a little small.

- Hell no! It's the perfect size. If it were small, it wouldn't fit so well at the waist.

- I do indeed like the embroidery.

- It's inspired by "The Empress's New Clothes".

- Really?

- Yes. It's a new designer's work. Her largest size is an M. It fits perfectly!

- Seriously? I'm an M?

- The skirt you're wearing is very flattering on you. May I show you something else?

- Sure, why not? But it has to be the same designer's.

- Of course! Goes without saying. Same designer, same line!

- "The Empress's New Clothes", right?
- Please try this dress on. It's a unique one.
- Is this an M, too? Will it fit?
- Of course it will, no stress! M is your size!
- It looks like the Pilates classes are finally working.
She squeezed and she puffed, and she did put that dress on, too.
- Come out, let us see.
- Yes, of course!
- So beautiful! So slimming!
At that very moment, a woman and her child enter the store.
- Mom, look at that lady's big ass!
The mother blushes and, dragging the child, instantly exits.
- Does it make my ass look big?
- Oh nonsense! Look again, it's just fine! It's just the impact of those anorexic runway models on the kids of today, pay no attention! Anorexia is rife among teens these days.
- You know what, you're right. I like these clothes. They make me feel good. Like an empress.
- This is precisely our company's vision!
At the cash desk, after a while.
- Would you like to be a member of our customer club? All you have to do is complete this form and we'll be notifying you of all our offers and events.
- Yes, sure.
She fills the form, she pays, she doesn't even notice the price.
Hey, she did after all buy "The Empress's New Clothes"!
- Thank you. Bye.
She leaves blissful.
A little further down the road is a dried fruit and nuts shop.
She buys a small bag of cashew nuts and digs in.
She returns home feeling peaceful. It's true, shopping therapy works!



Grown up tale

The one-legged dinosaur is so envious of Barbie's leg.

It's just lying there next to the bar.

He is looking at a mandarin, trying not to think about it...

Tonight there's a live performance of a saxophone-playing horse at the palm-lined bar.

He loses himself in the music.

If she were here, he'd treat her to some hot chocolate. Underage dolls aren't allowed alcohol. He asks the bartender for matches and a shot to dull his passion with.

"Even in tales they water the drinks down, dammit", he thinks.

Just over there, the musicians are taking a break.

His leg still hurts, even if it's not there any more.

He's looking at the leg again.

-Should I?

-Nah..., he mutters.

He orders a whiskey on the rocks.

He asks the bartender about the leg.

-How come the janitor hasn't thrown it out yet?

-She may think of it part of the décor.

The sax plays on.

He moves discreetly towards...
the... leg.





It's just so out of place.
White and smooth,
next to his greenish complexion,
thick and rough.

He asks the bartender for a whiskey, neat.
He gets his courage up.
He's never taken anything that didn't belong to him
except for a couple of ashtrays and beer glasses, way
back at Babylon.

He pays by credit card.
Everyone is lost in music.
The bartender is chilling.
Two pairs of legs are dancing.
He puts it on and staggers off to the Jurassic Park.

...two pairs of legs are dancing.



Morning hangover

He wakes up.
Humongous headache.
Aah,
Caffeine!
He tries getting out of bed and falls down.
What is happening?

He looks... There's a Barbie leg in the place
of his missing limb.
He thinks... I drank way too much last night.

[link]

<https://instagram.com/p/49RciBjSjk/>

The bartender's phone call

Dude, you just won't believe what happened last night! There was this dino. Yeah, no shit, a lame one, too! Yeah, he was just sitting there at the bar, next to the palm trees. He was drinking and drinking and then drinking some more, no wonder a wino. He was wasted after the third drink. Unreal, man. He just put Barbie's leg on and, whoosh, he's gone!

No, man, I never had a drop last night...



[link]

<https://soundcloud.com/veramand/sppeaowulspj>



Pared down

He was lame.

He saw the leg. He had a drink or two.

He took the leg and left.

[link] <https://twitter.com/veramand/status/820616086995562496>

A leg tells its story

I used to be attached to a doll's pelvis. I can't complain, it wasn't bad. Bit of ankylosing spondylitis from wearing high heels, but fine other than that.

The stupid girl left me at a bar. She took her clothes off, then she took me off, then she forgot to put me back on! How is this possible? How come? I just lay there for a week.

