

## **We buy a house.**

(2023\_Nóra & László Hortobágyi)

It's high time - we declare it and we're on the road.

Nono My daughter and I are strolling in a part of the urban green pile once known as Gellért Hill, which is not on any map and bears no resemblance to the usually scraggly and vestigially worn vegetation of Buda. Rocky hillsides, uninhabited areas of neglected and overgrown scrub, occasional neglected weekend cottages, with some larger, sparsely populated and dilapidated brick-built houses.

Remnants of former civic well-being, ancient tree gardens, in some places stone statues, dried up fountains, sometimes of artificial stone.

Nono's grandmother used to live here ever.

Strange, velvety electricity in the air, not a single bird in it, among unfamiliar weeds and Martian thistly flowers, sharp, large sword-winged grasses, in insect-free sterility. Early summer heat, dogs and people nowhere to be seen, a stony, cobbled road winds to and fro a slight incline. The desolation is attractive, but it doesn't tolling bell of propensity for the detailed viewing of an house – by for now.

We come to a high point where the road turns sharply but sharply to the right, and a more dilapidated and neglected, dense, tree-lined ruin stretches out long and deserted. Rounding the corner are two huge green-painted gate wings made of iron plates with large rivets, then a tin tank mounted on a rusting tricycle with red minium painted off, standing beside the stone wall, shiny red flesh-like gravy running down its sides, the tank half full of sibilant, irregularly blinking human eyes of various colours.

One gate leaf is half open.

My daughter peeks in through the gate, I step up to her and together we push in the sash.

It's a typical barren, rural shanty town, trampled earth, not a vegetable to be seen, a concrete tub of soaking water poured onto bricks just outside the gate, gold coins glistening in it, muddy, dripping mud around it. To the left is an old, shabby house, the rickety door closed, but Nono curiously enters and disappears into the gloom.

On the right is the start of a huge granary with cross-beam wooden doors, the whole monstrosity pressing into the loess wall behind it. One door leaf is half-open, a pulsing stream of inexplicable odour wafts out of the darkness.

I'll slip in sideways through the gap a vast space in half-dimmish and in front of me the curved relief of a huge spherical surface leaning down into the darkness. It's like when you look at a diagram of the Earth's iron core and cut out a sector of the planet from a sphere.

I start walking downhill, the initially firmer black earth getting softer and muddier, the completely unfamiliar smell getting stronger and warmer. As I descend, the light fades and the frosty soil becomes like ice cream thinner but not liquid. The downward scuech is getting louder as the arc of space narrows. The light finally goes out completely and I crash into a mud wall and something else tens of metres in the depths of the spherical arc.

The smell is getting more intense, the heat more stifling.

I feel out little pupa-case nodules on the lumpy wall, which twitch and run up my arm, sprawl over my body and push into the openings of my ears, nose and mouth. A cobweb slowly tightens in my throat, but I try to chew and spit out wriggling pupae, then with a jerk I spanning on to the left. I bump into a slow-moving, oily, hot human body, it several twitches at my groping, its arms silently wrapped around me, but it is not aggressive. As an octopus, it does not stick, it lets me go smackeroo when I pull, so I wade further to the left sloppy. Rows of seated and writhing human bodies line up against the wall, sinking waist-deep in this oily, heavily perfumed mud.

After the third or fourth body, the light of a knee-high porthole slitflickers on the wall, full of cobwebbed goo, which I dredge out to see in the greenish phosphorescent light a snow-white-skinned and haired extra terrestrial hermaphrodite sleeping soundly on the lawn-oil of a flowery grove, with a tear-stained face in the beautiful garden of the Hesperides. The underwater landscape is a quivering, homogeneous, pale greenish humid landscape, like a wrong mobile phone shot, with flat, stingray-like clock phosphorgreen spacecraft floating in the foiled of a gothic-secession kelp covered ruin church, with hoofed aliens moving between.

There is monstrously beautiful music, played on a stringed instrument never heard before.

At my scrape, the alien's opal eye pops open, its head splits in two and its hot phosphorescent snow-white encephalon slap towards me in a beam. I stomp the head of one of the writhing bodies sitting next to the light-emitting porthole into the opening and throw myself backwards.

Nothing can be seen anymore, again a blanket of darkness, only the rhythmic movement of bodies evoked soft sludge pops.

Something from the other side thumps against the wall with monstrous force, a few bodies tumble forward in the oily mud. The rising, bursting bubbles pump more and more smellgas into the air. I reach the last writhing body in the line, which shatters at my touch, drooping and disintegrates in the sea of black mud in which my feet collide with the remains of former bones.

Something with tremendous force from the other side cracks the wall again.

My clogged, inwardly gagging mouth is unable to scream when I attempt an upward exit along the left wall.

It's almost impossible to move, I slide back again and again, there's nothing to hold on to, my grinding feet only dilute the medium – unnecessarily. I paddle the bones and body remains with my hands, slowly making my way upwards, forming little terraces.

Looming twilight, then the increasingly sharp contours of the curved arc indicate the direction of exit. The mud is getting harder and harder, the waist-deep grip is becoming more and more trying, but the light is gaining momentum.

The heartbeat thumps deepen, the entire mud hemisphere shakes periodically, increasingly visible as human and animal limbs, blue-gold organpipes and glistening elephant goads ankus bob up and down its peristaltically moving surface. I'm already slipping out of the hardening medium, crawling upwards towards the light, the drying plasters of human flesh sludge falling off me. Underneath, my skin is peacock feather color, my hands and arms are covered with keep dropping warty cacti, with blinking, iridescent eyes, my blood dripping from my tiny wounds is predator-green here and there, but everything is fading, the transition of existence is beginning to normalize.

I reach the top of the slope, stand up, the granary door is still open, I walk out.

From previously ominous, but familiar muted sunlight and atmosphere.

Nono !!! - I shout loudly.

Concrete tub unchanged, waterlogged ground around it, gold coins still glistening inside. Absolutely deafening silence.

Nono !!! - I howl, and the answer comes:

I'm coming ! - and my daughter appears ten years older.

I don't say anything, because I'm happy for him, I hook on her, we walk out the green, crackling metal door and and we go on to watch an other house.



