

# THE LITTLE REVIEW

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PAPER

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## SHOLEM ASCH FRIENDS

## I.

Stefan's father and Jankiel's father live in the same house. Jankiel and Stefan grew up under one roof. In Stefan's company, Jankiel felt he was with his brother. Jankiel was born a Jew and Stefan a Christian.

It so happened one day that Jankiel's father told him about what the future would be like: that the Messiah would come and lead all the Jews with great fervor to Zion.

That is when Jankiel asked in astonishment:

"Will Stefan go with us to Zion?"

"No, dear boy," replied his father, "Stefan will not come with us, because he's a Christian."

These words filled Jankiel with sorrow and grief.

"What does it matter that he is a Christian," Jankiel thought, "why shouldn't he ascend with us to Zion?"

From then on, whenever Jankiel met Stefan, he looked at him with great pity.

"Come on Jankiel, let's play horse," says Stefan and pulls Jankiel behind him.

And Jankiel continues to look at Stefan with deep sadness.

"Do you know, Stefan, that you will not go with us to Zion when the Messiah comes?" says Jankiel, partly in broken Polish and partly in Yiddish, helping himself with his hands.

Stefan looks at Jankiel with astonishment. A timid smile appears on his lips. He resumes pulling Jankiel by his clothes and calls out:

"Gee, gee, gee! ..."

"Aren't you worried?" Jankiel asks Stefan.

"Gee, gee! ...," Stefan shouts out in a stronger voice and beats Jankiel with the whip he is holding.

Many days passed this way.

## II.

It is a summertime Friday evening. The sun has not yet gone down. Candles in silver candlesticks burn on a table covered with a white tablecloth. At the table, clad in festive attire, are Jankiel and his entire family. His father stands at the top reciting kiddush. His mother sits to his side and portions out the fish to one after another. Jankiel looks around, suddenly walks up to the window and looks out into the yard. He sees Stefan standing next to a wagon: dressed in his everyday dusty clothes. His face is grimy all over, and he holds a piece of brown bread in his hand as on any other day. Whereas here at home, everything is so clean and sacred. Jankiel takes pity on Stefan:

"He has no Sabbaths or feasts," Jankiel thinks to himself.

Jankiel looks at his friend through the window and says to himself:

"I have been sinning against him."

That is when he decides to fix everything.

What's most important though, Jankiel thinks, "is not to divulge that secret to anyone."

## III.

No one knows how it happened. One day Jankiel began speaking to Stefan in Yiddish and Stefan understood him, and Stefan spoke back to him in Polish, and Jankiel understood him too.

From then on, they could communicate better.

Jankiel found out that decent people of other faiths could also take part in the return to Zion. And so he decided to educate his friend to become a decent man: that he could go to Zion with others. Jankiel loved dearly this friend, who was a faithful friend to him.

"I'll teach Stefan the Gemara," Jankiel thought. "Let him also learn our holy faith and take part in the return to Zion."

On one occasion Jankiel asks in Yiddish: "Stefan, do you want to learn the Gemara?"

"What are you talking about?" Stefan asks back.

"Do you want to know what my father taught me?"

"Yeah," Stefan replies.

"Then listen: two men are holding one tallit. One says that it all belongs to him and the other that it all belongs to him. So the ruling is to divide up the tallit."

"What are you talking about?" Stefan asks.

"You jackass," Jankiel says and points his finger the way he had seen his rebbe do, "you've not learned the 'two holding a tallit'? Is there even one boy who would not know that?"

"Once more then: two men are holding one tallit. One..."

"Forget it. Come with me, I'll show you how you catch a bird with bricks. Listen now: you place four bricks together to form a sort of a box. You also put a brick atop, leaving a small hole and you tie a thin piece of string to it. You throw bread crumbs through the hole. When a bird goes in to pick the crumbs and moves the string, the top brick will fall in and the bird gets trapped inside."

"And what if the brick kills the bird?" asks Jankiel with pity.

"And so what if it gets killed," Stefan replies.

"But the bird did not sin, why should it be killed?"

"Don't you get it? As the bird moves the string, the brick..."

"Forget it," Jankiel says, and heads home.

Stefan is left alone.

Translated by A. M. from Tarbut

## CHILDREN IN THE STREETS

### Images

## I.

The street is jam-packed. People cluster around something or someone and deliberate loudly. Even a cop came up. I managed to push my way through the throng to the wrongdoer. This was a disheveled little boy. He wept profusely, covering his eyes with his dirty fists. What the purpose of that procedure was I do not know. Did he want to cover his eyes so as not to look at the people surrounding him, or did he want to smear his sincere tears all over his less-than-clean face?

The Varsovians are curious. The child was exposed to a barrage of questions: who was he and why was he crying?

The boy stood fidgeting:

"Boohoo, I've lost my mom!"

"And what is your name?"

"Mojszele... Boohoo, where is my mom?"

I understood why he was crying. He strayed away from his mom and now couldn't find her.

Warsaw is merciful. Everyone pitched in with their word of consolation, someone handed him a piece of caramel candy, another offered to find the lost mom. But the tyke would not stop crying. He did not respond to candy and even less so to comforting words. He called out to his mom and cried.

A tiny girl of about the same age as him stepped out of the crowd. She approached him and took him by the hand.

"Don't cry, Mojszele, come, we'll play together!"