A dinosaur came by. Was he a little lame, was he more than a little mad? He took me with him. I'm finding it a little difficult, but, hey, I make do.





[link] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0dXiKvTrxQ>



I'm not a fairy tale

- Hey!

The snow woman said.

She herself was startled by her voice.

Her hand moved and shut her mouth. -Oh! It's moving!

She kept the other hand in her pocket.

One always finds useful things in pockets, she thought.

She fumbled deep in her skirt's cold pocket. Coins, keys, candy, nuts!

{!}

She was so stressed she chewed on the carrot that served as her nose. In her other pocket she found a touchscreen phone.

{!!!}

She made a move.

Her first steps were slow. Then she started running!

- Oops, she slipped on ice.

Thankfully she kept her balance, then started to dance. She danced alone in the snow.

No one would believe it!

And yet, she had found the solution.

She had been given the solution by the kids who had made her.

She sat on the bench and took a selfie!



The giving boy

Once upon a time, there was a boy who fell in love with an apple tree.

The apple tree was young. The boy would refresh her soil, caress her leaves, sing to her...and the apple tree would smile at him. And time passed.

One day the apple tree said to the boy:

- It's time I blossomed. I need fertilizer.

The boy broke his piggy bank and bought a sack of fertilizer. He had hoped to buy a bicycle, but the apple tree was more important to him.

Time passed, the boy grew older and the apple tree grew higher.

The boy would climb onto her branches and whisper sweet nothings into her foliage. And the apple tree smiled at him. And time passed.

Until one day the apple tree told the boy:

- My blossoms will fall and I won't be able to bear fruit. You need to spray me.

The boy again used his savings. He worked in the summers and he had planned on going for a trip with his pals, but the apple tree was more important to him. He sacrificed his holidays and sprayed the apple tree.

The apple tree bore ripe apples and the boy would enjoy her fruit and hug her in his arms. And time passed.

One way or another, the boy grew older and the apple tree grew older, too.

The boy had to leave town for his studies, but the apple tree could go nowhere.

Don't go, she said to him. Stay here with me. I will be giving you my apples: you will be taking them to the market. And the ones you don't sell you can make into luscious jam. And we will be together,

forever happy.

The boy was reluctant, but he loved the apple tree so much he didn't want to leave her alone.

So he stayed, and he never studied. He planted cherry trees and pear trees and orange trees, but no other apple tree. He'd take the fruit to the market and sell it. He made all kinds of jams, too, and he'd put so much love in making them that he always sold out, nothing was left for him.

So the boy was now a man, and the apple tree was old. No matter his singing to her, no matter the refreshing of her soil, the apple tree stopped blossoming. She stopped bearing fruit and the man was heartbroken.

He loved his apple tree so much, and time passed.

The apple tree got sick. He fetched the best botanists, yet no one had a cure that worked.

The apple tree was slowly dying and the specialists said she could not be saved, on top of that there was a danger that the other trees in the orchard would catch the disease.

He had to cut her down.

The man would not consider it even.

He was 40 years of age and his whole life had revolved around this apple tree.

He had no family, no friends. He had made a small fortune, but without the apple tree nothing mattered.

The apple tree was slowly dying. And time passed.

If you believe in self-sacrifice and you are seeking a somewhat positive ending:

The apple tree could no more stand this situation. She loved this man so much: she couldn't stand seeing him wasting away.

One day she told him:

"I don't have long to live. Please cut me down, you'll be doing me a favor. Give my timber to the poor. There are new shoots of apple trees by my roots. Go ahead, plant them and create an apple grove in my memory. Fall in love. Teach your children to climb on the apple trees, to love them as you do...then you'll be forever happy."

He wouldn't have any of it. Yet he knew that the apple tree was right. He wanted to grant her her final wish.

He cut her down and gave her timber to grateful families up on the mountains.

He planted the little apple trees and created an apple grove.

He never had a family.

He gave away the orchard to the school, it was turned into a playground. Only songs, laughter and lovely aromas emanated from it.

The man built a house next to the orchard and lived alone with his memories to a very old age.





