

License for Insanity

Ofer Grosbard

Translated from the Hebrew: Anthony Berris and Miriam Talisman

I'm sitting on the balcony gazing at the view, my eyes wandering into the distance. This place is surrounded by high mountains, lots of trees and greenery. A real convalescent home. The mountains and trees, it all looks so enchanting, but mainly very soothing. Someone once told me that lunatic asylums are situated in places like this because they actually do have a tranquilizing and peaceful effect. The ward I'm in is in a very old building. Someone said that it used to be a hospital for tuberculosis patients. I don't know anymore which is worse. There was probably someone who thought that all these things - nature's beauty and harmony, the sound of silence against the background of the wondrous color combinations of creation - could have a beneficial effect on madness. When I arrived here and saw this sight I thought that all the lunatics should simply be brought here and that would do it. The external stillness would temper the clamor and storm that originate from within. Really, it couldn't be otherwise. You are so close to creation here. I also had personal revelations in the past, for instance, when you feel awful you have to go outside and get close to nature where everything takes on different proportions. The significance of your problems shifts when you face the breaking waves and spume of the sea. And there were philosophies and gurus and maharishis, a kind of period to which sentences such as these belong: people lose so much by living in houses instead of under the skies, and that country people are much more beautiful than city dwellers and especially so much better. This is of course a result of nature bestowing peace and goodness upon them. They are better simply because a person who feels miserable treats others badly, and a person who feels good is good to his environment. Then, I was ready to swear that I could tell a country person from a city dweller by looks alone. All this

belongs to a period of naiveté which has long passed. Now I am here in the ward and believe in my way, perhaps less passionately than I did in the past, but that is all I have today.

During that period I hiked alone visiting wondrous places, criss-crossing the country, a pack on my back. A spirit that will never return was vibrating within me. I was not afraid of anyone and felt myself the happiest person in the whole world. The breathtaking views, the eternal sites and the wonderful people you meet on the way transform you into a citizen of the world. I gathered pearls of wisdom from all corners of the earth and had my own private collection. At that time I formulated for myself principles of life of which I can remember three: 1. To be able to see people through their own eyes. 2. To be able to treat life more freely with a sense of humor. 3. To be able to understand men. And there were other principles that I gathered from many distant lands. An Australian told me to remember and never forget that I live only once. A Frenchman told me to live my life as if I was living it for the second time around, correcting the mistakes I made the first time. A young fellow from Scotland once told me that I am a good and honest person because I look people straight in the eye, and that's a sign. That was a peak period of supreme happiness, total belief that I had discovered the right way and all I needed now was to get back to it whenever I wished. The world was spread at my feet and a fighting spirit filled my sails. I felt the full strength of my young body and fresh appearance, no power in the world could obstruct me from achieving longed-for happiness which caused me to soar skyward towards fame and glory.

Today I am different, two years in the ward have taken their toll and the pleasant memories of days past are fused with pain. A dialogue between what I was and what I am is like a conversation between two people who speak different languages, have different conceptions, who cannot communicate at all. I would be happy to erase this "radiant" period from my life, mainly because it is embarrassing to me that I was once such a person. If I were to erase my past it would interfere with the continuity of my life. My personality is built on this continuity of memories from the past and expectations for the future. Voids in the past or ignoring it will not add to my emotional stability. At times I want to believe that I was born on the day I arrived at the ward and want to start counting my years from that time. But it has already been said that he who does not learn from the lessons of the past will repeat his mistakes and I have made many. In my imagination something strange is happening in connection with time which I find hard to explain. The present stretches infinitely backward and forwards on a time continuum and nothing is more valid than what I feel at this very moment.

I remember when I arrived on the ward, I was sure I would be accepted without any problems. After all, I was so special and had so much to offer, I mean I had such complicated and unusual problems that they would be dying to treat me. I also thought I was different from the other nuts in the ward. I alone really knew that there was nothing comparable to the intensity and interest of my lunacy. I believed with all my heart that Jeremiah, the head of the ward and Miriam, my psychoanalyst, were aware of the unique bond between us. They could not deny it, they knew I was special. After the first interview I was told that the routine procedure was a three-month observation period on the ward after which they would decide whether or not I

was suitable. My world fell apart, I believed that it should have been clear to them that it would be in their interest to accept me. Any doubt regarding my suitability was an intolerable insult. This downfall was followed by many more.

Analysis began. I lie on the couch five times a week for fifty minutes each session. Miriam sits behind my head and I don't see her. The only instruction she gave me was to say anything that came into my mind, irrespective of its content. I lay on the couch and did as she said. I said everything that came into my mind. I began with my shorts and asked her if my shapely legs aroused her. I told her the truth, nothing but the truth, about what was going on in my mind at that particular moment, that I thought that Jeremiah was giving her an occasional quickie when they closed the door behind themselves in his room for a few minutes. I added that if she annoyed me I would stick a finger up her ass and I ended with "you fucking pervert." Miriam's response was restrained but assertive, if I remember rightly. Unfortunately I missed her facial expressions since I couldn't see her from where I was lying, and this bothered me. I wanted to see her squirming, sitting aghast in her chair, bewilderedly facing the tidal wave of my flooding vitality and sexuality. But it didn't happen. She directed me towards my fears, the reasons that caused me to say these words, and to the great difficulties within me with which I found it hard to connect. I felt I didn't understand the rules of the game. "I'm joking and you take it seriously" I said. "I could have easily told you how difficult it is for me and thus fulfil your wishes, but mainly I did exactly as you told me." I accused her of continually polluting the air in the room. At that time, to the best of my knowledge she was farting whenever a muffled rustle came from the direction of her chair, and she tried to cover it up by moving the chair with grating sounds. I shared my assumptions with her about the

quantity and quality of her orgasms, and I had the clear feeling that these were not purely assumptions but rather a collection of facts well-anchored in historical truths. And who is better than me at soul-reading and delving into the depths that are based on such few hints from the therapy room. Miriam said: "The fact that you follow instructions and really share the continuum of your thoughts with me is only natural and does not prove that you are suitable for analysis and hospitalization in our ward." I got really scared. An old and familiar sensation, originating in my stomach, climbed up my throat, I'll be thrown out, I'll be thrown out again. I'm thrown out wherever I go. Again I don't fit in, my worst fears have come true, I knew that this would be the end of my heroic and triumphant journey. I protested, struggled and called for justice to come to my rescue. I swore I would never be misled again. I would never tell a living soul, in analysis either, what really went on in my distorted mind. For God's sake, I want so desperately to fit in and stay in the ward, must I lie for that? And in general, what kind of analysis is this if I have to break its most fundamental rule?

During this period, when the number of my provocations decreased enormously, I discovered a new method. I would say to Miriam: "A provocation went through my mind." I was sure that if she really knew what went on in my mind she wouldn't be able to stand it. I saw her sex organ hanging on a skewer and a gang of adolescents flooding it with torrents of lechery. I saw her degraded and trodden to dust, giving herself to all the universe's wretched and poor and I kept it all to myself. Miriam accepted the "provocation" code and to my amazement did not encourage me to provide details, and did not display a great deal of curiosity which I thought she should rightly demonstrate. I had a gnawing suspicion that the secrets and hints that flowed in my veins were not exciting at all, only to myself and myself alone. I felt

like a person who discovers that the pearls in his possession are only cheap imitation. My triumphant calls slowly began to make room for sadness and longing.

Three months later, at the end of the observation period, a staff meeting was held about me. Staff meetings are an extraordinary event. I was taken into Jeremiah's room. The room was full of staff people who sat against the walls. They stared at me. I felt like Daniel in the lion's den. My body shivered, contracted. The vacant chair next to Jeremiah was beckoning me. I sat down with great reverence, not too comfortably. Then everything happened in a matter of minutes. Jeremiah, close to me, turned and said in a cutting tone of voice, "We have decided to allow you to stay in the ward in order to try and see whether or not we can help you. Your levels of faking are high." He emphasized the word 'try.' Then there was silence from which I gathered that I had to extricate myself and get out of the room in a hurry because that was what was expected. I left dismayed and ashamed. Outside the other adolescents stood around and looked at me with concern, sharing with me, awaiting a sign from me - yes or no. I gently nodded to them that I had been accepted. A sense of relief was felt from all sides.

2

The door had a sign saying "Adolescents". I pushed it open gently and slid my body through the narrow opening. I found myself strolling slowly along the paths and among the secrets of the Kingdom of the Unconscious. This place is completely different from the other mental hospitals, rumors of which had reached my ears. The road here passes through wild and secret scenery, snaking between mountain and *wadi*. Pine and cypress trees perfume the air with a particularly clean and refreshing

scent. At one of the bends in the road stands a small, lone sign: “Adolescents”, that’s the name. The innocent driver traveling along the road would probably not even notice it and continue speeding on his way. Not “Lunatic Asylum”, or “Psychiatric Ward”, and not even “Mental Hospital”, just “Adolescents”. There is an entire ideology behind this single word. First, there are only adolescents in the ward, ten of them. These adolescents were given a license for insanity before they were tainted by the traditional stigmas of the various types of mental illness. They believe here that adolescence is a period of confusion and perplexity so they grant the adolescent his insanity under license. Here he can take a time-out from tempestuous life here and cut himself off from his oppressive environment. In this haven he can peep into his inner world, learn its secrets and dwell within it in an atmosphere that encourages this direction of observation.

I remember one summer Friday. As on every Friday, there was a party. The adolescents sit around a table at the head of which sits Jeremiah. At one point in the party there is always a discussion on internal ward matters, and this time it is about the “Adolescents” sign on the road. Basic questions of self-image, that is to say how I see my difficulties, how society sees me, and what price do I pay for being in this place, echo around the room in quick succession and are given expression in various ideas and opinions that touch on the sign’s content and size. There are those who are in favor of a big sign. Their reasoning is that there is nothing to be ashamed of, that’s how we are and there’s no more to be said. And in any case, it’s a fast road and in order to find the place the sign has to be pretty big. Others think that the first speakers are only presenting a reverse reaction to the shame that grips them because they are hospitalized in a lunatic asylum with a nice name, Adolescents Ward, and

there is no reason for a show of excess pride. In addition, anyone coming here knows the place and why they've come. Passers-by haven't come in for years. Someone said, "There's no shame in being here but there's no great honor in it, either." Later, the discussion moved on to the content of the sign; are we an adolescent's ward, a psychiatric ward, or both, and how do we want to present ourselves publicly? I felt the full weight that is embodied in the connection between an external world of reality and a world of inner personal content, which is something that turns searching for the truth into a difficult and elusive task. Jeremiah summed up, saying, "Logical reasons can usually be presented any way we want, but not so inner truth, and that is what should turn the scale. What is really suitable for each of us is not necessarily identical to what really suits one's friend." The decision on the sign and its content was made by a democratic vote.

A short path that crosses the lawn leads to a long narrow stairway that twists around the building that looks like an ancient fortress. The ward is on the third, top floor of the building. The two lower floors are deserted. One can see by the rusted beds in the empty rooms and the netting on the windows that they had been used as living quarters. I felt that wandering spirits had made their home in these hollow frightening halls and they were behind the roars and subdued sounds that emanated from these rooms during the stormy winters that prevailed in this region. The ward is comprised of a long corridor linking the various rooms, some of which are the adolescents' while others are staff rooms. At one end of the corridor there is an art workshop and bathrooms, and at the other are the clubroom and kitchen. A huge verandah overlooking the view links the two ends of the corridor in a way that enables you to walk around the ward in a circle. This verandah was taken directly out of my dream

world, and before I got here verandahs like this really were an integral part of my nocturnal world. They were tremendously high and spread over mountains and lakes. A feeling of panic and churning bowels grips me when I sit on these verandahs. They always tended to fall.

Here, high up in a corner of the verandah, I spend hours in thought. With the help of my brain power I try to solve the secret of my life, the riddle of my becoming lost. I don't know whether thinking can cope with these eternal issues, but still I try.

Actually, there is a certain pleasure in "thinking" for hour after hour, just like a scientist. Then, after a great, fatiguing effort, it suddenly happens, everything is clear, the world becomes ordered. All the pieces of the puzzle fall into place, fitting into one another perfectly. This is the experience of insight described so well by all kinds of apostates, ex-communists, schizophrenics and many others. The sailors of the past in their creaky ships, who bravely fought the huge waves of the stormy seas and their white-capped breakers. And suddenly an excited cry from the bows, "Land ho!" The glittering horizon reveals a new scrap of land untrodden by human feet. Exaltation grips those heroic seafarers until they suddenly realize that they have come the wrong way, and that after a long voyage they have come back to the country they originally left. What is left after this revelatory experience? Not much, really. So my life is inlaid with this kind of understanding and I have, I feel, nothing. Miriam, my analyst, says that at this moment of revelation I am both the little girl and the mother enthusing over her child.

I looked beyond the mountains where the Creator sat in all his power and glory on one of the peaks, surrounded by cherubs. One by one we went up on to the stage, shook

hands with the Creator and were handed diplomas stating that we had successfully completed our lives. Before I went up on to the stage, Daddy told me to shake hands with everyone so that no one would be insulted. I held out my hand to the Creator, I think I shook His hand strongly, as though we were old friends, and He said Good luck. Then I shook hands with all the angels who were sitting there in order. I wished them all good luck, sorry, they said Good luck to me and I smiled as though I really had done well and was happy. I sensed that they had meant me and it was only when I went back to my place in the auditorium that I felt the sheer magnitude of the fraud and the deception. They said the same thing to everyone, even the Creator was a fraud. To go through life successfully is not easy after so many years of torment. I looked around me at all the graduates and thought What a long way we've come together, I felt *esprit de corps*. Where had they all been along the way? Why can I see strange faces here? Had it been easier for them on the unfinished journey? And there were those who had fallen by the wayside and not reached the finish, some had chosen suicide along the way, but in the end, I thought to myself, the majority had passed. Completing life successfully means reaching the finish line, the end, and what you did on the way makes no difference at all.

"What was the last sentence you said?" I asked her after it had slipped my mind. She said that I was looking for an external text, what she had said... and that was instead of asking myself what I felt inside. I said I didn't remember the sentences spoken and she asked why I didn't ask myself what it aroused in me instead of holding on to her words. Her words directed me to my body, I felt my legs cold and paralyzed. I felt loneliness and emptiness and I wondered why I was so much not me to the point that I had to say to Miriam that I wanted to keep quiet instead of simply keeping quiet. She

let me enjoy the finer points of my preoccupation with my body as though I was a baby and she the mother taking care of everything. I thought she was thinking that that was important to me but I immediately corrected it by thinking that I thought it was important. Thus I immersed myself in the emptiness of oblivion, coming back disappointed and telling it to Miriam. She listened to my emptying head, to my anxiety over my tediousness, and when I asked if the time wasn't up she said yes. I've developed a special sense of time for fifty minutes here, or perhaps it's just her fidgety movements on the chair when the hour is up. I got up slowly as I always do with a lot of ceremony in my ass. She always waits for me to lead the way to the door with her following. She won't get up from her chair before I do. The idea is not to give me the feeling that I'm being thrown out. And she would certainly feel like an idiot if she had to stand waiting for Her Highness to get her ass off the bed and deign to emerge from her deep sleep of analysis in the ward corridor. At the door she was pretty and very much present. Her eyes at the critical moment of my half turn backward were in the right place. She looked at me with motherly concern. And about this entire story I say that I'm again occupied with some external threat instead of listening and asking myself what the parting at the end of the hour arouses in me.

3

The ward is actually a kind of extended family, so sexual relations are forbidden. The staff are the parents, we are the children and of course Jeremiah is the father. He is a strange sort of father, unlike others I have known. He doesn't laugh and play with his children or engage in small talk. His words are few and measured and have a pre-defined purpose. The succinct sentence he fires off is like an arrow aimed at a target. The target, of course, is helping us to "meet ourselves" and Jeremiah's arrows are

usually right on the mark. Our meeting with Jeremiah is not an encounter between child and father but rather one of a child with himself, with a special kind of secret mirror that reflects not his face but rather the contents of his emotions. Indeed, his inscrutable face doesn't give anything away about his personality and we are left alone. This reminds me of the sad story of Bambi who had never met his father. He saw him once for a brief moment but had heard a lot about him from the forest animals. Jeremiah is distant but in some miraculous way knows everything about us. He doesn't help us when we feel we need him, but he is there, strong and steadfast when he thinks we need him, when we are really lost. Yes, the feeling is that he is on guard and sees everything. A few laconic words at the morning meeting, a probing glance in the hallway when our paths cross, accompanied by a terse remark - this is the real contact between us. Jeremiah is undoubtedly a very busy man, but this is not the reason for his conciseness or distance; he is the psychoanalytical type of father, if there is such a thing. Each moment he spends in the ward is for him a strip of art on which he has to act in the best possible way. Perhaps he is simply a professional *par excellence*. He is a simple man, slightly confused at times. The dramatic seething that carries me away meets with his unaffected manners and collapses and shatters into smithereens on the stark rock within him, then vanishes into thin air. My feeling of uniqueness dissolves, melts and dissipates in the shared and commonplace routine which he represents. When the winds of courage fill my sails, battering them in all directions and I set sail to the omnipotent world of my imagination, he is there like the Rock of Gibraltar. He has the kind of face that left me slightly shocked after our first meeting. His large nose, his prematurely wrinkled and lined face - I think he's not yet fifty - his large brown eyes, all make up the kind of face that might frighten children.

With the slow passage of time, like all internal beauty that seeps through the tissue and bursts forth, his image changes completely.

My roommate Na'ama once told me the following story: Moses was known all over the land and was acclaimed a good and holy man. A king wanted to understand this miracle called Moses. He sent out a delegation of wise men. They met Moses, returned to their king and told him: we found an evil man, brutal and full of intrigue and greed. The king was astounded and sent out another delegation of wise men in order to resolve this contradiction. They returned and praised Moses, describing his extraordinary honesty and immense wisdom. The king, confused and bewildered, turned to Moses himself and asked him to explain the contradiction. Moses replied: They are both right. The first delegation told you who I used to be and the other described what I have achieved with hard work and the person I am today. Indeed, Jeremiah seems to me to be a man who has worked on himself and undergone a change. I believe that when you meet a person for the first time, you see all kinds of things you don't see later -things that get lost when your knowledge of a person deepens. At the first meeting you see the skeleton and as time goes by you pay attention only to the flesh. When I first faced him at the admission interview, my sharp senses perceived his apprehension, fear and insecurity. Since then his personality has taken on flesh and muscle which have become for me the Jeremiah of today. True, they believe in change in this ward. They believe that a person can change, not all at once and with a great deal of effort. Miriam says that if I invest a lot of effort I will progress, a little bit at a time.

And then, when I come out of a session of analysis I sense a kind of relaxing throughout my entire body. Not just because I spent fifty minutes lying on the couch, but rather a kind of psychic relaxation, a different state of consciousness. This condition is gradually ruined and easily vanishes after the meeting. But there is another bluff, each time I feel that this time I have understood, this time I have discovered a new world, I have solved the problem and it will never return. This is the fate of people who have no past and no future, who can't find their way and feel happy they can still choose between life and death at any given moment. The illusion of understanding through analysis is repeatedly smashed to smithereens against the rock of reality that doesn't fall apart even after many hundreds of meetings. It's like that fairy-tale that tells of a bird that comes once every thousand years and pecks at a huge rock, one single peck, and when it finishes crumbling the rock, all that will be only one day of eternity, and that's when I'll complete my analysis.

The ward is being renovated. They are drilling right in the middle of my cerebellum with a terrible racket, filling my nostrils with fine white dust that leaves no room for hope. I could barely hear her and thought that she didn't have the authority to tell the workers when to work or make noise. I said: "I see you aren't omnipotent." She answered that evidently I had thought that she was omnipotent. "But I'm not sure that I really want the noise to stop," I said and felt a smile creeping up on me. At moments like this I don't know how to explain the storm raging inside me, bursting the boundaries of my body. Then I remembered Mommy. Rona said that she talks to me like a friend and not like a mother and Na'ama said that she's a cold woman. Again Miriam asked why I have to rely on what other people say and not on my own feelings. I enjoy Miriam's closeness and cling to it but today I was sad and desperate

because I thought she couldn't help. I was sad. And then I asked: "What's the next step?" Miriam asked why I needed a next step, is it not only running away from an unpleasant and difficult sensation? True, there is no next step, there is no solution or plan that will save me... then came last night's dream. Someone screwed me in the ass, penetrated me suddenly and I wasn't prepared. I fought like I always do so that people shouldn't think I don't put up a fight. If they're able to see my weakness they'll exploit me even more. I don't feel myself a woman, they screw me in my ass; nor do I possess motherly feminine resources and strength. Miriam surprised me and spoke about a part of me that enjoys and invites this sort of thing. Enjoys, okay, but invites? How do I invite this? Did the Jews also invite Nazi aggression? I protested. "Are they the same, your dream and the Holocaust?" she asked. I asked Na'ama to explain this to me. She said that in reality no one penetrated my ass but the Holocaust really did take place. Miriam said to you: it's your dream, you invented it, and she meant that you invent opportunities in which they'll penetrate your ass. It's a tautology, I said, so what if it's my dream and I am the director, it still doesn't mean anything to me, but despite this I felt that it does have some meaning.

At that time I used to leave my meetings with Miriam with a smile on my face so as to show her I was not defeated. To show her that I am good and strong and it's worthwhile working with me and she could rely on me.

4

Morning. I pull the duvet over my shoulders to keep out the night chill. The netting over the window is torn by the invading early morning light, the sleep in my eyes burns and cracks. Rona's paintings stare at me, making their final full circles until

they come to rest over her bed, sensual women, and the last scene of a dream dwindles and disappears like the last vestige of darkness. I try to hold on to a fragment of a melancholy memory, to understand what happened there, but the thread of my thought is broken. One picture, if I can retrieve it, will draw a whole world after it, but there is nothing. Today, too, I won't be bringing a gift for Miriam. Someone shakes me by the shoulder, awakening me from my drowsing, apparently I had fallen asleep again, her face radiating a cold, cruel light like a fluorescent tube, Shlomit the counselor. First wakeup call, she yells, seven-twenty. She goes over to Rona's bed full of beans, knowing that there the battle will be hard and cruel, psychotic dreams are preferable to such a reality. Rona refuses to wake up, doesn't react, her body sprawled like an immovable rock. Another shake, another push, the body a single mass, no chance, she gives up. She turns her eyes to Na'ama, says Good morning and leaves, there's no work for her there. Again a vacuum. It's not just the stomach ache from last night, it's different, a big room, a vast, completely empty space, three girls and only one warm corner, Rona's. Over her bed there are oil paintings, bold warm colors, only a few, but with an intensity against the background of nothingness that is all around, a small mat at the foot of the bed covering a lot of cold tiles, a small cupboard with a cloth and a flower as though only they exist, that's all, that's all the difference and there is a warm corner in the white desert spread over the walls. To get up or not to get up for morning exercise, Wednesday, the fourth awakening this week, one more and I'll be granted a Saturday leave. Haggling, is it worth it, no, that's not the question, I'll have to tell Miriam that I get up for morning exercise and also take part in activities, not that I want to but so I don't miss anything, that nothing happens without me, that I won't remain alone outside. I suddenly shine,

fill with light, the emptiness dissipates, I get dressed hurriedly, go downstairs and am almost the first at exercise.

A circle is formed on the dew-damp grass, a misty morning dissolves the trees' shadows and spreads them like oil paint daubed on a canvas, a morning that is destined to be cold and fresh right up to noon, as though it had only just awoken. A group of bewildered adolescents, who knows what's going through their minds at that exciting conjunction of the world of dreams in which everything is permitted and normal, and the light of day, where it's called insanity, and the drugs, what do they do to a person who has to cope with a new day knocking on the door. In turn, one of us chooses an exercise and we all do it. We stand and wait, another bewildering second, perhaps we'll never begin, but Zohar saves the day and chooses a stretching exercise, "One, two, bend, four" erupts from his lips with tremendous energy, many arms are raised in disorder, internal cadences override any external order. That's how he opens the day, like a released spring, to wither at noon, fall down tired and crushed, thinking that no one knows. "You're fucking around, come on, exercise", says Shlomit energetically, "Come on, Julia". She gives a perfect demonstration, God gave her a made-to-measure chest how do you make something so beautiful. Why should I exert myself? It's hard enough coping with the insanity inside, what more do they want? He's angry because we're not doing his exercise, he's always angry. Amos arrives at a dead run, his shoelaces blowing in the wind, thin and gaunt, his black forelock as lovely as a child prodigy's falling over his eyes, darting from side to side, in their deep sockets. "Am I late?" he blurts anxiously. The expressions are embarrassed, as usual he's arrived at the time that's still considered waking-up time, before the end of the first exercise. A smile of victory spreads over his face. Simon, with the Terylene,

a splendid striped shirt and patent leather shoes as though he isn't tall enough without them, some people can do morning exercises dressed like that and still feel comfortable, asks everyone to stand on one leg like a stork until he says stop, he doesn't say it, a smell of sweat carries from him even this early in the morning. Then on the other leg and again and it goes on and on. Shuki pleads for more, he hasn't had enough. Julia, folds of fat doing morning exercises, falling one on top of the other in disarray, perhaps because of the drugs or gluttony or the emptiness, a creeping, emptying schizophrenic process, raises her arm and lowers it, she's satisfied with little, that's an exercise, too. A sour smell of sweat reaches my nostrils and fills me with disgust. Always the same smell when you exert yourself. A schizophrenic smell or a psychotic smell, and maybe it's the Parfenan or the Largactyl that's secreted with the sweat, giving it a repellent quality like that of a skunk, to the body or the soul. I'm not built for morning exercise, I don't like disturbing my sleepy body that way. As far as I'm concerned it's a gross insult and a severe breach of that degree of gradualness that is so vital for a soft landing on the uneven runway of reality directly from the world of dreams. Fragile Rona demonstrates a suppleness exercise, shapely Shirli a power exercise, each according to their spiritual tendencies.

My day is usually totally ruined by one event or another. What's happened? Nothing really, but things like that ruin my day. Something happens every day and I still haven't managed to get through one without unfortunate occurrences, but I continue trying to improve. Were I to keep quiet all day things like this wouldn't happen. What do I really feel? Recently the truth seems to me to be a key word. Because really, inside I know the truth that nothing has happened apart from a few defenses being breached and a number of masks that only I believed in have been removed.

This time it was Rona. We had a fight over the light in the room, she simply told me the truth, so I felt: “You’ve got a disgusting gut you think no one notices and you try to hide it with loose shirts, you’ve got a nose with a blob at the tip a real clown’s face that should be in a circus,” and she concluded with “Everyone knows it.” That ending was unbearable. If everyone knows it’s about time that I also recognized my inner truth. I felt “a hole in the stomach,” in my view it’s part of “the basics of the subjective experience” I’m trying to formulate. You generally feel it in your stomach as a kind of shudder, a churning in your bowels. A tunnel or a hole – because there’s a feeling of free fall and then you bend over a bit out of limpness. The fall, the crash is from an external event that causes you “to meet yourself”. You suddenly understand that you’ve constructed a thought of your own, a life of your own, splendid buildings you’ve lived in, and the whole lot collapses into your abdominal cavity. There’s no choice, I’ll have to stop parading around the ward like a peacock thinking that everyone thinks I’m beautiful. In analysis I talked about every morning when I look in the mirror I’m actually kidding myself, telling myself I’m beautiful, I could compromise on average, but certainly not ugly. So who’s ugly? I once asked myself, look, no one will admit to being ugly, and people do point at others and say he’s ugly! Did Rona connect me to my truth? To what I was always frightened of admitting, if so then that cow deserves my gratitude, unbelievable. I’m one of the world’s unfortunates whose ugliness everyone talks about, and they think they’re princesses. Towers of years have collapsed. And worst of all is that everyone knew the truth except me. The woman, the one I’ve seen recently almost every day, sometimes dressed one way and sometimes another, comes down the stairs to the party that is full of important dignitaries. The heels, the look, the slit, they’re all mixed up, the hall and the world catch their breath. And they tell me I’m ugly?!

What will become of those wonderful endless hours of my daydreaming? Where are the men and women who were captivated by me, who fell at my feet and were conquered by my charm and magic? Miriam didn't reply when I asked her how I looked. She also didn't get excited when I said that she too is no bombshell, she's even getting old and has wrinkles. I was afraid that she would be happy at my misfortune, that she'd celebrate the shattering of my delusions as a progress factor in the analysis. As usual I encountered the unexpected. She said that I had simply been insulted and as big as my imaginings were of the beauty queen, so was the insult. I protested that a person who would not be hurt to the depths of his crippled soul by words like that had yet to be created. No, others of course are not a comparative criterion in analysis, it makes no difference if only I in the entire world feel that way or if there is no one else who doesn't feel that way. "I must recognize my own feelings and the other in his own analysis will do his share," she once said. I continued with my philosophical monologue, she was silent, "There is no event in reality that necessarily brings a certain emotion in its wake. Reality can be interpreted in different ways, which cause different emotions", I said and I didn't believe that you can feel otherwise after what had happened. At these moments in my philosophical discussions with the world she keeps quiet and it's insulting.

She guided me to the depth of the hurt. I fought, I didn't accept, again she guides me towards myself, again the same cheap old tricks. I'm dealing with a cow here, can't you see, again you're tending to justify her and the others just as you always do. She said that it was of no interest to her whether Rona was right or not, and that I was ignoring the fact that I too had a certain responsibility because Rona certainly hadn't begun to say those things about me all by herself. At first she focused on my hurt and

didn't give up. Again and again she showed me the depth of the hurt, and again and again I protested and argued that nothing could justify such behavior. I have simply not yet completely learned the language of analysis. She talks about what she sees as important, mainly about my emotions, and she doesn't try to rectify justice in the world. Her words finally filtered down into me. OK I've been hurt, I said, and began a long debate on how truly hard it is for me and how much I am suffering. Even if someone shot me you'd ask me and talk to me about what I feel, I said. It really is the same thing for you, she replied, you are again the innocent victim who has been done a terrible wrong. She's even taken the pleasant, consoling and warm bit of imagination away from me. I felt that I'm forbidden to be anything here, she'll have something to say about everything. What I was not prepared to suffer at any price was a broad hint from her on my aggressiveness. I'm the aggressive one? There's a limit to everything. But she didn't let up, asked what had gone through my mind when I had insisted on switching on the light in the room just when Rona wanted darkness. To tell the truth, I have to admit again that I smiled to myself at that moment. So I lay there on the couch feeling like a sleek snake trying to squirm between the words, between the elusive words that flee and return and strike again, with Miriam as the experienced hunter not allowing me to escape. All right, again I'm the unfortunate victim and Miriam is the bad one. When will it end, when?

I debated with myself on putting Rona down for the committee. We have a committee in the ward comprised of three adolescents and two staff members whose job it is to discuss complaints made by the adolescents and staff. The committee meets weekly and there is a discussion open to everyone, proposals are made for responses, yes, responses not punishment. Responses whose objective is to help the

adolescent advance in his view of his environment and himself. The committee members vote on the various proposals for responses and a majority decision is taken. There is a book of rules that the newly admitted adolescent has to learn thoroughly, rules regarding living together and all that it entails. The ward's book of rules opens with the following bombastic sentence: "The adolescents are in the ward voluntarily in order to learn and understand the origins of the difficulties within them." The committee is elected by democratic and secret ballot by the adolescents. They really do try to allow us to run the ward ourselves as far as possible. I can't remember an instance in which the ward staff changed a committee decision. It sometimes seems to me that they treat us too seriously. Jeremiah probably thinks that this way we are encouraged to accept greater responsibility and internalize the adult attitude they have towards us. I asked Miriam if in her opinion it would be right to nominate Rona for the committee. According to analysis what can be mainly understood is that I have more problems than Rona is out of order. She replied that she doesn't give advice and it is not her job to participate with me in these decisions. She deals with my emotional world, so I see it, and avoids getting involved in realistic considerations. But the borderline between the two is not always clear, and it always seems to me that I know what she suggests I do without her saying it explicitly.

I decided to put Rona down for the committee although it wasn't easy to quote everything she'd said to me. There was an open discussion that was a difficult experience for the Beauty Queen. The committee said she had to apologize to me. Rona, I assume, had discussed in her analysis the good reasons she had for resolving her difficulties regarding her appearance by hurling insults at me. The painful gift I received from the committee was the directing of the spotlight on to my virtuosic

ability to repeatedly drive people crazy. In my own eyes I'm as righteous as a lamb and pure as an angel so how is it that Rona sees me as a creature of the Devil? From a confrontation with reality through the committee a person encounters himself, says Jeremiah. Thus reality proves you wrong again and again and it's used as a tool, an instrument for revealing my hidden emotional world. I think it's called "reality therapy."

In the beginning came the turnabout, that is the only feeling I remember from the beginning of my analysis days. The opposite of everything I had thought, maintained and in particular, felt. Such chaos, I don't remember any more, perhaps the opposite of from the outside in perhaps the opposite of an emotional high to an emotional down. The first round of the fight between me and Miriam ended with her victory. She didn't beat me by a knockout, only on points. A stubborn persistent incessant unrelenting fight in which she took it upon herself to show me what I wasn't happy to see.