He opened one eye first, then the other one, he made another attempt at shedding some more tears, but suddenly his face lit up with a smile, in a beautiful contrast with the huge glassy droplets in his eyes.

I dropped my gaze. She was such a small girl, yet she achieved so much more than all those adults!

## II.

It was raining, the fine, needle-sharp droplets cutting across my face. I walked down the street immersed

in my thoughts. Instinctively, I came to a halt at a confectionery storefront. It was not so much the delicacies behind the shop window that drew me, but rather what I noticed in front of it. An impossibly dirty small boy stood there as if glued to the wet glass. His black eyes devoured various biscuits, cakes, donuts.

Suddenly, a thought hit me:

"Listen, punk, would you like to eat some of these cakes?"

He looked at me as if at a madman.

"I asked if you would like to eat them?"

He put a finger in his mouth, his eyes went ablaze.

"Sure, but I have no money."

I took him by the hand and led him inside. I had some money with me and decided to spend it.

"Madam, give this tyke all the cakes he can eat, whatever he chooses! I'm paying!"

I put the money on the counter.

"I'm so happy," he whispered.

"Really? You're happy? Then go on and eat, only make sure this happiness doesn't make you sick!"

Even as I stepped out into the street, I could see through the glazed door how greedy he devoured one cake after another.

I smiled to myself. At least one human being was happy at this moment!

Half an hour later, I returned. I found him in the very same place as before. He stood there bending over and cried.

"What's happened to you?"

I looked down and understood it all. It was nothing special. He just puked.

I laughed out loud:

"And didn't tell you happiness could make you sick?"

I walked away angry. Even he, such a lad, overdosed on happiness; and it made him sick!

## III.

They are on their way to the cheder: Abramek in front – he is a rich man, the holder of a penny – followed by

Dawidek. They approach a stall that sells candy.

"Dawidek, what should I buy? A piece of hard candy, a caramel or maybe sunflower seeds?"

"Buy... buy hard candy."

"What're you standing here for? Go your way!"

For this lady proprietor, such guests are unwelcome. They block access for the real customers.

"I have a grosz!"

"If you do, give it here!"

An exchange takes place. Abramek gives up the grosz (which a moment later gets mixed up with other copper coins) and receives a piece of pink hard candy in a wrapper.

Dawidek looks on with envy, drooling.

"Let me have one lick..."

"And... you won't bite off a piece?"

The kid raised two fingers in a solemn oath.

"Let me... I won't bite it off!"

"Then, here you are!"

He carefully extends the treasure to the other's tongue and backs it up immediately.

A moment later, Dawidek pesters again:

"Abramek..."

"What?"

This "what" sounds a bit muffled; it's difficult to talk while you're sucking on a piece of candy.

"Once more, just one more time, this tiny lick..."

And his eyes light up.

He shows on the tip of his finger how much he's going to take and it somehow works on Abramek and he offers his friend one more lick. But he suddenly screams and withdraws his hand rapidly.

"Ouch... you wanted to bite it off, you... You bit my finger."

There are tears in his eyes, but joy fills his heart. His finger has been bitten, but the candy remains intact. He will refuse the next request for a lick!

Szalom Wajsbrod

## FROM THE WORLD OF PHILATELY

THE HISTORY OF MAILBOXES Before the mailbox conquered the world, it went through various stages of development in its form and function.

These days, even the smallest village will have at least one mailbox, while in larger cities you will find them hanging at almost every street corner. It was not always that way though.

It could not be established when or where exactly the mailbox appeared for the first time as a separate postal service fixture.

Apparently, in the 16th century, the churches of the Italian city of Florence provided wooden wall boxes with slots for depositing letters. These boxes were referred to as "tamburi" and they served a very specific purpose, namely, they were intended for transfer of anonymous reports warning the city governors against any plots of riots or assassinations.

Misused, these "tamburi" ultimately disappeared.

The postal service took over this

idea for its own purposes, and here begins the story of the mailbox.

However, in the 16th century letter writing was still a rare activity, and the letter writer would usually dispatch their letter through a special messenger.

Even at the end of the 18th century, the movement of correspondence was still very weak. In Vienna, for example, there were no mailboxes at all; letters were collected by special

CONTINUED ON P. 4

ANERI

# A GRAPHOMANIA-AFFECTED CLASSMATE

Various miracles have happened in the world and this holy land has spawned various maniacs. Once, I even encountered a mania maniac; in other words, a person whose favorite pastime is to detect and discover the most diverse kinds of manias of his neighbors. Let me leave that type alone though. That's because they are such an original and rare creature (doesn't even appear to have a Latin name), they would guess readily we were talking about them. They would beat me to a pulp, and you will agree there'd be no pleasure in that. I prefer then to describe one of my likable graphomania-affected school friends, as that is a more commonly encountered type. Thus, if ever confronted, I can always make an innocent face and declare I was actually not describing Jadzia but rather Marysia, or that I just made it all up.

I'll start with a brief description. This friend's name is – let's suppose – Hela. But because this is a person with a deeply poetic and lyrically-romantic disposition, somehow, she has renamed herself Liliana, or something to that effect, as whenever she writes letters, or rather the pink cologne scented little notes she sends to one dreamy idiot, poste restante, she always sweetly signs herself as "Lila." That specific idiot's name is Pietrek, but since that's not a proper name for romance, Lili renames him Petronius for her purposes, so that when she goes out to the balcony and gazes at the sky, she can sigh: "Oh, Petrus, my love!"