If you believe that real life is cruel and unfair:

The other trees got sick, too. He cut those down with no hesitation.
But he couldn't bring himself to cut down his beloved apple tree.
He saw her fading and slowly dying and his heart ached. He spent everything he owned trying to save her, but he didn't succeed.

The apple tree died and along with her his joy died. He found no meaning in anything. He wouldn't eat, he wouldn't drink. His life was pointless. He'd spend all day sitting by the tree. He was all out of tears.

He stayed alone, dried up, there next to her roots.

If you want to know the real truth:

He took the big decision. He didn't talk much at all. He went into art therapy. After a year in therapy, he'd understood. His relationship with the apple tree had not been healthy at all. He had been dependent on the "apple tree". He had kept his whole life on hold for her sake. He had isolated himself, distanced himself from family and friends. In the beginning they had tried to persuade him that this was not normal, how could he behave like this over "a tree". With time, they saw him as odd, and they almost avoided him.

He walked to his orchard. He took the big decision. Euthanasia. He ended the apple tree's suffering with one injection. There was no way he could carry on seeing her suffer like that. He kept telling himself that she was just a tree. He was able to save the other trees, and to save his business. And then he decided to do something for himself.

He enrolled in a school for an MBA, but he hated it. He needed something more creative, so he took up writing...



Doll of plastic

It didn't matter to him.
He loved her the way she was.
He spread the gingham tablecloth and opened the basket.
It looked like Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother's basket.
It was stuffed with goodies.
Fruit, cheese, carrots, celery, some salami.
I picked the best, he said to her.
I even packed dessert, some dark chocolate for us to share.
Don't worry, you won't be gaining weight.
A bottle of fine wine and two glasses.
Let's toast! To our health!
He always enjoyed their outings.
He got distracted for a while.
He almost believed that she was real, sitting there next to him, talking to him and smiling to him with that etched sweet smile of hers.

The wolf had been watching them from behind a tree.
Her little hat reminded him of her.
Andreas never even realized he had taken their wine. He had it on his own.
They got up and, hand in hand, they took the return road.
Stuck to one another, they looked as though they'd never been apart.





The wolf's grievance

The wolf had just one grievance. Contemporary fairy tales had messed with his image, one he'd worked to build over the years. He had eaten the six little goats, he had attacked both the grandmother and Little Red Riding Hood, he had blown down the little pigs' houses, and then some author decided to be innovative. Unheard of, a fairy tale in which the wolf goes against his type casting! Tongues are wagging.

- They'll say I'm in love with an ewe, that a pig is after my own little pups... They even called a souvlaki shop "The Big Good Wolf"!

I just cannot take this any longer! I will sue them for defamation of character! People ordering souvlaki or gyro at "The Big Good Wolf"!
These days I have a hard time getting about, Doctor. I put on my dark sunglasses and I wear my black trench coat, but then everyone thinks I'm Sherlock Holmes.

I have trouble sleeping, Doctor.
I am scared of people: I shy away from them.
Imagine, a big bad wolf having to hide away...

Contemporary Cinderella

I thought she couldn't possibly be real...

A girl stirring the embers.

The fairy godmother. Is there anyone left who still believes in fairies? Not to mention that most godmothers tend to forget about you as you grow older... Some forget you shortly after the christening...

The prince, the ball, the slipper... Nonsense, fables that create in us false expectations...

Ever since I was a toddler, housework was my turf. My sibling was a boy. I had to prepare for marriage even at that early, elementary school age...

We were treated the same, you see, no discrimination whatsoever.

I grew up and pursued my studies. No prince in sight.

And yet I got pregnant with a frog's child. My mother wanted nothing to do with the child. She wasn't even the evil stepmother: she was my own mother... A mother has instinct, and she has infinite love for her child...yeah right.

So I myself became a mother. And had all my feminist theories verified in the process. My friends supported me. My bestie's family became the fairy godmother. The prince bailed.

It was then that I saw her:

She was wearing a hoop skirt, like in fairy tales. And it was her wedding day. All women would be moved whenever she'd talk to them about marriage. Some dreamed of the day when they, too, would be princesses and others reminisced of the only day when everyone treated them like a princess.

But she was a real one. Contemporary, yet real. She wore glass slippers and had a prince by her side. She was sweet and pretty, she smiled and beamed!