5

This thing that's called blurred identity, the thing that a baby experiences as the diffused and unclear boundaries of his body, is his hand part of his body or does it move on its own? Is the nipple part of his own body or not? And what happens when one part of the body touches another, like when a hand touches a face? Whom is it obeying? I experience this romanticism on an emotional level. My last meetings with Miriam took on an existential character in which my experiences and sensations mingled with those of the other. My psychic wound always makes me want Rona's and Na'ama's esteem, my soul literally goes out to them. And again I hear that

unbearable sentence or rather the interpretation I attach to its sound, "You don't fit in here." Why do you care what I say? what do you think? she says. Do you think you belong here? My thinking disorder enables me to hear this tone in every other sentence she utters. When she hints at the question, what do I get out of the ward, I hear her saying, it's not for you, you repeat the same old problems again and again, nothing will come of you, it's just a waste of time. What have I come to? I am begging them to keep me in this lunatic asylum and they don't want to. But I prefer this external lunatic asylum to my own inner one. I dreamed I was escaping from Devil's Island and Miriam brought me back.

Rona, my roommate is really something special, so I envy her. First of all, she is the veteran of the ward, she's already been here for six years. I wouldn't say that it's an encouraging sight the way people behave after six years in the ward. One might expect greater maturity and restraint. But those in the know say that if I had seen her when she arrived, I would understand what a long way she has come.

"How long does analysis take?" I once asked when I was still new here. The adolescents gave me a kind of ignoring look and buried their secret deep among themselves. Later Rona explained to me that this is the sixty-four thousand-dollar question. Analysis is not measured in hours, months or years but rather in an internal feeling. "Yes, I understand," I protested, "there are no instruments for measuring subjective experience, but even so, in your vast experience in the ward, what is the average duration of hospitalization?" "It seems to me that you haven't understood what I just said" she said and walked off angrily. True, the longer I'm in the ward – I recently racked up two years - the less I know when my analysis will come to an end.

Assumptions as to the estimated date for parting wax and wane with a regularity known only to themselves and the fog thickens. Piecework I thought to myself, you finish and you go. In analysis, I was reminded of my mother's words: "it stretches like chewing gum, it will never end. They get state money for you, it's not worth their while stopping it." Miriam said that I believe this too.

So anyone who has spent six years in analysis enjoys the great prestige of being an old-timer who has studied the depths of the soul and comes out of it alive. He has walked in the realms of the soul where no one has trod before, and so on and so forth. After two years here I haven't the vaguest idea what I will be like when my time for discharge comes up. When they'll decide that I've done it and am ready to go out and face the stormy waves of the cruel sea of life. But Rona is unique in another way, besides her being the oldest veteran. Jeremiah himself treats her and that's no small honor in the ward. Is her case more complicated? More serious? It's not clear to me how they decide who will treat a new adolescent upon arrival. But it seems to me that I have deciphered and interpreted the code - emotionally.

Rona's parents are fanatic, ultra-religious people from the *Meah Shearim* neighborhood in Jerusalem. Her father is a cripple, confined to a wheel chair. Her mother is a convert to Judaism, a German woman who decided to convert to Judaism to atone for the sins her people committed in the World War Two. After converting, she chose, not by accident, to marry an ultra-religious Jew who belongs to *Neturei Karta*. Their chief rabbi approved this bizarre marriage. Rona was born. Her name wasn't Rona then - she was Haya. She was one year old when her parents separated and her mother returned to Germany, taking Haya with her. She became a whore for

the ex-Nazis, not in repentance for her sin of converting to Judaism but evidently quite the opposite, out of profound identification with the tormented Jewish soul, persecuted by its captors. This is how she wanted to reconstruct the ancient experience of the Jewess and live her Judaism, fully and more profoundly. At that time, when her mother was satisfying the sado-masochistic drives of ex-Nazis, she experienced pleasure and orgasms she had never dreamed of, neither in her intimate relations with the God of the women's section of the synagogue nor by being close to the Holy Ark. During this period in Germany Haya was locked in a room, night and day, alone. At the age of three her mother brought her back to Israel under unclear circumstances and she began her wanderings in various foster homes and with adoptive families. She was given the name Rona in one of the homes that adopted her, before they rejected her, a result of her intense emotions, drives and vitality. Yes, I too admire her, that's probably clear to see. To me she is as strong as a solid rock. She looks ahead, head bent forward, ready for battle at any moment. When she arrived in the ward six years ago, so the old adolescents say, those who carry the heritage of generations on their shoulders, she used to smear herself with feces, and had to be washed and cared for like an infant. They call this falling apart here. I had the pleasure of seeing Rona fall apart only once. It's an experience I wouldn't wish on my worst enemies. Her expression changes, she is flooded by a deluge of associations coming from secret worlds, and her behavior is directed by distortions that only the Devil himself could create. Yes, Rona has gone through hell. She believed that snakes were hiding in her bed, her mother was chasing her with a knife, and that Jeremiah, her therapist whom she loves so much, who is devoted to her heart and soul, asks her to give him a blow job, grant him some of her favors and the benefit of her extensive sexual experience. She arrived in the ward when she was fourteen years old

and now she is twenty. Everyone in the neighborhood knew her, or rather, smelled her. The stories, like gentle aromas wafted on the air, her musk would play havoc with the scent of the citrus groves, and alter the smells of the seasons. Truck drivers, driving night and day, used to follow her scent, and she would give them damp and wet pleasure in a joy of creation they had never tasted before. That's the way she behaved when she would fall apart or, as they say here, when she was in a psychotic state. She screwed in quantities and qualities that a virgin like me could only attribute to her knowledge, understanding and motherhood, much greater even than those of my mother. Yes, when I arrived in the ward she took me under her wing and I enjoyed her warm and supportive protection together with her unrestrained and boundless domineering. She simply couldn't face the fact that she felt that I was prettier than she was. But despite this I continue to share my troubles with her and consult her about everything relating to life. For me she symbolizes nothing less than life itself. The one who knows its simplest secrets, the one who isn't afraid of men but rather gives them a damp crevice in which to drown their sorrows. She castrates their masculine aggression with the greatest of pleasure. They come into her galloping, shouting, trembling, moaning and then pull out, totally drained and shrunken. As for me, frightened by this threatening male power, which orders me to undress and be raped day after day, I really admire her. Twice a week we have a workshop in the ward, under the tender ministrations of Susie; we paint, sculpt and create to our hearts content. Rona is queen of the workshop. As an artist she is self-centered, and extremely temperamental. She will suddenly throw down her paintbrush and leave the room in tears, shouting. When this happens Susie's kind words are of no avail, nor is her attempt to give Rona the motherly love she needs so desperately. At times I stand in awe gazing at her work of art. A couple embracing. Another Rona is then revealed,

a little woman leaning on a big and confident man. Always sexual, always with a plunging neckline, an emphasized bosom, uncombed hair. Rona has no parents. None whatsoever, they have forgotten her but she has not forgotten them. Late at night, when consciousness becomes hazy I have heard her many times sobbing under her blanket, not asking for help from anyone. I think she said "Mommy, Mommy." The staff is in love with her and all have fallen under her spell. I am happy but apprehensive about spending just one more minute with her. What I am really jealous of is her ability to be herself without fear, without playing up to anybody or trying to be liked, and wonder of wonders: she is loved and accepted. If that is the result of six years of hard work in analysis, it's quite remarkable.

I watched Miriam from the door and saw a tiny smile hovering at the corner of her mouth. When I lay down on the couch I realized that again I had abandoned myself for fresh pastures. Again I was incapable of bearing, even for one single second, the embarrassment of entering the room and had instead escaped to accepted innuendoes and the playground of my mind. In Miriam I was supposed to reveal what I myself felt, my own truth, more than I could find in myself. This was a small reminder of the painful twenty-four hours each day that follow this same pattern. I told her about the excitement I feel each time the counselor Hedva pats me on the shoulder and speaks to me intimately. Afterwards I simply sprint joyfully down the corridor, happy, capering weirdly, a kind of supreme joy that only I know. During the rest of the day each time I touch on this intimacy in my imagination I can hear myself blurting out words like Hedva is wonderful, Hedva is something. At other moments I touch the untouchable moment and run away from it with sentences like "there is no one like Hedva" and bite my lip in order to extricate myself from this mess. And immediately

I fantasize that she is thinking good things about me and I fantasize that I am thinking good things about her and for a moment I get scared and think that perhaps I have ruined whatever I have achieved with her until now.

6

And at that rare, awesome, unforgettable moment I halted my train of thought and said to myself now say the real sentence, the right one out of all the bluffs and lies and fantasies that fill my mind, and at the time I felt the hurt and the insult. But halting the express train of fantasies calls for tremendous strength that I only have at those treasured moments that will never return. Thousands of seconds of unpleasant feelings that I don't want to feel and their only witness beyond the fraction of a second in which they appear and I feel them and they escape into a dream, that is the dream.

Na'ama is 18 and has been in the ward for four years. She came here following a suicide attempt. Na'ama is a strange name for my second roommate, especially as she has tried to kill herself on a number of occasions and isn't pleasant – which is what her name means – at all. She's a tough girl, too tough. I sometimes think she's too connected. She sees the truth too clearly and that's why she tried to put an end her life. She's a very intelligent girl, perhaps the most intelligent in the ward, and there's no shortage of smart guys here. I always believed that if they gave you insanity then they'd give you something good too. In the ward, when I look at all the faces in my mind's eye, most of them have been endowed with a great deal of sensitivity, the kind you can really find in those people who are obliged to compensate themselves for something else, for the insanity. She serves as committee chairperson and that's a

very eminent position. Her job calls for her to run the committee meetings and prove herself to the staff members who take part in the discussions and she does so with great skill. No, perhaps I'm mistaken. The committee's responses are supposed to be educational and she's like a tough cookie, cynical. A kind of unsmiling cynicism, it's hard to pull one over on her. I've never found love in her attitude towards me or the other adolescents. It seems that she's never been granted that gift. Cold, a smell of cold, a great deal of cold makes her extraordinarily precise, orderly and fair in her proposals to the committee. No favoritism, no pals, and when she breaks the committee's rules she's particularly tough on herself. From our long talks I understood that not only does she have no friends outside but she has none inside either. In other words, at night, in her dreams, in her inner world where she's completely alone, that's where she feels desolation and emptiness that are difficult to comprehend unless you experience them yourself. I tried to fathom out the meaning of her sense of loneliness and I asked her what she meant by desolation inside. She described something she found hard to put into words and I found even harder to grasp. She spoke of there being no connection between her nocturnal images. I didn't know which was worse, a lack of a relationship or one that was threatening like mine. But Na'ama insisted that there was nothing worse than ignorance. She was born to commit suicide, there *are* people like that, so she says. Her inner world doesn't allow her to live, she simply isn't capable of bearing the desolation that emanates from it. In the ward, she says, the threads of the spider's web that carry her soul have thickened a little but they still aren't strong enough to bear its entire weight. She's a thin girl, almost skeletal, of average height, her eyes are big and brown and her hair is black and cropped short in line with the dictates of the latest fashion. Yes, even in her short hair, that sometimes reveals wide expanses of her skull, the seeds of

self-destruction are hiding. Someone once asked her if she had cancer because the bald patches on her scalp were reminiscent of the hair loss suffered by people undergoing radiation treatment. In my view she has been through the hardest thing of all, she reached the lowest place of all from which there is no further retreat. She's been on a journey to death and has come back. Yes, she really did try to commit suicide and not only to call for help and win some attention. They found her by chance a short time after she had swallowed the pills. Zohar told me that her mother turned her into her own mother the moment she came out of her womb and apparently even beforehand, in her imagination. He told me that she used to take her to all kinds of places so she wouldn't be alone. I'll never know or understand what happens to a little girl who's turned into a mother at her own birth because I always was and always will be a little girl, while Na'ama always was and always will be a mother. No, not exactly, today when she's curled up in her bed with her wooly dog, her eyes fill with longing in supplication to the mother figure who will come and care for her, as though she is asking for a void to be filled. She never committed incest with her father but her imaginings are stronger than any reality. When he puts a finger on his cheek and asks her for another kiss, her body is filled with disgust, that's how she describes the French kiss he demands. During the time she was under the sole protection of "Mr. Death", as she calls him, she was hospitalized in a closed ward until the danger had passed. There they were forced to restrain her again and again so she wouldn't be able to try and kill herself. These scenes of being tied down with restraints were particularly erotic for her and were etched on her memory as extremely satisfying experiences of care and touching as they all held her tits. I was lucky enough to have met these two special girls. It seemed to me that I could learn a lot from them and I can put down part of my progress here to my relationship with

them and the stimulating talks the three of us had deep into the night. Rona lets me touch upon my drives, with Na'ama I touch death, but what do I give them? I'm just a little girl compared with them and yet they like being with me and talking to me, and this is something I can't understand.

At night, from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m., we're alone without the staff. One of the conditions of acceptance to the ward is the adolescent's ability to be without supervision during the night. We sometimes use this time to go wild and shed the tension that accumulates during the long daytime hours. During the day we're as exposed as laboratory mice to constant surveillance and strict recording of our behavior, movement and what we say. Sooner or later our nightly exploits reach the ears of the staff. They obey the law I formulated for myself: in a closed system (like the ward), in which the unconscious plays a central and controlling role, there are no secrets. They are uncovered sooner or later through associations, slips of the tongue, one type of behavior or another, and so forth.

The more seniority I acquire in the ward the more I feel that its special, confidential, organizational secrets are slowly revealed to me. The adolescents reach maturity and are discharged from the ward, and only then, so the story goes, do they suddenly understand the secrets of the universe. They suddenly experience all the thousands of small details of which the everyday and their being in the ward are made up as a single, whole and integrated entity that is brilliant and unblemished in its beauty. They suddenly realize that everything about them has been known from the outset, even things they didn't know about themselves. Everything suddenly seems to have been planned down to the minutest detail in an overall plan whose objective was to

place the discharged adolescent at the point he had reached through much striving. No, that's not the way things are. No one can unravel the secret of a person's internal forces and as I once read in a book, analysis is a joint adventure of patient and therapist and that is the *raison d'être* of our being here. No one knows the secrets of time or can forecast which point we will reach and how much progress we'll make by the time our discharge comes around.

It's not easy to become a counselor in the ward and they are carefully selected by Jeremiah and the analysts. They are terribly exposed during the eight hours of their daily shift. No, they're not protected like the analysts whose faces we don't even see as we lie on the couch. They're with us in everyday things, the day-to-day activities, and we can see right through them, that's what I feel. In the past I went through a sadistic period in which I used to systematically torment the counselors, especially the new ones who tended to lack confidence in themselves. Under circumstances I can't recall too well, apparently expecting greater assertiveness from him, I went to Danny the counselor and told him the truth, that I couldn't stand his lack of confidence; that I experienced his weakness in his every movement, in my entire existence and being. I couldn't understand how they had accepted him for the ward and I made him a party to these thoughts at the top of my voice in front of all the adolescents. He didn't move, he just froze, I could sense the "hole in the stomach" he felt. Some of the adolescents who were there disappeared and others were struck dumb. Their reactions told me that I had crossed the line. Then, I viewed these actions as youthful mischief and the realization of the drive of adventure I believed I had. Today, I'm petrified by bringing up these memories. They have echoes of a cold, alienated, frightened and threatening inner world that is inaccessible. Another time I was

convinced that Hedva the counselor had something against me. My inner powers of persuasion were so profound that no one could refute them and tell me that black was white. I felt her sideways, inquiring glance, the grudge she bore against me, in my bones. And then when she asked me at supper to pass her the pitcher, me and not someone else, always me, I couldn't bear it any longer. I shouted and screamed that she hated me, I got up and left the table, and my motivation for this action was discussed at length in analysis. So there's no doubt that we test and try every counselor who comes to us. They pass difficult entrance examinations and their entry into our family isn't easy. From my descriptions it might be concluded that we uninhibitedly maltreated them. But this is not so, the greater the hardships, the greater the need and the love. Saying goodbye to a counselor at the end of the year is a difficult and painful experience. When we go out to a movie or for a walk we will probably look about us in the city streets with the hidden objective of meeting them, they who were as close to us as brothers, who understood us and accepted us without question.

I feel degraded, threatened by the environment, they make me feel I'm not needed and I'm nothing, and Miriam rephrases it: You felt that... instead of they make me feel, and reminds me that my emotions are my own responsibility.

One of the big things in therapy is that I have discovered I can say anything and nothing happens. So I declared that once I've finished saying everything I have to say, I don't care if I die.

After Miriam had decided, upon my arrival at the ward, that I don't fit into this place, she outdid herself and taught me to rely on myself and decide on my own whether or not I wanted to stay here. At the time I shouted at her, didn't stop and said that she, the bitch, repeatedly gives me the same message that she thinks I don't fit in here. Yes, even Miriam couldn't stand my capacity for connecting to her unconscious and presenting it in blazing colors. But she continued to claim that what she thinks is of no consequence and the only thing that matters is what I think. So one fine morning when I reminded her of the sins of her past, she asked me if I now think that she thinks that I fit in here. But even so, when the rules of good and bad were placed before me, and I, the good one, thought that I fitted in and Miriam and all her associates and followers, in other words, the other bad members of the staff, think that I should be got rid of, Miriam didn't help me to make this split. She really and truly put the entire conflict on me. With much ceremony she gave me back the part I put on her, and refused to accept it. One part of you tells you that perhaps you don't belong here, she said repeatedly, and you are just putting it on me because it's easier for you. You really don't think that I belong here, I screamed at her again, only a deaf mute wouldn't detect it in your tone of voice and intonation. And then we talked and talked and talked and said that what she thinks doesn't matter and perhaps she has an opinion of her own, so what? Everyone has an opinion, about everything perhaps, but that isn't important. What's important is what I want and decide and think and feel, etc., etc., etc. Miriam really surpassed herself and helped me seek my own inner truth, as if her opinion is really unimportant. Miriam is a real mother.

No one at the end of the 19th century would have believed that there's a person in our ward who roams around and vehemently claims that there is no unconscious. He asks, virtually begs someone to do him a favor and prove to him that he's wrong because he really suffers a lot as a result and for this reason is ostracized from society. You are not observing the commandment of knowing thy unconscious, I said to him. But his years in the ward have simply strengthened his belief that being exists, and non-being does not, and the existence of non-being is impossible. Despite this, the miracle began to trickle through later on, he learned that one can't argue with feelings and began to increasingly appreciate the unconscious and respect the mysteries of his soul. At the time he simply thought that if he could only uncover his unconscious he would find the answers to all the questions that are connected to the universe's secrets and magic, those that even the Kabbalists refrained from delving into. Questions like, Is it worthwhile living? What is the point and meaning of life? And if we're talking about life - what should one do with it and things like that. But he gradually learned, under the supervision of Deborah, his analyst, what all of us already knew - the unconscious is not mystical, he painfully disclosed to me one chilly morning, it doesn't pretend to solve the riddles of human existence, it is simple, concrete and attainable.

At breakfast the masks fall again and the faces hidden behind them are revealed. Amos eats ravenously and voraciously heaps his plate with amazing speed and makes sounds of satisfaction and pleasure. His covert instinctual nature raises its head, inspired by the various nutrients. Matti, who recently has become a pious Jew, doesn't touch most of the dishes, or rather, touches only what he feels like touching. He is busy murmuring incessantly to himself, it's called the Blessing over Food. He

rushes to perform the ritual hand washing, all according to a set of rules he has created for himself, as if they were previously clear and known to him. This confusion that besets him beneath the camouflage of the sanctity of God, at times arouses gentle smiles at the corner of the mouths of the adolescents. Matti doesn't ask anyone to pass him this dish or that, he simply doesn't believe that they will, therefore he leaves his place at the table to assault the farthest end of it, something along the lines of the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, and there, at the far end, the tastiest delicacies are hidden. And then there is Shuki who says to everyone with great pleasure: "When you go to Shuki, take the strap." Shuki is convinced that there'll be nothing left for him. He falls on to the food and doesn't leave anything for anyone else. A kind of bulimia. I can well understand him, either because I like him or because I can identify with him. I also get this feeling sometimes that there'll be nothing left for me. Then the battle for survival develops, like that of prehistoric man, but more elegantly. The idea is to eat as much as you can and make the impression that you are not grabbing, you are actually eating modestly and with good table manners. In this battle for survival, he who is left with nothing may fall by the wayside and die because no one will care. How is it that a girl like me - who grew up in a home where not only was there no lack of food but also all material requests were fulfilled, instantly and religiously - can fear that the bread will be taken out of her mouth. There is no alternative but to assume that the answer is anchored in deprivation in another sphere. My feelings and sensations are evidently different from those of the Holocaust survivors or the 1905 Russian famine victims who really were starving. My starvation, as I see it, is really emotional. The only difference between me and Shuki is that I manage to overcome it, or rather, camouflage this drive while he is repeatedly reported by the adolescents to the committee for his

unrestrained behavior. On numerous occasions the response has been that he can eat only after everyone else has finished. The underlying idea was to demonstrate the paradox of existence to him. They, the adolescents, will finish their meal in peace, and you Shuki, will be left with heaps of food after all the others have finished and left the dining room. Shuki really was astonished each time he discovered that the table was still heaped with food even after the adolescents' foray. Shuki of course didn't learn a thing from these responses - he remained standing like a beggar, grinning like a fool, waiting until everyone else had finished eating. Like he was begging, leave something for me, leave something for me. Sometimes he would be banished from the room and would join the mewling cats, dying for a morsel of food, annoying those sitting at the dining room tables. It seems to me that the energy I expend and the tension I suffer thinking that nothing will be left for me consume the surplus energy in my body and the enormous quantities of food that I devour and leave me gaunt and emaciated. On the other hand, Hedva the counselor eats with her mouth closed and looks as if she isn't eating at all. I have been practicing this for years but am not even close to reaching her level of expertise. To eat without anyone seeing that you're eating - that's the epitome of gentility and eating esthetics.

From after breakfast until nine o'clock we make our beds and are free for other activities. I usually spend this time lying in bed. At this early stage of the day I am already engrossed in daydreams. I am lying in bed with my dada. Dada is just a plain sheet but it is better if it has a wide and protruding seam somewhere. This seam will see quite a lot of rubbing on my part, until it frays and turns into lint. A dada, as any baby knows, but all the grownups - except for me - have long forgotten, should never be washed. Washing kills its true scent and unique touch. The seam's pleasing

roughness is transformed by the washing machine cycles into something so impersonal that I regard it as treason. Miriam exploits my feelings for the dada and shows me, at the most unexpected moments, how I tend to treat people the same way I treat the dada - in other words, exploit them or throw them around or wish that the other person will adjust himself to me just like the dada does. And it does this with great skill. I sleep with it close to my body and if it doesn't adjust itself to me and my position, it is sentenced to be kicked into an inferior part of my bed, at my feet, or thrown out of bed onto the empty, cold floor in the terrible winter. When I hold the dada and feel its seam I am in a unique state of consciousness, my tongue tends to roll back so that it's underpart strokes the roof of my mouth. Maybe I am suckling at this moment, who knows? The dada is a machine which can stop time, in this cosmic state of excess sensuality in which I surrender to my sense of touch and sucking instinct, my eyes floating into the wastes of infinity, and the world comes to a halt. I am fixated on one moment in time, somewhere I was perhaps ages ago. I have my own paradise where I can come and go unhindered. This is perhaps my little acre of archeology, the remnants of the dinosaur from my earliest days that are long gone. Who would believe that this paradise lives in my bed. But the dada is mainly my own and was created for me, a kind of marvelous bridge between the inside and outside. One part of it is inseparable from my being but another is strange and distant and I am connected to it in the same way I am connected to the world. At the same time both me and not-me, only with a creature such as this can one maintain such a thrilling and unique relationship. What the others do at this time is unclear to me. I am simply and naturally immersed in pleasant and consoling thoughts and the dada is with me. The dada is actually a secret. Na'ama and Rona don't know of its existence, I never shared this experience with them. My shame just won't permit it. But when Rona once

innocently asked me what that crumpled sheet was doing in my bed all the time, I got awfully scared for one moment, she has connected with my most precious secret, the thought went through my mind, but even so I was silent. Later I understood that what you see from here you don't see from there. My paradise seems to be a crumpled sheet to her.

On the couch I was flooded with instinctual feelings. Miriam touched my sweet little weewee, caressed me there like a good mother. She asked me whether a good mother caresses the weewee. I drifted off in different directions, with considerable sexual intensities and contents. I wanted her to get mad at me, I wanted her to love me, I felt depleted after each outburst. My head is dizzy, everything is swirling around me, I said. She said that I don't take responsibility for anything, it's not that everything else is swirling. I wanted to take her picture and I planned to bring a camera or a mini-recorder and tape our meetings. She said that I want to take her picture or record her in order to feel that I have someone, otherwise I am not sure that something is really happening here. I promised I wouldn't do this without her consent because the analysis belongs to both of us. She will touch my weewee, touch my soul. I will record her. She is just a stinking whore who's fucked by all the nuts who come here, I told her, and was afraid that she'd get angry at what I was saying. She asked whether what is important is what she thinks, whether she should be appeased, and not what I think? Perhaps I really am allowed to say whatever comes into my mind, I thought, three years into analysis.

How will I ever I be a mother and bear that total responsibility? Me, who is chronically dependent on others and is enveloped in their wombs like a fetus? Miriam spoke about my feeling like an empty vessel that has nothing and can't give anything. Only when I left her did I understand that she was talking about feeling and not reality, so strong is my sense of nothingness.

What do we talk about during the meeting? Whatever we like, it's usually a friendly talk on mundane, everyday matters. Some, like Shuki, don't shut their mouths and others, like Amos, never open them, and there are those, like Simon, who never put in an appearance, while the rest are somewhere in between. After a while, whenever Jeremiah sees fit, he drops his bombshell. Quietly says a few words. At first, when I joined the ward, this whole ceremony seemed to be part of a mysterious cult. The adolescents talk about whatever they feel like and every now and then Jeremiah slips in an obscure sentence, and that's always provided that you manage to hear him. My ears have grown and my sense of hearing has become heightened in the ward. Today I can even hear things that haven't been said. I examined Jeremiah's sentence backward and forward, top to bottom, I turned it inside out and was still completely baffled. I remember one of the first morning meetings, the adolescents mentioned Ya'akov, one of the analysts who was going on army reserve duty, afterwards someone raised the question of a counselor who we all liked and who was leaving, and we concluded by talking about parting from one of the senior adolescents. These subjects were raised by the adolescents randomly and without prior planning. Someone suddenly mentioned that he had made a train journey and that he had enjoyed it. It was at this point that Jeremiah intervened. He spoke about the

experience of the railroad station, particularly the sense of transience, the lack of permanency, people coming and going, and parting. In this way he revealed our true feelings about recent events. On the face of it, the principle is simple: so long as we live with the bad and the painful we are “connected” and Jeremiah doesn’t have much to add. The moment the “turnabout” kicks in, which is what I call this device, a reversal occurs. The difficult contents are replaced, almost without our noticing it, by easier and more pleasant ones. Each time another adolescent cracks first and abandons the threatening inner world for a voyage on the seas of pleasant fancy. This time it was a train journey. Then Jeremiah intervenes with the objective of revealing the truth. As the priest’s well-known saying goes, when you feel bad it’s good and when you feel good it’s bad.

The ward runs as a closed group and at any given moment there are unconscious collective emotions that stir things up. These emotions, with all due respect to “the narcissistic injury”, are not exclusive to anyone but are collective to us all. Until this day, whenever I hear an interpretation of the group I tend to bare my fangs and exclude myself from it. The sense of exclusivity that flows in my veins does not allow me to recognize any collective emotion whatsoever. What Shirli blurted out about the chirping of the birds, and that Julia didn't get up on time this morning still doesn't show that I'm euphoric, I have no part in it at all. I can recall only a few occasions on which I let myself admit that I really do understand what they're talking about, and really can be helped by this revealing of the inner collective truth that is also part of me. Shuki, for example, doesn't stop talking, he takes up the entire space and doesn't leave room for anyone else. He's simply so anxious in the group that he can't keep quiet. It's not fair that they tell me what I'm feeling based on Shuki's

incessant chatter, it's a real *chutzpa*. It seems the staff think that this *chutzpa* works. Shuki represents the collective unconscious on numerous occasions because he doesn't muzzle himself. The fact that everything he says provides a trigger for the staff to prove that the opposite is true is a well-known ploy, but the truth is that it apparently takes a particularly long time, which I haven't yet completed, in order to understand this. Things happen in our communal life that affect us all and we even affect one another. When Rona goes crazy it's an experience that makes "a hole in the stomach", meeting madness just like that, face to face, when she changes her spots and her content at the same time. Only someone who has experienced something like that can understand its collective effect. But there's no need to go looking for extreme examples. The dishes that have been standing in the sink for a few days are nothing but damning evidence of "giving your life in the face of the enemy," an atmosphere that has pervaded the ward over the past week. The numerous notes to the committee are a reliable seismograph indicating that the irritability level in the ward is rising, we only have to find out why. Building renovations, a clogged-up drain and the cancellation of a trip to Jerusalem's Old City under the circumstances of the last few days really are collective traumas for all of us, and can't be ignored. Perhaps the awakening spring in the wonderful place we live in, the chirping of the birds and the sweet scents, raise, as is well known, the sexual receptiveness hormone level and imbues us with a strange gaiety. We have to be aware of that, too. And so again and again I discover the power of "the turnabout" in both the group and my personal analysis. At the morning and afternoon meetings, whose structure is identical, bursts of laughter and high spirits replace old pains, and the staff, headed by Jeremiah, put up a heroic, persistent and untiring fight against our denials.

The old hands among us have a special knack for recognizing our common fate and similar inner worlds. They sometimes recall memories and events from the ward's history that prove, again and again, that nothing changes and that a wonderful, mysterious regularity guides us. The threads of the unconscious, its warp and weft, not only unite us adolescents at any given moment but they're also a continuation of past events that are connected to events yet to be revealed to us, in the future's code we are gradually being shown. That's how the ward exists as an independent entity, and like everyone it has a past, present and future, a kind of strange continuity hidden behind the white walls that gives validity and power to everything that happens, and which pushes us forward so that we too will become, in the course of time, hysterical, sorry, historical figures, inscribed in the annals of the ward. The old hands represent the collective unconscious, but in this Rona has a quality of her own and she's excellent at evoking it. I mentioned earlier that she doesn't have parents and the ward is her home, so she is wonderfully sensitive to everything that goes on. On Friday she says goodbye to us sadly when some of us go home and welcomes us back with a smile on Sunday morning.

Amos habitually picks his nose when the group meets. He sits curled up in himself and his famous windbreaker that he wears even during the summer heat waves. He apparently believes that the windbreaker breaks the heat waves too. Yes, he sticks his finger deep into his nose, looking for diamonds. He sits on the edge of the couch, his legs crossed, withdrawn, with his gaze fixed on a hidden point in the ceiling. His hand is now stuck deep into his pants for a change. This guy has some autoerotic characteristics I've always admired. He could sustain himself as an autarkic economy, he doesn't need anyone else in the whole world. I recently dreamt that he

lives in a castle on the hill with huge doors. I knock on the door and he refuses to open it. Yes, Amos is a particularly romantic character. His piano playing is so full of longing that I can't but see him sitting playing in some pub or other or in a smoke-filled cellar in Paris of the sixties, the Paris of Jean Paul Sartre. That's where I'd put him and my love for him. In any event, he doesn't open his mouth at these meetings. The only thing that moves are his legs, that twitch from the Arten they give him to prevent the side effects of the Parfenan they give him against delusions. And to prevent that nervous twitching of his legs, the only thing to do is tie them up and then the entire ward will calm down. In contrast, Shuki doesn't stop talking. He laughs, smiles and folds his arms like a veteran staff member. There's no doubt that he's always asking for the next slap. It's been said of Shuki that because he's so frightened of someone, he's likely to go up to him and give him a ringing slap in the face. In replication, he's amazed by his ability to forecast what will happen. "I knew he'd beat the shit out of me," he always says. In the group, when he's told that he doesn't stop talking, his voice carries him higher and higher to the asymptotic intensity and entertainment of the skies. Only then is he able to calm down and relax.

During the meetings it is usually Jeremiah who talks and the rest of the analysts sit like mummies and keep quiet. Now and again one of the analysts will muster up the courage to voice his criticisms and interpretations of what has been said, but then it seems to me that Jeremiah is not very happy. I have never heard a word from a counselor at any of these meetings. The situation is actually much more complex than I'm ready to admit. First of all I believe that his attitude towards me is special and sympathetic. In my memory I record every remark he makes that might imply that he has used something I said even though his use of it might be contrary to what I said. I

try to catch his eye from the corner of mine and tell him, look, both of us understand what's going on, we're playing the same game by the same rules. In brief, I experience Jeremiah's entire being in the group, it merges with me and it's as if I never existed. There I live for him and try to behave, as it were, according to the code he dictates to me. In this way, when Jeremiah speaks to me it seems that he's speaking to himself as I am a small, insignificant part of him. I have no desires of my own and no existence at this moment, I am him, sorry, he is me. So I feel like a thief and I'm terribly ashamed to hear even a hint of his knowing that I've stolen something from him, or rather his personality.