And then... then she writes a romance and here begins the phenomenal career of a graphomaniac...

\* \* \*  
Here is a math lesson: functions, lines, zigzags, digits, numbers... numbers... numbers, our friend sighs.

"Ah, how prosaic! What is mathematics worth compared to eternity? Well, actually, not so much eternity as love..."

My friend's heart swells. She feels she can create a novel that no ears have heard or eyes have seen yet. (That's right!)

And she writes. Describes the tragic history of young heroes. Petrus is naturally the main character. The text continually reiterates such words and phrases as "champagne life" (and why not "cherry brandy," for that matter?), "boarding-school girl," "cute lass" and "te deum laudamus," and is, all in all, an idiotically stupid piece of nonsense, absolutely not worth discussing at any length. Naturally, the outcomes of all this include F's, not just in math but in all the subjects, followed by what is commonly called a flop, streams of tears from the eyes that "twinkle like two stars," plus the crowning achievement in the form of a new and fascinating novel and a poignantly ridiculous letter to the dreamy student at poste restante, which read as follows:

"At eight o'clock tonight, I will hurl myself off Kierbedzia Bridge, at the fifth pillar from the right bank of the river on the left side of the bridge. I cannot reveal to you the reason for which I chose to deprive myself of life, of being able to appreciate birds, flowers and the sun. May our beloved Vistula devour my poor body. Farewell.

Yours, even beyond death,  
LILI

Naturally, "Petrus" arrives at 8 p.m. at the agreed place and the tragedy ends in a walk "in the moonlight," and that stroll serves as the subject of a new novel.

We are having fun with it: at one of the boring lessons, we can oblige the author and deride the "champagne school life" and similar expressions of a girl who is not sentimental, but affects sentimentality, because she believes it agrees with her. When the class will not share her sentimental notions, she stands at the pulpit, takes on a theatrical pose she had previously studied at the mirror and states in a pathos-filled voice:

"Ah, you are incapable of understanding me! Not all are given a poetic soul!"

Subsequently, she pours out her deep-seated regrets to pages of her diary. This diary, by the way, is also a literary gem. I always thought that I was the sentimental goose (though some say I am a she-goat), but I learned that there are types even more sentimental than I, who produce pieces so overcrowded with daybreaks and sunsets, blossom fragrances and the hiss of wind in fir trees, that human heart gets mawkish momentarily.

Sometimes, Lili has an argument with her Petronius. Some tears drip on paper as a fresh product of rapture and another letter to a relationship advice column in some magazine is written. The letter gets signed. The tragedy deepens further as the letter falls into the hands of the teacher, who initiates the relevant steps, i.e., calls in the parents, who solemnly swear to throw every one of their daughter's suitors down the stairs and to bat him over the head with a broom, for good measure. What a mundane end to such poetic drama! ■

FROM A CYCLE ENTITLED "TO THAT WHICH IS UNKNOWN"

## SHADOW

I know you not, oh shadow fine, conjured by light  
Who smears on walls its own dark signs.  
I know you not, and know not why you write  
And sketch me in odd streaks and broken lines.

When I rise so rise you – trace my step,  
Lie coal black, long and slim, on the floors.  
Me you stalk, give no peace, chill my pep.  
As you draft eerie lines, my contours.

A human head, blown and grim, the ceiling haunts.  
Round it now springs a creepy lion's mane,  
Shrunken next on your whim, me it taunts.  
Spiting you – mock you may – I stay sane.

Where's your home, shadow ghost, I may find the strength I need  
To part ways – to the door thou to lead!  
And that you after me do not stray to the sun I would glad point your way,  
and erase thereby my manic mark.

That is the whole thing that I do not know your home  
And that you do not offend when I say that obtrusive  
And I do not know when, when you disappear cover,  
Wrapping a good night's face in some nasty grimace.

I do not know how your name companion faithful,  
Will you always be, by the shadow of being, behind me will you wander?  
And then change into a smudge, into a dark black belt,  
And slowly... quietly... in the morning fog to sink?...

Oh say it! Speak to me... once... one word.  
After all, we know each other so long and we survived so much...  
Answer me like a man, this ordinary human speech.  
Will I still be together by my life?

You're still – I know – quiet shadow,  
Always... always silent and only once, sometimes  
On a mat white wall, a crooked twist  
He paints a shapeless, blackish smudge.

Halina F.

## AN UNEXPECTED EFFECT

"Children," says the teacher, "you have to be extra careful now. One time it's cold and the next it's warm, it's a dangerous time of the year. I knew one boy who had a runny nose during a thaw, the snow

fell again and he went out with his sled and fell into the snow. He caught a cold; then he got pneumonia and died..."

The students listen in silence. A moment later though, a voice comes from the back benches:

"Where is his sled now, Professor?" ■

NORRIS

# IN THE MOUNTAINS

## A Summer Romance with Adventures

In the summer, we went on many trips. We walked the Chornohora and Gorgany mountain ranges back and forth, we visited their various beautiful regions and climbed several of the summits, including Hoverla, Turkul, Velika Marishevska, Khomiak, Syniak, Gorgan, Dovbushanka, Syvulya and Pip Ivan.

Especially the trip to Syvulya etched itself into our memory. It started in an ordinary way. When we came out of the forest through which our patch ran, we began searching for some accommodation.