In the royal chambers the bowl of cashews was empty again. Crap, once more I ate them all. Wretched diet, I just can't resist cashews. To the right there is the sitting room. On the wall, the mounted little statue of a woman disabled, kneeling and bent in two, looking to the sky. A mortal Aphrodite of sorts. Women have to endure a lifetime of pain. It is a

souvenir from the ex...maybe I should get rid of it...?

To the left, there is chaos. The playground. The space one must tread on with caution, lest they trip on a toy and fall flat on their face. No one stays long there except my daughter. She plays all day long and she plants her dried plants, amidst a mess of toy cars, puzzle pieces and dolls. I turn my eyes to the computer, and to the right of it. My glass display of dried bouquets to remind me of happy moments. Next to them a vintage scale, and then another one for decoration, as well as the empty cashew bowl. I need caffeine and I need nicotine.

The little fish is floating in nonchalance. What does it know of my own hysterics? The color has faded off the paintings. Ha, a life as black and white as mine, on a colored background. Thankfully a wall doodled on by my little one provides the color.

I turn my head to the balcony, to my small planted paradise. There is an old aristocratic door and a Smurf house. I'd like to be tiny one day, so I can fit inside.

I'll ask my godmother to transform me for a while.

I'm bored of being a princess all the time.

I can hear my daughter call me...

-Mommy! I need to go potty...

In the sitting room, the TV is blaring silly children songs. Most kid programs are silly these days... Children are smarter than we used to be at their age and still we underestimate them. Clueless grownups... I think it should be left to the kids to make their own programs. I don't think it's far-fetched, especially given their technology smarts. Her toys are all on the floor. Legos, cars, dinosaurs, disheveled dolls, all in disarray. I think at some point I should try what I've read in an online article, train her into picking everything up, because my back can't take this any longer.

-Mommy... Can we go to Cinderella's to play today?

-We should call her, sweetheart, I think she has to attend a ball today.

She must be busy getting ready...

-Okay. Call her, pleeeeeease!

*-Oh, welcome, my girl! How are you, pretty one?
Come, let me treat you. My cook has prepared tea and cookies.
I think I'll have my godmother make me tiny today. You do like the idea, right?
-Godmotheeeeer! Are you listening to me? Do your thing!
...and then Cinderella shrinks down and she can now fit sitting on the little plate.
The little girl is calmly having her tea, and she does love chocolate cookies, she feels like a lady-in-waiting.
Cinderella is right next to a huge, by comparison, cookie. I won't be easy for her to drink tea either. She did think of climbing on the handle, but could easily drown if she slipped and fell in. Hey, it's not that convenient being tiny, she realizes.
She climbs on the girl's arm and tumbles onto the ground.
-Ugh, how dusty... The help has neglected sweeping the floor again... I'll have to tell the queen.
She finds a miniature skate so she can move faster on the now stadium-sized sitting room. She wants to reach that house on the balcony, but the door is shut and she can't open it...
The girl has her tea like a young lady, then prepares the room for the ball. She dresses the dolls, brushes the teddy bears, even provides musical instruments for the Playmobil figures. The room is ready. Let's get the buffet ready now.
She takes a box, draws a tablecloth and plates on it. It is there that she serves some cookies, grapes, lemonade in thimbles. The buffet is ready, too.
Our Cinderella, having failed at drinking her tea, helps herself to a lemonade.
The music is playing and everyone is ready for the ball.
A little further away, a dwarf is looking at her.
She asks him to dance.
He gives no reply but keeps looking at her and smiling.
She throws caution to the wind, grabs him and starts twirling. It's been a long time since she last attended a ball. Since that time with the glass slipper actually.
Now she sees all the Barbies with the pointed, deformed toes and wonders*



what it's all worth. She lets the dwarf be and eats a grape.
 -Yum, that's really tasty. It's not so bad being tiny, one grape and you're full.