I remember one terribly hot summer, the yellow *hamsin* scorched everything and we were collapsing under the burden of the heat and the absence of counselors. We talked about the lack of counselors at the meeting. One dishy counselor hadn't shown up after passing the interview. Was it because of the low pay they get, or perhaps because of the stringent screening? Miriam's sharp ears caught the right note and connected us to our fear that the counselors didn't come because of us, because we're naughty children, and it seemed to us that it isn't easy to work with us and encounter our insanity. What do they really say about us in the big city, who are we? asked Shuki tremblingly. And at another stormy, noisy meeting, we interrupted one another, I was accused of sitting on the toilet with the door open, and Na'ama was charged with going into the boys' rooms after hours. Jeremiah's response threaded all the different subjects together, and emphasized the common in them. He spoke about people invading the privacy of others, he revealed Rona's feeling of "Daddy's not home" and the hidden craving in the ward for a "rod of iron" or an "iron fist", as Shuki always says.

Precisely after half an hour Jeremiah gets up. He allows you to complete a sentence but no more than that. He makes a sharp turn towards the door followed by the rest of the staff, while the counselor taking minutes is still busily scrawling the last words spoken. Numerous drama groups have deliberated the secrets of Jeremiah's body language as he jumps from his chair, goes through the door and disappears. There are years of practice, so it appears, behind these psychoanalytical acrobatics.

Shirli is a strange adolescent. She was accepted into the ward so that after long, serious therapy she would be able to understand exactly how sick she is. That's the objective, so it seems to me, that the staff have set themselves in this difficult case. Every therapist's true ally is the small part that remains sane in the insanity. With Shirli, that part is rapidly dwindling to zero. There was one advantage in her psychosis. Things she said were often proved to be correct six months later. They were completely misunderstood at the time she said them. At the last meeting, Shirli said she felt that they had given up in her case and were going to discharge her shortly.

9

Night fell on my house of dreams and I found myself suffering from cancer. I had only one month to live. I could feel it in my stomach, my chest, I didn't know what to do and how to live my last month. It was terribly frightening. I went to mommy and daddy's bed to ask for help. I found two duplicate daddies in the bed. Only two daddies, no mommy. I got very frightened seeing two daddies, it's not normal. I asked the nearest daddy where mommy was and he pointed to the far end of the bed.

The face that daddy pointed towards was wearing glasses, blurred, with no identity. Suddenly I saw that it was really mommy.

Daddy spoke about death and sick people were standing on line, waiting to die. He said to me "Don't be sentimental", and I answered him, why, is that forbidden now too? I felt it was a pity that I had to miss out on analysis. I immediately tried to photograph my feelings, to exhaust everything before I die. I didn't know that death's seed was rooted within me, the cancer inside. I hadn't felt it when I was healthy. I tried, during the six months left, to live through the rest of my life, all the things that would have happened. He said we would meet in the next world and that it's not so terrible, he was encouraging. He said that we would meet more often there and it's all right and there is no point in asking for an extension. I asked why they hadn't told me the truth, why had they hidden what the world was really like from me. But daddy continued to act with confidence and control and did a lot of stupid things before I died.

In the next room my wedding was going on. Someone was marrying me just a few days before I was about to die of cancer. They were saying that I was a poor thing and put out for everyone. Among the tombstones there was one very impressive one with my name on it. It was empty, engraved with a plain picture of a book. It said that she had wanted to become a great writer.

To cope with the impossible, with my being enveloped in a misty cloud through which I can't see whom I am fighting against. My attempt to pick myself up together with the chair I am sitting on. And mainly the distortion within which I live, admit it

and at the same time continue believing in its objective existence. A kind of dream, the reality of which I am convinced of and for a moment I awaken, alarmed by this nightmare and understand the enormity of the deceit, before I once again dive down into an unknown period of time, back into the gratifying hell. The few awakenings within this continuum of madness that occur in analysis or at other special moments are a scant and insignificant collection taken from the existence I have invented. I try to control, control my mind, my dreams, my collection of associations, Miriam, my environment, and mainly myself of course. A kind of heroic attempt, desperate and dramatic, to overrule the conspiracy, and as I am imprisoned within it and it constitutes the picture of my entire world, I have no object for comparison that can prove the depths of the abyss into which I have fallen. No one is aware of the fact that the earth revolves on its axis and the person who is enveloped in madness cannot comprehend his situation if we don't give him a reference point, that stable place, which only with its help can one move the earth and extricate oneself from madness. An inner voice, Miriam's, is suddenly speaking from my gut: "the most pitiable person in the world," I hear her say. She is willing to accept the fact that things are not easy for me, but under no condition will she accept drama. I still don't possess a scale for gauging distortion so I find it hard to assess the extent of my difficulties and disturbance in relation to other adolescents, but each to his own suffering and it may well be that there is no way of comparing torment. I tried to control my dreams so they wouldn't attack me from behind, I set my alarm clock in order to see what really is going on, at regular intervals, in the darkness. Thus I discovered the full extent of the distortion in which I live. A simple and consistent translation of events into a recurring code of terror and violence. Beyond the different stories, beyond the large degree of variance, which pervade our variegated world, the inner experience, again

and again the atmosphere in which I live, boring in its monotony. I understood that this is the basis, my starting point for contact with the world. I discovered that everyone lives in an atmosphere. A kind of inner world which characterizes him alone, this is his story, his and his alone. Zohar lives mainly in an inner prison, a prisoner-warder relationship is familiar to him. Na'ama - in an internal desert, even violent relationships don't exist there, but in this barren desert of her existence, her survival indicates a considerable amount of strength. Amos, so it seems, his inner experience is coldness and distance, this I guess by his uncompromising longings for connection and contact of which he is unaware and in which he regularly destroys any chance of attaining. Rona feels herself strong, able to withstand the forces that threaten her. Shuki discovered the trick - when he is sad during the day, he has pleasant dreams at night and when he is high during the day, he pays the price at night. Recently he tried to sell this trick to Amos, who enjoys this sado-masochistic prank. Amos simply isn't capable of deceiving his world of dreams and feels frustrated that he is regularly one step behind. He pretends to be sad, depressed and downhearted during the day, and then at night an even more depressing dream appears and proves that he actually immensely enjoys the longings that stream from his eyes. And when he is really depressed, wonder of wonders, who would believe that pleasant sensations swell in his hidden world and spread their wings under the protection of darkness. Shuki sometimes laughs in his dreams, incredible: there are people who are so different from me and their dreams can be comical.

I received a wonderful gift from Miriam in the way she relates to my dreams. Before I got to the ward I used to marvel at the unfathomable color, drama and inner richness. This was an experience of self-admiration, the artist at his best. And now I repeatedly

understand what I felt and what my dreams expressed so well, in a way that no one in the world, no other medium can so accurately pinpoint the nature of the feelings I experienced. This is the way I used to admire my feelings and what is greater than knowing thyself in this original way? True, if not for this experiential, intellectual delving into my dreams, I would never have guessed the enormity of the inner threat that I carry. I was amazed at this new inner revelation that seemed to me the most thrilling journey I had ever set out on, a journey to the depths of the soul, to magical worlds, a bridge over troubled abysses, towards the unknown that dwells inside. She stole this pleasure from me, repeatedly pointed to the fact that I regard my world of dreams as if it is real and not a distortion of reality. I dreamed that I was petting and I told her about it with satisfaction and much pleasure as if it was really happening: she went out of her way to remind me that she is not willing to have this kind of relationship with me. When I took delight over my innocence and wretchedness in my dream, I was being chased, she showed me my shameful mistake as if I were psychotic and actually no one was scheming against me and it's my distortion which I experienced daily as life-threatening. To take responsibility is an appropriate expression for this gap between the distortion I generate in every human interaction and the catharsis I reach from this delight with the distortion, which gives it the validation of reality. Really, every dream is a kind of distortion of reality but here the quality and quantity of distortion comes into the picture. In one dream I watched Julia's death and the eulogy delivered at her graveside, I told her about this sorrowfully. She directed me to the simple fact that I had created this dream and this means that I have a wish to kill Julia. She simply transformed my feelings of delight and indulgence in my wretchedness and innocence that were my dream world into my putting my aggression on somebody else. But despite this some good has come from

that eventful period of writing down dreams in the middle of the night. In analysis, very often when Miriam directs me to the extent of the insult, hurt and pain that I feel, these dreams of yesteryear serve as proof that these painful feelings – whose existence are hard to accept or believe in - really exist within me. True, in a dream insult is transformed into a life-threatening situation and minor apprehension turns into a deathly danger but that's already what I make of them.

10

Once upon a time they used to burn witches, I thought to myself and then remembered Miriam. She has all the signs of a witch: she deals with the arcane, says things that can't be understood and rules everyone in the ward with a rod of iron. She looks like a witch too. Something in the way she looks doesn't change with the passage of time; today she looks to me the same as she did on the first day I saw her in the ward – a temptress ready to sting. But in my opinion before they burned witches they used to stand all the men of the tribe over the age of ten in a line naked, the witch would be stripped in full view of everyone and then they would all have their way with her. That's the punishment she deserves, to be degraded just once. Miriam's voice rings out from within me and dries the moisture in the folds of my stomach: "You probably feel very degraded in my shadow," she says.

How did I get to the ward? Many years ago a friend of mine asked me why didn't I get psychological treatment. I was hurt and insulted, I said what am I, crazy? Time changed things and the shame gradually turned into a mark of respect when I discovered that all the good guys are in therapy. I changed my therapists at a fast rate and I blame them for a lot. Today I mainly wonder why a psychologist can't say I'm

unable to treat a case like yours or try someone else, perhaps a hospital ward, they have more tools and greater power. They should have said, to cope with you we need a team, one therapist will collapse and drop dead. He won't be able to withstand the force of your provocations. You and your tricks must be under supervision, you must be given continuous daily feedback that will enable you to make progress. It's desirable to distance you from your home, from the emotional snafu that's tied around your neck like a noose and which doesn't allow you to look at yourself, and so on and so forth. I was but a step away from total disappointment, asking for real help in therapy. True, I wasn't an easy case. I sat opposite him, looking at his threatening hero's beard, and it was clear that all he wanted was to have intercourse with me. I didn't hesitate to ask him how much he was willing to pay for that pleasure. With another one I didn't stop staring at his crotch, I told him I'd grab him there. I'd try to divert my glance, but it with its surfeit of independence returned like a released spring to that unbearable place. It was difficult, embarrassing and degrading. Miriam says it's enjoyable too. These emotions dominated me and flooded my senses. I shared my emotions with the therapist, but from my point of view the plot against me, that is the placing of his sex organ in the center of the room, didn't stop. In another instance my eyes were fixed on the particularly beautiful bosom, the deep exposed cleavage between my therapist's breasts. Those days I was lost. Sentences like, "I understand that it's hard for you", that the best of them managed to blurt out under my sweeping intensities fell on my head like pleasant raindrops. I didn't understand what they were talking about, they were embarrassed, metaphorically screwed by me, and fell dead at my feet and I celebrated my victory with joy at their misfortune. I am the one who knows their perverse thoughts beforehand. My monologue with myself will suffice because they don't have anything to give me. That was when I decided to go for

broke. I heard about the ward, everyone said it was “the” place. I asked to be admitted and undergo analysis. I saw this step as a direct continuation of my victories and exploits on the road that would lead me directly to fame. I am again doing the best, strongest and most significant thing, psychoanalysis. This is where the miracle occurred, which not for its own sake became for its own sake. I came to the ward to seek the kingdom and I found the asses, that is to say myself. Perhaps people who look for analysis for its own sake don’t really need it? Deep down I possibly felt that something wasn’t right but I couldn’t put a name to it or put my finger on it. I was hospitalized, perhaps because I wanted just once to do something total and that’s part of my problem. My parents, of course, are a story in themselves. Their only point of agreement with the Nazis, at whose hands they suffered so much, is that the Nazis viewed psychoanalysis as a Jewish plot, while my parents were satisfied with just a plot. For them, psychology was a way of ensnaring the perplexed in a kind of net that made them go on incriminating themselves again and again as they lay on the couch, thus providing telling proof of their need to continue therapy. My mother used to keep a precise account of the number of bicycles, clothes and cars my psychologists had bought and which had been financed by them. At a later stage my parents used to collect evidence, press cuttings and studies that showed that there is no real benefit in therapy. And there’s a great deal of literature that goes in that direction. The truth is that the studies never interested me, I simply felt that I needed it to solve my problems and move on. Even though the amount of this progress was negligible, there was no other way. In my parents’ view, natural sciences were the essence of life while the humanities dealt with the illusions and vanities of this world. In their humble opinion Einstein was a genius while Freud’s genius was in confusing everyone. For how could you “take yourself in hand” as they used to say, if, according to Freud, you

were not even master in your own home, and an unconscious exists that will attack you from behind and contradict everything you say that's of any value.

I went into the room and Miriam's blouse was open a little, on the couch I told her so. I added that I didn't envy her feeling of being scrutinized by me all the time. She said that I'm familiar with that feeling because it's what people had been doing to me all my life when they told me "not with your hands", when they checked how I ate and how I smelled. I said that at least I finally know something about her, and that's how she feels because I feel inside what I allow her to feel. She said I'd turned it around. That because I feel transparent and can be seen through, I'd turned it into a personal victory in which I know how she feels. Later I told her about the dream, it was something about Hungary and it had been cold there and someone had worn three pairs of socks, and I had thought that I longed to walk barefoot on the hot sand. As I allow myself to go more with my associations in analysis lately, mainly because I do what she wants and not because I believe anything will come of it, I went on talking about the three pairs of beautiful socks that Na'ama had knitted for her baby niece. I got stuck, I think, and when I wanted to answer her question about what Hungary reminded me of I answered something about India and said that there were children starving there. She said that I wanted to be a baby and have all my physical needs taken care of. Hungary reminds you of the word "hunger" and you also mentioned the feeling of cold. I answered her that any minute now I'll get an association from her in Yiddish and I hadn't imagined that I had associations in English. Only the next day was I able to speak openly about the intolerable insult of someone knowing your mind and your thoughts better than you, breaking in there and doing what he wished

with your most private associations. I understood that this is my resistance to bringing my dreams and following them with my thoughts.

“The only sure thing that comes out of a therapy session”, wrote Simon in his diary, “is another therapy session. I have therefore decided to analyze myself like Freud. Why should I let them all cut me when I can do what the Patriarch Abraham did and circumcise myself.”

11

Someone deliberately introduced Amos to the death game with a dead-end trap. Make an effort, make an effort, he was told, don't remain passive and idle. Try to break loose, don't rest, don't give up, be like Sisyphus. This is when Amos tries to put an end to his life, escaping both the trap and the game, but for some reason this too is impossible, and then, when he realizes that he'll have to return to the besieged city, that lost Atlantis of feelings, and spend the rest of his life there, he wanted to take his own life and for some reason smiled. This abysmal emptiness - the emptiness of oblivion, the emptiness that only one who has left his emotional world deep deep down in the bottomless sea can feel - was his other alternative. And then, during that horrendous morning meeting, the radio in the background playing *Mother Earth*, I saw Amos drop his head between his knees and bury his face in his hands.

I have spent three years in the ward and at this stage I feel that I am beginning to form a more integrated and complete picture of it and the psychoanalytic process. There are ten adolescents in the ward now, five boys and five girls. Na'ama, Rona and I in one room, Shirli and Julia in another. The boys: Shuki, Simon and Amos live in one

room and Zohar and Matti live in another. In my opinion the adolescents are clearly divided into two groups: one made up of those who regularly take medication and the other - those who don't. Rona, Amos, Shirli, Simon and Julia take medication and the others don't. Dispensing medication is clear proof of the inability of psychoanalysis to provide salvation in the more severe cases. Medicine is taken for delusion - psychosis in the professional jargon - when an adolescent can't differentiate between imagination and reality. It took me a long time to establish this distinction. Those who are not psychotic are neurotic, in other words, just plain normally uptight. Shirli told me a joke that helped me understand the difference between the two. What's the difference between a psychotic and a neurotic? A psychotic isn't sure whether two and two equal three, four or maybe five. The neurotic knows that it's four but it annoys him! Yes, this really annoys me.

Rona believed that there was a stranger in her room all the time, Simon - that he was being chased and that his sex organ was going to fall off, Julia - that her soul didn't belong to her plump body but rather transferred itself into that of a warthog waiting to be redeemed, Shirli claims she can understand the language of the feeble, sorry - feline, and that a wall separates her from the world around her, an imaginary wall, of course, which she experiences as very real. And Amos, he tells a strange tale, I don't really understand why he is on medication. The purpose of medication is to reduce these thoughts as much as possible. To the best of my knowledge medication is irrefutable proof of "a brain dysfunction" because its ingredients improve the condition. Most of the time these bizarre thoughts are hidden because of the drugs but sometimes they emerge and then the adolescent is in a sort of twilight zone in which what's right and what isn't is indistinct to him. Shirli used to tell me again and again

about the wall which she felt existed between us and would immediately add: "But I know you'll say it's bullshit." In our daily routine we forget that some of us are on medication and what might happen if it was taken away. A psychotic adolescent who comes to the ward before taking medication - that's an awesome sight. He simply lands here aboard a spaceship from another planet, from somewhere in his world of dreams. The best analogy that I can find to comprehend this condition is that moment when you wake up in the middle of the night, struggling with a nightmare and it isn't yet clear to you whether it's real or only a dream. That's how they live there, in this constant struggle, trying to enlarge reality's small island that's within them. With Rona, one time I had the honor of seeing her fall apart, she went crazy and at the same time knew what was happening to her. Lunatic asylums are full of people who are conscious of themselves, Zohar once told me. She both believed and didn't believe that her bed was crawling with snakes, and I was afraid that they would slither into the wrong place. Shirli is constantly in a dream state, while this happens to Rona only rarely. Julia conceals her thoughts, either because she is afraid that we are allied with her mother against her or because she simply is trying to fight on her own until her strength gives out. Sometimes someone breaks down, totally. In ancient times they thought it was an evil spirit or demons taking over one's soul, when this happens the adolescent is taken over completely by his world of dreams and needs help either by locking him up or by stupefying him with tremendous doses of drugs and tranquilizers. Not every adolescent is accepted in the ward, there are three months of observation during which they decide whether or not you fit in and can go through analysis. Conditions that are too serious, usually severe cases of psychosis, are sent to a closed ward and don't come here. What can you do, it's good that they admit to the limitations of psychoanalysis. On the other hand, minor cases that don't need a

framework such as ours - hospitalization in a "therapeutic community" - are not accepted either. An adolescent who falls apart is sometimes sent to a closed ward for a specific period, until things quieten down, there he is stuffed with medication and they wait for him to calm down. They say that each falling apart of this kind is an additional deathblow to the adolescent's chances of rehabilitation and his ever being able to function normally in society on his return. They say that each such breakdown is a kind of fire in the brain that damages the healthy parts and makes the chances of recuperation more difficult.

Medication is supposed to prevent these fires and short-circuits, so an adolescent who doesn't take his medication religiously or plays games, is reported to the committee. It isn't very nice to have to swallow your bitter pills, a few times a day, in a ritual ceremony. The adolescents are called to the clubroom and each one takes his dose. Shirli used to hide her pills under her tongue and spit them out later. She was convinced that no one knew better than she what was good for her. She spoke with great rage about the medication's side effects, muscle laxity, dryness in her mouth and leg spasms, and claimed that what would finish her off were the large quantities of medication that she had been taking over the years, with no apparent improvement in her condition. Na'ama was perceived as someone who hoarded tranquilizers in her drawer during the period she was on them. The memory of her previous suicide attempt by swallowing pills left no room for doubt. She was reported to the committee on this matter. Reporting to the committee is a way of telling the adolescent that if you are not mature enough to take responsibility for yourself, then we, the rest of the adolescents and the staff, are forced to take action. Taking medicine is not exclusively your own personal problem, you live among other people.

It seems to me that our place is the only one where psychoanalysts are the people who actually decide what medication and dosage should be administered. A hospital doctor serves only as a rubber stamp. In the battle between psychiatrists and psychoanalysts who are trained as psychologists but have no medical training, we are the only place I know of where psychoanalysis has the upper hand. Decisions on medication are considered with the utmost care, and the interaction between the adolescent's condition and the kind and amount of medication he will take takes place against the background of understanding his emotional world and a wish to create a delicate balance between the forces working within him. Too much medication will impede the stimulation of content in analysis, repress it and make it unattainable. Too little medication may cause another breakdown like the one the adolescent experienced in the past, if not for which he would never have been here in the first place, it's playing with fire. In general, we live on a desert island in a world controlled by psychiatrists and their medicine. It may well be that the ward is unsuitable for most of the adolescents who have difficulties, in the same way that analysis is only suitable for the smallest minority of the population.

They don't give a diagnosis of illness in the ward. At times we, or our parents, want to know the name of what we suffer from, but we don't get an answer. Instead the analyst tends to help us clarify why the label, name, definition are so important to us. It's important because the name of the illness indicates the chances of recovery. It is well known that schizophrenia is incurable and on top of that one has to take medication all one's life. When this happens the analyst will refer us, in most cases, to ourselves, do we think we have made progress since we arrived here, maybe we feel that we have no more strength to cope, and what point do we believe we will

reach by the time we are released from the ward. I regard this as a compliment, we are too complex to be arranged in little boxes. Here life determines diagnosis and the chances of improvement. After years in the ward there are no conflicts on the subject of diagnosis, the facts speak for themselves, it is clear what you are capable of and what you are not. With all due respect to the real belief that prevails here that one can change, it still seems to me that they exaggerate a bit about not divulging existing information. Medicine has not cured anyone, and my threatened inner world will not be transformed into one of warmth and loving. When I frequently asked Miriam what she thinks I will achieve when I am discharged, she answers me: "Do you think I'm a prophet?" Dispensing medicine is a definite diagnostic action. Whoever is not psychotic will not get medication, except for the occasional tranquilizer, when needed. To the best of our knowledge the psychotics among us will have to take medication for the rest of their lives, be very careful like someone who has suffered a heart attack which might recur, and no bright future awaits them. Those here who are not psychotic suffer from an inner distortion, what they call here a borderline case. Maybe they mean bordering on psychosis. My division is based on my limited knowledge of the environment, and Na'ama says, as usual, that reality is far richer than the dichotomic divisions to which I am addicted. In any case, the distinct difference between us, the various types of psychotics and distorted people, frequently arouses hidden envy it is difficult to talk about. Fate and luck, which were not fairly distributed in the world, are not distributed equally in the ward either. Only Rona can tell me how much she envies me my great chances of progressing and improving and leaving this place "healthy" as she calls it. She promised to take me one day when I grow up to the adult psychiatric ward just over the hill, there, she said, I will be able to see the vision of the End of Days. We, the really sick people, unlike you, will

decorate the ward's entrances like potted plants. We will simply become vegetables after that final conflagration when flaming emotions burst forth. Eyes staring, heads empty and any kind of experience, even sexual, will be ours no longer. Time will tell, says Matti, who believes in Rona's sexual prophecies that fantasies will fade in comparison with reality. I feel as if I belong to another world, not to the dark world of the psychotics. I struggle night and day to understand my inner world and the distortion that guides my every breath and action. In my dreams I discover to my astonishment, again and again, how great is the inner threat I carry with me every second of the day. No one can tell me the extent of the difficulty involved in this incessant battle or the degree of humiliation in discovering that you are a misfit, different and so distorted inside. What can the psychotics say? I at least succeed in repressing my dreams and fears and can ignore them. I know I'm not a frog, and even if it seems to me that someone is hiding under my bed, I know it's only a hallucination. And here I meet them, those who believe in all the nightmares. They, whose intensities I meet on a daily basis, I bow my head before their suffering, it is not easy living in their tumultuous world, without being able to step down onto the ground of reality, the suffering is terrible. How the analysts cope with this is beyond me. Their strength is in their helping us to understand our feelings. How will Shirli be saved if she understands that the wall existing between her and her environment is one that she builds in her imagination as a result of her feelings of loneliness and inner emptiness? She really believes that this wall exists. I struggle with the feelings I invent and create, while they struggle with a reality that doesn't exist. They hear voices, they see visions. Even if their healthy part understands the emotional source of these imaginary things, as we understand our dreams and here is where analysis

can help, then who can save them in this battle between the healthy and the sick parts, in determining what reality really is?

Again and again a face, a word, an intonation that cause me to withdraw. Why am I like this? How many years of analysis will it take to rid myself of these fears and become a human being? But outside people are not so difficult, it will be easier there. The truth is that Na'ama, my roommate, imparts these feelings to everyone while I get these feelings from everyone. She tells me that I am hurt by everything while I feel that she hurts everything. Perhaps Na'ama is my real chance of coping with my problems. She deserves thanks because in my encounter with her my problems intensify to such a degree that I can't ignore or deny them anymore. There are advantages in our mutual reality. In a normal society there would be far less drama, action and color. Do I still love this blossoming of youthful energy or do I join the ancient Chinese sage who uttered the terrible curse "I wish you an interesting life." I'll never know.

12

At the beginning of my analysis I adopted the existentialist position which was the only one that respected my existence and gave meaning to my life and suffering. I was important, I was free to choose and more than anything else, I was far superior to Man and Beast. Then, Miriam faced me armed with her psychoanalytical weapons and sparks flew from our clashing swords. When I said if you will it, it is no legend, she said that my desires were omnipotent. When I screamed that no one is going to tell me what to feel or what to do and I'm the one who will decide my fate and my future, she continued lashing me with her short sentences that I didn't want to see, I

refused to listen and found it hard to live with the difficulty. No one's going to take my suffering away from me, I said. The tormented martyr?, she said, no one in the world suffers like you. As my freedom flowed in my veins and filled my sails the adolescents were also with me. They all believed that no one could withstand my willpower. When I claimed that I wanted to continue analysis, she asked me if I was suitable. It's not enough to want to undergo analysis, I said, maybe it's an innate trait in the genes where it's written in advance if you can undergo analysis. But for many more days she continued asking whether I was suitable.

Miriam's room was dark, and this made me think that there was an electrical fault. On the analysis couch I discovered a change, at its foot, next to the cushions there was a folded woolen blanket. For a moment I thought that it was another decoration in addition to the flowers she likes that decorate her room in beautiful and unusual vases. I pointed out the change. She asked me what the blanket was for and I replied without believing what I was saying that perhaps it was cold because there was a power failure and the electric heater in her room isn't working so it's for wrapping up in. She didn't confirm what I said but it was clear to me that that was the reason. I was surprised by the intensity of the discovery. That *she* would give *me* a blanket? Any minute now she'll give me a breast. And perhaps we'd get under the blanket and play Mommies and Daddies like a couple of children. I was captivated by the intensity of the excitement in the discovery. Yes, she really does care about me. But why does it seem so strange, I thought to myself, she's only put a blanket there because it's cold. I plucked up my courage and covered myself with it. I had discovered the blanket's real role by chance because I had so much wanted that invitation to be sick and cared for to be there that I was afraid of seeing it next to me. She spoke about my difficulty

in thinking by myself at these moments and of my need for her to tell me what the blanket was for because I'm unable to think for myself.

Simon is an interesting case, he came to the ward about eighteen months ago, didn't speak to a soul and didn't open his mouth. He was shut up in his room and hardly came out except to go to the bathroom. Amos and Shuki, his roommates, said that he spent hours gazing out of the window, looking terribly troubled, perhaps thinking, with perspiration covering his forehead even when it was cold. After about six months in the ward no one yet felt that they knew Simon, including his roommates. The mystery surrounding him and his glorious isolation created a whirl of rumor and speculation. Everyone wanted to get close to him but he kept to himself and didn't allow it. There was a staff meeting about him. No one knows what was said to him there, but after the meeting he occasionally began coming to the various activities although he sat at the side and didn't actively participate. In retrospect it's clear that he was very frightened of us and so he kept his distance. Miriam is his analyst too, and in that respect we're brother and sister. I take the trouble to attend the sessions like clockwork, but he tends to be late and even not turn up. The compulsive devoutness with which I count the seconds on my watch until I knock on the door stands out against the background of his disregard and lack of concern. Yes, I learned from him that there is another way although both of us apparently exaggerate each in his own way. We have become a little closer recently and I've had a number of heart-to-heart talks with him. He shamelessly defines himself as a scientist, which is, he says, the way one should relate to life. You must think about, consider, and mainly plan every action, examine its results and thus continue advancing in the battle for life. Talking to him is strange, he writhes like a snake, reveals little of himself and his

secrets and conceals a great deal more. He writes a lot, it looks like diagrams, arrows and various other geometrical forms. He has a wonderful memory and demonstrates it at the most unexpected moments with the help of citations of various things said in the ward. He claims that he remembers every sentence he has ever uttered, where and under what circumstances. In his own way he manages to get into trouble with everyone, especially the committee. He is simply incapable of saying one simple direct sentence, and when he is told to do something, he almost certainly won't do it right. Instead, he is fully conversant with all the rules of the ward, their sub-clauses and precedents, and he is capable of proving to you that black is white. A discussion with him on any apparently simple and completely clear subject will, I sadly admit, always end up with me doubting my own judgment. Facing him on your own is to drive yourself out of your mind. It's lucky we're a group of adolescents and staff and even then he manages to fool us more than once. I once tried to understand what happens to me in discussions with him when I feel inside that I'm beginning to lose my stability. It seems to me that he leads the discussion into thousands of irrelevant details that blur the picture and get you lost, and you can't see the wood for the trees. When a counselor asks him to lay the table, when we're short of monitors, he proves to him with the help of ancient charts and tables that there is someone else in the ward who has filled in on the duty roster one time less than him. When we're told not to get back into bed after morning exercises, you can find him laying on top of his bed, and when he's asked not to raise the volume on the clubroom stereo deck beyond the line marked on it next to the volume control, he can prove, according to the theory of sets, that he has gone over the line by only a hairsbreadth.

It's difficult for me to judge his knowledge of mathematics and physics because when he shows me things I thought I already understood, I always end up confused. But Shuki admires him and says that he does calculations and works on subjects that they haven't even thought of at the Haifa Technion. True, he's immersed in his papers day and night, and a quick glance before he manages to cover them up reveals formulae and lots of numbers. One day, a few months after he came to the ward, he suddenly came out of retreat in his room and breathlessly announced to everyone that he had found it! He later told us that he had felt like Archimedes who had run naked through the streets of the city shouting Eureka! Eureka! after discovering the principle of specific gravity as he sat naked in the bath. Simon claimed he had found proof of the Fermat theorem. No one knew who Fermat was and Simon told us the following story: once there was a famous mathematician whose origin and year of birth he didn't remember, who claimed that he had succeeded in proving the following theorem that many had tried to prove and failed: $x^n + y^n = z^n$. This equation has a solution when x , y , z , and n are natural numbers only if $n = 2$. As we know, $3^2 + 4^2 = 5^2$, but when n is greater than 2 this equation has no solution, in other words, there are no natural numbers that support it. Fermat died without showing the proof to anyone. But who are we to cast doubts on the credibility of the great mathematician Fermat. Since his time, huge prizes, vast sums of money and unsurpassed prestige have been promised to anyone who can solve the riddle. Recently, so Simon says, there are those who claim it is impossible to prove the theorem within the limits of the numbers we have created for our world, and that the system must be extended in order to deal with this problem. From that day Simon began demonstrating appalling suspicion, he was afraid that the proof would be stolen from him. He destroyed all his papers and walked the ward's corridors incessantly, repeating the proof before it got lost. His

nights gradually became shorter, he feared that if he lost control while dreaming his discovery would vanish in a puff of smoke as a result of the incursion of hostile powers. There was considerable confusion among the staff, none of them knew enough about mathematics so it was difficult to classify Simon's behavior as either psychosis or reality. I'd love to have seen Jeremiah's face after the staff decided to increase the dosage of Simon's medication following his discovery, and it suddenly became clear that Simon had actually solved the terrible riddle. We adolescents kept our fingers crossed for him, the choice was between genius and insanity. The staff decided to support him and he was sent, with a member of the staff, to present his solution to a number of mathematics professors. He refused at first, he was afraid that they'd deceive or mislead him and conspire to deprive him of the fruits of his genius. But in the end he was persuaded. We all waited for them by the gate on the road, we were filled with pleasure by the idea that a genius was numbered amongst us, and we were happy at the staff's misfortune because they couldn't tell the difference between reality and imagination. Each of us was looking for that spark of genius that resided within himself and wanted to say you were mistaken about me too. Shuki didn't stop mumbling I knew it I knew it, I saw he was different and special right from the start. Simon and Danny, the counselor who had accompanied him, got off the bus. Their faces were inscrutable and they didn't say a thing. Simon immediately went to his room and locked himself in. We understood that a catastrophe had occurred. He later claimed that they hadn't understood him but he was prepared to check his proof again, and that he had no doubt that in the end he would be proved right publicly. But since then he hasn't mentioned Fermat's theorem although he seems to be no less busy with other subjects. We heard indirectly, through Shirli's mother who has contacts at the Technion, that the professors had never come across such a joke. According to them,

Simon simply spoke rubbish that was unfounded, disconnected and without logic, in such a way that it was apparent from the outset. We slowly emerged from our illusion regarding the adolescents' victory over the staff. Our hearts were bitter that Simon had managed to lead the staff by the nose.