At the foot of Syvulya, there is a place people refer to as the "Factory." That's where we decided to spend the night, with the thought that we would get up at six the next morning and be able to reach the summit by noon.

The plan was a good one. Unfortunately, we could not find the factory. A Hutsul we encountered was ready to take us to it, but demanded 5 zloty.

"That's too much," we decided and went in search of accommodation in one of the coliba huts.

It was already 7 p.m. when we came upon a coliba and lit a fire in the clearing in front of it. The host was not there. When he arrived, it turned out he was the same Hutsul who demanded 5 zloty for pointing us to the factory.

We bought milk from him and began scrambling into the coliba, in which he hastily started a fire.

No coliba is particularly luxurious, but that one was perhaps the height of confinement and stuffiness. We couldn't fit more than ten of us in it, and so another five of us found room in a second, smaller coliba, about 200 feet away from the first one, while the rest of the group – Danek and Lolek included – decided to spend the night outdoors by the fire. There were about ten of them there. They set up a watch by the fire, and we all fell soundly asleep.

I lay in the coliba on a blanket, with another blanket pulled almost up to my eyes, this to protect myself from the smoke. On trips like this, I learned

to sleep on the hardest of beds, and so I quickly fell asleep.

I was suddenly awakened from my first sleep by a cry:

"Boys, get up!"

I jumped up, still half asleep. All those sleeping outdoors pressed themselves into the coliba, with their blankets and backpacks. The guide stood in the doorway and fired a revolver into the air twice.

"What happened?" we kept asking one another.

No one had the answer. We were given commands:

"Collect all your stuff in one place. Get dressed!"

Suddenly, Lolek said:

"You know what, I think I'm hurt."

Only then did I notice it as he lifted a handkerchief from his forehead.

We had one medical student in the party. She took care of Lolek: washed clean his forehead, bandaged it and laid him down comfortably in the coliba, leaving him in the care of two girls, who at the same time watched over our things.

From snippets of the conversations I heard, I put together a view of what just happened. Lolek began his watch duty at around 11 p.m. He sat by the fire and... fell asleep while on duty. He only woke up when a rock hit him in the head. He jumped up, woke everybody up and made them take refuge in the coliba.

"Are you sure the wound was made by a rock?" we asked the doctor in the making. "Couldn't it be a bullet wound?"

"I think it's from a rock."

"How can you tell?"

"If it were a revolver bullet, he would have been dead now. Temple area wounds are fatal."

Meanwhile, there was no calm in the coliba. Rocks kept pounding over its wooden walls, the roar was that of thunder.

The tour guide gave a few more shots. He must have remembered something suddenly because he turned in our direction and called out:

"Search this Hutsul!"

The Hutsul, who trembled with fear like an aspen leaf, obediently allowed himself to be frisked, this without getting up from his bed.

"He has no firearm on him."

"Move your feet away from the fire!" the tour guide shouted, and when the Hutsul tucked his legs, he said to us in German: "Watch that he not use his feet to put out the fire. He may be in collusion with assailants."

The roar of the rocks ceased, but the danger remained imminent. We were afraid the robbers would sneak up inaudibly from the back of the coliba, attack us and seize our backpacks and blankets.

At the tour guide's command, we searched the entire coliba and armed ourselves in all we found there: saws, iron rods, sharp stones, bottles broken at the neck, canes, etc. We took out the best blankets outside the coliba and posted ourselves in ambush positions around the hut. A handful of girls and boys remained inside; they guarded our belongings and the wounded Lolek, and "illuminated" the Hutsul with flashlight, to make sure he didn't do anything uncalled for. Initially, the Hutsul was very irritated, but finally fell asleep calmly.

The tour guide sat himself at the hut door and received reports as he called us by our names.

Initially it sounded like this:

"Janek!"

"All good."

"Norris."

"No one here."

"Danek!"

"All right."

Later on, when danger did not materialize, our moods improved. The reports went like this:

"Janek!"

"They're coming."

"Who?"

"Two sheep."

"You should get it in the smacker for such answers," the tour guide responded irritated.

"Norris!"

"One ram just sneezed."

# STARS AND A SPIDER'S WEB

Measuring the distances between stars is one of the most difficult tasks because it requires skill, patience and precision.

While it is difficult to measure these distances, it is equally difficult to imagine them for an average person, who had so far been used to measuring only terrestrial distances. For example, what do we make of the scholarly information that the distance between the Sun and Earth is 149,500,000 km. The scholars also use another measure they refer to as "light-years." They claim, for example, that Proxima Centauri, the star nearest to us, is 3.6 light-years away.

What does that measure mean?

Well, the fastest speed known in the universe is the speed of light. It is around 300,000 kilometers per second, which is 18 million kilometers per minute. For comparison's sake, we should also say that sound, which also travels fast, covers only 1/3 of a kilometer per second. It could thus circle around Earth within 36 hours, while light circles the Earth seven times a second.

That is also why we see the lightning first and only then hear the thunder.

The distance in light seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years refers to the time it takes for a ray of light to travel that distance. In other words, one light minute equals 18 million kilometers.

Imagine then, that one beautiful morning we set out on a journey through the universe in a chariot drawn by the rays of light. We begin the journey at the center of our solar system – from the Sun.

In three and one-third minutes we will have reached Mercury, in six

minutes Venus, in eight and one-third Earth, and after thirteen minutes we will have reached Mars. On our journey we will have further encountered Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and finally, within five hours of the Sun we will have reached Pluto.