-Are you ready for the race, Maria?
 -Erm...sure...ready...
 -On the count of one...two...three... Let all the cars get into their box!
 -Vroom vroommm, it's parking time!
 -Good girl. Shall we tuck in the teddy bears and the dolls, too? They are tired.
 -Okay...bedtime...
 -The books go back in their place...let me help you.
 -There you go, mom...
 -And put all the rest in the big box!
 -I'm tired...and hungry...
 -Okay, let's set the table. Please pick up those grapes, we don't want to be stepping on them...
 -Do we have any risotto leftovers?
 -There is some, yes. I'll just make a salad and we're all set. Go on fill our glasses with water.
 -Yes, some champagne would be nice.
 -What are you saying, girl? Champagne champagne, even your friend Cinderella only has water!
 -Okay, okay, water it is then. Can we have our meal on the balcony?
 -Sure, the weather is fine, let's. Did you have a good time at the ball?
 -Yes, mommy, it was fab! Dolls and teddy bears and dwarves and a Playmobil band! I even helped Cinderella with the buffet. Everyone liked it and they all danced to their hearts' content. Ken never showed up though, I don't know why... He may have been busy... It was good, in any case.
 -She is a nice lady, Ms. Cinderella. Very down to earth. It pleases me that you hang out together.

*At night I tossed and turned in my bed. I couldn't get to sleep. I probably overate. And my feet hurt from dancing...
 The dwarf was a good dancer, as opposed to the Prince, who'd always lead and drag me in all directions.
 My eyes are drawn to the wedding picture on the wall.
 It's a fairy tale image! I was wearing the hoop skirt and the famous glass slippers.*

All women were moved when I talked to them about marriage. Some dreamed of the day they, too, would become princesses and others reminisced of the one day when everyone treated them as princesses. I was real, though. I smiled and had the fairy tale Prince by my side. He worked long hours at the Palace. It's hard to be a monarch these days. It didn't bother me much, but I did feel that I had to go through everything on my own. Not the chores, heavens no! We did have domestic help. And then I got pregnant. And he was sweet. My body would get rounder and rounder by the day. I felt strange. That was supposed to be the happiest time of my life. But it wasn't. I couldn't move, I couldn't sleep, I was chronically tired and overemotional. Then the child arrived. The picture of the Royal Family was complete. Yet everything I did, I did wrong. Everything seemed unnecessary to him. He thought that French classes, ballet classes, piano classes, were all a waste of money. I should concentrate only on the child, he said. He thought I was wasting my time with painting and literature... "When will you get serious?" he used to ask. Nothing pleased him. Not even my appearance agreed with my position any more. Do not eat this, do not do that, so tiring. Feeling needy, I even tried my godmother's magic tricks. Nothing worked, alas. Thankfully the fairy tale ended with the wedding, and with "they lived happily ever after." What a shame it would have been if it hadn't...

I am thinking of writing a book for single parents. I got the title, too. "How you can live happily ever after ignoring all others."
 I think I'll be using Cinderella's story, too.
 I can't afford publishing it, so I may have to settle for an e-book. It won't be easy, but it's well worth the effort.
 There is work, though (of course I work overtime and don't get paid extra.) Then there is my mother (she does help with the child, but she constantly invents new trouble for me.) I'll need to make time... I need to drop by the doctor's office, too... Something about tweaking my medication...

I am thankful for my godmother, she helps with the child and she occasionally saves me from reality.

Tigers “I”

TIGER was so lonely in the zoo. It was difficult, after all, to be a rare species.

Everyone admired him for his beautiful orange fur and black stripes. Bengal tiger, they said, but he had never been to Bengal.

All he ever dreamed of was having a best friend.

He used to have friends but not a BEST friend.

Visitors came and went, but no one stayed. Even the person who fed him left immediately after providing him with his food.

TIGER couldn't figure out why everyone disappeared so fast.

He was polite and nice, saying hello to everyone.

Visitors were scared off and ran away really fast.

TIGER's “I” became so small. He felt that no one liked him. No one could be his friend in the whole world.

He tried to stretch it back into a capital “I”, but it got so tied up he became a TieGER. No one ever heard of a TieGER before. Everyone rushed to visit.

TieGER had many visitors, but no friends. TieGER became more and more sad.

His eyes became more and more sad. Sad TieGER didn't feel like eating, didn't feel like sleeping, didn't feel like playing around in his park. He stayed in his bed, resting, no energy left in him whatsoever. People couldn't find a tiger, or a tieger in the zoo. They were looking and looking and, eventually, stopped coming. He was finally left alone in his misery.

TIGER's “I” became so small and his eyes became so heavy that he fell asleep.