It pains me, it pains me to see the little scientist getting in over his head with endless calculations that are of no value whatsoever. As far as I'm concerned he's like a dog watching two humans play chess. On the basis of their moves, the dog tries to understand the rules that guide them. It's sad because however much he tries, he'll never understand. Simon will go on getting kicked in the teeth from all directions, he'll continue bobbing along on the stormy waves of this cruel life until he learns how to feel. He won't resolve his difficulties and problems with calculations. Perhaps he's missing one unknown in the equation, the unknown called feeling.

Simon had another cruel and bitter secret that came to light by dubious means, despite the fact that in the intensity of our communal life, secrets are almost non-existent. He would spend long hours in his room, busy with the measurement and calculation of various bodies that he hung from the ceiling with twine, he was engrossed by the pendulum, in measuring time and weight. This innocent interest in the statics and dynamics of mechanical phenomena seemed at first to be interesting and original, but the great intensity and emotional investment in these experiments also seemed a little strange. The seed of his psychosis later became apparent – a constant fear that his sex organ would drop off.

When everyone was standing in line and each one came up to me and said to my face: "Not you!" something collapsed inside me. I couldn't bridge the gap between the inside and outside, I couldn't understand why not me. I didn't have the inner tools to comprehend this. Like a student who studies and studies and repeatedly fails the test. "Not you!" is an external criterion, I thought to myself, it doesn't have to mean a thing to me, for me I was and have remained yes! And perhaps there are things that people see in me that I don't know about. But how can I know what I don't know about myself? This is the kind of information that can't be integrated into and digested by the system. It remains not you! Kind of scary. And then the gap between the inside and outside becomes infinite and unbridgeable. And then, when the last one came over and said to me - not you! - nothing was left for me but to continue trying to live with myself, to feel and rely on myself because there's no one else.

Julia is a sad story. She came to the ward after her second psychotic attack, the first her parents tried to deny, simply ignoring it as if it had never happened, and then the second one occurred. She was brought in for an interview, terrible shouting could be heard from the room, as if someone was being butchered. Banging and wild kicking and sounds of things shattering into a thousand pieces. Later the door opened and Julia burst out like a raging bull. She circled the ward, running wildly through the corridors, galloped outside and disappeared through the door and the gates. Her disappearance was reported to the police and a week later they found her wandering in one of the neighboring Arab villages. It wasn't difficult to listen to the interview through the door as it was conducted in loud voices.

Jeremiah, as always in these interviews, was tough and cruel, thus, he doubtlessly believes, he will be able to glean as many details as possible and will be able to assess the thickness of the sane crust which covers the hidden core of insanity. He began with an open question and asked Julia what brought her here. Later he touched directly on the psychosis. She was asked to describe her belief that her soul resides in a body other than her own and is imprisoned in that of a warthog. "Are you sure about this or perhaps you have doubts, even the slightest doubt, that these thoughts are not realistic?" asked Jeremiah. She was questioned as to her belief that her mother wants to eliminate her and is capable of achieving this simply by looking at her. Julia believed that looks could fuse, fight each other, injure and even cause death. The meeting of looks, peeking into the other's pupil is like a piercing death ray. She never looked you in the eye, she used to walk around the ward, her head bowed and her glance sweeping the floor. A brief silence behind the door, I imagined Jeremiah and the other staff members staring at her and then a commotion erupted. Sounds of struggling and fighting came from the room. A long time after her disappearance the staff was still huffing and puffing and licking its wounds. At our Friday party, when we reached the part devoted to news in the ward, we couldn't contain our curiosity and asked Jeremiah about Julia and the drama that had taken place. The introduction of a new brother or sister to the family isn't an easy experience, it arouses many overt and covert waves, and even more so in Julia's case. As usual, Jeremiah shared his feelings with us more than just giving us a detailed report of the events. The encounter with insanity, he said, is always a very painful experience, even for a stable person, and it causes tempestuous feelings of inner disturbance. Julia, he added, was very frightened by her first self-encounter and this was the cause of her outburst. At moments like these I want to disappear into my chair and not be there at all.

Everyone looks immersed in himself, the silence that sliced the air at the end of Jeremiah's words was like the testimony of a thousand eyes to the fact that at this moment Julia had helped us all meet ourselves.

Julia joined us about a month later after spending some time in a closed ward. She couldn't stay at our place in the beginning and when she arrived she was all wrapped up, well organized, with the correct dosage of medication that shrouded her lunacy with a guise of sanity. At first we were afraid to look at her and would turn our heads and lower our eyes at every encounter. Soon we were to learn that this was superfluous, Julia took this responsibility upon herself, the avoidance of this violent meeting of glances.

Julia is the sad story of a person who is emptying out before our very eyes. Her entrance into the ward, according to her interview and other dramas that occurred during the first part of her stay here, gave an impression of vitality and a great inner richness of contents. Her schizophrenic deterioration was rapid. She was an exceptional student at school but after two years in the ward had difficulties in reading and writing. Her drawings gradually became more and more empty, more and more scanty and more and more as if there was nothing in them. Her orientation in space and time was confused, in the afternoon she might ask whether it was morning, and at times she forgot where the dining room or clubroom were. These were subtle signs, well camouflaged by allegedly momentary confusion, but we, who knew her, found this hard to bear. And the worst thing of all is that a person can become empty of thoughts, simply nothing goes on in his mind. Na'a'ma lives in an emotional wasteland, her dreams are devoid of figures, she is alone there but her head is teeming

with ideas, her loneliness full and rich with conflicts. Julia has nothing, not even a sense of loneliness. She is gradually losing her feelings, her thoughts and sometimes isn't even aware of it. This is the well-known schizophrenic emptying-out. A flower enters the ward and leaves it a vegetable - after five years of analysis and an enormous investment. After the fire, the burning remains, mania disappears, obsessions depart and depression also makes room for the voice of silence, emptiness. Jeremiah accepted her for analysis, perhaps he foresaw her deterioration and thought that it would only be fair that he bear this terrible weight on his shoulders, perhaps he hoped that something could be done. In her analysis, she once told me, there were long silences. When she is told to say whatever comes into her mind she can do nothing but respond with a prolonged silence. Maybe the staff was mistaken when they decided to accept her. There was something heroic, lost - in the battle against time and the attempt to stop this process of deterioration. Analysis had nothing to say on this matter and the frequent changes in her medication only proved the inadequacy of this treatment. Her future was clear to all of us. At the end of her treatment she will be sent to a closed ward where she will spend the rest of her life. I, whose main motivation in life is the wish to become someone, the essence of my life self-realization, the thoughts that fill my head are a *sanctum sanctorum*, cannot fathom this cruel fate. Julia has one wish, I almost forgot, and that is to get married. This is her only wish, her most aspired-for yearning. It seems she is willing to compromise and accept anyone, like the warthog, no one is not good enough for her. During one of the social games we played it came out, to her shame and humiliation, that she's in love with Simon. To her he is the epitome of all her aspirations. Simon, so it seems, gathered this crumb of hope and put it into his laden satchel as further proof that his path is leading him to the pinnacle of the world. Julia had one remarkable ability -

anything she didn't want to admit just didn't exist. Her capability for denial reached heights unknown to me. She used to walk around the ward, where there are few secrets, as if no one knew anything about her. When something came up in one of the committee meetings or under other group circumstances, she would be hurt to the depths of her soul, even if only a few days before she had shared these things with others. Her white lies were beyond my comprehension. When she was asked whether she had returned the cutlery to its place she would say yes, later she would vehemently stick to this version, with zealous vigor, even if it was public knowledge that she had not. She could evidently not bear the fact that she wasn't perfect. The entire weight of her sanity was for that moment hinged on the cutlery and she fought passionately for the veracity of her story. At a later stage the severity of her deterioration became evident to the staff. With the kind help of her roommate, Shirli, who continually supported her, it was easy to hide the fact that she didn't know how to tie her own shoelaces, was afraid to go to the city on her own and that she had no confidence in her ability to perform simple everyday tasks. We, the adolescents, had noticed this a long time previously. Julia's symbiotic attachment to Shirli was strange. She didn't stop following her down the corridors, physically and mentally leaning on her whenever she could and was afraid to stay in her room alone. A sub-ward was founded - Shirli & Julia - that had its own rules. Mainly a fusion of identities. Shirli, who paraded her meanness on any occasion and didn't miss any opportunity to prove it to the rest of us, revealed in her relationship with Julia a side of herself that surprised us all. It was evident that it was Julia who had succeeded in breaking through the wall that Shirli had created in her imagination and which separated her from the world, and allowed her to suckle from the warmth accumulated there.

Little truths of confusion in her everyday actions were like curbstones around the huge abyss that gaped in her soul. She had recurrent dreams about falling, sinking into the sand and drowning. In the daily encounter with this controlling unconscious and its scattered innuendoes, together with the seeds of calamity that the future holds, self-prophecy took place. Julia met with her own inner truth and this caused her what we call here "a hole in the stomach". This hole expressed itself in a reaction that resembled freezing, paralysis and the inability to react to the environment.

After approximately fifty minutes of chatter I suddenly understood that everything I had said was for Miriam and not for me. It's no secret that my psychological world is still submerged in an obscure twilight. More hazy than clear and scantier than a lot. Under this veil of secrecy it isn't clear to me if the grains of truth I hold on to are there to recite to Miriam and placate her, and that's why I talk about my difficulty or is this only a myth. There is and was no difficulty, there is only the rapture of wild youth that will never diminish. I don't speak about my truth but am participating in Miriam's game. In this mist the subtle difference between being connected to myself and placating her and her aspiration that I be connected isn't clear to me. Near the door I half-turned on my heel as an appropriate compromise between the wish for independence and autonomy and my inability to bear my feelings without any help. There, at that moment, her face and not my emotions determine my inner reality.

14

Very slowly, beneath the card of my wretchedness the one bearing my aggressiveness began peeping out, which is how Zohar, an inveterate card player, put it. My unalterable and well-fortified positions with all the banners and symbols of the

world's wretchedness and suffering began submitting to Miriam's open assaults and revealing the arms caches stored in them. My tiniest thoughts were isolated in critical units that showed my aggressiveness towards the world, as thoughts that I can see through them, that I'm better, that they can't see me, and those same everlasting smiles between me and myself of accepted lies, whose smile is their most successful expression because words are not enough to be fleshed out and formulated. When I reported on my aggressiveness, she repeated my words exactly but in a tone that always sounded ten times more painful from her eloquent lips.

Every time I stand before Miriam's door I feel the magical effect. Is it the furniture in her room? The heavy psychoanalytical atmosphere that is reflected from the heavy wood of the sideboards? The slightly dimmed light that reflects a special kind of taste? A vase of flowers and a lamp by its side. A coverlet in the old Jerusalem style, an Arab-style flowered rug, a few abstract paintings that allow you to get away or the library with its twenty-four volumes of the works of Freud and others. It seems to me that for some reason or other there is a preference for Melanie Klein. I stand facing the door and get my act together. Something's uncomfortable, usually the pants stuck into the crack at the front or behind. The bra is too tight, something uncomfortable with a strap cutting into my shoulder. When will it end? When will I stop getting so excited? Stop getting myself together so much? Feeling anxious and so uncomfortable before the light knock on the door? So after a short wait that seems like eternity the door opens. The ceremony is so clear-cut, so well known, I go in with a great deal of ceremony in my ass. A brief glance in her direction, I don't remember if I said hello or only inclined my head by one millimeter that covers a known understanding. The steps are measured, always the same number to the couch,

I don't know how many, always beginning with the same foot, the right I think. She's behind me, closes the door, I lie down on the couch slowly with great ceremony. I have another brief second until I hear the squeak of the chair behind my head, which means that she's made a soft, or hard, landing on the chair. Yes, I forgot to say that our glances met for a fraction of a second at the moment the door was opened, there was a kind of click. But why can't I remember the color of her eyes with any degree of certainty? What have I been looking at for three years five entrances and five exits per week? Perhaps there isn't enough light there. And something else I forgot and it's actually the most important thing, what flashes through, passes through my brain like lightning the moment I enter the room? A lot of times it's the clothes, what is she wearing? What is she thinking? I appear to her to be tough today, she appears to me to be sad, she's unhappy, her high-heeled shoes are for me, I see her, at best she looks at my legs. All dressed up, who's she making an impression on? Her blouse is open, what is she trying to tell me? No, I won't come in shorts, my legs are tempting, I had enough of that at the beginning, I want peace and quiet now. I want to appear beautiful on my entrance, to make an impression. And then on the couch I tell her everything. Maybe laughingly maybe seriously, maybe out of the belief in my ability to read her symbols and thoughts, maybe asking her to help me find a way out of the maze. Again and again, over three years, many of the sessions have begun this way. Again and again I stand amazed and helpless in the face of the distorted magnificence of my brain. Did I invent all that? And everything in a fraction of a second, at the moment of my entrance. During the discussion everything falls into place. I was afraid of going in, of telling things, and now I know things about her. It's not her examining me but me her. It's not her seeing me lying on the couch and not seeing her, it's not her seeing me and me not seeing her but the other way round. I see her

everything through the mask of her face, through the style of her dress and even beneath her clothes. I call it “the turnabout”. It’s what manages, in a split second, to create a thought opposite to the one whose existence you’re not willing to feel and acknowledge. It was then that I understood the fear of the baptism of fire, jumping in at the deep end, going in and meeting myself, that’s the crux of the matter. What good is there in this understanding if it recurs at the next session and the next and so on and so forth, who knows until when? It’s hard for me to believe that it will change, and perhaps I don’t have the ability to see a long developmental process, as Miriam once put it.

But that of course is not the only distortion that I do to her. There was a period when I decided, on the basis of mysterious hints, that she’s a poor divorced thing. That she has no purpose in life apart from harassing poor unfortunates like me with analysis that twists like a snake trying to grab its own tail. Other times she was the one who knew everything and wasn’t prepared to help, advise, say what was worthwhile doing. She was also a prophetess who knew where and when the analysis would be concluded, and where I would be with myself at the final stage. It seems to me that she was everything except what she really is, an analyst trying to help me be with myself, to understand myself. I still become resentful and sometimes refuse to discuss only me. After all, it’s illogical that she is the epitome of objectivity, that things she says are not biased by her personality. In short, I still haven’t completely understood that this is my analysis and not hers. That here the rule is that I’m the one in therapy so therefore we talk about me, but that is not to say that she does or doesn’t have problems of her own. It’s entirely possible that when I understand this rule, the therapy will be over. Analysis ends, Na’ama once told me, when you see your analyst

as a human being and don't distort her. So I'm still at the stage at which the rules of the game are not clear to me although they are in fact quite simple. She had all kinds of ways of screwing me. Cutting the hour by an average of fifteen seconds per session. Liking Simon, who is also in analysis with her, more than me. Fact: he always leaves one minute later than the allotted time – fifty-one minutes. Making calf's eyes at me when I leave. In other words, tempting me with a kind of simulated closeness that exists, as it were, between us. Yes, parting is another scene, so by the door as I hold the knob, I half turn to say goodbye, our eyes meet. At that moment I see the essence of our session in her eyes. So she's human. When the session is unendurable, she's closer than usual by a few critical millimeters, her large eyes look at me with a loving, maternal look. When I'm brave and proud and have just about turned on my heel to say goodbye, she's not there in her usual place at the critical moment. Is it all my imagination? Love, like hate, all in my head? What's important is what's inside my head, because someone else under the same circumstance could feel otherwise. And surely one part is hers but the important part is mine. She tempts me with her sexuality – she once appeared in one of my dreams wearing a bikini. She debated me like a *yeshiva* student, she once appeared in a dream with ear locks. She lowered my head, I once tried to lift it and peep backwards and she returned my head to its place with a light slap, in a dream of course. In short, she's always cold and doesn't give. Is this reality or imagination?

To myself I continue to deny, one way or another, that Simon has laid on this couch before me or will come in after me, depending on the day. I want to think that she's mine alone and that she has nothing else in the world other than me, then I'm less hurt. The great intimacy that I share with her, my trembling soul is unable to be one

of the many, tortured souls that knock on her door seeking adoption. That's a distortion too.

They say, so I've heard, that everyone has a grain of a positive attitude towards their parents who cared for them otherwise they wouldn't be alive. With me, this grain pops up very rarely in analysis, and then my heart wells up with longing and compassion, my eyes brim with tears, it's hard for me to cry but once I really did. At these moments of love I know that Miriam is the most precious thing on earth who devotes herself all to me and gives me the thing that no one ever has – myself. And even then I realize that it's a distortion. Miriam is simply and mainly my analyst. At first she wasn't a person for me but a creature who lived for five hours a week. I tried to ignore her when we passed in the corridor or when we met by chance at the bus stop or at committee meetings. I didn't want to grant her an existence beyond the five hours. There was something insulting in her having other activities in her life apart from me, or in other words, that a person capable of penetrating so deeply and understanding me is a person and not an angel or some other kind of creature. If she were another creature it would improve my condition. I wouldn't have to cope with her superior and insulting ability of being on the same wavelength as me. Others are happy that their analysts hit the target every time, I'm hurt by it. Each to his own distortion. I slowly learned the hard way that she's human. I accused her of farting and was surprised when she simply said that she does everything I do. I didn't understand whether she meant that she, too, fucks and farts. I asked again, I couldn't believe my ears, she repeated that she does everything I do. That's how I took one small step on the long journey whose objective is to understand that I'm dealing with a human being. I got the last shock only recently: she has a family and children and

everything's fine, that's what I was told. Again and again I stand elated in the face of the power of the distortions and transformations I make on the balanced and ordered world.

15

Shirli is tall, thin and mean. A few months after I arrived at the ward rumors spread that Shirli was coming back. I didn't know then who Shirli was but the horror that was visible on the adolescents' faces and the cold sweat you could see on the staff members' faces left no room for additional explanations. Shirli spent her time only intermittently in the ward, distributing it equally between home, the ward and a closed ward. The staff showed surprising tolerance while we, the adolescents, all of us except Julia, couldn't wait for the moment she would be expelled. Living with her became hell. When a new counselor arrived she would go up to him and simply say a few words, different things to each one. The frozen and ashen expression that spread over the counselor's face was proof that Shirli had hit the mark. She said to Hedva that she had bad breath, to Danny to stop looking at her bosom, to Dana that she shouldn't touch her because she wasn't interested in having a lesbian relationship with her. Frequently she ran away from the ward, she would at times refer to the inner wall that she experienced, the one that cuts her off from the world, as the broken-down fence that encircles the building. She saw the old guard with the gun hanging on his hip who used to doze during the cold winter nights in his hut at the entrance on the road as a soldier in one of the elite army units who stands at his post night and day. She was repeatedly reported to the committee because of her attempts at escape. At the committee meetings she would passionately explain that her attempts at escape do not impair her treatment, quite the contrary: they enable her to unload her inner

tension and hold out in the ward. The committee was helpless. She simply didn't give a damn about any decision taken at this forum, and we, the adolescents, watched the staff's helplessness from the sidelines. On one occasion she was sent home to think for a week. She was supposed to come back with an unequivocal answer regarding her desire and ability to stay in the ward and accept the standard rules. I don't know what she promised the staff on her return that they agreed to take her back. In any case there was no improvement in her behavior. I could understand her: the freedom that flowed incessantly in her veins, freedom that symbolized a fresh breeze from the cold city, the destination of her escape, were temptations she could not overcome. Indeed Shirli regularly tried to run away from herself and each time she succeeded she sensed the sweet taste of freedom and an intoxicating whiff of independence.

Each breakout of this kind is a jolt to the entire ward. The police, the adolescent's parents and Jeremiah have to be notified - if it occurs during the afternoon hours, when he is no longer in the ward. The counselors are uptight and busy and have no time for us. This is one of the reasons for the anger the other adolescents feel when one of us tries to escape. Beyond this the atmosphere is tense and a real maternal concern for the adolescent's welfare is not always easy to admit. Shirli's mother was used to this kind of message, but never stopped saying outwardly: I just hope she won't commit suicide on me. Who knows what she's capable of. Shirli's mother has a clear death wish regarding her daughter. It seems to me that she's not the only one. The adolescent's parents don't have it easy, and a desire to rid themselves of this nuisance is always there, either overtly or covertly.

Shirli's mother carried her sin in her womb for nine months, and punishment waited for another fifteen years. She married an Arab and gave birth to Shirli. Later they separated, and her mother remarried, this time to a Jew, and she never told Shirli the terrible secret of who her real father was. Shirli used to say at times that there is something that everyone knows except her, something terrible. She used to sense this with her receptive antennae but never went into detail. The rumors spread but only reached us after Shirli was no longer with us. But later, it turned out, we knew this without knowing, without words, perhaps in our unconscious, the same way she did.

She spoke about a wall, about the gap between inside and outside, that cannot be bridged, which sentenced her to a life of eternal loneliness. She used to describe her thoughts as a machine, at times well oiled, at times rusty and creaking. The split was not only between inside and outside but also between mind and emotion, so she thought. She described both these parts within her as never meeting, never being able to converse or reach an agreement. And her bad reactions, her ability to look you straight in the eye without batting an eyelid, there was something in these that aroused terror. The emotional detachment she was endowed with enabled her to behave according to rules and regulations she herself laid down. She saved her emotions for Julia and other unexpected events. With dwindling strength she tried to bridge this unbearable gap between herself and her surroundings. She used to ask us whether we could see that she was devoid of emotion, a kind of robot. Can we also see the wall or can only she see it? She had the talent of holding on to the sane and the insane at the same time.

She was accepted in the ward on the assumption that the only thing that could be done was to hold on to the sane part of her and help her understand that this part couldn't triumph over the insane part, and that the battle would continue forever. The alliance with the sane part, the attempt to increase its part at the expense of the insane part, this is the objective of analysis. Ya'akov's, Shirli's analyst, face fell each time they decided to move her to a closed ward until her condition improved and she could come back to us. When she asked me whether I can feel the metallic tone of the machine vibrating in her voice, I wanted to tell her that it was only a figment of her imagination, but the truth was that her voice did have a metallic quality and her sharp movements did seem like those of a machine. When she held the flute she carried with her wherever she went, sounds from hell were emitted from her stomach, such depths and beauty, warmth flowed like waves and echoed through the ward's white walls, and continued echoing in my ears at the end of the day even now when she is no longer here. What was the secret of the terrible fear she radiated around her? Was it the feeling that she was unpredictable like the unconscious? The psychosis that flowed in her veins gave her incredible powers. She could simply read our feelings, represent our inner worlds like in our dreams, with a kind of precision and description that only our personal movies which we direct during the night can express. She was the emerging unconscious, controlling, breaking down defenses, and mocking us with its metallic sounds and shadows. I don't know what came first: our crowning her as Queen of the Unconscious or her real talent. It is well known that a group can offer the individual a role and he can accept it. She believed in demons and ghosts. One day, when one of the counselors lost his keys it was Shirli who was seen in the area. When the counselors' name signs on the doors were taken down she was the only one who said, "I didn't do it." Cutlery and crockery and morning and afternoon meeting

logs disappeared and reappeared in a kind of bizarre cycle that befitted some mysterious mood she expressed in her behavior. Everyone was sure that she had a hand in this, panic was rife but there was no proof. Jeremiah would use the Friday parties in order to illustrate his talent as a Sherlock Holmes, he would blurt out dog-ends of information and peek at Shirli to see her reactions and her beaming face. He promised that if the adolescent who was responsible for this would stand up and admit to it, he wouldn't be banned from the ward. He made an emotional call to stop the lunacy rampant among us. He warned us that the ward's ship was listing and might sink and we had to find the reason. He said that each one of us should look into himself and at his friends and this would not be regarded as squealing but rather as genuine help for a friend in need. Jeremiah was right, tension rose to new heights and I was not sure that I didn't have a hand in this. Zohar, who tended to incriminate himself at every opportunity, behaved like a criminal. Na'ama and I carried on an argument about principles - assuming that neither of us had done it - was the nature of the theft and the disappearance of items psychotic or psychopathological - in other words, was it committed by an anti-social personality. This diagnosis could reduce the number of suspects. I thought that the great anxiety flooding the ward and the wild unconscious accompanying this bizarreness, was irrefutable proof of psychotic influence. Na'ama, the representative of morality in the ward, thought that this uninhibited behavior in the group with its accompanying planning, was proof that the crimes committed were well-planned by a psychopathic personality. We both agreed that both descriptions suited Shirli. She reacted with indifference to the *danse du diable* going on around her and used to make remarks during the morning meetings that frequently led to unraveling the mysteries. "I have no doubt that whoever took the report book will return it by tomorrow, he undoubtedly was angry about what they

wrote about him." And indeed, the book was returned next day. Was it Shirli or was it the criminal fulfilling her prophecies in order to confuse us even more. Tension rose and there was a fear that some of us wouldn't be able to hang in and would fall apart. How far would the staff go? When would they give up their futile attempts to lay the mysterious ghost? Jeremiah promised that there were no secrets in the ward - "mysteries are often solved even tears later," he said. This slip of the pen of mine - tears instead of years - is proof that I don't believe him. Shirli's every word was documented, we went over her sentences again and again, her slips of the tongue and subtle hints. Again and again we were astonished by the fact that each of her sentences seemed planned in complete detail and could be interpreted two ways, both as one who knows the solution of the riddle and one who does not. Jeremiah continued to talk on Fridays about the terrible feelings of treason within a family. He asked us to hang in, not to break down. I smiled to myself: "what's he talking about, who's going to break down here anyway?" Jeremiah's ability to express difficulties that seem minute to me, and transform them into huge mountains was usually successful. Later, with the help of this legitimization, I could usually connect and comprehend the full intensity of the difficulties that I used to regard as a joke. Terror, a fifth column, treachery and spying, were the images associated with Shirli, and indeed she often said that she felt herself an Arab, despite the fact that she had never been told about her true ancestry. Was she taking revenge on us, was she transferring her unbearable feelings about the terrible secret that enveloped her life to us? Yes, a mysterious atmosphere of secrecy enveloped the ward, the kind that only Shirli could unintentionally instill, and meanwhile the signs were piling up that keeping Shirli in the ward wasn't helping her at all, but was causing her harm. The tremendous amount of medication she was crammed with did not provide a remedy for her lunacy. The

committee couldn't cope with her, she behaved in the ward according to her own private code that she herself created. She filled a whole notebook with what she called the theory of good and evil, and behaved accordingly, and proved that she was nobler than both. As long as they thought there was hope for improvement the staff continued to keep her despite the fact that we, the adolescents, paid the price of the ward's gradual deterioration. We were frequently called upon to exhibit maturity, to be patient and persevere in the struggle that each of us was familiar with from his own private world. At the farewell party that takes place for each adolescent upon leaving, I wanted to cry, Jeremiah and Ya'akov said that perhaps a closed ward would be more suitable for Shirli, they couldn't help her. Her mother didn't want her to come home, it was also clear that no good would come to her in the greenhouse in which this lunacy of hers blossomed and burgeoned. At the farewell meeting that customarily takes place when a staff member or adolescent leaves Shirli gave me her final present. I opened the conversation with a litany of anger and hate, I counted and enumerated all her misdeeds and everything she had done to me and didn't omit anything in my seething anger. Shirli said only one sentence: "The time has come for you to stop thinking that anything anybody does is directed against you," she said, and nothing more.

When I entered the room Na'ama greeted me like a rabbit. Lately she smells everything and is busy with odors and their relationship to conscience. You stink, she said. Enough, stop smelling me all the time, it's not your business and you have no right to say that to me, I shouted in burning anger. But she doesn't give a damn about anything. On the couch, two minutes later, as usual, all events of the past disappear and as always only the last one remains, as if by the Law of Limitation, and takes on

vast proportions and hovers like a heavy cloud, casting a shadow on everything else. Miriam simply said that I'm asking for it. Examples surface despite my fierce objection. I farted, I proclaim with extreme pleasure to Na'ama whenever this routine occurrence happens to me. I remembered that I had never, at least I don't remember when, cleaned the common bathroom with scouring powder. Others should take care of my shit? Perhaps. But I also tell everyone that it's been two years since I last suffered from eczema between my legs and the doctor ordered me not to wash with soap, I never used soap again and have made do solely with water. You are inviting them to take care of you and get angry when they don't, Miriam shouted at me. What are you shouting about, you want everyone to hear, I became angry. You imagine that everyone can hear, she answered me, and enjoy it. Again I remembered how I share every fart with Miriam and in my debates concerning physical matters like if I should go to the bathroom now or later, why don't you use deodorant? she asked me, so people will accept me the way I am, I said. You say I stink, I suddenly understood, what you're doing is dangerous. But at that very moment I farted and debated with myself whether to share this with her.

If I look at Miriam when I return from the bathroom or if I don't, I will still be afraid of her, if I speak my mind in the group or keep quiet, the inner battle will continue. Inner experience is not dependent on what I do or don't do, first of all it exists and one has to live with it. There are no tricks and no escape routes. "So what the hell should I do?" Shuki yelled, "Tell me what to do!" I can tell you what not to do but not what to do, Amos explained to him. Zohar continued to maintain that everyone humiliates him and he has discovered that everything he does derives from this emotion. And as he discovers this more and more he is left with fewer and fewer alternatives on what

to do. Then he said that he understood that he has to continue to do the regular things but couldn't say what they were. Breathe, for instance, I advised him.

16

I have built an exciting microcosm the meaning of which only I know and it is hard for me to reconstruct its words because of the age-old well-known and familiar agreements between me and myself. A collection of hints and codes that are mine and between me and myself that words cannot describe because of the excitement and their physical implications.

Each time I discover that the whole world is not like me, I am astonished. It's a kind of hidden discovery which says that it's also possible to feel and react otherwise. A different inner experience is something I can't grasp. I only know my own experience and I'm in it up to my neck. And then suddenly, for a moment, I make the discovery that leaves me lonlier more astonished and understanding how absurd my existence is. But I wouldn't say I'm miserable. All in all the analysis, the ward and most of all my inner world and the journey to it are an enthralling experience in themselves, one I wouldn't give up for anything. Zohar says that after the army he'll be ready for anything, just not experiences. Just don't give me experiences he says, and explains that for every impossible thing in the service, when suffering reached new heights, they always said that it was all an experience. He once told me about a hard route march, they don't get any harder, they called "To Hell and Back" and that was a real experience. And yet the variance that exists in our world which is revealed to me only at those moments of grace when I manage to raise my head above the surface of the morass I'm floundering in reminds me again and again that things can be

different. They have locked me inside my inner experience and thrown the key into the sea, Zohar told me. But they put books and a TV set in my room and from them I can learn that what I have is not the only possible experience.

I looked at Matti and suddenly discovered myself, a light in the eyes and everything was clear, the weakness, the groveling, the smile and most of all the cover up and the pretense. It's all me. The discovery of himself in someone else only happens to a borderline case. And it's so sudden and it hits you so hard that suddenly everything is clear. You stand and look at yourself in person. Does it also happen to others that they discover themselves in me? They can look into me to the depths of my consciousness, fish out my content and gobble it up with gusto to underpin and verify their feelings. And perhaps when it happens to me with Matti, it happens to him with me at exactly the same moment.

And that same morning when I became Julia or more precisely I connected with the Julia inside me who I despise and deplore so much, truths I knew nothing about were suddenly made clear to me. There are people who are marked and there is the mark of Cain. The mark of Cain is a wonderful term for illustrating a historical truth, explained Matti. Cain who murdered his brother Abel was ordained to roam the earth with a mark on his forehead. Everyone except him can see what's on his forehead. It's not clear to me how you can't see that I'm marked like Cain, I shouted at Miriam one day, when my head was swimming with thoughts and my body lay unmoving. But she doesn't accept my theory of marks and my mark of Cain, otherwise she wouldn't have carried on working with me. As far as she's concerned there is no emotion that is not legitimate and a hole in the stomach and other acute symptoms are

nothing but understandable emotions. She doesn't think I'm marked, diseased, and so I find I'm gradually becoming more and more patient towards Julia. Because what I see in her is gradually becoming bearable and more and more acceptable. And so perhaps I too am changing and don't see myself as incorrigible. And perhaps only I put the mark of Cain on Julia and others don't so much. Perhaps something in her reminds me of the wasteland inside me and the others don't. If so, they don't think I'm as unbearable as I feel, that what I have inside me is unbearable.