This would be the end of our solar system, and we will have begun to wonder who we should visit next.

We might initially assume that Sirius may be the most appropriate one as it shines so brightly, so it must be close by. But we immediately remember that astronomers on Earth told us that the closest to us is Proxima Centauri. We will have resumed our travel in its direction.

We fly one day, one week, one month... with no change in sight. We navigate with the maddening speed of 18 million kilometers per minute. Finally, after 3 years and 7 months, we approach Proxima. It turns out to be a massive radiant sun, very much like our earthly Sun.

The same is true about other stars. They are all suns; some smaller and some larger than ours, and certainly many of them also have planets orbiting around them; nonetheless, we have no information about that.

As it took us 3.6 years to reach Proxima at the speed of light, we say it is 3.6 light-years from Earth.

Astronomical telescopes normally include a grid of thin organic or metal filaments on the eyepiece, placed there to allow for measurement in the course of observation.

For many years, the material used for that purpose was the spider's web, though not that relatively coarse web we see on trees and in the grass, say in the morning, when it glistens with

dew, but rather the thinnest filaments the female spider uses to spin a small cocoon sac in which it protects its eggs. These threads are extremely delicate and thin, and must be mounted with extreme caution and dexterity.

A technician involved in this work once used very sensitive scales to weigh a strictly measured length of such filament and then calculated how much of it would be needed to make a pound. It turned out that the length would have been 40,250 km. – enough to wrap around Earth; ten pounds would yield a thread long enough to reach the Moon.

And how much of this thread would be needed to link us with the Proxima star?

You would need over 450,000 tons! To carry that quantity, you would need a 240-km-long train pulled by 500 powerful locomotives.

Such is the distance to the nearest fixed star, the one closest to our Sun, and one of the many rotating in outer space.

Sirius, the brightest of the stars, glitters from a distance of more than 8 light-years, Vega – 25 light-years, Polaris – 270 light-years, and there are many, many more far behind those.

If some inhabitants of Polaris could observe Earth today, they would presently see what was happening in Poland and Europe 270 years ago, in the year 1663. What an extraordinary perspective for historians! It turns out that the image of our Earth as it was a few hundred years ago did not disappear completely, but is rushing along with rays of light somewhere in outer space, getting farther away from us at a maddening speed of 300,000 kilometers per second. ■

# INTERESTING STUFF

## ANIMAL DREAMS

Do animals sleep like humans?

In other words, do they see any images in their sleep?

And which animals sleep that way?

Scholars have considered such questions for a long time. Their answer is as follows:

It is a long established fact that the sleep of a great number of animals is similar to human sleep, meaning that they also dream dreams. Aristotle stated that very long ago, ancient Roman writers also noted it, and scientists of respective ages and times have been examining it.

It is certain, for example, that dogs have visions and dreams in their sleep. A survey Professor de Sanctis conducted among dog breeders and hunters demonstrated that the pointing breeds experience most dramatic dreams. Domestic dogs have quiet and less vivid dreams. The proof that dogs go through various events in their dreams is that in the state of sleep they move their paws and heads, and their entire bodies shake nervously, and that they also moan, sigh and bark half-heartedly.

Professor Erhard involved his hunting dog in various experiments. He would first keep the dog at home, away from a forested area, for some days. When the dog was asleep – at completion of such a period of detention – Professor Erhard would bring a pine tree branch close to its nose. Immediately, under the influence of the air it inhaled, which was saturated with the scents carried by the branch, the dog exhibited forest related associations: though asleep, it acted as it would when hunting in the woods.

Observations have demonstrated that the ability to dream in dogs is closely correlated with breeds and their habits. Dachshunds or Fox Terriers sleep and dream differently than Great Danes or Dobermans.

Apart from dogs, cats and foxes also undoubtedly dream. What is characteristic is that most dogs dream their image-filled dreams only after midnight, while foxes have them only in the afternoon.

It is hard to say anything decisive about whether all mammals dream and what they dream about. It is known that many mammals have a very light sleep and just as many a deep sleep, but it is difficult to say whether their brains are a seat of fantastic visions.

It is even more difficult to tell what animals dream about. We can guess the dreams of dogs and cats; it is harder to guess at the dreams of a fox.

Perhaps science will reveal that mystery too.

## ON HOW LONG SOME ANIMALS CAN SUBSIST WITHOUT FOOD

Some animals can subsist without food for very long: there are recorded cases of bats and toads discovered alive after being accidentally bricked up several years earlier. Snakes are next in terms of hunger resilience. One boa constrictor would not have any food for twenty-three consecutive months, despite all efforts on the part of its keeper at Jardin des Plantes in Paris. One giant anaconda, in the same Jardin des Plantes, had eaten only 34 times over six years, and thus it needed to eat more or less once every two months. There were times, however, in which it did not touch food over 204 successive days. The musk deer can go without food over ten days in a row, the antelope for twenty, the eagle for twenty-eight, the badger for thirty, and the dog for forty-five days. The horse can subsist on water alone for twenty-five days, and can survive without eating or drinking for seventeen days. Two months of strict fasting make no impression on the crocodile; scorpions can go without food for three months, bears for six, chameleons for eight, and vipers for ten days.

A certain species of the Persian tick is particularly resilient to hunger, and can survive without food for three years.