He was not a proud TIGER any more. He was a T--ger with sad eyes. It was better they remained closed. He couldn't face anyone, so he 'd rather stay in his bed and sleep.

“Bleat”, he heard, one day.

T--ger thought he'd been dreaming.

“Bleaaaat”, he heard again.

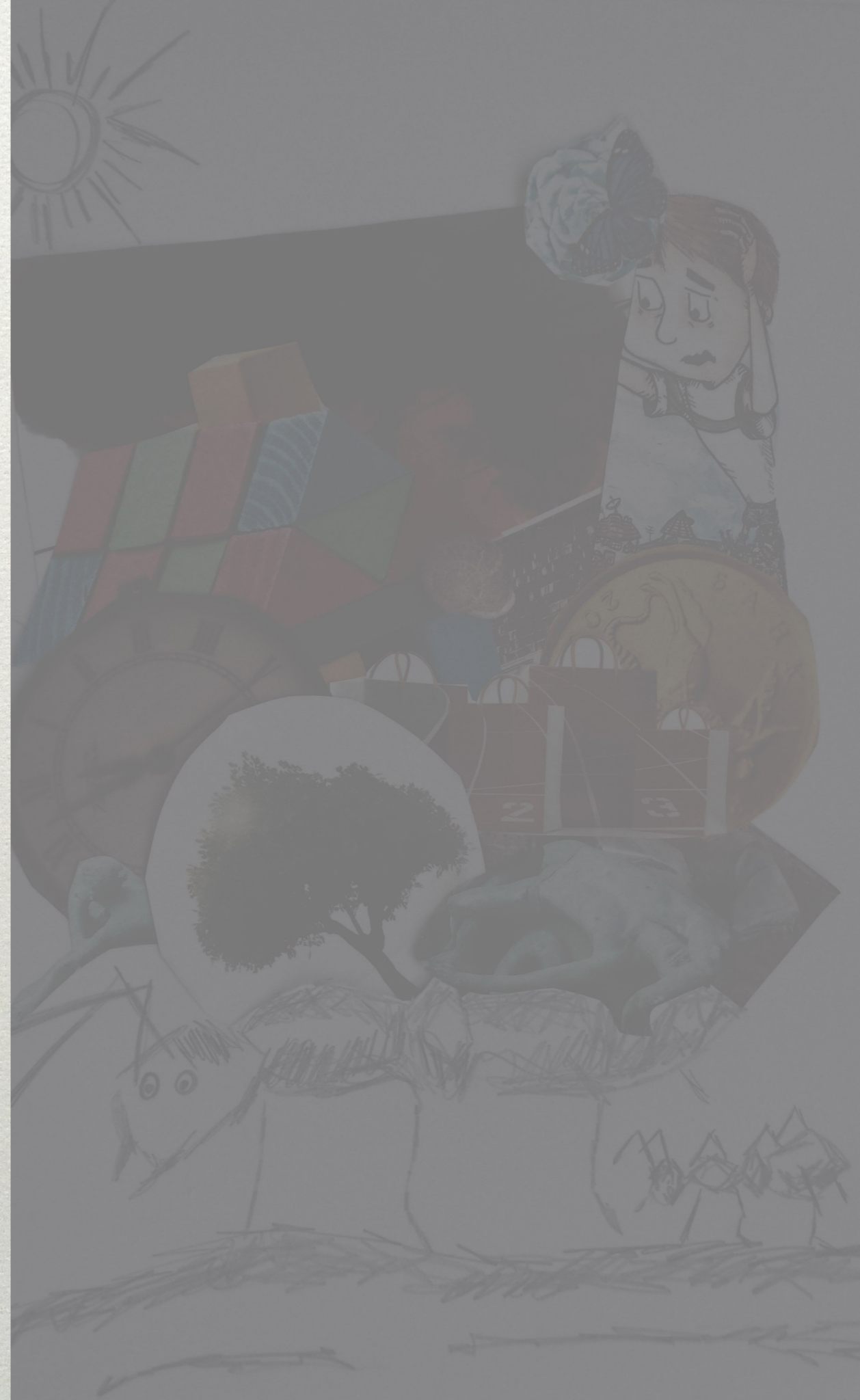
“Strange,” he said, talking to himself. “I thought no one wanted to talk to me.”