Zohar is like me. He isn't psychotic but there's something in him distorted to the core. It took me a long time to understand but I can now state categorically: Zohar was born in prison. An inner prison of primary relationships. I can just see the newborn babe interpreting the world around it in various ways. Zohar apparently saw in it inmates and warders, bars and locks and mainly the deep humiliation that exists between dominant and dominated, between sadist and masochist. I don't know if it's the movies he directs at night, or whether his dreams are flooded with scenes like this, but that's what I guess. It's difficult to understand why a baby interprets the world this way, why it continues to spend its life in a way in which he invites and expects this kind of relationship from his environment, and when he doesn't get it, becomes confused and lost. The fine distinction I have developed in the ward might explain it. The first time I met Zohar's parents after my arrival in the ward, his father came up to me, held out his hand and shook mine firmly. Beyond the distortion I carry within me, beyond the sexual excitement that gripped me because of his authority and size, it was clear that he too had a part in this. He simply aroused fear in me. At that moment I was able to understand Zohar, I was able to understand why the whole world is obliged to behave just like his father for him, otherwise

something's wrong, something's not working. It's quite possible that others would say that this fellow is very nice but the humiliation has been imprinted and etched on Zohar's soul. The mother approached me and held out her hand. The limpness of her handshake and her woebegone face left no room for doubt about their relationship, she was the real victim in her imagination. The father was an army man with the rank of major-general and the mother was a housewife. Rumor had it that he was a warm and devoted man who was concerned for his subordinates day and night. Zohar told me that on more than one occasion people who knew his father had said, "What a father you've got, you lucky guy." But he never felt that way. He is the youngest in the family, he has an older sister and brother. Hadn't they been burned by their father's personality? Had their mother's helplessness not affected them? Why had only Zohar been hospitalized? Why had only he been given an internal distortion that doesn't allow him to live normally among other people? Perhaps he had been given an extra portion of humiliation because he was the youngest one in the family? Perhaps he had been born different? The psychologists, the sensitive people, we're all wise after the event, explaining the world after observing it and its secrets. Are there no more healthy people despite authoritarian fathers and dishrag mothers? This is the eternal, unbridgeable gap between the explanation that comes before and the one that comes after. We sometimes play this Russian roulette, Rona and I ask ourselves which one of us is going to commit suicide. Will we say afterwards how didn't we know? After all, we felt it inside.

Zohar told me about his fantasies in which he is a Hero of Israel, standing on one of the hills overlooking the slopes of the Judean Hills and commanding the army. With heroic spirit, charisma that leads directly to glory, he leads the army using stratagems

as yet unknown in military history. He knows every soldier and is concerned for them all as though they are his own sons. He appears on TV and addresses the nation, he is a Hero of Israel and is above party politics, above petty disagreements, he speaks of national unity, the fighting spirit of the nation's sons, how they steadfastly face hopeless situations, and mainly on the salvation he brings to the people of Israel. Zohar's words are not dry, his eyes are damp and lightning flashes from them. His yellow goosepimpled skin is evidence that a different spirit fills him when he lives his daydreams. According to him he watches this recurring movie a number of times a day. At these moments of glory time stops for him. Once, when the sun's orb began setting behind the mountains of Moab and he had not yet finished the battle, he yelled, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon", thus he was able to complete the battle, defeat all the Arab armies even with the Russians fighting at their side. To save everyone, but chiefly to surmount the unbearable daily humiliation he feels.

We have common jokes, I often ask him doesn't he think that a Hero of Israel deserves a beauty queen or perhaps a great author like me. The truth is that I'm not sexually attracted to him. I believe that sexual attraction can be forecast by compatibility between the sexual fantasies of the couple. Zohar has strange sexual fantasies, he's a football fan and when he masturbates he fantasizes that they're sticking goals into his net. I can't score goals against a man, I need him to take me, preferably my girlfriend. Zohar is a delicate boy who wants them to stick it to him, literally. It's hard not to see the pleasure he gets from the gang rape the committee subjects him to. He's in the habit of putting himself down for the committee on trivial things he's done. At the committee meetings he demands that they exact punishment

with the full severity of the law so that justice is not only done, but is seen to be done, otherwise, he says, there is a likelihood that he will deviate from the straight and narrow and do these things again. At the meeting he sits bent over, his head forward between his shoulders, as though asking, push my head down further, humiliate me. For him the world is divided into two groups, those capable of humiliating him and giving him pleasure and respect, and those not worth considering because they don't fulfil his expectations or fill his needs. I belong to the second group. When he left the ward he told me simply that I had been nothing for him, this after years of a common life, heart-to-heart talks, and what I had thought of as real consideration and concern for one another. It's hard to imagine behavior that so perfectly invites one thing and one thing only: "humiliate me". His lackadaisical walk, his way of speaking without looking you in the eye, as though he was already bruised and beaten, making it easier for us, and even for me, to join his oppressors. He sometimes stands in the doorway of one of the rooms almost pleading to be invited in, he never closes the door of his own room as though inviting penetration. He was overjoyed when he got his call-up papers. It was clear even to him that he was unfit for military service and to follow his daydreams, but he exploited this opportunity to the full, just to experience another humiliation. He came back from there wretched, bruised and happy. So long as he can find the strong figures to castigate him, from both staff and adolescents, he manages to place himself at a sensitive point of equilibrium. There he manages to exist with the absolute minimum of drama. A little pleasure from the aggression of the other, a little hatred that he harbors for him, and so you have perfect equilibrium. The moment his wishes aren't fulfilled, as happens in his analysis with Rivka, he begins to go off the rails. It seems that Rivka hit on this point and doesn't cooperate with him in this game. She simply treats him like an equal human being,

and this drives him out of his mind. He sits on the couch, refusing to lie down. He gets there a few minutes before the end of the session to check whether she is waiting for him in the time belonging to him, and tries in every way possible to drive her crazy. Luckily, Rivka, the oldest analyst, with decades of experience behind her, is not easily ruffled by these manipulations and reveals them one by one through direct and fair conversation. Then Zohar understands that it's all in his mind, and it's terrible. In this encounter with himself he simply and sincerely wants to die. The real humiliation is concealed in the knowledge that you can't even rely on your feelings, that everything you do in the world minute after minute is the result of your internal distortion, this is suffering that cannot be borne and who knows that better than me. Every encounter, every interaction is translated through the internal code of the distorting mirror, through an internal filter that enables the one facing it to be in only one of two situations, warder or prisoner, humiliated or humiliator. And then, when his expectations of being trodden underfoot are not fulfilled he begins to go wild, to be the aggressor. He curses the counselor who relates to him with warmth and then withdraws, as though saying "now it's your turn to hit back". When he doesn't get the appropriate response the *danse du diable* continues until there is no alternative and he gets his comeuppance. It took the staff quite a long time, it seems to me, to hit on this code. Zohar was invited to staff meetings day in day out and was given attention that aroused our envy. Each time he knew how to find the act that would win him gang rape. He once locked an adolescent in the shower in reaction to his taking a shower with the door open, once he menaced with a knife, and another time he took a shit on the bathroom floor. The frustration in a relationship with him is great. I'm aware of the trap I'm about to fall into, and there's no choice. I try to be human with him, warm towards him, and this attitude of mine only arouses his aggression more

and more. Should I be bad? That's how we adolescents repeatedly find ourselves drawn into his net, playing with fire in the flames of his secret desires, and being trapped again and again in the snares he sets for us. It's hard to remain indifferent towards him, it's hard not to join his games and that's the problem. Na'ama defined the incessant dramas that take place around him as dramas of the hysterical man. We know that women are usually hysterical while men are obsessive. Zohar calls an ambulance when he's got a hard-on, that's what Na'ama says. Shirli says he's a homosexual, Na'ama says that he simply hates women, but I don't believe in this pigeon-holing. It seems to me that anyone willing to humiliate him will be welcomed regardless of religion, race or gender. He homes in on Simon's unconscious weakness and takes him apart. He is simply incapable of encountering well-reasoned and camouflaged weakness. There was a time when he stole motorcycles and was involved in accidents. Each time he was summoned to court and had to face the bench, he felt, so I think, a dramatic sexual arousal he was not prepared to relinquish. He therefore repeatedly reconstructed it in the drama group. Once, after he had almost begun a fight with Simon, he later described the excitement that had gripped him beforehand. In my mind I saw these two handsome men fighting by the burning hearth. Zohar would probably add Simon's victory to this erotic scene. So, when he wasn't being a masochist he was being a sadist, when he wasn't a criminal he was a policeman, and when he wasn't being a convict he behaved like a prison warder in the ward, and then he had to be curbed and punished only to once again break out and revolt. The hands of the clock continued to describe this vicious circle despite the fact that not long ago Zohar completed four years of analysis.

And when everyone sees outside what you see inside that's unbearable and perhaps they see even better than you, it's terrible. I sometimes sense with others, by their faces, that what's happening to me is intolerable. But Zohar explained to me that I identify with those who identify with me and that's my way of feeling myself instead of identifying directly with myself.

After Simon had been occupied for a long time with what the rest of the adolescents thought of him, precisely what he had done and said, and what out of all this they see and call the truth, and what he had managed to hide from them and so on, he suddenly understood that he hadn't asked himself that one and only, terrible question, what he thinks about what he had said and what had been said to him. He then discovered, to his amazement, that he thinks that nothing had happened and he was extremely surprised by this discovery. If that's so, he asked himself, then what's all the hullabaloo about?

Shuki once believed that there wasn't a cunt in the world that could bear and contain all his desires and satisfy him for ever and ever. "There isn't a cunt whose capacity can contain all my sorrow that I want to sink in it," he used to declare. Then he would make girls swear that their cunts were his for always and for eternity and they would swear to it. The oath was usually sworn when Shuki was in full gallop inside them in a race of genitalia. Time had proved, so he went on to say, that every cunt he had known had satisfied him and withstood his formidable virility. In other words, there was not a single cunt that had bowed under the burden and in which he had been unable to vent all his anger, to tremble and weep on a bared breast once the nightmare was over. That's how I felt with Miriam. It's strange that for years she's been

capable of containing me and the world of my impishness and does not get worn down or destroyed by it. I didn't believe that someone could absorb all my passion into himself without being aware of having had intercourse. That's what the sea of life between Miriam's legs is, from where everything flows.

17

Friday is a special day in the ward. Reveille, morning exercises and breakfast all have the quality of excitement that precedes an event. For me the important event is the psychic meeting with Jeremiah. That moment when we are lost within him and are granted a touch of inspiration from his personality, style and perspective of the world. Shirli says it's all bullshit, that I make him into a god. She has a point. During breakfast we are more withdrawn than usual. Everyday equality is violated and each of us withdraws into himself and senses his own fate. This day is exclusively ours and Jeremiah's, there are no analysts and there is a thrilling and stimulating feeling of intimacy. Fridays have their own unique pattern. At nine o'clock, after reading Jeremiah's and the two counselors' report, we get together in the clubroom for a preparatory meeting. Here we decide who will do what in preparation for the festive Friday night dinner. First someone volunteers to preside over the meeting. That's where the problems begin. Sometimes there are no volunteers. This is when Shuki, who is always ready to fill in a void, jumps up. Jeremiah says: "No, Shuki always volunteers, someone else." Dead silence in the clubroom. The dynamic meanings of everyone's unwillingness to volunteer soar. Are we prepared to give up the Friday party, the thing that is dearest to our hearts? Have self-destruction, hatred and mutual accusations overpowered every grain of emotion and intelligence? Julia has never volunteered, Matti doesn't come to the meeting at all, Simon appears and leaves in the

middle while Amos doesn't talk at all, only smiles. I remember one time when no one volunteered, Jeremiah granted us an additional five minutes and afterwards left, both counselors in his footsteps. The party was magnificently prepared. Clearly we were not going to let the ship sink, that's what Jeremiah was to later call this collective suicide. I think that this was the only party when Matti didn't burn the French fries. They ask who wants to make French fries. This is when traditionally the boys raise their hands. The meeting's director decides you and you and you, etc., so that each one has a job, which includes laying the table, preparing drinks, etc. Unexpectedly a few girls volunteer to prepare the French fries. Jeremiah points out something regarding the ward's masculine tradition undergoing a change. What is it that connects men to French fries with ball and chain? I don't know the answer, but it's a fact, there's continuity and from generation to generation men carry the burden of making French fries on their shoulders. Later, the burnt omelets that Simon by chance left too long to cook, the salad I over-dressed with vinegar, Matti's coffee that was unfit to drink due to an excessive amount of sugar, all of these things will indicate what happened in the ward during the past week and faithfully document all our emotions. From the end of the meeting until eleven o'clock the ward is in a state of bedlam. Some of us are energetically busy with preparations and others doze in bed with no motivation to live. Zohar hurries to throw Matti out of bed and tell him his assignment. Each one has an assignment and anyone who doesn't fulfill his duty may not participate in the party and will have to eat after everyone else has finished. A white tablecloth is spread on the ping pong table and there's room enough for everyone. Ten adolescents, two counselors and Jeremiah.

And then, at eleven o'clock on the dot, everyone congregates around the set table in the clubroom. Jeremiah sits at the head of the table. From this moment on we connect with a thin and mysterious thread to Jeremiah's soul. As always, everything has a meaning and the slightest reaction, like Jeremiah's facial expression, is nothing but a surprising preciseness of something known and hidden that unites us all. What makes this day different is the presence of love. On this day I know that Jeremiah also simply loves us. We open with a song, there is a song booklet. Each one in turn chooses a song. Choosing a song is at times a tough decision, which section of your mood to reflect in the song and which part does it hide. There are serious songs, light and merry ones and in others pain and happiness are intertwined. When an adolescent chooses a song I haven't the slightest doubt that I know what he's feeling. Jeremiah always chooses bizarre songs that have no particular meaning. In my fantasy he chooses defensive songs so that no one will learn anything about his uniqueness or personality. Zohar picks war songs of a Hero of Israel. Shuki chooses amusing or childish songs, "Betty, Betty, bam, loves everyone" and the like. Matti doesn't want to pick a song, asks to be passed over. Simon, optimistic songs, Na'ama, songs devoid of content, Rona, love songs, and I, perhaps songs with a fine melancholy tone which give me satisfaction and love. At this stage, like any other moment, Jeremiah is about to surprise us with his eagle eye by exposing the truth that is hidden from us. He relates to the way things happen as a fascinating riddle that has to be solved, put in its place, the connections unraveled, otherwise we will get lost together with him. He makes a remark, something about the intensity of singing, the tone, rhythm and the kind of songs chosen. Usually we begin with extremely soft songs, I am ashamed to sing and make an effort to cover up my voice, the main thing is that it shouldn't be heard but rather disappear in the tangle of the other voices. Sometimes we need a

hero to save the singing from diminution and disappearing, that is when someone rouses himself from drowsiness to rescue us. Sometimes someone picks a song the melody of which only Rona knows. Once again Jeremiah may point out Rona's act of saving us. Recently the songbooks have become tattered and torn and this too was a sign for Jeremiah that something in the ward is becoming lax and that the bolts need to be tightened. Julia volunteered to copy the tattered pages and replace them with new ones.

When the round of songs comes to an end we move on to "foreign news". Anyone who takes any interest, watches the news or reads the papers is asked to tell us what attracted his attention in the past week in Israel and around the world. At times, when an event has slipped our minds Jeremiah will remind us of it. It is evident that he is conversant with what goes on. Two more Arabs were killed in Bethlehem during rioting, Simon says. A girl was raped in Megiddo, Rona says. Shuki mentions the latest basketball game that Maccabi Tel Aviv lost, and Zohar's specialty is juvenile crime. Usually I keep quiet, in recent years my interest in the news is scanty and I am more involved in my own wasteland and inner news. Foreign news is an example of how things that have nothing to do with us, because they're far away and our ward is so cozy and protected, are put to use by Jeremiah to expose emotions buried deep within us; for taking an educational stand, perhaps a kind of psychoanalytical education if there is such a word at all and no inner contradiction between the two. No, Jeremiah is not prepared to fall into complacency and routine when each day another Arab is killed. He asks aloud: "When will this cycle of madness come to an end?" He speaks about the difficulty of living with madness, getting up every morning and saying yes, this is madness and not normal routine. He speaks about the

denial of lunacy that is seething around us because it is very threatening. They'll close the ward, they'll close down the State, etc. He isn't afraid of talking about our feelings regarding our dubious future, that steal into everyone's heart whenever lunacy overflows, inside and out. A wildcat strike at the Electric Company, the postal workers, everyone's got everyone else by the balls, I thought to myself. Yes, the postal workers strike too has an internal effect on me despite the fact that I don't need their services. It is one more small brick in the tremendous building that is about to collapse from within and who knows, perhaps from the outside as well. What does psychoanalysis have to say about the political situation I thought. Jeremiah no doubt would answer me "there is room for everyone, for us and the Arabs, side by side." In foreign news there is room to let out all those daily events to which we are supposedly accustomed, which have become part of our daily routine as a defense against their unbearable part. Someone's degrading attitude, pushing while waiting on line, sky-high prices, etc., etc. Jeremiah is simply willing to say that what seems to me a piece of cake is really unbearable. He speaks for all of us, expresses our emotions with an enormous degree of concentration and great pain. This is where one can meet Jeremiah the human being. Jeremiah repeatedly represents what we repeatedly forget, that there is lots and lots of pain in the unbearable lightness of being. I remember once Shuki said that in his opinion all the Arabs should be annihilated. Jeremiah was silent for a moment and then said out loud: "get out of here, I don't want to see you here." Shuki rose from his chair with a kind of miraculous hovering and disappeared through the door as if he was a transparent creature. So there is no doubt that in his own way Jeremiah expresses a political standpoint. He is a politician of emotion. There perhaps is where we all meet on the same plane, oppressor and oppressed, the one who degrades and the one who is degraded. There it is clear that we are all

human beings and you don't need the Declaration of Independence as proof. This is something that Jeremiah tries to give us. Psychoanalysis grants total space and a stage for human emotions, human suffering, and will not accept any standpoint that denies this inner freedom. Jeremiah has leftist inclinations, that's where he would be placed on the political map. Okay, it's well known that beyond the Green Line, in the settlements, there are no psychological problems. Right wing tendencies and nationalism are proud that we are the best, the Chosen People, and do not live in peace with self-awareness of contradictory and difficult emotions such as inferiority feelings that create these nationalistic emotions. Jeremiah speaks in the name of human suffering, a murderous terrorist bomb somewhere in the country shocks him to the core. The fact that we have stopped going to the Old City because of the *intifada* is additional proof he mentions so that we won't forget that we are part of events, part of the country and are obliged to give ourselves an account of our emotions and fears that surge day in day out in the press and on television.

The next stage of the party deals with internal news. This is when we bring up the events that took place in the ward during the past week. A new counselor or one leaving us, an adolescent admitted or discharged, members of the staff going off on reserve duty, illness and various parties. Pipes that have burst, buying a new video recorder etc. In internal news, just like foreign news, every item of information is of value. Julia mentions that some of the potted plants died because Na'ama forgot to water them. Amos complains that Shuki complains about the reading light he has on at night that keeps him from sleeping. Should they allow us to go to sleep with the heater on in the freezing winter nights or is the fact that Matti's blanket slipped onto the heater and burnt proof of future fires that may break out in the ward. Inner fires of

the heart that will catch on to the room's walls and its meager furniture. At moments like these Jeremiah tries to place himself in the narrow space between lunacy and sanity and once he even admitted that he too loses it at times. It is evident that he is involved in the quest for truth. The bitter cold in comparison with a fire hazard. Can we be relied upon to distance our belongings from the blazing coils? Jeremiah comes to a decision after hearing what we all have to say. He may come back next week and change his mind if he thinks there is good reason. Someone says something about the new counselor. Jeremiah reminds us once again how difficult it is to enter the ward, to adjust and assimilate to it. He also reminds us that a journey of one thousand miles begins with one small step. Any of the week's events that seem meaningful can be brought up. A counselor who took sick arouses fears relating to our being left alone, our need to get along by ourselves and the future lack of counselors about which we are always concerned. The racket of the drills boring into the ward's walls, due to the replacement of piping, has a deep analytical meaning pertaining to the racket that's going on anyway in our brains. Not to speak of the staff meeting about a specific adolescent. He was asked whether he wanted to tell everyone what he was told or would rather keep it a secret. At this stage Jeremiah likes to hint, something like casting your bread upon the waters, he says to everyone that Shirli has had a difficult week, this and no more. We all go over Shirli's week in our minds. Yes, so what? She ran away three times but there's nothing new about that. The committee has given up on her or has announced or hasn't announced that it gave up, that's also expected, but even so Jeremiah sometimes asks us again to be patient with Shirli. You need air, lots of air and a long breath, he says. In situations like this we can do nothing but cross our fingers, he added. Later the staff really did decide to terminate her treatment and transfer her to a closed ward. When she left the ward we

understood what Jeremiah meant when he asked us to hang in, that we give her one last chance, that we should be patient with her.

After the internal news we eat. When we finish, after each one of us has collected his dishes, those who have to take medicine over the weekend go over to the station and get a little bag as a present. "You can't escape the vial of poison." Julia said to me, who is talking less and less as time goes by. A final goodbye to a counselor and to those who remain. At one o'clock we're on the bus, on the way to the big city. Then it's clear to me that I should have stayed in the ward.

18

The siren for Remembrance Day for Israel's fallen caught me in the clubroom. We all stood to attention except Zohar who claimed that all year round was Remembrance Day for him and no one is going to tell him how to carry the memory of the fallen with him. A siren is a primitive way of obliging people who don't remember to remember and be at one, he said, and in general what is my suffering compared to the suffering of the nation, he added with a giggle and comforted himself. Songs of sadness and bereavement made the air tremble and I felt a longing I hadn't known before. A bittersweet pain lanced through my bones and opened an ancient box that had been locked for many years. From it arose scents of caressing bereavement, sad orphanhood and propitiating and relaxing longings. Something climbed up my throat, where it mixed with a few teardrops to ease the swallowing. I had never known that tears help to digest pain. Shuki's luck was in and his analysis session was supposed to end at eleven o'clock when the siren sounded. We were all jealous of him. He described Dvora's confusion for us at length, when they stood to attention together in

memory of the fallen. It sounds almost like taking a leak together in the bathroom, said Zohar who hoped for the day when quite by chance he and Jeremiah would be standing side by side in the public toilet at the central bus station. Then he'd be able to check whose is longer, I thought to myself, but Shirli quite rightly corrected me and said that Zohar would check whose was shorter. But in any event Shuki was waiting impatiently for that embarrassing moment from which Dvora would have no escape. When he heard Dvora's "all right" he couldn't believe it. He was convinced that they'd forgotten to sound the siren, that the country had brought disgrace on the fallen. Only when he walked out the door and looked at his watch he heard the siren. It was then that he realized that Dvora had fooled him and had ended their session only half a minute before its scheduled end. He told me later that during the entire session he had talked to her about how he was waiting for the unique opportunity of standing to attention with her in salute to the nation's heroes. But she'd fooled him, repeated Rona later, she didn't even tell you beforehand that you wouldn't be standing to attention together. So Shuki understood that there are people you can't beat. But Zohar said that it wasn't people like Shuki and Dvora who built up a country and psychoanalysis certainly wasn't one of the accepted ways of establishing a state and sending people into battle. Remembrance Day had been set for the day before Independence Day, Na'ama explained to me, and it wasn't by chance. The transition from sadness to joy was part of the basis of Man's life, she said. But I continued to think that had they scheduled the days the other way around it would have been more connected. Finishing with a whimper had more truth in it, at least as far as I was concerned. But it's in Man's nature to repress things, I heard Jeremiah say without him ever having said it.

Amos is a story of longings that drives you out of your mind. He is proof that every distinction like psychotics and normal people or borderline cases just doesn't work. He is proof that there's someone up there whose only desire is to treat people with particular cruelty, the kind that a person causes himself, brings upon himself and therefore can't blame anyone. Amos's parents are both Holocaust survivors, they came to Israel as penniless refugees. They met here and began building their home and life from the beginning. They built a wonderful home, two sons and a younger daughter. Amos's older brother was outstanding in everything he did: studies, friends and finally the army where he volunteered for an elite reconnaissance unit. Amos was more sensitive than him: he liked reading, art and music. And the little sister was the family's charmer, love was heaped on her from all directions. The eldest son was killed in one of his unit's daring operations that is still shrouded in secrecy. Amos also volunteered for the same unit and his parents signed the release form that was needed because of the eldest son having been killed. And then, one fine day at the end of a training exercise with live ammunition Amos sat down on a rock and began to feel the pulse in his temples. Electric currents, so he felt, were coursing through his body from his feet to the top of his head. The intensity was unbearable. He was very pale and they rushed him to the clinic. The pulsing in his head stopped, the electric currents too but a new smile that had never been seen on his face before has never left it since. A smile that words cannot describe, but those who know him understand. A smile that laughs at fate's misfortune. From that moment Amos has been stuck with a sentence, a collection of words, a single thought that is with him day and night: "Why didn't he say goodbye to his brother before he went out on the operation?" The smile that's spread over his face was one of genuine satisfaction, the satisfaction of someone who is getting his punishment. Amos's punishment was for not saying

goodbye to his brother. Perhaps he forgot, perhaps it was out of malice but his sentence had been handed down: Amos would go through life under heaven with one thought filling his soul: why hadn't he said goodbye to his brother? Why had he forgotten? And if he hadn't forgotten this thought it wouldn't have stuck in his mind year after year. At first they thought it would pass, a temporary crisis, but after three months of observation it was clear that his condition was serious and that he should be kept in the ward. The parents hadn't yet recovered from the death of their eldest son two years previously, they hadn't been out once since then, and now Amos. Some people have amazing endurance, they bear their pain in silence. It is me who gets up onto the stage to reveal myself and represent the suffering of the universe, I who am incapable of bearing anything inside without causing uproar around me, look at them and understand that there's another way. Amos spoke little and let us in a little. He mainly didn't wash and change his clothes as is customary when in mourning. But this mourning was extremely strange. As though Amos's head had been split into two parts. The part that could talk told things that were totally different from the part that was able to behave. When he was pushed into a corner with the question of what had happened to his brother, a question that had been taboo in the ward for years, and which Ya'akov, Amos's analyst, had only dared ask after years of analysis, Amos replied simply that he had been taken prisoner and would one day come home. Can this be called acute denial? Is it a psychosis? We, the adolescents, didn't know. One thing was clear, that there was one part of Amos that knew the truth and another that denied it, and perhaps that's where the smile belongs. Who knows? Attempts were made to confront him with the truth, with the details of the facts, and that was after a few years when the hands began to be raised helplessly. Some saw this as life-threatening. Na'ama, who knew the short step between life and death better than the

rest of us, who relished Amos's songs, prophesized the worst. A smell of death indeed rose from his poems, a smell of no point to life and no hope for it. But the confrontations with the truth had no effect on him. It is hard to describe this absurd situation of mocking reality, the cold facts that a person's soul can create, the information that had been given to him on his brother's death didn't make the slightest difference. No, there is a gap between logical, real proof and feeling. But amazingly, Amos continued to stick stubbornly and with clear perception to his version of his POW brother. Every now and again he would go into the workshop and bring up out of the depths of his consciousness a painting of a tree shedding its leaves, a headstone and a cemetery as though he had not said a word. The committee recommended a personal hygiene program for Amos that included a daily shower and change of underwear. In the small hours when his saxophone wailed songs of despair and sadness you could hear from his lips about his childhood with his brother, their closeness and the love that existed between them. The stories ended in the hope that in the end he would return from his imprisonment unharmed. He loved Alexander Penn's poems. When his saxophone played sounds from the cellars of Penn's poems, a man cried there like a child. I had always felt that there was no instrument more romantic than the saxophone for expressing a person's bitterness at his fate and Amos played beautifully. Shirli's flute would sometimes accompany him and then I knew that we were all representatives of the world's suffering. The most wonderful thing of all was the feelings we all had in our hearts for Amos. The girls competed in their motherliness over who would nurse Amos more. The women counselors fought with one another over who would hold him in her arms and nestle in his longings. The hearts of the boys who had never known the taste of fatherhood filled with gentleness in their contact with Amos. What had he done to us all? Where had these waves of

warmth and closeness that we were unable to stop washing over Amos come from? But he continued to claim, almost scornfully, that he felt cold, a terrible cold in his relationships with people. His mouth spat chips of ice and his body came close to us in a kind of longing that left no room for doubt. His brother had bought him a birthday present a few days before he was killed, a very nice-looking calendar, so we suddenly discovered in his stories. From that moment Shirli became busily engaged in various numerological calculations that were supposed to foresee the date of Amos's expected suicide. I continued to dream about him at night, sometimes as a man living in an old castle, I knock on the door and he opens it. Yes, Amos didn't allow anyone into his inner world to which even he had no access. In another dream he was a fortified city to which the lines of communication and supply had been cut. It's hard to understand this cruelty of fate that deprives a person of the ability to be conscious of himself. That internal disconnection that nullifies his right as a human being to enjoy therapy. Amos's unconscious had a ball in the ward, it was spread out in front of everyone except its creator. According to him he didn't feel longing but cold, a disconnection and distancing from people. At one time he began taking an interest in the theory of relativity and asked for material on the subject. Simon solved the riddle and said that he probably wanted to go back in time, to free himself from being stuck at that point of not having said goodbye, to just say it and then come back to us in one piece. So when I'd surprise him in one of his moments of solitude and ask him what he was thinking about, he would reply, "Why didn't I say goodbye to my brother?" Amos realized that something had happened to him, that since that training exercise with live ammunition with his unit he had changed. At first we all hoped together with him that it was temporary, fleeting. But as time went by the hidden mourning went on and his fixation remained unchanged, and chances lessened.

Amos said that he knew that he wouldn't ever be what he had once been. He will never again be that promising boy whose bright future lay before him. He won't be an author or a musician, he won't go back to the army and who knows if he will ever be able to function as a human being. He described it as something that had happened to his brain, something had malfunctioned, burned out he once said with a kind of cruel awareness that made us all shudder. Cruel fate, and Amos was right, had not only damaged his brain but had also allowed him to remember how life once was in order that he could go on torturing himself. But the paradox went on, it was impossible to put a finger on his madness. He suffered no delusions in the accepted sense of the term and he continued to be an interesting conversationalist. He used to lie in bed, twist himself up like an acrobat, stroke himself with a kind of auto-erotic pleasure like a baby waiting for the touch of its mother's hand. Thanks to him I first felt an inkling of maternal instinct. The punishment he had been given was like that given to Sisyphus. The boulder he had been sentenced to roll to the mountain top and once he reached the summit to do it all over again throughout his life was the goodbye he had not yet said. He bore this reward with a smile. A cynical smile, slightly wicked and eternal. He loved science fiction and read 'Thoughts' magazine over and over. A magazine on the border of scientific philosophy that dealt with elitist speculation of this kind. In the absence of his goodbye he saw arrogance and therefore the punishment. His cold logical thought, his verbal distancing from the environment, his inability to understand what benefit he could gain from his stay in the ward and from the strenuous staff work around him had never coincided with the so strong emotions he never stopped transmitting, the distress signals of a drowning man that never weakened with time. His analysis was bogged down, and we all know that in the sphere of logic alone nothing can be resolved. So we began to recognize

the fact that the curse on his head which he had recognized a long time ago was indeed irreversible. The struggle over recognition of the illness and rehabilitation began. Romance began to move over and make room for reality.

19

I really do know that I'm smarter than others, I really believe this, and that's what worries me, I told Na'ama. It's not clear who is smarter and according to which criteria you measure it, but what is totally clear is that you are very disdainful, she answered me. But the fire in my bones continued to rage and didn't subside at my session today either. Again passionately I didn't understand the intensities of "I am the smartest" that take me over like the raging typhoons of winter waves. It took Miriam some time to show me that the opposite is also true. Perhaps she too collapsed somewhat under the burden of my intensifying conviction as to my undoubted wisdom. Suddenly Atlantis, the lost continent of emotions, emerged from the darkness and a whole new world was revealed to me. The atmosphere was dark and grim and abysmal insecurity reigned, a kind of stupidity that resides in me, greater than any stupidity I have ever heard of. "Only I don't understand", the sounds from my early years came back and I paled. Everyone else can and you can't, my mother said to me in third grade. And in the group you are silent and don't check if you have anything to say and so you're left with the secret that you are the smartest one, Zohar said to me. Miriam tried to ask, unsuccessfully, why is it so important to be the smartest one. Matti said that if I think that I'm not the smartest one or the dumbest one in the world, this will calm me down and the storm will abate. There is multi-smartness in this world, he explained to me, and you have to begin adjusting to it. You'll never be the smartest or the dumbest one. You'll be like everyone else and

you'll say things like everyone else despite the fact that you'll make tremendous efforts to speak pearls of wisdom just like everyone else does. Indeed his words made me serene. So I searched and searched during the group session and at last found what to say that would ordinarily contradict what the others had said or would be full of disdain in a bitter argument. I didn't listen to the rest of the conversation which at the moment is in a different place and I emerge from the blackness, hurling a hand grenade and retreating again into the darkness of my world, to additional eternal sleep, teeming with blows and suffering, that's the way I am in the group.