In one Swiss village, an avalanche came over a pigpen, trapping a porker. Four weeks passed before the pigpen was excavated; the hog survived, but was extremely emaciated; over all that time, it was consuming its own fat.

## WHAT DOES A FALLING MAN EXPERIENCE?

So far, it was assumed that while falling from high elevation a person loses consciousness, unless they die of air pressure caused asphyxiation before reaching the ground. This supposition was proven wrong through the unusually bold attempts made by Private Bourdreau at the Selfridge Airport in America. Brought to the altitude of 1,500 meters by a military airplane, Bourdreau performed a headlong jump with a parachute. In one hand he held a rope for opening the parachute and in the other a timepiece, which he held before his eyes and thus monitored every moment of his journey. Spectators and the airplane pilots witnessed the spectacle with bated breath. Though the wind shook him in all possible directions, Bourdreau fell at a rapid speed. After 30 seconds, Bourdreau pulled the rope to open the parachute – at the altitude of 200 meters – and descended to the ground unobstructed. He declared that he had not lost control of himself for even a moment nor did he have a sense of any imminent danger; he only experienced the whizzing of the air around him. ■

"Danek!"

"Well by now."

"Who is?"

"The ram is."

"Every decent man should be entitled to kill one varmint like you once a year," the tour guide said furiously.

"There was one who said such things and later died of dandruff," we answered in a choir.

We suddenly remembered the five we left in the second coliba.

"Shouldn't we go and get them? Who knows what's happening there," someone suggested.

Two of us went there, but were back in ten minutes. They could not find their way, and they felt they could be ambushed at any moment: every rustle of leaves in the wind and every sneeze of a ram with a cold exacerbated their anxiety.

The night dragged on. Finally, around 3 a.m. we witnessed dawn in the mountains. What a beautiful sight when one side of the horizon lights up suddenly, while the other – obscured by the mountains – is still enveloped in darkness. Only now could we bring our five people out of the other hut.

"How did you sleep?"

"As the knights of Frederick Barbarossa."

"Nobody attacked you?"

"What do you mean nobody? Don't fleas count?"

"Fleas do not count, and fleas are

not robbers either. Did you hear the shots?"

"We sure did!"

"Why did you not come running?"

"What'd you expect, that we get out of beds just because someone felt like cannonading for joy?"

When we told them everything, they barely believed us. The Hutsul, the hut owner, told us that though quite rarely, groups and huts had been robbed.

That is why you always have to carry firearms with you. As a compensation for unfounded mistreatment during the night, the Hutsul received some sausage and we continued our march.

When we reached the foot of Syvulya, the weather was beautiful. We reached the summit in two groups. When one party climbed to the top (no backpacks, just chocolate in their pockets), the other one stayed back, watched over the belongings, had some food and rested.

At 3 p.m. we reached the summit and began our trek back. We returned through the beautiful Salatruck river valley and kept on telling ourselves along the way:

"We'll have so much to tell about back at the camp!"

To our surprise, they wouldn't believe us at the camp, and when we pointed to Lolek's busted head as evidence of truth, the answer was:

"He fell over and smashed his head, and you just added this entire

crime-action-thriller-travel romance to it."

This irritated us to the highest degree. To disbelieve in a perfectly authentic and blood soaked story; that's scandalous!

Our vengeance was original. We began spreading mutually exclusive stories and coming up with fantastic versions of the adventure so that ultimately no one knew what was true or what was false.

"Don't believe in this bullshit Hutsul attack," Danek said. "We smashed Lolek's head deliberately, so we could tell these eerie stories."

"No way," Lolek said. "When I reached the Syvulya summit, a meteorite fell straight on my head, and hence the wound."

"No, here they go," said the tour guide. "He stepped on a tree root with too much force and the tree jumped up, and hit him in the head."

"We were simply playing soccer," said Janek from Lviv. "It's the ball that hit him."

"Actually, it wasn't us who played football," I would begin my story. "The soccer match was played on a clearing in front of the coliba: the cows against the rams. They used rocks for the ball. Lolek stood right behind the goal and got hit in the head at one cow's volley."

"What football?" said Gutek, the one who slept in the other hut and had his own doubts. "When we were

climbing the Syvulya, an avalanche of rocks came down, you know the 'gorgans' that cover all the peaks in the Gorgan range. This was quite dangerous. Lolek saved us all.

He stood on the avalanche path and cried out:

'Stop ye, now! About face! Forward march!'

And the 'gorgians' heeded. Only one of the rocks defied Lolek and hit him in the head. A field court-martial sentenced that rock to be pushed over a precipice. The sentence led to a summary execution."

That is how we managed to convince the entire camp and hopefully you readers as well. And if you did not believe it, then you should know that it was all baloney, and what actually happened was that this giant gorilla in the forest bashed Lolek's skull with a branch and hence the wound. But then, it could also have been other monkeys throwing coconuts down from oaks that hurt him. Got it?

Shortly after this excursion, we returned to Warsaw.

In the title I said "a summer romance with adventures." The reader may ask: "You had adventures, you had the summer, but where is the romance?"

Let me placate you. The title did not lie. There was a romantic thread there too. I just somehow forgot to write about it.

THE END

# CHINESE AND JAPANESE CURIOSITIES

## CHOPSTICKS

People's habits differ from country to country and from one historic era to the next. Something considered in good taste in the past can be an object of ridicule today. Foreign customs may seem original and peculiar to us, just because we are not accustomed to them. Members of other nations may initially think of us in the same way.