His eyes opened so wide that he became a Tiger again. He looked outside. He couldn't believe his eyes. He rubbed his eyes with his paws so much that they became really shiny Tiger's Eyes.

It was a goat.

Goat seemed so happy and playful.

Tiger was hesitant but decided to say hi anyway and wait and see what happened.



"Hi," he whispered.

The goat couldn't hear him.

"Goat doesn't like me," he thought, and his eyes became moist.

Tiger stayed in his bed and tried to ignore his visitor. Goat would eventually become bored and leave, he thought.

Goat was exploring the park he was put in. He couldn't figure out why they left him there. No other goats, not too much grass; it was so quiet.

He jumped around and rolled and played in the field until he got tired.

It is fun to play on your own, but it is better when you play with others, he thought.

Goat started looking for friends.

No one seemed to be around. He found a fly, but it was difficult to play with her. Fly flew around and sat on his back, but besides that, they couldn't find any interesting games to play.

He then discovered a worm. Worm couldn't fly. He could hide in the earth.

Hide-and-seek can be fun, he thought.

Worm hid, Goat found him, so it was the Goat's turn to hide.

He looked around and saw some trees. I will hide there; the worm will never find me.

Running towards the trees, the goat tripped. He rolled and rolled and accidentally fell on the tiger's bed.

"Oh! I am so sorry," he said. I didn't mean to wake you.

"Who is this?" thought the tiger. "My eyes are open. Am I daydreaming?"

"Would you like to play with me? Playing with flies and worms can be a bit unfair, I feel. I cannot fly, so playing with a fly is so boring. I love hide-and-seek, but it'll take ages for Worm to find me, being that he's moving at such a slow pace.

Would you like to play with me?"

Tiger opened his eyes so wide that his I became a capital again.

He was very cautious with his new friend, as he was afraid Goat would fail him. He had never had goats as friends before. He only had goats for food...

He agreed to play.

They ran around, chasing each other, they rolled on the ground, hid behind the trees, told each other stories and laughed so hard.

It felt like they had known each other forever.

Tiger started hoping he had found a friend. Maybe even a best friend.

Goat went for a sleepover and spent the night watching the stars and telling scary stories about wolves and humans.

Tiger was finally happy after a long, long time.

Visitors found out about the tiger-goat friendship and couldn't understand how a tiger could make friends with a goat. For them it felt like making friends with cheese. They could say 'cheese' and smile but couldn't think of anything else besides eating it when looking at it in a plate in the fridge.

The friendship made the world news. Visitors flew from around the country to see the tiger who made friends with his food. It was so annoying referring to his new friend - dare he say *best* friend - as food.

Tiger had never thought of eating Goat. Not *this* goat, at least.

Visitors fled the park and cameras started recording their every move.

It was quite annoying becoming a celebrity.

The park became so noisy they couldn't find any peace and quiet anymore.

However, they were happy. They played and played during daylight and found some time to rest when the park was closed, just looking at the stars in the evening.

Tiger didn't mind sharing his bed and decided to sleep behind the trees instead. After all, tigers don't need beds to sleep in - they are like small children, they can sleep anywhere.

Goat enjoyed his time at the park but was still looking for new things to do, new games to play.

Fly didn't sit on his back anymore, and Worm was still looking to find him.

Two minds are better than one, so he decided to wake Tiger up so they could think of new games together.

Tiger couldn't hear him calling, so Goat decided to use his horns. He poked him with his horns and pushed him with his legs to wake up.

Tiger was still asleep.

Goat couldn't wait any longer. He decided to wake Tiger up no matter what. He poked Tiger once more and pulled his legs while sleeping.

Tiger woke up and couldn't understand why Goat was attacking him.

He was still half asleep but so angry.

He grabbed the goat, shook him like a kitten and threw him away.

He didn't mean to hurt his friend and couldn't understand why Goat had been so mean to him. He felt so betrayed. After all, he did believe he had finally found his best friend.

Tigers Eyes version

Tiger's heart became hard. Trust left him wholly. He wanted to find Goat and apologize but, at the same time, ask Goat why he had been so mean to him.

Goat disappeared. Tiger assumed Goat didn't want to speak to him.

There was nothing he could do about it.

He went back to his bed and stayed sad for a while.