Shuki is the ward's little boy despite the fact that he is our veteran, he's been here for seven years. He is proof that in order to undergo analysis you don't have to be too smart. He's the third child in a family of ten, of oriental extraction. They couldn't keep him at home. He would become wild, threaten, run away and later retreat to the position of a rabbit and ask to be beaten just so he should know that he had done his duty and was now free for another journey of destruction. When he arrived at the ward, so the legends have it, they feared that he would simply destroy it. Even the walls were not safe when he passed by and vehemently kicked at them. "There is something intolerable in this person", I said to Miriam one morning with pathos. "You're making him into the most dangerous person in the world," she mocked me, and added that I am apparently afraid of him. The constant fear that he would be thrown out as a result of his accumulation of misdeeds distresses him more than it does me. Before each staff meeting about him, he would pack his belongings and tie them up very tightly so they wouldn't fall apart when he was expelled from the ward, carrying his belongings. His parents threatened that he would have nowhere to go if he were to be expelled, that they wanted to see him a human being or not at all. He

did indeed turn into a human being in the ward. Shuki is the story of a person who comes from the enchanted world of our forgotten childhood. Psychologists from afar gathered together to hear the voice of a year-old infant who recalls what he feels. Numerous articles were written about him. Every country is proud of its resources, and here in Israel we are not infrequently proud of our pathologies, so Matti says. He used to arrange the stones in the garden at different angles so they wouldn't have to see the same view all the time. When he dropped a stone he would pat it because it was hurt. He would present a solitary flower with more flowers so that it wouldn't be lonely etc., etc. It soon became evident that his immense aggression stems from an even greater anxiety. When he suffered these panic attacks his anxiety intensified and swelled and no one could help. Standing next to Shuki at moments like this transferred vibrations that flooded and filled us all with his sensations which reflected on all his surroundings. At times like this it was clear that an unavoidable explosion was near. The relaxation room was his favorite place. This is a room into which the adolescent goes, either on his own initiative or that of a counselor, when it becomes clear that he has to carry on a conversation with himself for a while. He used to ask the counselors to send him there when he sensed that a storm was brewing. This is one of the presents he got here, the ability to get help from his surroundings in order to help him restrain and arrest the destructive powers surging within him. There, alone in the room, what did he think about? What did he do? It seems to me that he was involved in calculating doom and destiny. He has a surprisingly precise daily schedule, a surprisingly arranged weekly schedule, and a surprisingly correct annual schedule. The future was too surprising and frightening to be left unforeseen.

We loved Shuki. Very often we succumbed to his begging to play all kinds of games with him. He found it extremely difficult to be alone and demanded continual attention from us all. This love was mixed with our fear of what might happen if we didn't fulfill his expectations. At the morning and noon meetings it was he who didn't stop chattering, demanding attention and feeling that we were objects of the environment, there to fulfill all his desires. Shuki is the story of a person who acquired a new language that he learned in the ward through hard work. When he spoke of his emotions he used to fold his arms the same way that Dvora, his analyst, did. He not only learned to speak about emotions, but also to feel, and in particular to be, like Dvora. Once he stirred up a scandal in the ward, in an analysis session he stretched his hand back to where Dvora was sitting and touched her bare leg. A staff meeting was called on this matter and he was informed that perhaps analysis did not suit him. The staff decided that his analysis would be interrupted for a week. His instincts were his stumbling block. There was a fear that he might rape one of us, it was not clear what part of this fantasy belonged to Shuki and his bag of tricks and how much belonged to Julia's fantasy that viewed this act as a miracle. He wanted to get everything from everyone but was also willing to give everything. He was the surest address for getting help, wholeheartedly and unconditionally. There were no barriers between him and his surroundings. The new language he learned in the ward enabled him to give names to the phenomena he felt within himself and this was a lot. He debated how the names began, where they were, and do the objects know their own names. Once he asked whether the sun knows it's called the sun, and what came first: the sun or its name. Once he proposed to Shirli that they exchange names and subsequently identities too, and then he would declare like a cock, at the top of his voice, that he knows what he feels. I'm afraid, he once said, running towards me like

a rhinoceros trying to gore me. Yes, he learned what he felt and because of this slowly developed greater control over his actions. He continued not to understand our simple conversations especially when these took the form of a group forum, when it was impossible to adopt the teacher's voice, explaining to him with warmth and love the things he didn't understand. But it turned out that in order to progress in analysis sophistication can sometimes interfere since it builds and creates a network of defense mechanisms like an automaton that turns on its creator and cannot be cracked. Shuki didn't have anything like this. His emotions were crystal-clear and bright and shone from his face. In the beginning he would become confused about his dreams and act as if they had actually happened. The ridicule we heaped on him was transformed in time into envy of his ability to live with his dreams, in their proximity, and to have ongoing daily connection with them.

He had a unique relationship with the committee. He tried wholeheartedly to obey the responses he got from them and was an active partner in the decisions pertaining to what response would be better for him, teach him and benefit him for a safer future. At times his concreteness reached new heights and repeatedly provided proof that nothing more is needed for analysis. When Na'ama attempted suicide, swallowing a huge dose of pills, he reported her to the committee, and when Simon, after he tore his coat, announced that he wouldn't speak to him, he implored that this wouldn't include the backgammon game he loved so much. He would religiously hoard candy and give it out whenever anyone helped him understand what he felt and what was happening to him. His greatness is in the fact that he is not ashamed to ask for help and to present himself naked as the day he was born, and the positive results were not long in coming. His aggression diminished, his anxiety lessened and his communication with

us blossomed and burgeoned. Even Shuki said that one needn't be very smart to undergo analysis, and that he understood what Dvora said. Only Shirli would shoot her arrows at him and ask: "In your opinion, does a retard know he's retarded?" The question confused him but Shirli answered immediately that she thought the answer was yes. He promised her a piece of candy, a game of ping-pong, backgammon, anything, just so that she would explain to him everything he didn't understand. She, of course, declined with great pleasure. Shuki is the story of a person who lives in an environment he cannot understand. And whenever he doesn't understand something he is beset with anxiety, maybe it's against him. When I can't understand something that's even minute I go out of my mind. How does life seem to him when most of our conversations are incomprehensible to him. He doesn't give up, demands an answer again and again. Lately he has either improved or despaired. He is able to spend more time alone, and also doesn't torture us with that incessant and annoying tapping on our shoulders, "explain it to me, explain it to me" like he used to do in the past. When he arrived at the ward he treated himself as a *fait accompli*, when he would be released from the ward he would be awarded a B.A. in the psyche even though he would understand only little of his environment. He has interesting masturbation fantasies, everything that moves is okay with him, men, women and animals. Always maintains the position that he deserves that he be allowed to. When I arrived at the ward I had two main suitors, Zohar and Shuki. Shuki hoped that I would put out while Zohar thought I would humiliate him. I feel more comfortable with Shuki even though he succeeds at times in performing the impossible, to make me say goodbye to him before he says it. In other words, even I manage to part from him and leave him by himself. He is the ward's child, but I am able to understand how a mother can allow her child, particularly when he wants so much and this miserable thing deserves

to have a little fun, why not. No, in my meetings with him my superior intelligence has no significance. Our sexual fantasies meet on one equal and compatible plane. He receives and I give and everything is so wonderful.

His inferior mental ability was pitiful. Once Danny the counselor shouted at him and told him to stop being so miserable and expect everyone to pity him, this was after he begged that we play with him. One year later he came up to me and simply said: "I know that you pity Shuki but Shuki doesn't feel like a poor thing, it's your problem." He was right, but continued referring to himself in third person - as Shuki and not as "I." His directness was shocking. He wanted the sex organs of his roommates, only to touch, to have some pleasure. He asked Dvora to put out a little, what would it matter to her. And if she is so concerned about him and understands him better than anyone else, why shouldn't she do him this little act of mercy as well? He masturbates for hours during the day. He performed deep experiential studies in what Amos called "the pleasure tip", and related in great detail, for hours and hours, that fateful moment of "the smell of earth," as he called it, before it spurts out. This was one of his ways of calming himself on an everyday basis, in a fatiguing daily routine, and reducing his level of anxiety to what he called "the hour after orgasm." He discovered that during this hour his misdeeds were not usually reported to the committee, and he therefore wished to always be either before or after that moment of "the smell of earth."

He continued to look for hell when someone told him to go there, he never stopped turning around to see if the objects didn't mock him and then disappear, and once he explained to me that when someone gets on your wick you mustn't jump around

because it'll fall out down your pants leg. For him bells would wake up, the sun would break out from behind the mist, and steam tried to escape. Time passed for him at a different pace, as if he lived in that enchanted world of the beginning of life. There he ruled as the great sorcerer. Things said to him a few minutes earlier sometimes turned into eternal truth, and he always preferred one piece of candy now to two pieces later on. For him he was the center of the universe, the sun and moon followed him, but he also knew what he really felt. Dvora's simple and impressive words calmed him down, allayed the storm of his anxieties and allowed him to look at himself. Like a child he often used the new language he acquired before he could comprehend it, but the fruits of this were never far behind. His simple and concrete truths that echoed in the room during morning and noon meetings were the kind that we make efforts to express, to say, to discover, and later we say we knew it. For me he was proof that you can live within a stone's throw of your feelings and survive, even meaningfully. When he called me by name from the end of the corridor and everyone heard, something that was never there before swelled inside me. I called him Shuki. It was then that I knew that an infant can also give and that an adult can at times behave like a baby. When he left us we felt that a huge hollow was created in the ward. He united us in his simple ways, his generosity, the cakes that he liked sharing with us and particularly those he liked getting from us.

Words taken from the talk Simon gave on the event of Shuki's sixth year anniversary at the ward: once complicated and unintelligible things seemed to me wise and beyond of the scope of my understanding. Today I know the meaning of conceptual, fundamental thinking. The basis, the principles are quite simple while their less important derivatives may be confusing. Einstein, too, wrote a book called *Relativity*:

the Special and General Theory with no formulae. The teacher who stands at the blackboard and confuses his students, the students who get lost in the labyrinth. All this because there aren't enough smart people who know how to differentiate between what is of primary and what is of secondary importance, to separate the wheat from the chaff. And again, you can take everything and reduce it to its principles, its fundamental rules, which are the most interesting foundation for all. I am often guilty of this sin and get entangled in sophistication and the curves and bends of my thoughts, and forget the simplicity of the main points that Miriam reminds me of so well. Yes, I want to say that analysis is entirely simple. What is said there is banal and utterly basic, and despite this it is repeatedly obstructed from my view until she states and articulates it. For me she is the one who knows how to simplify the complexity of the problems I experience, and transform them into universal, objective and overall truths, fitting each and every detail beautifully, and thus give me myself, as well as the ability to understand others. Shuki reminded us that good analysis is not philosophy, you can't fool it nor do whatever you like with it. It is one, unique and true, what we really feel.

20

Tuesday afternoon is visiting time and the bus with the visitors arrives at four. Gila is coming to visit me today. She's my only friend from the outside world, at least the only one I maintain contact with. We were in parallel classes and were kind of friends. Strangely enough, the friendship became stronger when I was hospitalized. At the same time she began psychoanalysis with a private analyst. That's the reason we have a common language. She's jealous of me and I agree with her, it's not the same undergoing analysis outside or in a hospital. First off, she pays a king's ransom,

around eight hundred dollars a month for only four weekly sessions, while I get my head together at the expense of the country and its generous taxpayers. Can it get any better than that? But in my humble opinion there are other, more fundamental differences. Gila described the twilight situation very well, the clouded consciousness with which she goes to analysis. She gives her all, tells everything she knows about herself, tries very hard and there are still a great many everyday things that until they throw them back into her face she doesn't think that there's a problem and she doesn't take it with her to analysis. In the everyday routine of life people don't tell you you're ugly, that you've got bad breath, that they can see you're frightened and lack confidence all the time, not even when you're aggressive and particularly not that your head's a bit out of kilter. No, it's not worth their while to say it, they prefer to remain polite. "But don't you feel all these things yourself?" Gila's analyst asked her. The truth is that we agreed that not always and perhaps even most often do we actually grasp how much our distortion is with us minute by minute throughout the entire continuum of our lives. Gila says that her analyst helps her expose her emotional truth that stands behind the events and dilemmas she comes along with, but if she doesn't come along with something important, how can he help her? I said of myself that when I came to the ward I suffered a series of blows like a Stone Age man dropped into the twentieth century who doesn't understand anything of what's going on around him. My aggression, my scheming and my tricks were given back to me with such intensities that it made me think I was in a lunatic asylum. It wasn't clear to me who's crazy here, because no one had ever told me these things and certainly not in this way. I ran to Miriam for analysis. I thought she'd stroke me and say that it's not so terrible and that they on their part are probably exaggerating. Not a bit of it. For fifty minutes we discussed it at length, in detail and with long silences that

were proof that the matter was intolerable. I, who have the self-image of a grazing doe, discover that I am a genuine carnivore with blood dripping from my fangs. Without the regular daily feedback my inner distortion would never have been fully exposed. No, I'm not a masochist but analysis seems different when you get massive and constant feedback from the environment. Gila agreed that cheating and running away are impossible. Shirli has recently begun to walk bent over slightly with her shoulders hunched forward like some tough guy walking around the ward looking for a fight. Boaz the counselor told her that she's pacing the ward terrorizing everyone. I shivered for a moment. They'll soon be telling me about my ugly nose, I thought to myself. How insolent of Boaz to tell Shirli something she's unable to change and for which she's not to blame. I later understood that this too is feedback. The way Shirli carries her body's weight and its posture are not only what she's broadcasting to the world but also her inner experience with which she lives and the time has come to connect with it. The principle is simple, the world is made up of people who don't tell other people what they think of them and feel from them and the analyst is the one and only person in the world whose role it is to be the bad guy, not the fake goodie. No, he's not really bad or cold and distant, he's simply objective and from that you can conclude that the others aren't. The response to me and my behavior arises here from nine extremely sensitive adolescents and ten skilled staff members, and if all that is not enough, I get called to a staff meeting. There, in just a few seconds, like a good sculptor who knows with one hammer blow that is not too hard and not too soft how to chisel the stone, they put me in my place, touch the root, the kernel of the difficulty, in a way that what was clear to them is clear to me. I sometimes find that they have waited. They didn't call me right away. They let me go crazy for a while first. Only when the madness is in full bloom can they look at it in all its glory,

beauty and intensity and only then I, too, am capable of recognizing it. And not too late, it would be a shame to waste time and get lost. And there are less drastic means. Jeremiah can drop a word or two at the morning or afternoon meetings in such a way as to focus all the adolescents' eyes on my problem and perhaps at the Friday party he'll say it with a little more love. Jeremiah once said that they call it "reality therapy" in the psychology literature. But I prefer to call it by the name that homeless Rona gave the ward: "a warm home" is what she calls this place. It is here that Shuki learned to do his laundry and calculate his pocket money with the help of a counselor, Matti learned how to shave, I learned not to throw my tampons into the toilet bowl and that you don't take a shit with the door open and Rona learned everything, to be a human being. Gila describes the split between what happens in her analysis and life. It's hard for her to apply what she sees in analysis to everyday life. In analysis everything is clear and outside she continues as she always has. So her four hours of analysis remain orphaned and are not part of daily routine. With us, in a place where everyone lives and breathes psychoanalysis nonstop, that can't happen.

Yes, I invest a great deal of effort in trying to foresee what Miriam will say to me. In the ability to prophesy there is control over the situation that I need so much. Again and again I stand helpless in the face of her ability to surprise me. "It's simply intolerable that I haven't yet learned your trick", I once told her. "Trick?" she replied. Her words sometimes seep down, calming and creating wonders that over the distance of years take on the form of such banal truths on difficulty et cetera, that for some reason or other I didn't recognize. If only I could grasp her way, her code, I already have some ideas in that direction. Sometimes things I said that she repeats using almost the same words sound so different from me and have a far greater effect. "It's

very insulting for you that you feel I have something to say. It seems you would prefer that I be a fool and have nothing to say to you”, she said. “You are even willing to go to therapy that doesn’t appear to you to be good.” That’s true, if she were just a fool at least I would feel strong. I would do her a favor and come along to hear her words patiently and tolerantly and I would even grant her a little of my own vast wisdom. And again I squirm like a snake and beat my breast in contrition. Why did Miriam say something? Why couldn’t I have said it? Again and again I come full of cleverness, knowing and analyzing my previous day’s exploits. Again and again she says all the right things. “True, I was very hurt and insulted.” “Yes, I wanted to fix someone, I so much wanted to be a beauty queen...” she says in order to say later, but I said that. It doesn’t work. Again and again things that I said more or less, that the words went before the tune arranged by her and, leaving me lying humiliated on the couch. After all I really came to work on myself, not to lie to anyone. Why shouldn’t I be happy with what she truly is able to grant me? That’s the sixty four thousand dollar question, as Zohar once said.

Matti is fourteen, a penitent Jew. He’s the youngest in the ward and looks so small, weak and frightened. Rumor has it that he came to us after he suffered an indecent act at the hands of his roommates at the *yeshiva*. As a result he had a psychotic episode. He’s never said anything about it. I remember the first workshop he took part in after his arrival, then he said he was twenty. Long, curly and light hairs spotted his face, revealing his youth. Matti walks between the walls of the ward like a shadow, always along the walls, always carrying books. It’s hard for him to budge without a book in his hand, he has good intentions of reading them but more urgent matters prevent him from doing so. He tries not to engage in idle talk, in the fleeting vanities of this

world, so he thinks all the time. He doesn't permit himself to rest for a single moment, every moment in life has a meaning and he doesn't begin a sentence without saying "With the help of the Almighty." Unimportant things like suitable clothing, minimal contact with his environment and elementary table manners are a waste of time to him. His books, belongings and phylacteries are spread all over the ward as though the entire ward belongs to him. He is deep into the essentials and does everything on a major scale and he's an even more major mixed-up kid. With the help of the Holy Scriptures he will cure himself. He digs and digs and burrows into them from all directions. Now and again, once our relationship had become a little closer, after he had understood that he was allowed to exchange a few words with a sister and that seductive Satan would not burst out from within me at any moment, he confided in me. He once asked me if I knew the intensity of the forces of man's soul. He was silent like someone waiting for an answer. When he saw I didn't know and sensed my embarrassment he demonstrated his knowledge in a flood of the Sages' aphorisms and verses from the Scriptures. I slowly caught on and began arguing with him. We have interesting conversations, his greatness is undoubtedly in his ability to deliberate and propound a number of contradictory opinions at the same time. He doesn't panic when a specific question has been given different answers by the rabbis he drove crazy from the call box downstairs. He once showed me an excerpt from the Sages in which there was a discussion of depression, how we must take care to avoid sinking into it. Matti was contrite and admitted that he did not always observe this precept. He did not always observe the commandment of always being joyful and happy and he viewed this as an additional sin whose punishment is depression and so on and so forth. Man has a great gimmick, he must be happy, in fact it's his decision and with it all the problems are solved. When I was a little girl I too thought that the

entire world could be fixed that way. For Matti there is no unconscious, those parts belong to the divine. He deposits his soul with the Creator before going to sleep and on awakening from a night of horror and nightmares he religiously recites the blessing, “I give thanks unto thee, the living King, who restoreth my soul in compassion.”

There’s a smell of jizzum from him day and night, so summed up Rona who is the ward’s sense of smell. Shuki once told me that he brought a piece on “spilling seed in vain” to the sex group and in it all the punishments and floggings that are given to those committing this transgression. He explained to everyone the symptoms likely to befall you if you masturbate. Tremendous hair growth on your legs, loss of teeth and baldness. And he indeed examines the hair on his legs now and again, we’ve all seen it. When the woman counselor comes to wake him up in the morning it appears that he slept naked. The committee drew up a program for him to sleep in pajamas. This evidence left no room for doubt. His lusts fill his mind and grow wild in the ward.

The combination of Matti and Zohar in the same room is a strange one. Matti’s smelly socks spread all over the room constantly humiliate Zohar. That’s how the balance between them was built. He does not obey many of the committee’s decisions and the rules of the ward as though they have nothing to do with him. That’s how he exists in the ward as a separate and independent entity. The truth is that the pathology of each of us is different and strange, and it appears that adhesion is non-existent and it’s hard to build a cohesive group. Each of us lives in his own world with his own problems but Matti is the biggest loner of all. Rona said he has no backbone and that’s why he turned to religion. There was something in this image that fitted me. I

didn't understand why they picked him to commit the act that aroused our unreserved curiosity. Na'ama said that he probably asked for it and they couldn't keep him at the *yeshiva* after what had happened. Matti walks around the ward like a captured Jew among the gentiles. He must try not to anger them and continue to keep his faith as far as he can. That's how he thinks he'll get through the difficult period of hospitalization. He reminds me of a kind of happiness I once experienced when I was very young when my parents were the epitome of perfection and everything was so perfect, a happiness that will never return.

Matti underwent the emotional-cognitive reversal that happens to every convert, so I read. From a condition of depression and dejection he shifted to indescribable happiness. Everything suddenly fell into place. I have already discovered how much deceit there can be in the insight experience. In Matti's case he built for himself, at that moment of insight, in the sudden turnaround in his personality, defenses of reinforced concrete that could not be breached. There is an answer to every question, everything is clear and ordered. He doesn't stop blessing, mumbling, doing everything so that sinful thoughts do not penetrate his brain, not to mention lechery and lust. When I look at Matti I'm amazed how far logical reasoning, rationalizations and intellectualizations can go. Luxurious buildings of human intelligence are used for one purpose and one purpose only, to negate what he really feels. The split between emotion and intelligence appears in all its glory, even Shirli admits this. He's a scared child, there's no doubt about it, but he's busy with questions of redemption and eternity. In the clubroom he once asked me whether, in my opinion, God is a fact or an opinion. I thought and thought... and thought "an opinion". Matti was silent for a moment and then replied, "There's something in that, I simply hadn't

thought about it.” At that stage he had already been told quite clearly by the staff that he was hiding behind religion and was sabotaging his therapy. No one wanted to suborn him from his belief. When he wanted to prostrate himself on the grave of some rabbi or other every couple of days, he was allowed to do so. But there is a meeting point at which it simply doesn’t work together, so my roommates and I summed it up. Matti replaced his relationship with himself with a relationship with God and the Holy Scriptures. His past vanished and was replaced by the glorious past of the People of Israel down the generations. He once warned me, saying, “You don’t remind the stranger of his past”, it’s a great sin to shame him like that. He burned his bridges to the past so that he would be unable to retreat, he mortgaged the present for the benefit of a brighter future, the reward of his Law, and moved forward like someone in the throes of amok and in strict observance of the commandments that arose every now and again. Analysis was bogged down.

Dvora’s work was difficult. He refused to be alone with her at a distance of four ells as prescribed by the Law. He quoted from the Ethics of the Fathers to her, “And ye shall not converse much with a woman” and concluded with “Blessed is He who made me not a woman”. He refused to talk to her about what had happened to him but he said that since they sucked out his soul, which is what he called what had happened there, everything had begun to deteriorate. He asked whether it was his fault and how had he brought that terrible thing upon himself. After all, it was out of the question that he be punished by being hospitalized among lunatics in a secular mental hospital. Could there be anything worse than that? Evidently he has done something bad that he hasn’t yet revealed, so I gathered from his conversations with himself that were often held aloud with various hand movements that expressed the

depth of his thinking. When waves of laughter erupt from the station and spread throughout the ward we know that it's report reading time and the staff closeted in the station have reached the report on Matti. He once told me a joke: How do you know there's a God, he asked. When thirty thousand fans of the Jerusalem soccer team all rise and shout three times in unison, there's a God! So isn't there?! Matti continued to hold on to his religion and laugh at it at the same time. He knew he was misusing it in terms of the ward. At night, when he ran away, he sometimes went without fear to the Wailing Wall. In light of the recent terrorist events in that area, some people viewed this as a suicide attempt, but he believed that the Almighty would protect him, so he said. There is one thing that is always beyond my comprehension, the ability to bend the facts. Why not eat meat and milk together? Matti immediately brought out the latest studies that proved that it's bad for the digestion. Why not have sex when the woman is having her period? Well, the man and woman would want more afterwards. Circumcision is really the crown of Creation. Pardon me, procreation, he said. In short, science today has proved that it's worthwhile being a Jew, not to mention being a *kosher* Jew. Dvora fights heroically, trying to unify the time continuum vital for any understanding, to show him that he is the same person before and after the conversion. She tries to show him why he creates such an extraordinary cognitive system. Such high towers in order not to feel the feelings he experienced during his period of despair before he turned to religion. At first they tried to conceal the great battle but time made the question more critical. Religion or analysis? They simply didn't go together. They tried to enable their existence side by side. Perhaps it was possible with other penitent Jews or religious people. For Matti religion was a defense and he simply didn't have the strength to feel. At the time when he walked the corridors of the ward like a shadow with *The Guide for the Perplexed* in one hand

and *How To Succeed With Girls* in the other, he once said to me, "This world is a corridor leading to the next, and no more."

21

Matti claims that to be joyful in life is one of the commandments and it is an unforgivable sin to be immersed in sorrow and depression, while I show him a study that proves that the reality perception of the depressed is better than that of the rest of the people. That's how I view analysis. No, Miriam never told me that I have reason to be depressed. Clearly she wouldn't accept this theory the same way she doesn't accept any other theory of my invention. But I can repeatedly point out that the essence of analysis is in revealing things I don't see. Why? Simply because they're unpleasant. For Simon it's not mathematical proof but it's my feeling after hundreds of sessions with Miriam. "So you can't say good things to people?" Matti asks, "you can only say bad things?" "That's what they call progress?" I don't want to represent them, only myself, I said. I sin again and again when I say too many good things to myself and am unwilling to see the bad ones. Doubtlessly Miriam would correct me, I thought to myself, and wouldn't accept the dichotomy between good and bad. She doesn't have Matti's moral aspirations. For her, the hidden, repressed and difficult feelings are the solid truth that must be uncovered and no philosophy will stand in the way of this belief of hers.

She announced that soon she'll be going off on vacation. Before every one of her vacations, she insists on prying out of me what she doubtlessly calls my true emotions, intense feelings of abandonment, anger, loneliness, etc., that I am supposed to feel on her approaching absence. I used to waver on the twilight borderline of

playing her game. Giving her feelings and dreams that would make her happy and substantiate her theories. The game I played, as if something's hurting me, continued and sometimes I got the impression that maybe something really did hurt me. In any case, this time I did feel the slightest, tiniest bit of abandonment anxiety. The single stable, safe and right figure in my life, the one that holds my soul in the palm of her hand, is going to get up and go. She, who only yesterday taught me how to conduct myself with her, who knows all my tricks, the only support I have to shelter myself from myself and the world, is about to disappear. No, that's not the way it began. At first I hurled at her, as always, unbridled anger, I gave her indisputable proof that she's not behaving properly, probably some international congress, perhaps having a good time with her husband whose existence has already penetrated my consciousness after long years of denial. Who knows what she's going to be doing during those weeks, but why at my expense? I said in jest. Yes, she, who took my jest in earnest, said, anything anyone does is at your expense. I wanted to put an end to this game, I didn't know whether it was for real or not. I asked her to promise me that she wouldn't be leaving soon, let's say, in the coming year. My parents had warned me that analysis is addictive. Maybe I'm a member of a secret sect within which I have become deeply entangled, and am nothing more than a person who lives in order to be only one more association in a wild collection of associations and interpretations that fill the minds of the staff. I live in order to prove and realize their theories and play their games. Vacation, I say again, she's only going off on vacation, she's not leaving. Perhaps this will be another small brick in the building that is going up in my inner world, this time a stable building that won't collapse, in which the foundation of pain will be broad enough so that there won't be a collapse. A broad basis, perhaps someday I'll get married and have a child of my own. Will I be able to give him what I got from

her and others? Will I be able to become a person who bears his pain silently and adds additional pain to it the way Miriam, the staff and even my parents have done? For a moment I thought how much she actually depends on me. If, for instance, I were to abandon her. I'd leave the ward announcing that I'm unwilling to continue with her. In addition, her professional success depends on me, on my progress. This time her inner voice, which resides in me by now, pointed out to me that instead of feeling how hurt and insulted I am regarding her nearing vacation, I prefer to fantasize about how much she needs me.

Lost time brought with it the flavor of a new unknown country to me. The years that passed under the protection of analysis give no return, sorry, won't return. It's as if analysis constitutes the sole documentation of the landmarks of lost time. On such and such a date I understood this and that. No, even these landmarks are a bitter illusion. The walls in Miriam's room did not change and the day I'll have to part from them is nearing, although I still don't know when that will be. Maybe I want eight years of analysis and need a lifetime, no? The sorrow, the sorrow and longings, for what? Four years have gone by and things are still going strong. Spring in the fields and the villages that surround us has not changed and the sounds coming from the radios and TV sets tell us only that the country's situation is getting worse. There's no room for lunacy, you have to get a grip and there's no time for fooling around, Zohar said one gloomy night, that and no more. He spoke about his dead father who had lived his entire life in his past, when he was a famous military commander. And he, Zohar, felt his dead father totally alive within him, as if he were branded on his heart. Time has a unique flavor. What's the point of the passing year, who will bring it back. It's only etched on memory and doesn't exist anywhere else. What's the point or

meaning of this surrealistic experience of fleeting life that doesn't stop at any station. I'll write a book, that will be my quintessential struggle on the face of this earth, my dream of being someone will come true. Time is sad, nothing can be done about it, I thought to myself. Miriam went off on vacation in the summer and that made my life even sadder. During our last session before her month-long vacation I talked about my parents who used to leave me at remote summer-camps or with some distant relative and go off on their own to enjoy themselves. Wordless emotions hovered in the room. I am standing alone in front of a rabbit cage at some godforsaken summer camp. Again a picture of me alone. How me and my sister hid from my grandmother under the covers and peeped at her putting talcum powder between her wide-open legs in an obsessive devout ritual. Later she played with my privates but didn't let me play with hers. I said to Miriam it was a pity I wasn't little then but a big little, I could have seen, watched this loneliness from the outside. She said I was sorry that I didn't have someone older close to me. I don't like talking about my past with her. It's like crying over spilt milk. The here and now are important to me. But she returns to my past every now and then and does what she likes with it. No, it's hard for me to bridge over the lost past and think that this child is me. And now Miriam is leaving too. Will she come back? I have to be a good girl, otherwise everything will be lost. I want to hug her, she's mine, I'm hers. But these are pointless longings for what is lacking. Near the door of the house of lost time stood Miriam, stood there as if we were parting forever. She stood there firm and solid as a rock and this time looked at me a little more. No, this isn't the last time, I had to remind myself, but this is my Miriam.

Night fell on my house of dreams and I found myself climbing the stairs to her house, they didn't open the door for me, and a different name was written over the bell push. I became frightened. As I was going down the stairs Mommy suddenly opened the door. Daddy was lying in bed surrounded by all kinds of children who were renting the apartment. I shouted that there wouldn't be any room for me now. There were loads of kids playing in the living room and no adult was taking care of them. I asked, when you take a child for a walk, who carries his coat or sweater, because they're too heavy for a child. And there was a baby there that had to be watched so he wouldn't fall out of bed because his mother had gone out for a moment. Suddenly I saw that that there was a girl lying in an aquarium filled with water and someone said she had been circumcised. I tried to fall asleep in my bed, I sucked a finger that I had previously covered with DDT and couldn't fall asleep. I thought that perhaps it was a result of the poison. I went over to wash off my finger and there wasn't any water in the faucets. Suddenly I felt that thousands of bugs were crawling all over my back. I called Mommy, she didn't get upset and laughed as if it wasn't her fault and didn't hurry to help me. And there was an unsteady plank there that Mommy and I stood on and had to balance on together. Mommy didn't help me, she stood there and didn't move an inch. All the time, I, on my last legs, fell down and steadied the plank but Mommy was proud and didn't budge. Later I was punished with an array of punishments, every six months dismissal for a week, for the duration of one year. All kinds of people tried to explain my punishment to me but I couldn't understand and Mommy shouted at me that I'm torturing her. I tried to understand what they were saying by their tone of voice because I don't know German.

I fled to my special childhood landscape, between the houses and over the fences and felt safe. I opened the door and saw myself sitting on Miriam's chair; I was the analyst. I was filled with fear that she'd catch me. I made an effort on the couch to say something objective to her and told her about the two analyses I was undergoing at the same time. She asked what did I need this for? I was playing in her nursery on a nice soft carpet. It was a mess, lots of toys were cluttered around, a room with no partitions like I have at home. I gave her my hand and she stroked it, suddenly I felt that it was a man's hand. She said that if for instance I come three quarters of an hour early, I should knock on the door and I could sleep there. I imagined how Miriam and her husband would wake me up.

22

My book is one of the middle of night when my table lamp casts my entity as unexpected light and shadow on my notebook. No, I haven't managed to make time from all my numerous activities to write, because this is not the stuff of which my book is made. It is made of the stuff of life, from the everyday that pulses in my innards and is thrown onto my table in the small hours of the night, this is the nature of a diary. Sometimes it's the best notebook of all and sometimes it's worthless, insipid, lacking rhyme and reason. Not just another book of the many that have been written, and so I'll continue wandering at the speed of light between everything and nothingness, seeking objectivity in my inner subjective experience and not finding it. In the late, late hours of the night something is released inside me, I'm not a slave of the words but their master. I talk to my notebook in a raging torrent that spurts from the remains of the past day and don't make revisions and then amend them. When I told myself that I write for myself, I was weaned from the sanctity of the letter and the

word, a cruel inheritance from first grade where my fingers loved to write, the portals of my soul were opened and I began singing soul music known only to me.