The Japanese, for example, are considered a very original nation because their customs differ from our in many aspects. In their books they provide footnotes at the top of the page, above a line, rather than at the bottom, as we do. They mount horses from the right side and place troughs in stables facing the front door. When writing out the particulars of addressees on letters, the Japanese write the family name first and then the given name followed by relevant titles. In trading accounts, small coin values precede total balances. Polite respect is demonstrated there by taking off of shoes rather than a hat.

We laugh at those customs and cannot understand how a Japanese or a Chinese person can hold food using just two thin chopsticks and manages well completely without our knives, spoons or forks.

In return, Japanese laugh at us. In the booths with mechanical figurines, which can be found in all Japanese flea markets, there are exhibits depicting a European eating his food with a spoon, a knife and a fork. The image of a sober figure slicing meat and raising it to their mouth with a fork elicits peals of laughter.

The way chopsticks are used in China and Japan is really interesting. If we consider a Japanese person eating, they will have a sealed envelope containing chopsticks placed next to their plate. These chopsticks will be a partially cut piece of wood that will need to be split before use. The stamp on the envelope and the fact that the sticks remain uncut are a proof that the set had not been used. Japanese follow strict rules of hygiene. Chopsticks there are only used once; they are burned after use. These chopsticks are 30 cm long, pencil-thick and completely white.

When eating, a Japanese person holds both the chopsticks in one hand, specifically in the right hand. One of them rests at the base of the thumb and the index finger, and in the middle it rests on the ring finger. This chopstick remains stationary in the course of manipulation. The second chopstick is placed between the free tips of the first three fingers, just like a writing pen; this one is mobile and moves away from or closer to the first chopstick, as needed. Thus, we have a kind of wooden tweezers held together with the hand. The Japanese use them with great dexterity, they can grasp the smallest pieces of food, even an individual grain of rice. They sometimes do it with fabulous speed. They considered the transfer of an egg from a dish standing on a table into a basket placed on the ground between the reveler's legs a show of extraordinary dexterity. It only takes one false move for the egg to fall out and break.

The Chinese also eat with chopsticks, but while Japanese use only wooden utensils, they make theirs of gold, silver, ivory, steel or copper, depending on the user's wealth. Hygiene there is not as strict, and chopsticks will be used repeatedly, just like we would use knives, forks and spoons. We should note here that the Japanese are perhaps the most cleanliness-conscious nation in the world and occasionally bathe several times a day.

Chinese restaurants hold a unique type of lottery in connection with the use of chopsticks. The way it works is that on entering a restaurant, every guest will take a pair of chopsticks out of a box placed by the entrance. The box will have several of the chopstick sets numbered: the patron who pulls out numbered chopsticks will be entitled to one free dish.

In Japan, chopsticks are put to versatile use. Chefs are not familiar with spoons, and they use chopsticks to mix sauces, to beat liquids into a foam, to stretch dough, to sprinkle it with sugar or flour. In Japanese houses, we find porcelain stoves with coals

arranged into pyramids, inside which embers glow; here metal chopsticks connected by a chain play the role of tongs and a poker. Silkworm breeders use chopsticks to carry the weaker or young caterpillars between leaves of the mulberry trees. These useful insects are so delicate that a stronger touch can kill them. Lastly, Japanese garbage truck operators use 60 to 90 cm long chopsticks to collect trash from the streets.

The use of chopsticks in Japan goes way back in time. One monastery holds a complete collection of chopsticks which used to belong to a Japanese monarch that reigned in the 5th century CE.

"Look," the Japanese will speak with pride as they show us these relics, "while you were still shredding animal flesh with your bare hands, we were already eating food like decent people."

## CRICKET FIGHTING

Cricket fighting is one of the most popular pastimes of the Chinese people. In China, these fights are also a welcome pretext for betting, just as horse races are in this country, boxing is in America, or cockfights are in England. That is why the Chinese carefully search out these insects – taking them out of their hiding places in walls – and nurture them with care until the big day of fighting.

The fighting involves two wrestlers released simultaneously into a large tray, pushed towards each other and spurred on to fight. As soon as one of the agitated insects sees the other, it will give a sudden sharp war chirp, throw itself on the opponent and beat it fiercely until the other bounces back. The owner of the winning cricket collects the winning bets. These takings may differ vastly because next to the poor, who wager small bets, the wealthy also engage in that sport with passion, and often put up bets of several hundred dollars. For this reason, a tried-and-tested wrestler often costs a lot of money. China even has cricket fighting clubs, which gather in sheds built for that purpose. ■

## FROM THE WORLD OF PHILATELY

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

mailmen provided with ratchets, with which they notified of their presence.

In Paris, mailboxes were introduced in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and were used for local correspondence only. The Napoleonic wars precipitated the spread of this solution throughout the world. Initially in Germany, later they were also adopted in Poland.

Initially, the boxes were small. Also, the postal service regulations of the time made their use quite difficult.

People were allowed to drop into the mailboxes only the free-to-sender local letters. The postal service charge was collected from the letter recipient. The letters with a foreign destination, which the sender had to pay for, had to be brought to a post office to be paid, since postage stamps were not yet in use. The charged amount depended on the distance to the destination.

