

Beginning No. 1

Simple things No. 1

Childhood No. 3.

1. Only children from this apartment block who have heard of the game can take part.
2. Those who have forgotten the rules of the game have to either remember the them or think them up for themselves.
3. If they can't think up any rules, they can play without them.
4. The main thing is to take part.
5. If they don't like the game, they can play other games, the main thing is to enjoy the game they are playing.
6. If you can't or don't want to enjoy the game, you can play to challenge yourself and/or learn more about yourself and/or [insert your preference]
7. You can also not play at all.

Artworks Come from Pain 2

If I was a writer (not necessarily famous, but definitely a writer)
I would definitely write lengthy short stories and even lengthier poems.
Not novels, because no one has time to read them anymore. Poetry either actually.
It's too much of an introverted and egocentric genre.
In reality, I would devote my life to making the lives of others beautiful,
to inspiring,
changing (of course, not necessarily for the better),
so they would feel that life is worth living.
At the beginning I would act like I am showing interest,
pull them in,
gradually get them involved
and then carefully abandon them,
with the feeling that nothing will ever be the same again as before.
What does that mean – that it will never be the same as before?
We don't know
(and it's good that we don't)

I argue for the need to understand reading as a social practice (...) [and] this understanding of reading has obscured its social dimensions, I discuss the social infrastructure of literary production, distribution, and evaluation as well as the social contexts in which reading is taught and the habit is nurtured.

Elizabeth Long. *Book Clubs. Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life*. 2003

you were 19 and sitting on a hard chair
the space was small
right in the middle of Central Europe
you are learning new words that you will need to use now
in order to find work
that you love and
the identity of your level you
sat on that chair and while the break slowly flows by
you try to convince your as-yet enlightened head to learn again
to count
one
I
am
me
and you are you and we
have rights to
rights and a just democracy two
you will not have to be an object just a subject and not make anyone else a subject but also not
an object if he or she or you yourself don't want to and three
definitely three high art
is just
a social
(cultural?)
construct!

Psalms No. 1

the main thing is to smile at the camera
photographers know which of those last smiles
touch the world
draw a close to the old
force the person turning the pages to stop
and afterwards live better without ever looking back again

two disembodied hands *sauté* a trout on the tram's TV monitor
sprinkle it with peeled shrimp tails and *sauté* it a bit longer
under the monitor
in an aquarium of wrinkled noses
like a lichen from beyond a squatting homeless man
saturated with life which no one will ever write down
behind him a poet
who won't have anything from his life
to write about today or tomorrow

please stand clear of the closing doors

two retired goldfish glide uphill towards the library
and shaking their colorful tails
vanish into the city's belly

The main thing is to smile at the camera
says the poet the seaweed rustles the goldfish gape without a sound
the photographer presses a button believing in the last smile
the goldfish splash about in a milk river sans seaweed on a glossy magazine cover
the city's stomach releases its last rumbling and embarrassed shrinks
down to the size of the poet's little toe

Ways How People Try to Re-Define the Buildings They Inhabit as Homes. From a 1995 Handbook on Home and Garden Care