I suddenly remembered a sentence from my childhood in which I swore that I would always understand children because I feel myself so much and understand what's happening, and I swore that when I grew up I would never ever forget what I had undergone and so I would always understand children. But today I am locked out of my childhood garden just as it is hard for me to communicate with children in general. I was expelled from the Land of Children and have forgotten their language just like the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The Land of Children, the Language of Children, the World of Childhood – is there such a thing? I have lost the child within me, I told Amos who listened smiling. I have no way left of reaching it so I won't ever be part of the world of children as a family member. I have built defenses, thoughts and excuses whose ramparts are higher than any forgotten childhood, and this mask of grief is called maturity. As far as I'm concerned childhood is synonymous with waiting for maturity, with calculating when I'll be a big girl and an end will be put to this terrible suffering. , I thought to myself that ff they could, children would commit suicide, because they really suffer carrying the terrible secret inside them, the secret of their uniqueness on earth. No, I have been locked out of the Garden of Childhood for ever and I will nevermore seek entrance there.

Try explaining the taste of an apple to a person who has never eaten one and try explaining the notes of the tunes that are plucked on the soul's strings to someone who has never undergone analysis. My last session with Miriam was so gentle and stormy. This closeness, the tender and caressing touch with which she touches me

inside is unparalleled. Not long ago I heard that a mosquito has its own world of sounds, and that's how it is with a person after a few years of analysis. Your world of sounds changes. You hear and see other things. You see a new spectrum range and hear notes at previously inaudible frequencies. The everyday plays a new melody because it is totally immersed in understandings and motivations that come from somewhere else.

I'm angry with you because I'm late, why do I have to hurry so much because of you, why, who the hell are you? Look how frightened I am of you, that I'm making all this effort and for years I've been exactly on time! But she presented all this in a different light, she said that I'm not willing to give up anything that's mine, not even one minute of analysis and so I'm punctual to the infinite. Forty-nine minutes of analysis are indeed not fifty minutes of analysis, and who better than me knows the significance of each of the last breaths on the couch. The confusion between me and her, excuse me, between me and myself, continues. I have gone back to the beginning, the analysis is mine, I'm interested in as many sessions as possible and not to miss them and that really is my own choice. But it is pleasanter to feel that someone is forcing you to do analysis and then you do it and you're doing right. In the chapter of confusion we can say that the difficulties between me and myself become difficulties between me and Miriam, and that's calming.

I returned to my body and enjoyed Miriam who felt the mysteries of my sex organ and its delicate sensitivities with me. She spoke about me not feeling that I'm here and exist without external approval. I thought about the baby that is guided towards a survival relationship with its environment from birth. Smiling at them, crying,

making eye contact, copying those around it incessantly, saying hello to them with a bright smile etc., etc. That's how I am too, I explained to her. My entire being is directed towards broadcasting on the frequency of whoever wants to receive. I stretch my neck in your direction to be in greater contact with you. I suddenly realized why I have a slight crick in my neck. I religiously uphold everything you imposed on me four years ago, to say whatever comes into my mind unashamed, like a puppy with no personality. She said that not everyone likes puppies. I recalled that I was good at revision at school and Miriam, I think, laughed. Then in the middle of this terrible laughter I told her she was humiliating herself by laughing with me and she wants to butter up to me, and in general it seems to me that she's unhappy lately and needs me. You feel like a puppy or you see whoever treats you like a human being as a puppy, she said. Later, when she switched off the fan at my request, she dropped in my esteem.

Matti's sister has had a boy. Dvora didn't wish him *mazal tov* and so Matti declared "neutrality has no limits". He told us weird stories about how he has woken up short of breath the last few nights before he became an uncle. I've never had asthma, he told about that night of panic when he feared that if he fell asleep and left the automatic control to take over and regulate his breathing he was likely to die of suffocation. That's how he described, panic stricken, the escalation of the panic that gripped him when he realized that if he wasn't more conscious of his breathing he'd simply stop. At that moment he was convinced that he was expelled from the Garden of Eden forever and destined to walk the face of the earth conscious of his breathing, a burden that is heavy for him. And as Matti isn't capable of doing two things at the same time like walking and chewing gum, the sequel is clear, he'll remain attentive

and riveted to his breathing like a tremendous curse lying on him and delegating him an unbearable responsibility. Dvora displayed no great empathy towards his illnesses and especially not to the moments in which he became more like the other than the other resembled himself. She simply understood that the fetus in his sister's stomach was pressing against his diaphragm too and making breathing difficult for both of them. She said he fears that the air will not be sufficient for both of them, that is for him and the baby. There was some truth in this because Matti anticipated future events, he simply lost his sister's heavenly support and compassion for ever and ever. During this difficult period he put on weight, complained of constipation and when his sister went into labor, says Julia, and the doctors told her to push and push correctly as though she is taking a crap and not with her neck as though she has something stuck there, Matti was better at pushing than she was. Dvora strikes at him mercilessly. With her characteristic toughness she reminded him that he is Matti and not Matti's sister. At that moment, he said, her interpretations hit the mark so accurately that his symptoms vanished but not for long. His anger at her lack of empathy towards that great historic moment was unforgivable and took over. He told me later that there are moments when he feels so bad, not in control and not connected that it seems to him that all the analysis is crap. I replied from my own experience if he thinks that the purpose of analysis is to make him omnipotent then he really does have something to be disappointed about. But if he understands that all that analysis can give him is the true and objective recognition of his inner reality, so often hard and unbearable, he will be able to gain some benefit from it despite everything. And the struggle will continue without end with improvements and stumbling again and again.

And yet Matti got up and adopted a tiny kitten, an alley cat as they're called. A few days after he brought it into the ward and introduced it proudly and with unconcealed euphoria, he went into what's called postnatal depression. In a certain place in his consciousness he apparently realized the magnitude of the commitment that would change his life beyond recognition. From now on he would no longer be a free man but a downtrodden slave for the rest of life, so he explained his sorrow to Zohar. Freedom, freedom was the key word in Matti's gloomy world from the day he chose, of his own free will, to give it up. In analysis, he told Na'ama, they had a serious discussion about his difficulty in maintaining his position of not knowing. The kitten whimpered and Matti hesitated and didn't know what to do. In other words, at the beginning he displayed a great deal of knowledge without any basis whatsoever and slowly, with Dvora's help, he was able to consult Julia who understood cats in a most surprising but suspicious way and connect to the truth that he really doesn't know what to do in such difficult situations. The primary object relations and the eternal encounter between mother and child took shape under Matti's protective wing. He had a new-old theory that if he is connected to himself then the kitten would grow and become a person. That's how he examines his reactions to the kitten from morning to night. He tries to find the cat's real desires in himself and makes the notorious dream of identity symbiosis come true. In analysis, of course, Dvora continued telling him he is incapable of maintaining the feeling that he doesn't know and that getting to know an animal takes time.

In the near future I'll go far, Matti used to whisper in Zohar's ear, while Zohar secretly hoped the day would come when he would awaken to a new day without the illusion that he would be more connected today than yesterday. His hoped-for

depression enveloped him. His existentialist view of the world changed in a way that aroused everyone's envy and there were some who attributed great progress in therapy to this. It was no longer "things will get better" but "it will be worse tomorrow" he used to say. During this period of great upheaval in his life he used to compare analysis with the marine commando route marches his father used to tell him about. You go on till you drop, he once told me scornfully in the hope he could arouse something in me. And another time he left it at a more mature description as an analogy with analysis. You march carrying ninety pounds of sand on your back and they don't tell you how far you have to go. There is some similarity, I agreed, we too carry the burden of our false identity and no one has told us when this relentless march will be over and analysis successfully terminated. Whoever looks back is turned into a pillar of salt, Amos once said, and with this sentence broke the silence of generations. But Simon, who is busy calculating the end, assured me that I've done between a third and a quarter, said Shuki once, a few days after we had celebrated his twentieth birthday. In the meantime the special relationship between Matti and Ciao Ciao the cat was an endless source of verification for my theory on the primary relationship and shaping of personality on earth. The End of Days riddle of what is innate and what is learned is likely to be resolved, I claimed in an emotional moment in front of everyone. Somewhere beyond the walls of the ward Dvora's blows to Matti continued to reverberate, striking angrily again and again giving no respite. She stuck to her guns beyond recognition. Matti was to learn that it was not only innocence, tenderness and love that he felt towards Ciao Ciao. He was also filled with tremendous hate and disgust during his endless nocturnal awakenings, and imaginings of annihilation and destruction did not pass him by and especially unfettered jealousy for her primary relationship with Julia. He finally understood that

she was simply humiliating him, or as Dvora corrected him, he felt humiliated and it was not necessarily she who was humiliating him.

Matti claimed that Dvora and a part of him are facing the whole world and his other part. As proof of this he raised the subject of the *mazal tov*. Dvora was the only living creature on earth who had not congratulated him and part of him claimed strongly that she was doing the right thing. But mockery arose from all sides. Some called her inhuman, like saying goodbye said others, yuck said Julia, and so on. Matti slowly discovered what he so much feared that he himself is not sure that he wants the congratulations and the good luck wishes. He began connecting with his destructive desires to destroy this bothersome creature and wondered whether to give it up for adoption with quite a few guilt feelings and to everyone's relief.

23

Last night in the clubroom I was overtaken by a mood of foolishness, perhaps as a result of the atmosphere of merrymaking that's taken over the ward with the blossoming of the almond trees or perhaps for other reasons. Insistently and dramatically I stood in front of everyone and said: "Help me! Help me uncover the distortion within me. Every time you see something about me that I don't, tell me!" I really begged. Everyone promised they'd do their best. Zohar said if I thought that they can see through only from time to time, he can, even now, indicate my mistake: "We can see through you all the time." "Take it easy!" he suddenly shouted angrily. At first I was insulted but there are great moments in a person's life, moments when the inner and outer worlds unite. I felt that everything I sense every minute sensitive people can see and grasp and the time has come to stop playing as if maybe they

didn't see it. So what? Do I have to walk around transparent, with the thought that they can see everything? Simon, who has experience in these matters said that people are not preoccupied with me and don't think about me all the time. He, for instance, thinks of me only rarely. "How much this must insult you" he added. In short, I summed it up for them, whoever wants, comes and takes, sees through everything and the others don't care a hoot. But if they wanted, they could have it too. This time Julia too had something to say: "What will you gain by being a great author? You think your husband will love you more? Who'll give a damn? Will anything real about you change in any way?" she said and turned to Simon, intending this for him too. "In any case, my attitudes and feelings towards you won't change in any way, even if you do become famous." The library is full of books, the picture flashed through my mind, millions of them, one more or one less, what difference would it make? My whole life I have sinned by imagining the brilliance of my future of greatness, every hour and every minute of the day. And now it becomes clear that nobody will be waiting for me when I grow up and no one is loaning me anything or wants to be close to me now in order to cash in sometime in the future. Perhaps only Shuki or Zohar are able to live the fantasies of the other as if they really give me credit for the things I have not yet realized. We are all *wunderkinder*, said Shirli who wants to be a monster when she grows up. Only Zohar brought us back to reality, humiliating us by reminding us that we're lunatics and have no future at all. In my room, in the dark, under my warm blanket I thought to myself how lonely we are. Each person locked up in his own world. It's hard for me, simply hard to listen and pay attention to the others. I am so engrossed in myself that the world just passes by, life goes by and I don't even taste it's delights, but like a nun devote myself to analysis, my god. I don't have the time for anyone, I just suck the marrow out of their

bones. Another scrap of information about myself that will help me find the way. Our pathologies, in contrast with other illnesses, are not contagious. Each one of us lives isolated on his own island, and occasionally signals for help and shouts SOS. The soul-to-soul talks with Na'ama and Rona in our room, deep into the night, leave me lonelier and lonelier. The differences between us gradually swell, and with them fate too is being written. Pathologies and personality structures are unbending, resilient to analysis' erosion of time and will never change. In lunatic asylums there are no heroic friendships, I said to Na'ama, quite the opposite, we have extreme difficulty in creating ties. To emerge from our tiny shells and look at the other, to forget ourselves for one brief moment.

Zohar told us the terrible secret he had never told a soul. In his army unit, when ten soldiers were ordered to carry a very heavy plank, Zohar never lent a hand. In other words, he pretended to participate in the joint effort. He never could understand how the plank was carried since he was convinced that everyone else was doing the same thing. Finally he began to believe that he really carried it like the others, otherwise he couldn't solve the paradox, and in the end believed that if not for him there would be no one to carry it on his shoulders. Nonetheless, every time they were given this horrendous assignment Zohar would put his shoulder to the plank as if he were carrying it but actually, with the help of his other arm that grasped the heavy plank, he was simply hanging on. It looked the same, Shuki explained, and no one noticed. When someone shouted nobody is carrying the plank, and it began to sink lower and lower, Zohar stood up like a hero, shouted carry on to the guys and helped, assisted by his Hero of Israel fantasies, encouraging everyone so that plank would be raised high.

It was then that Zohar sighed and said to us that the riddles of an individual in a group are beyond his comprehension.

Matti planned something interesting for me. To complete all of life's obligations so that later he would be free to study the *Torah*. He calculated and came up with the answer that he would need to spend six months in the bathroom to finish up this issue. Later, a similar period for eating and rid himself of this obligation as well. Then, to say goodbye to people, that would take, let's say, another month, since he is reducing idle conversation. Shirli added a few more years for him for masturbation and I added time for looking for his *yarmulke*, which he loses under suspicious circumstances. Finish up and go home, like piecework, I thought to myself, but nevertheless I liked his plan. Invest today and cash in tomorrow. First you conclude all your obligations and then there's happiness waiting for you in the future, for this kind of ideology I am even willing to try to live.

Biofeedback is the solution, I announced to Miriam. That is when inner experience becomes external and objective and can be scientifically measured and perhaps also controlled. It's the vision of the End of Days and fulfillment of all desires. But she continued to ask what's the matter with my feelings that I can't rely on them, that I need these tricks.

My mother never touched me, I understood at the end of the session, I understand this, I told her, because you touch me a little. Miriam's touch means relaxation even before I understand what had pressurized me. She's with me, I can now reconstruct the feeling. She shows interest in me, touches upon every iota of my body, observes me

and observes with me. So when you have a mother like that what's there to be afraid of? She cares for my body as if I were a baby. I farted, I say while I'm lying on the couch. I hope all the Arabs rape you, I need to go again. My pee is sticking to me, I tell her and so on and so forth. She listens to these voices. The fantasy that she's taking care of my body and notices everything about me is too pleasant and healing.

When Zohar's father died, birth and death became intertwined and challenged Zohar with the strongest kind of existential reality. That is when he understood that his inner world was eternal and stronger than any existential reality. At first he tried to mobilize death on the side of his analysis, in the hope that it would take the hint and provide him with tolerance for suffering and control over himself, things he did not yet possess. No one doubted that Zohar really had inherited some of his father's miraculous powers that would enable him to divert them to avenues of self-examination instead of conquering the enemy. The eulogy was impressive. "A real phenomenon" an army brigadier and comrade-in-arms called him. "An amazing personality" one of the nation's heroes eulogized. Zohar stood there, his mourning was doubtlessly that of the entire nation, so he explained to all of us later. Huge bereavement notices from the nation's high and mighty appeared in all the papers. It was clear that there was no one like Zohar's father. He was praised not only as a courageous, fearless fighter for freedom but also as an unrivaled, warm and devoted family man and Zohar regarded this as a hint to himself that he should take himself in hand and become a man like his father had ordered, asking him to follow in his footsteps. When they filled in the grave, he stood there, his head bowed in mourning. He wondered whether his father would be able to lift the heavy earth that they had piled on him and reappear, smiling like old times, battle-weary and tired, as if nothing

had happened. Everyone left and he continued to stand there, silently looking at the pile of flowers placed there by the entire spectrum of political parties. It was then that he came to understand that there are things that one must learn, otherwise you won't know, like the fact that the dead don't return. It was completely obvious to him that his father couldn't simply disappear and be irresponsible to the pleadings of his beloved son. His father died in his arms and didn't speak some words of wisdom before he passed away. He died of cardiac arrest in the hospital, but Zohar remembered something he said in his sleep, someone next to him sneezed and he said bless you. Reinforced concrete defense mechanisms until the last minute, we all said to him, and he agreed. At night his father appeared in his dream, he was alone, living in a dilapidated rented flat like a student. He wanted Zohar to come and stay with him and not leave him. In the dream he offered him ice-cream to seduce him to stay on. Zohar understood that his dream was his father's true wish, he was his best-loved son, made in his own image. They both had tempestuous inner worlds, except for the fact that his father had stronger defense mechanisms. Later he explained to me that wordless emotion flowed between them. "I want to speak to you," his father used to say to him and when they sat down to talk, he had nothing to say. Zohar asked him what kind of child he had been when he was little and his father answered "Why are you continually occupied with the past," and accurately read Zohar's desire to look for those guilty for his hospitalization. No, his father never accepted his son's illness and continued to angrily claim that some day this nightmare would come to an end and he would take himself in hand. But longings flooded Zohar's soul and slowly drove him crazy. He understood that he had missed the boat and there was no one to talk to. His father used to implant sentences in him that would be beneficial for him at the End of Days, like the long-term stock investments that he loved so much. "When I'm no

longer around you'll have no one to turn to," he often said to him and added: "So remember what I said and you'll see I was right." "If you don't take the straight and narrow path you'll become jaded and ground into dust." You have to get married and learn a profession as quickly as possible, there's no time, that's the way he concluded his never-ending refrain. But Zohar understood the most distressing thing of all, that you can't mobilize the torrential waves of life for the benefit of analysis but quite the contrary and now he has to cope with his or his father's defense mechanisms with increasing energy, so that they won't exploit life's torrents and precede him. At the funeral he discovered that he had no idea what he felt and tried to understand who he was and what he was by listening to the words of eulogy uttered by others. It was well-known that his father loved every clod of earth of the Homeland. That's when he remembered how he filled in the grave in order to observe the precept of burying your dead with your own hands, with such vim and vigor that the burial society people were forced to restrain him and not let him get carried away and then he once again beat his breast in contrition and was terribly ashamed of what he had done. Indeed it was clear that he would fail at the trial of the funeral and wouldn't know what he really felt there, but no one blamed him, except himself, with unforgiving, penetrating criticism. Longings gnawed at everything that was good and Zohar understood once more that the golden thread that connected him to his father was broken forever. He understood that his father missed him no less than he missed his father, but when two loving people reach out to each other over stormy seas, the ship's bow sinks and the hands stretched out to be saved will never bridge the few short inches that are wanting. The beloved friend will sink into the depths of the ocean and the almost-touching hands will remain at the same distance for ever and ever. This was the drawing on the present that Rona gave Zohar.

Zohar dedicated his book, *Fundamentals of the Subjective Experience*, to his father.

On the flyleaf he wrote: "In memory of my father who did not believe in psychology."

24

The Iraqis have invaded Kuwait. It seems as though the whole country is in a state of anxiety and no one's talking about it, said Shirli on her return from a visit home.

When I went out into the street and saw that people were walking around and not panicking, I calmed down, she told me. But a ward like ours will not keep silent and repress the anxiety. At the first morning meeting after the news of the invasion, an orgy of mutual anxiety set in that spurred us all on. I looked at Jeremiah and waited for calming words that were not spoken. But what about our army? It seems to me that it's gradually becoming weaker as I stop believing in magic. How can we fight a million soldiers, I asked Shuki who asked me how many a million is. I hope they rape her, I thought to myself, glancing at Miriam who was sitting opposite me, let her see that reality is no different from my imaginings. But admit it's confusing, I said to myself, because my distortion is suited to the crazy world we live in, so who's crazy for God's sake?

At the most difficult moments in analysis, Zohar once said, he imagines that his sex organ is being injured, it's being cut off. Something there is being cut off, he said and didn't go into details for Shuki who wanted to know exactly what. I also frequently imagined blows directed at my sex organ, its being widened, narrowed or totally destroyed as a punishment for my exploits. Zohar has recently developed a theory stating that castration is good, it assists in and advances analysis. Not only did he

provide references from the history of psychoanalysis which in its beginnings recommended abstention from sexual activity during analysis. He also explains this with a simplicity with which Matti agrees that desire dulls a person. It makes him dopey, without awareness. It takes over every other thing and severely sabotages the understanding of the self because you are driven by such a strong impulse. He referred to well-known folk sayings, “the sperm went to his head” or “when you’ve got a hard-on, your judgement’s up your ass” or “the prick is an idiot because it’s got a hole in its head”. Rona toned these expressions down a little and said in her own words, “love is blind”. The girls, so it seems, understood the boys whose drive is full to overflowing. There was complete agreement on the special difficulty the boys had more than the girls in undergoing analysis because of their wild drives. I thought to myself that perhaps women analysts are better therapists than men because their drives don’t dominate them, they’re not dependent on what is dependent.

Amos and Simon have become close recently and together with Matti’s verbal talent they began to formulate a new theory called “the vulva’s blinding strike”. They used to shut themselves in their room and discuss these issues into the small hours. For years they shut themselves in their room this way, so the story goes, until white smoke was seen. They spent the chill winter nights in deep and frenzied team discussions on questions of existence. Matti joined them at a later stage after the foundations of a new theory that would shed light on the inner world of the human race had been laid. He, apart from short breaks for prayers, never missed these discussions although according to Amos and Simon he made no decisive contribution to them despite the fact that he listened to them attentively. And so, in the wee small hours, day after day, night after night, they both sat and investigated “the mysteries of

the wild vulva” which was Matti’s version, who mainly concentrated on providing suitable titles. At the present time I am not in possession of the entire theory, but a few leaks from the discussions of the senior team have already been published. The central question raised by Simon, whose face was filled with wrath and whose cheeks blushed red, was basically simple, like all the great theories dealing with the basis of the basis. He asked “Why don’t they put out?” That was the essence. Various calculations were made on the feasibility of simply approaching each girl they met in the street and asking her to put out. The chances were that they wouldn’t. But if one in a hundred did, said Simon, he’d be able to accomplish a lot in a day. He had no doubt that at that moment, for example, there would be an awful lot of women in the big city who were dying for what he had to offer. But the riddle remained unsolved, so I gathered when the Council of Sages headed by Simon came to ask me why don’t they put out? I found it difficult to answer. I knew beforehand that it was not in my power to answer this question because no answer exists that will really satisfy them and put a stop to their compulsive discussions on this subject. I tried saying, “Who says they don’t put out, maybe you haven’t tried?” but I saw they were right. Amos came along with a list that Shuki had given him of girls who had emphatically refused him. Simon spoke of a twenty-year deprivation that who knows what its results will be. After all, the great famine in Russia did not last for twenty years and the sex famine, who knows what catastrophes it holds for the future. Since the birth of Man, said Simon trying to word his theory in general terms and without using the first person, by the time he gets it, let’s even assume that he gets it at thirteen, then no one’s going to put out for him beforehand, so we have thirteen years of famine, deprivation and trauma that are greater than the trauma of birth, than the trauma of abandonment, than any other trauma ever heard of including incest, he said to Matti

who agreed. All us men, he added, are tainted by this deprivation from which only the grave will free us. I slowly began to identify with them and understand their suffering. The girls seemed malicious to me. Why the hell didn't they put out? One day I caught myself asking heatedly, what have they got to lose for God's sake? What do they care? As these words flashed through my mind I knew it was time for them to let me join their profound discussions, at least as a passive observer. I sat and listened like someone guilty. I tried talking to them about love, relationships, during those nights. We're not animals, I heard myself saying, not believing that these words were coming out of my mouth. But what could these answers of mine do, they foundered on the cruel rocks of existence in the presence of the mountains full of the suffering of existence while in the firmament Simon's questions sailed like clouds and shattered like lightning into thousands of stars, "Why don't they put out?" There are questions that hold so much suffering, Na'ama once said, that there is no chance of answering them. There are people who have no chance, I thought to myself, not daring to say it out loud. I retired but the discussions continued.

I gathered from them that the vulva has magical, cosmic powers of control over man. This theory had a number of branches, one of which held that women don't put out so as to make men addicted to their cunts, so said Shuki simply. It's a kind of agreement between all the women of the world not to put out whenever it's not absolutely necessary. Then the man who's drowning in one particular cunt, who's in deep over his head, will not abandon it quickly for fear of the market shortage. He will see fit to give them a wedding and then children just so that he doesn't cut off his orgiastic oxygen supply. No, that's not enough, interrupted Simon. Then they'll tell him go to work and bring home money. And they'll go out and have fun and all this thanks to

their God-given treasure. They want your soul, everyone said, to simply suck out your soul and only then will they relax. But we'll die young of a heart attack because we'll be working so hard, said Shuki. And they'll get the pension, Simon explained. So I became convinced that there is a demonic plot here and what I have between my legs is something like a nuclear power station that drives the men of the world.

Amos had a dream. In it, Jeremiah came to him and gave him the solution to the riddle "Why don't they put out?" After he woke up he knew that he had actually known it beforehand, for years it was simply on the tip of his tongue. Simon went white. Amos was a step away from solving the riddle, he would win the Nobel Prize and steal Simon's years of labor, not to mention the honor and respect he would gain. In his usual way, Simon waited a few minutes that seemed like eternity, and then said what we all knew and for some reason hadn't said. Why hadn't we said it? We knew it, Shirli said later. It was so clear. Amos said to Simon, "They simply don't want to." Even Simon agreed with this simple, correct and amazing answer and was angry with Jeremiah for not appearing in *his* dream. He now had no doubt at all that Jeremiah has something against him. But a guy like Simon doesn't break easily. He continued dealing with this issue even after Simon had been awarded the ward's Nobel Prize and had taken great pleasure in humiliating his roommate. And then about three months after Amos's revelations, on one of those terrible nights, Simon presented himself at his bedside and with lightning flashing from his eyes, told him, "No, you haven't solved anything. You haven't explained why they don't want to." Amos hurriedly replied, as though asleep, "Because they're bad." Simon was silent and for about six months accepted Amos's intellectual superiority quietly and submissively. They say that the insight Amos gave him helped him connect with the

sources of evil in the world, reserves, access to which had been blocked for him until that night. He simply knew that Amos was right. Shirli says that it's the only thing that can help him progress in therapy. A little modesty, a little humiliation will help him be connected with himself, she said. And when Amos says that someone is bad then it's like evidence given by a thousand witnesses. He is simply very conversant with these matters of evil and we agreed that even Shirli can consult him from time to time. Lately the subject began disappearing from the agenda and it seems that the ward has emerged from its "dirty mind" period or has grown up a little as they say. I still continue to read the stories about rape that appear on the back pages of the paper, with enjoyment and a damp trembling. There is something stimulating about sexual abuse, I revealed to Miriam in analysis and I was shocked by the intensity of my encounter with myself. Control stimulates you, said Miriam, controlling someone else. What does stimulate me is that you can turn someone into whatever you want, into a frog for instance, I thought to myself.

25

It's so hard to concentrate on the experience and so easy to spoil it with a million words that spring to mind. That's what happens to me on the couch. Thousands of words, words, words, human creativity's lavish buildings with the sole purpose of concealing pain, repressing and denying and particularly burying it deep down in the depths of my mind. The inexhaustible energy, the purpose of which is hiding pain, is doubtlessly my emotional world's richest source of energy, if only I would channel it into being who I am, who knows what I could achieve. But your words, I said, determine what's happening to me inside and what I feel with which I try to blend because I myself don't know who I am.

Today is a sad day, I was frightened because Mommy died. Miriam, so I felt in analysis, had no strength, she almost didn't talk at all and I was convinced that she had given up on me, something that I have been feeling for quite some time. But to hear her speaking in that weak voice was too much. I feel like a naughty girl who had disappointed Mommy. She would wish to see me the way I imagine her, strong and stable and mainly not repeatedly soaring up to the skies. But this happens to me again and again and if she stops struggling I'll die. Just don't leave me, I'm terribly frightened. Once again Shirli turned up the phonograph in the clubroom to a booming volume. Say something to her, I said, why don't *you* say something to her, she answered. I'm afraid of her, I said and got upset. I don't know what's gotten into her, she never talks that way and it's scary. Maybe something personal and painful has happened in her private life and I love her so much and want to help her. What a delightful fantasy. I help her, not she me. Miriam is my mother who died let's say when I was three. A mother who managed to provide a basis for life and personality, but I don't remember or know her. But I miss her terribly, miss death. So for her, really for her, God made me sad enough to be more stable like Miriam wanted me to be, if not for me then for her.

Modesty is the key word after so many years of analysis. I'll say it again: modesty is the key word after so many years of analysis. You invest so much and really get ahead, but so little that really modesty is very appropriate for the ability to change. But that's exactly what's missing in the ward and that's the paradox. And there is where my criticism of the staff comes in, particularly Jeremiah's personality which presides over the staff and the whole atmosphere. He tries to fight my dramas with

drama. For the adolescent the staff meeting is a real episode of omnipotence, how do you say, *par excellence*. The desire to know everything about you, the adolescent, how do you breathe and when did you change? First they humiliated your parents and threw them out of the game with the excuse that they are failed parents and need to learn from the staff how to be parents. And then they want to accurately direct your life, control you so fully and follow every one of your movements. To connect you every moment you're not connected, everything is so heroic, as if I'm not going to continue living in the shadow of the unconscious forever and ever, just like everyone else. It seems to me that Jeremiah is unwilling to accept the fact that there are things of which he is incapable, things over which he has no control. What can you do, the spirit of the elite units and we're the greatest is so dominant and strong. I've tired of this heroism. Of Jeremiah's inability to say that he can't force a patient to change. I look at Miriam and guess that she doesn't agree with this omnipotent standpoint, because she's not that kind of person. She builds on my desire to change, works only with what I bring, and doesn't pry into what I don't lawfully tell her. She looks to me like a more serene woman and actually less hysterical than Jeremiah. Doesn't think that she can do everything, and is capable of containing what she can't. Still waters run deep. Amos says suddenly that you can't conquer omnipotence with omnipotence and only quiet and true depression can vanquish such a powerful opponent.

She says she's not criticizing me all the time, no, she doesn't say that. She says that I can't see things differently, only that she tells me all the time what's wrong with me. She tells me that I feel such and such, and it's clear from her words that I shouldn't feel afraid and apprehensive for instance. So she does tell me what to do, she does criticize me. How can you interpret her words otherwise? I don't even have enough

imagination to think that someone else could say perhaps, let's say, that she's not criticizing but rather warmly explaining, perhaps really trying to help.

On my parting from her I'm still spread on the room's walls. I can't gather all the parts of my id from the ceiling or my super ego from under the bed. I'm waiting for one last act of grace on her part before I disappear, but it doesn't happen. Otherwise I can't understand my confused behavior at the door, who's who? She's called away.

And she, Miriam, broke through the dam of my defenses with such disregard, as if it were made of paper, without any support or consideration. Once, at a moment of truth when I tried to hold on to another moment of compensating fantasy I had created, she interrupted me, the way she used to do whenever I began flying and fleeing and showed me my mistake. I asked for another tiny moment of pleasure, indulging in the pleasant thought that was in my mind. She answered that I've been indulging in these fantasies for eighteen years and she hasn't the slightest intention of giving me even one more minute in analysis in order to soar to the heights. It's not easy when you're told again and again who you are and the person who tells you is right, again and again.

On *Yom Kippur* eve Zohar lit a candle in memory of his father. A memorial candle burns for 26 hours, that's what written on the package, but Zohar explained things to me that were unknown and beyond me. We both looked in silence at the flickering flame, such a small and weak flame this candle has, but nonetheless it flickers for so many hours. All the adolescents had gone to sleep and we were alone in the clubroom in a mysterious ritual with Zohar's father's soul, its shadows cast on the walls. Now I

first understood the meaning of the words "the flame of his life was extinguished." Pain was mixed with pleasure, that's how I felt Zohar when he was silent. His father, who wanted to embrace the world, spoke in his lifetime about death and what would follow. Man has a desire to extend himself beyond the borders of time the Almighty allots him, Matti once said to me. Zohar said that the feelings he has at this great moment are none other than the essence of his father's inner experience that he bequeathed him. Now I feel my father's inner world, he said proudly, how much he is like me! The identification, the longings, Daddy is not outside in his grave, he is so much within me, those were our last emotions before they disappeared into the mist of the night.

Yom Kippur eve Simon was busy dispersing the inner emotional experience among the population, after he despaired of dispersing the genetic properties and the genes, between and within the generations. He spoke about cloning, splitting and reversal, concepts he had borrowed from well-known genetic theories. Matti disclosed that schizophrenia was nothing more than a cancer of the soul while I was busy with that *Yom Kippur* when the foundations of our nation shook and hovered on the brink of the abyss. The papers reported a gang rape that undermined confidence between men and women in the country, in addition to the lack of confidence between the religious and the secular, between Arabs and Jews and between me and God, who did what he did to me. Was the passing year one of blessed or accursed analysis? asked Rona, and Matti added a special prayer to his prayer book, a plea to the Almighty on this holy day, that he should finally advance his analysis to the point where he'd be able to better understand his low level of morality. I simply avoid turning back because I'm afraid I'll turn into a pillar of salt and avoid looking ahead because I'm afraid of being

disappointed again and again. For me analysis has no beginning and no end, it's a continuous existential state which is incomparable. That's the most appropriate emotional response I could find for the question that I don't want to be asked: what have I achieved up till now in these colossal analysis efforts I have made?