The institution of the mailbox met with varying reception in different cities. In some places, they were praised as a wonderful device available to the public day and night. Elsewhere, the innovation met with protracted resistance rationalized with a suspicion that persons disgruntled with the postal service workers might drop into them offensive anonymous letters.

The early mailboxes were made of wood or tin plate and oftentimes had fantastic shapes.

Initially, the boxes were emptied by hand, later they had fitted inserts of metal plate or leather. These locked inserts were removed from the box at specified times and replaced by empty inserts. The process of clearing the inserts would take place at a post office, under official supervision.

The mailboxes with inserts were ultimately replaced by automatic mailboxes. These are cleared by inserting a letter bag into an iron frame on the bottom side of the box, which then opens automatically and

the letters fall into the bag. As the bag is pulled out, the bottom of the box closes automatically.

In Poland, we currently have about 17,000 mailboxes.

## THE LARGEST POSTAL MUSEUM

The world's largest postal museum is located in Switzerland, in the city of Bern. In addition to its huge and very rich collection of postal service related artifacts, it also houses the world's richest collection of postage stamps.

The museum management has been expanding this collection since 1874, the date when the Universal Postal Union with headquarters in Bern was founded. This extraordinarily valuable collection includes several tens of thousands of postage stamps, this because the postal service administrations of every member state of the Union are required to send the museum samples of their every new stamp issue. ■

## LAST SUMMER ISSUE:

Starting next Friday

# THE LITTLE REVIEW will be 6 pages long.

In the upcoming issue, we will publish our prospectus for the 1933–34 school year (plans and guidelines of the editorial team) and begin printing a new novel by

**DR. JANUSZ KORCZAK**

## JOKES

### A STRANGE ADVENTURE

One evening, two boys arrived, after a short trip in a certain town where their parents' acquaintance lived. They found him and asked if he would put them up for the night. The man led them to a dark cell and pointing to a small uncomfortable bed said:

"You can rest on this bed, but this door," he pointed to one, "you must not open."

One of the boys, intrigued by the old man's words, decided to find out what was behind that mystery door. He opened it absentmindedly and was stunned as he found himself in front of a beautiful bed covered with a down duvet.

Overjoyed by his discovery, he told his brother:

"Look, what a wonderful bed, Jaś let's both sleep here."

Jaś agreed and both the boys soon fell asleep.

As one of the boys woke up the next day – and it was high noon by them – and saw his brother lay there completely uncovered, he cried:

"Jaś, cover yourself; we're in a shop window."

### A TIP

An old lady sits in a train compartment clearly waiting for someone, repeatedly checking her watch impatiently.

Suddenly, a small boy runs up to the carriage window and cries out, nearly breathless:

"Madam, I am here."

"Finally! Do you have the ticket?"

"Sure, I bought it. It cost 4 zloty and 30 groszy."

The lady opens her purse, counts out a sum and says as she hands the boy the money:

"Here you have 4 zloty and 30 groszy, which you can keep for your trouble."

### A DIVERS' DISCUSSION

Two divers meet underwater. One says to the other:

"I prefer working here to sitting home. My home is horribly damp."

### ON THE STREET

"Mr. Policeman, is this the second street to the left?"

### IMAGINATION

A traveler talks about an adventure he had in Mexico.

"Imagine, I'm on my way home at 4 in the morning. Suddenly, a bandit jumps out at me from around a corner and shouts 'your money or your life!' I run away. I'd never had to escape in my life. When I started running it was

4 a.m. and when I stopped my watch said 12 noon.

"You're lying, you couldn't be running for so many hours!"

"That's right, but my watch was so frightened it covered eleven hours in five minutes!"

AN INTELLIGENT PROFESSOR  
"And so, my dear student," says one professor, "let us take the case of someone coming with serious chilblains. The thing happens in the wilderness; there are no houses nearby. What do you do to give him first aid?"

"I rub his legs vigorously with snow, Professor."

"Very well. Now imagine that all this happens in the summertime and there is no snow anywhere nearby..."

### DEAFNESS

Professor Ł. is an elderly man and somewhat hard of hearing. On one occasion he asks a student:

"What is your name, sir?"

"Kapuśniak." (cabbage soup)

"What?"

"Kapuśniak, professor."

"Say it louder; I cannot hear you..."

"Kapuśniak!" the student shouts out. The professor begins to laugh.

"What are you laughing at, Professor?"

"Oh, you see, I am hard of hearing and I thought I heard you say Kapuśniak..."

### THE EPITOME

OF ABSENT-MINDEDNESS...  
...is when a member of Parliament entitled to a free first-class train ticket buys a second-class ticket, sits in the third and pays a penalty fare for riding without a ticket.

### EXAGGERATION

"When I was in America," boasts one gentleman, "I saw – imagine this – a machine to which they put grain on one end and ready-made bread and buns come out the other end!"

"Hey, that's really nothing," says another man. "When I was in Italy, I saw a machine to which they poured in fresh grapes on one side, and kicked out drunk guys from the bar on the other."

### TIMES CHANGE

Two flies walk down the shiny bald head of one man.

"Oh my, how this world changes," says one fly to the other. "I can remember the days when only a narrow path ran through this place."

### THAT'S LIFE

Patrolling along the Vistula river, a policeman sees a man in the water, at a distance of a dozen or so meters.

"Hey, dear sir! You come out of there this instant. You're not allowed to bathe here."

"I'm not bathing, I'm drowning!"