1. Cats roaming around the house.
2. Family photographs, where everyone is smiling and their arms around each other. Under palm trees, holding skis. At various ages, poses, and graduation events.
3. Pictures of the Holy Virgin Mary. Crosses hanging on the walls, which have figurines with nail imitations in the hands and feet glued to them.
4. Dogs roaming around the yard.
5. Refrigerators with palm-sized magnets stuck to them. The city names on the magnets may or may not match the places where people are smiling on the photographs.
6. Refrigerators that always have more food than necessary, even when two of the women of the family are on spring diets.
7. Common issues directly connected with the house that's under the family's care, and which can be addressed in the kitchen in the morning or hallway in the evening, with these discussions diligently ignored by the teenagers of the family, who have barricaded oneself in their rooms. For example, dull knives, a leaky roof, or a long dreamed-of, unrealized garden bench. No one knows anymore, if that garden bench is still classified as a dream in the heart of any member of the family.
8. Dogs roaming around the yard and also in the house.
9. Stories, the best being the same old ones you burden your guests with.
10. Stories, the best being the same old ones you embarrass each other with.
11. Mistakes in the remodeling of the house, the best being those, which have left a visual record. For example, an uneven wall or crooked door frame, which demands a tailor-made door. Occasionally these mistakes can be presented as a story to guests or to one another
12. Both cats and dogs, the discord of which is the entire family's responsibility.
13. Joint conflicts. Particularly those connected with the very house the family inhabits.
14. Small, crocheted doilies on the windowsill, table corners, and TVs.
15. Spring cleaning of the windows, which is the joint responsibility of the women in the family.
16. Cutting of the summer grass, which is the joint responsibility of the men in the family.
17. Toilet paper that's running out.
18. Soap that's running out.
19. Goldfish, because one of or all of the children have a cat and/or dog allergy.
20. Bookshelves with books no one has read.
21. Cats that are not allowed to lay on the table, the piano, and the bookshelves.
22. Mugs from childhood with drawings of little bears and mice that belonged to specific children in the family.
23. In a few cases, the love and the desire to return.

Krista Anna Belševica
Poetry
Translated by Jayde Will

Literary dreams No. 3

In the corner of the room is an old dried-up piece of soap and a very new cat.

I'd like to write a poem about this situation some time.

The Academy of Make-Believe No. 1

Elizabete puts her Bible under her pillow

Katrīna discusses the countess's latest mischief with her girlfriends

Anabella laughs and puts her yellow mitten-wearing hand on the book in her lap

an artist

smiles

once again pressing the paintbrush on the canvas Anabella's sister

Žozefīne uses a big thick book under a large-format sheet of paper

and blushing begins a letter to Him

Marija has read all the books in her father's library in secret

Rita has read all the books in her father's library and her mother

shares this fact with all of her potential fiancés

Linda would happily go dancing right away after work

who has time to read at all today

Vineta is on maternity leave and has more time to read

she will also teach her children to read just like her mother taught her

Samanta goes to a book club on the last Tuesday of the month and

complains to them that she has too little time to read

they all complain about the same thing to Samanta

while for Egija, reading seems to be a waste of time

she has other things to think about

Communication

**

the laundry is washed the table was already
wiped clean yesterday
a word said loudly settles over the room
for a moment it enjoys the newly found freedom from its
predicate and leaves slowly through the door

**

you can watch words as a casual observer as they
vibrate between glasses and pickles
sit squarely on faces and leave

marks

**

someone enters the room and says
“it’s so quiet in here”

**

I am afraid to speak
I am afraid to lose words

the fact that people, while they are saying something, look around looking for eyes through
which to affirm their existence is at once terrifying and fascinating
it seems to me a lot of Sarte's philosophy is based solely upon this one act of humanity

the tram is coming late
she finds a spot
sits down
and pulls out her red velvet-covered notebook
the pages of which have no squares or lines
just a white winter that hasn't melted entirely
she will write about how tired she is
she'll weave a metaphor of global significance in her lines
so that it seems to the reader
that the entire era is in fact exhausted
that the world has never been as exhausted as it is today
when skyscrapers are shooting up like abscesses from a skin infection
on which parasites sit which never feel as if they are far away enough from heaven
or perhaps far enough from earth

they are definitely also exhausted

just like the others

and she writes those words so she can take part in a discussion that started a good while ago
about who is more exhausted in this world
and in general whose exhaustion has greater weight
and which of those is weighed in gold or in condemnation

she is going to visit him
not a real visit just for a brief moment to meet in the dark
she will come with the last tram to get to the corner for hookers
he also wanted to meet her right there this time
in the place where you can touch real life
descending to the bottom of life and then rise up to the surface with each step
see you can
watching how they sink and you don't sink at all