At long last, Tiger decided to nurture himself. He needed to find his ego again.

His I became bigger and stronger. It felt like iron.

He kept looking for his friend. He never had the chance to talk things through. He needed to hear Goat's version of the story.

Tlger asked the fly if she has seen Goat.

Fly said the worm had finally found him. Goat had been transferred to a new home in the park after the fight. The humans decided it was more profitable to exhibit Goat rather than treat him as food for Tlger.

Tlger sent a message to his friend through Fly, who could fly.

They needed to find a way to talk. It was difficult.

Fly decided to help them by transferring their messages.

Goat explained he missed playing and joking with Tiger. Fly misheard and thought that Goat wanted to play a joke on Tlger. Fly explained the situation to Tlger. Tlger got upset.

Tlger and Goat finally met again after years. The humans decided to put them once more in the same park. Tlger insisted on having the same discussion in person. He needed to hear it from Goat's own mouth that Goat had been nothing but a joke.

Tlger was ready to listen. Goat's version of the story shocked him.

What a waste of so much time, thinking his friend had betrayed him!

They forgave each other and became friends again. Tlger and Goat even forgot they had ever had a misunderstanding in the first place. They lived happily ever after.

Tiger's eyes shined and shined, until they became precious stones.

Some people say they can see the two friends playing around the park when looking through them...



Tigers Iron Heart Version

Tiger's heart became hard. Trust left him wholly. He wanted to find Goat and apologize but, at the same time, ask Goat why he had been so mean to him.

Goat disappeared. Tiger assumed Goat didn't want to speak to him. There was nothing he could do about it.

He went back to his bed and stayed sad for a while.

Tiger nurtured himself. He needed to find his ego again.

His I became bigger and stronger. It felt like iron.

He never saw Goat again. He never had the chance to talk things through.

When he died, his heart was found. It was hidden under layers and layers of iron.

Tiger's I they called it. It was hard but shiny. When you laid eyes on it you could see into the Tiger's heart, just like looking through a friend's eyes.

Some people said they could see a lonely Goat calling out to his friend to play.

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Η συλλογή **Παραμύθια για Αηγλύκους** δημιουργήθηκε στα πλαίσια του εκπαιδευτικού προγράμματος «Δημιουργική Γραφή» του VERAMàND ACàDEMY, με τη Μαρία Α. Ιωάννου, τον Χρίστο Λ. Κρασίδη και εκλεκτούς συνεργάτες.

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Το «Παραμύθι για ενηλίκους» παρουσιάστηκε στις 17 Ιουλίου 2015, στη Λεμεσό, στην παράσταση «Δεν υπόσχομαι πως θα γυρίσω». Οι εκδοχές του «Πρωινό Hangover», «Το τηλεφώνημα του Πάρμαν», «Λιτό» και «Ένα πόδι αφηγείται την ιστορία του» αποτελούν αποτελούν ψηφιακό μέρος της λογοτεχνικής αυτής παράστασης. Η φωνή στο «Πρωινό Hangover» ανήκει στον Χρίστο Λ. Κρασίδη και η φωνή στο «Ένα πόδι αφηγείται την ιστορία του» ανήκει στην Έλενα Χειλέτη.

Illustrations of “Red thread tied” and “Your Majesty” belong to AnnaMaria Charalambous*.

The poem “Your Majesty” belongs to Evangelia Socratous.

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Tigers I was originally written in English language.

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*AnnaMaria Charalambous προτιμά το όνομα της να αναγράφεται με τον συγκεκριμένο τρόπο.



a few words about the writer

Persephoni is a fine artist, an educator and an art therapist who lives and works in Limassol. She explores creative writing from a contemporary arts perspective. Her creative expression includes play on words, thoughts, meanings, images and feelings. She shares a passion in multiple readings, dialects, research, humour, and the unexpected.



[back cover]

Even we grown-ups believe we have grown up.
Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?
No, it's not adult content,
don't look at me like that...
It's only a game,
a game of words,
a game of thoughts.
You don't want to play, do you?
Close your eyes,
take this thread
and unravel the empress's new clothes.
Look in the mirror.
Enquire...
You never know.
It might reply.
As for Little Red Riding Hood,
she now dresses in yellows, and greens and blues
like in Magica's sweet, fully calorific spells.

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