"The past is dead, what was is dead" Matti said with a strange emphasis on dead.

And I, who for many years have decided that this year will be the decisive year in my life, in which I will be situated at the place I historically deserve, understand these words better today. How can one belittle my past so much, as if I was born now, making it totally worthless? Why don't I ask at the end of each year of backbreaking analysis, what I have achieved? Instead I decide that this year will be the year of decisive change. The belittling I demonstrate towards my past, the unrelenting efforts that lead to my routine life amaze me, I continue to believe that what was is dead. Facts are hidden in the past, illusions in the future, Na'ama interpreted for me, and said no more. But I continued to be amazed, confronted by this miracle by which you swiftly nullify your past and with it you hurl all your relentless efforts into the depths, year after year, as if they're worthless. Am I born again every day? Or perhaps each day my world is destroyed and I start from scratch?

How she listens to me is still a great mystery, who she is and what she's doing is an unfathomable secret to me. When I grow up I want to be an analyst like her. I lay out a succession of associations and she listens. How does she listen? She dives into me, intermingles with my emotions, my words, my stormy spume and remains silent. And when she rides the right wave, in other words she sails my ship on the raging breakers of my days and nights, then, when she is so much with me and really she is me or vice versa, only then does she suddenly feel that if she were me she would see things I

don't. True, she has completely transformed into me, she left one foot outside and this foot enables her to extricate me from the trap I laid for myself. That's when she tells me how she would solve this problem, but not before she feels herself me, before this she won't dare open her mouth. Yes, I know this by the suddenness with which she says something, at the same speed that my waves break and they break swiftly. Then, before she misses the boat she says what's in her heart.

26

They'll throw me out of the ward, and according to the old timers there've been cases like this in the past. Breaking ward rules in any way at all can arouse these feelings in me without any ability to assess the severity of the act on my part. The moment the thought crops up, it's like a rolling snowball gaining speed and momentum filling my mind with fear and any attempt to stop it in the name of logic or extraneous hints only worsens the situation. "For God's sake, I only ran away for a few hours, Shirli does it every day." And yet I feel that it's different with me, they'll find me guilty. And then, when the vortex begins its whirling in my brain I look for signs that will tell me whether they'll throw me out or not. At the noon meeting Jeremiah said something about a new adolescent and in which room they're going to put her. Ah... that means they're not going to dump me. In analysis I ask Miriam to tell me that they're not going to throw me out, to calm me down. But she doesn't pacify me and doesn't say that everything will be all right. It seems to me that she's not over eager to allay the magnitude of my panic with soothing words so as not to lose this tremendous energy that drives the wheels of comprehension and the opening of old and squeaky boxes. Again and again in cases like this, with her help, I discover the real reason behind the terrible fear. The paradox is that I prefer the catastrophe of being thrown out because

then there's no need to cope with the real things. Panic and catastrophe are the greatest enemy of the small difficult things of everyday life that must be seen and coped with. Each time I overdo it, when I encounter myself and the sheer size of my inner distortion, instead of saying it's me and I see myself good and clear, I panic and scream throw me out and then of course there's no need to change.

So, am I changing? It seems that I'm slowly becoming able to contain myself at those places where I was previously unable to. The truth is that these are the minority of the instances but that's worth something too. Miriam is on vacation and the following dream I dreamt last night illustrates this feeling: I'm sitting by Miriam's house in a car. At first, some fat guy came along and bothered me, he sat on the car. Then a group of toughs, three of them, bent the car's fender. A trial was held in Miriam's house and they all came to apologize to me. A beautiful and luxurious house with a lot of rooms, lots of little girls were walking around there, one perhaps was a retard. There was some very beautiful and impressive antique furniture there. The police came and they were all looking for me, not me, the guilty parties. One man apologized and I gave a speech and responded to him saying "the past is dead." In other words he thinks, I say, that he can do whatever he wants and he'll be forgiven. I spoke with pathos but the pitch of my voice changed because I couldn't get enough air. I felt as though I had been raped and remembered that I too have rights that I'd almost waived for the sake of understanding what was happening here. And someone offered me some telephone tokens as compensation and I told him to put them in a pocket, in his. And after interrogation everything that had been done to me was revealed and justice was done.

I know what she'll say about this when she comes back from her vacation. That there was no real danger to my existence as I had described with pathos, and that my rightness too is the fruit of my imagination because everything is just in my imagination. But still, something is different. When did I ever feel inside the sweet taste of someone protecting me, someone giving me his home, in other words a place where I feel strong. This feeling of power is completely new, that I have rights, that there is justice. True, no one has really attacked me and this content has not yet changed in my dreams, and especially in my experience, but there are buds of a new experience that is slowly growing there. Miriam makes me a warm corner inside me and then they say she's cold, tough and distant. And the paradox is that they're right.

Miriam hasn't left me, I got up and wrote down this dream as it actually happened. I'm in a weird house with Miriam, a two-storied house with lots of mysterious rooms. We're stuck in the elevator and she pulls a piece of wire from her cunt and fixes it. We're on our way to some place or other and I tell her about my previous dream. She says that I don't agree with her way of dealing with dreams and I agree somewhat apologetically. Shirli takes a bite out of my food on the way and I don't like this at all because she did it aggressively. She reacts to this, not saying that nothing happened but asking if something had happened and whether I was offended. I put my head on her legs and my hand between them. Maybe she caresses me and says it's a pity that she can't hear my dream because we don't have a session. She says all kinds of words that I don't understand and I restrain myself and don't ask immediately, but I later summarize by saying that there are things I don't understand and haven't asked her. She says nothing about this. A girl shows me the way inside the building and again I feel that she knows better than me.

In my first six months in the ward the world around me was in total confusion. I was battered from left and right and didn't understand why. I didn't ask why. I tried to cope by using my powers of logic that gradually collapsed as reality gradually misted over, gradually became blurred by the minute. But when the laws of the logic of cause and effect stop working, that's the moment of terror. My only weapon, my powerful logic, ceases to function. It no longer has the power to explain what's happening. Thus the speed of my spin gradually increased and the vortex of terror spread its wings. I put myself down for the committee every other day, the whole world was against me, having a ball, both adolescents and staff. The counselors got at me for every little thing. Anything I did was no good. Rona and Na'ama directed mocking glances at me while I continued preening myself like a peacock and explaining everything to everyone. My logic was a fortress, no one could shake its foundations, I was the smartest of all. Tremendous struggles between me and Miriam took place in analysis. She tried to show me that I'd been hurt by some event or other and I continued to talk in terms of absolute justice and to show with the help of the Divine Court that I had been hard done by day after day and hour by hour. Again and again each word Na'ama uttered would hurt me. I cursed the moment I'd met her. Why didn't the staff do something about it, because they can see and they know who she is better than I can. How harsh, cruel she is inside, and how insane. Why have they put me into a room with someone like her? I had all the documentation proving that she's a total nut case. The fear rose and flowed, it was a life-and-death war, a war for sanity. The alternative was to accept the fact that something serious was not right with me. Then I was called to a staff meeting. Hedva the counselor came into my room to speak to me. Before she could get a word out I shouted "I know you're

going to throw me out.” I had already learnt that the greatest moments of revelation are often, sadly, the greatest moments of faking it. But my knowledge was so perfect as to be unshakable. I had waited for this moment, the look that would tell all. She remained stunned for a moment, came to her senses and said in a pacifying tone, “You have a staff meeting just now.” I went into the meeting. Jeremiah looked at me and said quietly, “You’re afraid that we’re going to throw you out.” I nodded. Had Hedva managed to tell him that in the few seconds before I entered the room? Perhaps he’d read it in my eyes? I wouldn’t have been surprised if these sparks of insight exploding inside my head could be read on my face without me even opening my mouth. In a quiet tone Jeremiah said that the feeling I have of everyone being against me is not imaginary but reality. “Your behavior, your emotional position are the cause of this,” he said without going into further detail. I flew out of the room and waited for the next day, for analysis, to try and better understand what exactly he’d meant. But those few seconds worked wonders. Those few words took me out of and released me from the terrible suffering. I knew that everyone was against me. It was no longer a delusion. My feelings were right and I could rely on them. I could no longer say, it just seems to me that everyone’s against me because I’m no paranoid. It is hard to describe so few words that brought relief and changed so much. Existence became bearable. Jeremiah had put order into my world. If they’re against me, I must understand why. But if they’re not against me because in my opinion they have no reason, then what I feel is worthless and that’s called going mad. I summarized it with the well known saying, “If you’re paranoid, it doesn’t mean that they’re not all out to get you.” Or in other words perhaps a paranoid invites persecution.

I thought to myself what is it she does about me that's different from any other person in the world. First of all she really listens to me, she's really with me. She boards my train of associations and doesn't get off until she's sure that she knows where she is and what the platform looks like. Only then, once she's allowed herself to undergo a process of merging and identification with me, she suddenly wakes up as though from within herself and says something. In her experience everything I've told her about myself has happened to her. But when it happened to her she wasn't quite there and kept a certain distance from the train of events. And then when it seemed it had happened to her she understood, she suddenly discovered, and so it's interesting for her with me because she discovers herself all the time, that is when she discovered what she would have understood had it really happened to her. That's actually called lending yourself to someone else, said Rona, and she knew what she was talking about. But Miriam loves me? I don't know for God's sake and it's tearing me apart. A profession, Madam! A profession! a voice like Shirli's rang out from inside me and continued echoing in my ears like an old bell that had never stopped tolling. Being an analyst, said Na'ama, is an emotional position, it's not a technique or a gimmick. For that you need attention, attention Madam! Attention! The word echoed between the white, empty, hollow, walls of the ward. Attention is when you're not thinking about anything, when your mind's empty and waiting to receive something. It's the opposite of concentration, everyone told me. But attention is far too difficult because there's nothing to concentrate on, you have to remain in a vacuum and that is precisely what is intolerable for you, Zohar concluded. Listening is not knowing what to answer and reply, I thought, listening is an emotional stand. To try and understand, one of those present put it. To recognize, said his echo. Where did all these words that don't exist in my lexicon come from? To recognize, to understand, to listen and

whatever else I don't know for God's sake? That's the thing, I suddenly realized, that's precisely the crux of the matter. It's not the language it's the emotional stand, someone explained to me, but I lost my cool because I didn't understand. Quiet Madam! Quiet! they all shouted, they mean inner quiet I reminded myself.

We did the analysis dance at our discharge party, we were psychotics or dreamers. And it was such a slow dance that took such a long time you wouldn't believe. The people just about moved, the movements froze, like a movie in slow motion. Gather up your pieces and come join the dance that is never over, everyone called to me, so I came. You invite things to be said to you from outside, they all sang in a circle, and I lay on the couch in the middle. I automatically turned towards the big sun and was drawn towards it like a moth to a flame. It had the answers to everything, I knew nothing. It stood there strong and sure and all I had to do was to connect with it and suck the marrow from its bones. That's what you think, they all chorused, that you have nothing and it has everything.

27

When Zohar and his team set off on the daring route march carrying "wounded" on stretchers to the depths of Jebel Cunt they were filled with an irrecoverable spirit. Die or conquer the mountain, Zohar recited to himself along the *Via Dolorosa* to the summit. The story has it that the only inhabitants on Jebel Cunt are females in heat who ruthlessly devour any man who falls into their net. Jebel Cunt is one of the intrepid airforce bases that employ only women since radiation injures and destroys mens' balls. Therefore only women live there in abysmal loneliness. When we approached the summit, Zohar related, we all caught our breath but didn't see even a

single woman all the way. But at the very edge there was a huge crater and we all fell in. I have felt the sensation of falling for ages but to falling into the stronghold of a woman is something I have not yet experienced, Zohar continued excitedly. The route march to Jebel Cunt made us all, the adolescents, shiver with a tremor unknown to us. Was it the mountain's steep slope that a brave contingent of soldiers had relentlessly tried to climb? Was it the dismal weather, our heads in the clouds, while daringly climbing to the top? Or perhaps it was the idea that Jebel Cunt embodied as uniter of the foundations of Mother Earth and her gaping sex organ, inviting us all to forever drown in it together with our sorrow. I know only one thing, nothing can compare to Jebel Cunt in our ability to convey the message of the Sisyphean journey that we all, as Mother Earth's children, carry on our shoulders.

Miriam teaches me the bedroom secrets of the mole, sorry, soul. I get something out of every session with her. Each session I come back with something in hand, something new and different happened there. Isn't it miraculous the way the soul flows around and around, its creation exquisitely new at any given moment. It's a wonder. On the couch I threaten to go wild, run to the bathroom, want to lay on my stomach and tear the lovely cushions next to me. Today I was more despondent than usual with her. "You've got no strength for me" I said to her, and she answered that I felt that Mommy had no strength for me. Despair is a wonderful word because it's not psychoanalytical, it's so existential.

The mutual bluffing of therapist and patient is well known. The future is rosy and the past is black and parting will never happen. I, without my Miriam, it's really unbearable. The moment will come where you'll have the desire to get up and go, so

the stories have it, at that moment you'll simply feel in the most natural and simple way that it's exhausted itself, an ancient Chinese sage says. No, I won't drink a last cup of coffee with her and even if I do, it won't make any difference. If I smile at the door or if I don't, it won't make any difference to anything that did or didn't happen between us. Therapy without a time limit, Na'ama says, is like life, in both cases you don't know when the end will come. And that's the stumbling block of the unconscious from the dawn of history. If only they told me the exact day of my death, if I knew when analysis or life would end, everything would seem different. I wouldn't fall into illusory euphoria but would make enough time for myself for a final period of depression. There will be euphoria that will slowly make room for joyful depression, followed by exhilarated depression, and finally simply depression. And until then Miriam will hold my hand and walk with me, hand in hand, on this thrilling journey into myself. The two of us marching in this mysterious world, both of us in me on this journey, and if she's next to me I'm not frightened so much.

It's very easy for people to accept the fact that one, for instance, runs faster than the other, they are even willing to accept the fact that someone else is smarter than they are, but one thing, the hardest thing of all, is to accept that someone else's character is better than yours. What does this mean? For instance, the other doesn't have concrete defenses like you have, he doesn't get frightened and doesn't jump around like you do, and mainly he doesn't have the need to repress every last drop of unpleasant information and delegate it to the depths of oblivion. His personality is better and differently organized, his inner world is not so dark, cold and disconnected, he is perhaps warm and loving. He was simply designated and born under a blessed sign and his life will look different than yours at every single minute of his day. Listen to

me, Jack, I said to the wall facing me, there's nothing you can do about it, he's less distorted than I am, maybe he's like you, a *tabula rasa*. This is the essence of human suffering, institution experiences and the foundations of our souls that are worthless. There's a difference between souls, get me? one soul is not deemed to be like another. That's the essence of the soul theory in a nutshell. And fate intervenes, with unparalleled directness and cruelty. Here there is no atonement and no pardon, a soul is a soul and there's nothing you can do about it. Suffering is clear and horrendous. But that's clear, right? the wall answered me. It's clear to you, I said angrily, not to me. In analysis I try to raise my soul at least one degree higher and place it in a more dignified section. It's very hard for me, for instance, to simply confess that Miriam's soul is different from mine, more organized and relaxed and I will never reach these heights. Would I be able, like her, to sit religiously year after year behind my stinking head, with an alertness and serenity that have no equal? Her soul is luckier than mine, she probably doesn't distort the world, that's distorted anyway, like me. In short, the most difficult thing to accept is that each lunatic has his soul and each lunatic has his luck and envy is all-devouring. Because what I've been working at, all my life, day in day out, with limitless devotion, is to return myself to my body without getting scared, Shirli takes it for granted, not to mention the counselors and the staff. Whatever I do I am destined to suffer more than them, behind the glasses of my world.

The wall, that's what they call the thing that cannot be passed, breached nor can you look beyond it. The more the ex-psychotic strives to pass the wall, tries to understand what has happened to him, so it will grow higher and he'll never understand what happened to him at a time of crisis. Something happened there, he can even

remember what he felt, or what he said and thought, but nonetheless, how it had happened to him remains a mystery. Once I sat with someone condemned to death, Zohar told me, he simply didn't grasp that he was going to die. It's situated in the depth of consciousness and waiting for the moment to erupt, to play a trick and laugh at fate's misfortune. The flimsy membrane between sanity and insanity breathes, like a hymen that any penetration will rupture, and from it a rain of gross insanity will pour forth. This thin membrane separates night from day, reality from imagination. Go open up, go imagine, go masturbate after something like this happens to you. You're clutching at reality like a lifeboat, a last ray of hope before the next take-off. It's forbidden to fantasize, by rabbinical edict, Matti told me, you have to rely on what they tell you or what you see outside because inside nothing is worth anything and that's really too much. And then come the drugs and transform your face into an expressionless mask, devoid of mimicry. And then come the drugs and make your movements clumsy, frozen, stiff as if you're moving like a schizophrenic on drugs and only someone who has seen Shirli walking down the corridor, all tensed up, can understand what it's about. Then they give Dekinat, that's for the side effects, but how can you counter the counter effects? Your mouth is dry, it's difficult to piss and I'm glad I have no part of it, and of course also the weewee does or doesn't get a hard-on. The cute little thing goes to sleep and no one talks about it because they don't want to arouse it and if they do there won't be anything to do with it because it's sleeping on account of the drugs. But thoughts are also blocked and shut off. That's what the drugs do, stop everything, both insanity and thoughts, so everything is slow and slack and blocked and shut off. And then it's clear that you're a schizophrenic for life because you're taking drugs that transform you into this sort of being. You can smell schizophrenics. Perhaps it's in their sweat or maybe it only seems like this to me

because they don't feel like washing but I, even with my blocked nose, can smell them.

A borderline case is condemned to eternal hard labor, all his life under the sun he will go about obliged to be aware or at least try to pay attention to what is going on in his distorted mind, otherwise things won't be good for him. Imagine, I said in my imagination to everyone, that all the time we'd have to pay attention to our heartbeats, our breathing, fighting the germs is also going on inside us, without our knowing it and that's surprising and wonderful. But everyone is also exempt from paying attention to the actions of their mind because usually it interprets correctly. And thus I was condemned to a life of eternal slavery, every hour of the day, every one of its minutes I have to question the actions of my mind, again and again it plays tricks on me. Like psychosis, I thought and consoled myself that I'm not the only one afflicted by this monstrous suffering. When I got up in the morning I began looking for something to do. What am I running away from before anything happens, for God's sake?

Sabbath in the ward is magical, a festive atmosphere on a beautiful winter's day, where the earth and the air and the sun and the hills in the background have still not betrayed you, as far as possible. They came to visit, Mommy sits on the bed with a tragic face, Daddy nervously taps his foot, wanting to leave this lunatic asylum already. Mommy has the face of an old woman, engraved in stone with thousands of wrinkles in the right places. Her sorrow, the sorrow that's reflected in her face, is all-embracing and resides in the heights of the heavens because only there do they understand what great sorrow is. Mommy is cold, only now do I comprehend this

after Rona has told me so many times. I don't know whether a cold-blooded person like me can differentiate between cold and warmth. My mother's history of hardship and her days weighed on her weak shoulders, the mask will be torn away only in the grave. What you feel is right, Miriam always tells me in her silence.

I'm talking about character assassination, I'm speaking of the annihilation of personality that they can do to you, and it's so sudden. Everything begins with my inflation on the face of the earth that places me on one level with the highest of stars. With the importance and inflation with which I open my mouth and speak, in this the seeds of calamity are latent. In that position of Miss Know-It-All, nothing between her and the open pit, one who has never experienced scorn, forgetfulness and doom. That's where I am, in other words, what are human difficulties to me. When they touch my mask or what's beneath it, I'll fall apart. They've got me by the balls is a fantastic expression. They'll catch me for not doing my homework by myself, for not growing up in my own right but by virtue of medication I was given and for stealing everything I own. And perhaps everything is connected to the Holocaust, to that core of colossal and unexplained fear that for some reason I took a too-big part in. The Holocaust is the mother of all existential anxiety of annihilation, doom and extermination. It's in every one of us in varying dosages and we will bequeath it to the future generations. The spark that activates the fuse that trails after us from childhood, that spark is responsible for the detonation of the anxiety bomb in intensities and multi-crisis waves. This spark for me is the look with which they saw through me, the hole in my stomach that my parents bored, the feeling of total lack of acceptance, that's when character is destroyed. That's where I commingle with my

nation's people who died in the Holocaust. But like in every holocaust, there is a message for the future and it is that there'll be another one.

28

I was swimming in an infinite world of scenes and images, only feelings, nothing concrete. I passed through a strange completely paved garden with no soil. There was a stream there but you couldn't drink the water because it was muddy. And there was a tree there and every time I was bad, the tree gradually died, and the tree was almost completely dead, most of its branches had been either cut off or had withered and I still hadn't owned up. In the land of music, a land of far-out sights and sounds there were two evil people, one who specialized in inflicting wounds and the other in torturing you with the wounds you already have. And there was a little boy there whose mind had been affected by fear of heights. He practiced flying until one day he flew further than he was able, he was stopped by the wind and something happened to his mind. His mother stood behind and shouted at him to stop. A little gazelle that had had one horn broken so that he would be able to adapt better, drank from the muddy water. I wanted to shout that they should save me but I had lost my voice. I asked for an ambulance to show them that my condition was serious. Suddenly, my internal organs slipped out of my body through my cunt and rolled about on the floor, my womb, ovaries, liver and spleen. I noticed that I was standing next to a corpse, next to which stood all the old women who were yet to commit suicide and I was afraid they'd think I'd done something bad. I felt a power pulsing inside me that would cause me to kill myself, an internal or external power that I couldn't control. I was left paralyzed and unable to move by the fear that I would commit suicide.

For a moment my eyelids were caught in the net of dawn, my eyes full of sleep and I found myself in my earliest childhood, screened by a mist and I turned on my heels. In this psychotic state called childhood, thinking has primary rules of its own. The enchanted magic of wonderland does not allow me to think, leaving the secrets completely anonymous. In the atmosphere in which you live it is simply dangerous to think because who knows what you'll discover. When I awoke from my dream to my adolescence everyone around me laughed, and I realized that I had started to think.

As I wallowed in the tangle of the logical labyrinth which I had never left to relax a little, I realized that there is something beyond my comprehension deserving of the title "emotional stand". Like an axiom, said Simon, from which all the developments are derived. You're not willing to be little and learn, you have tremendous difficulty with that, Miriam told me, I understood that she was talking about an emotional stand. Emotional stand, Madam, emotional stand! said the announcer and I stood amazed at the parade of disguises of the emotional stands that passed before me. "Look at me" was the first emotional stand. I immediately understood everything. Since my entrance into the first group in my life, my birth into the warm bosom of my family, I have never stopped talking so that people would notice me. All was wrecked by the wind and nothing remains, futility I said. Emotional stand, emotional stand! said the announcer. The second stand was "When I finish the ward...". It's not here and now that I'm growing up, learning and developing. Not at this moment because this is the moment that will never return, but the dawn of my life will rise on the day in which the curtain will fall on the ward act with the song of songs and vanity of vanities of my life.

“What’s the diagnosis, what’s the diagnosis?” roared the district psychiatrist, and the first to answer was Zohar. “Sentenced to a life of pain and suffering,” he said.

“There’s no such diagnosis in my book,” roared the district butcher. I was the second to answer, “The diagnosis is that there is no diagnosis,” I protested. Don’t get smart with me, roared the giant fat man in the white coat, and that was dangerous. After me came Matti who replied that the diagnosis is cruel fate, fate from the Almighty, he doesn't know why. Na’ama thought and refused to answer but her inscrutable face spoke of the arid deserts of the soul on which human emotion had not yet set foot. Rona bellowed that the diagnosis is giant serpents in the female genitals, writhing there until the end of time or until they suffocated from the stench. “Simon, what's the diagnosis?” yelled the hangman whose penis was dangling. In the end everything falls, he screeched back and fell. It’s your turn Shuki, everyone screamed, and Shuki was terribly frightened. He pulled himself together, took a deep breath and replied, You won’t tell me what to do I’ll get married and have children. Write in the book that the diagnosis is to fuck, ordered the butcher. Now or later, asked Shuki, but it was Julia’s turn. To buy a bridegroom with the little money I have, said Julia and looked at the hangman himself. She’s got some gall, everyone said, knowing that in the end she would get what she wanted because it’s so hard to refuse her. And Amos and Shirli remained. Amos has no diagnosis, everyone roared, that’s clear and well known from the annals of the ward. Amos really does not have a diagnosis and his punishment is that he will never have one. Like his missing in action brother who can’t even be mourned and they will always be forced to wait in the hope that one day he will appear in the doorway. Amos has no diagnosis the words reverberated and that is his punishment and he will go on smiling. Shirli, what is the diagnosis? everyone asked. Shirli will have a lovely little puppy, came a whisper over the heads

of the choir. A puppy that will understand only her and she will not understand it. Why a dog? Why a dog? the guests repeated twice. Because Shirli will have a human relationship with a dog and it will breach the wall of her loneliness and shatter the watchdogs that guard her wall. Shirli will have a dog that will melt the metal of her heart by repeatedly licking its loyal master. Know that Shirli is a human being, everyone bellowed.

It's a good thing I said nothing today at the morning meeting, each time I manage to keep quiet I simply come out in a better state. But I'm allowed to talk, aren't I? From an emotional stand like yours it's better to keep quiet, Zohar once told me. In the annals of the ward, in the chapter on the law of paradoxes Zohar wrote, "From within yourself you cannot know a thing about others but only about yourself." So what's the paradox? I persisted and the writing answered me, "How can you know whether you're considered good or not and whether or not your problems are heavier than those of others, the place the place is yours," the book repeated its words, "It cannot be measured from within..." and that's terrible, I continued the writing in my head. From within I have learned to feel things, once I didn't even know that, but that has no communicational value because I remain so very alone. Am I more suitable for the committee or less than others, I asked it, I can't know from within. How can you compare inside to outside? the writing asked me. I only know myself from within and the others from the outside and that's precisely the paradox, I said in sudden realization. Simon tried to solve this problem in his own way, he distributed sociometric questionnaires to us in which each of us had to report on exactly what he thinks of the others. His plan was to put the questionnaires on the bulletin board, this way he felt that inside and outside would unite. Everyone knew what everyone else

thinks about him and could compare their feelings with this data. Inside and outside will unite, the vision of the End of Days, Matti's voice echoed after him. The war of the Forces of Light against the Forces of Darkness wailed Shirli. Everyone was pleased except me because I was scared to death by the law of preservation of the gap within my soul. "But you know," Miriam's voiced echoed after me, "what do you need it for." She, the whore, my inner world's secret agent, the fifth column in the ward, she represents the inside with such objectivity that it's sickening, without even a drop of subjectivity.

It's hard to explain but Miriam tells me what everyone apart from me already knew and refused to tell me, damn it. I always knew that what came naturally to others, innate and alone, needed an exact and exacting measure with me. To feel that I had been insulted I need to learn in analysis. Today I'm learning the basics and secrets of a primary relationship after having read Freud and Einstein. After many years of analysis I'll reach the level of a three year-old with good object relations. I hope so, Na'ama told me. But I haven't yet given up on the fantasy that one day we'll meet there once more, in the classroom of my childhood, we'll sit next to one another and then I'll put right the damage to my labile image.

"I'd like you to stop coughing, not now, not now please. You don't have to cough right now." I smiled to myself and burst out laughing on the couch. Cheek, she actually starts coughing just as I have something to say. She said I feel that I'm told exactly how to breathe and what to do at any given moment. True, I agreed, but I haven't yet grasped that intelligence comes before emotion. I'm told where to look because otherwise how can I understand this situation in which when I talk to people

they decide where I should direct my eyes. I direct them according to the position of the eyes of the person I'm talking to. A kind of angle, I don't look at him directly Heaven forbid but I don't completely evade him either. There is a rare and precious point of balance at which I place myself, in the interval between flight and attack, at the gap between fear and aggression and between sanity and madness. They also tell me how to breathe, how much and why, you mustn't breathe too strongly, you mustn't move, I have to show him that I'm a little frightened of him otherwise he'll be angry with me, he'll surely tell me how to breathe, how much, why and when. When I breathe my bosom rises and that's an aggressive act of the first order despite the fact that I hardly have a bosom.

The bells of the monastery that grew out of the side of the nearby hill conclude our every session and it's terribly romantic. "Our bells", I said to her. "*Our* bells?" I thought to myself it's hers and not mine, it's her room and her place. But our bells, can there be a more wonderful conclusion to a session? The atmosphere of the deep notes reverberating over the wooded mountain tops tells me that it's time to leave Miriam's room. The ceremony, the church, what has it got to do with analysis, and yet it is so appropriate as though it's an additional religion in which I believe with every fiber of my being and which I won't give up, the ceremony that is so unifying and special.

29

"I have good news for all the kids," Simon came running into the room, Shuki in his footsteps, "it's worthwhile waiting to grow up, it'll be all right." Each day of a child's life is suffering, he explained to me, and I didn't object at all. Every morning he

awakens and wants to be grown up already and it's not by chance because he lives in the land of eternal slaves under a despotic reign of tyrants with not even minimal democracy. I thought about Oedipus, I thought about being dependent on grown-ups and most of all I remembered that I was really very miserable in my childhood. I knew then that the future held happiness and great freedom and my situation really did improve more and more. There is nothing worse than the subjugation of childhood to the great powers of evil which are stronger than you. Life in the repulsive world of home and school, where can you escape to for God's sake? You're familiar with your own street and barely two neighboring ones, where can you run away to? Twenty-four hours a day you owe them something, right? How is it that a born slave, I asked, knows the taste of freedom and longs for that moment, and wonder of wonders, it seems that the soul can't be sold or vanquished. Just think about yourself, I said to Simon, living in that enchanted bewitched world of your childhood in which even the secret of suffering you hide deep down in your stomach during long and grinding years of winter hibernation that never end except after perhaps two decades. Today, any difficulty I am faced with I immediately share with everyone, with a minimal capacity for restraint. How did I survive so many years, incapable of uttering a word? How did I undergo so much torture without divulging my harrowing secrets?

Exploit her to the full, until you draw blood, disposable goods, that's what I do to her in my conversations. You have no independent or separate existence and you have no personality you have no cunt and you have nothing you're all mine and at my service. Yes, just the way you're acting right now that's how I want you to take care of me, and that's what she does, she listens and is with me until the bitter end, doesn't get angry

and doesn't give up and also doesn't speak at moments like these, simply letting me fantasize to the full. I want to fuck you, no, I don't want to destroy you pardon me I'm sorry I want you with me like the way you know how to give warmth and confidence because you're wonderful. And then I'm convinced that this is the road to healing, simply to accept the unfulfilled need and if she were willing, even a tiny bit, to be warmer, more with me, I would improve so much faster. I landed in a vacuum and found it difficult to be there, she spoke of the need to produce thought in order not to be there, to masturbate first thing in the morning in order not to feel the gray day looming at the door. That's when I understand that Miriam's a wonderful person with her own needs, the baby understood that sometimes it's hard for mommy when she's exploited in such a way. That's when I love her, love her very much with all my body and soul and she's the dearest person to me in the whole wide world, something that Mommy never was.

And here she interpreted for me and it comes out of me and breaches my boundaries and becomes an insane game, a lethal boomerang in the confused tie between her and me. She says something about our mutual lunacy having a ball. She's not speaking about me, she's speaking about our mutual mystical experience which we experience as a single entity. Because everything she says I immediately find a complementary place for myself and thus we are one body. Everything happens in the middle ground between us and not inside me alone. My automatic location as her shadow, her missing part...

I told her before the end that now I will be insulted by her 'okay' that signals the end of a session. Seconds later she said a sort of faint okay that I felt was hard for her and she was with me.

Just imagine yourselves during World War Two, I thought out loud in the clubroom, undergoing classical analysis in Vienna, or perhaps England. This shift from analysis to war, from the inner to the outer world, from fantasy to reality, from unreal to real anxieties, from fantasies of doom and annihilation to annihilation itself. This is fantastic, I thought to myself. How can you undergo therapy in such a situation? I didn't tell you what to do, I heard her saying to me again and again, I only spoke about your feeling and how you grasp it. But you won't help me survive, I cried to her and she didn't answer me. The Nazis will do all the things to me I fantasize I do to myself and to others and that's the worst kind of torture, if you ask me, you can inflict upon a human being. But nevertheless, the closeness I feel when I'm lying on the couch, to my sexual and aggressive instincts and their realization before my eyes in war, that's already too much. War is analysis, but in actions, I explained to those present. Direct translation of feelings on the couch, from a horizontal to a vertical position, from imagination to reality. The Iraqis will rape me, I pondered when I was again close to the approaching reality. "You'll be raped," Zohar ridiculed me, as if he heard my words, that's the way it is with lunatics, they're engrossed in themselves and aren't free for anything else. They're not interested whether the world is destroyed around them, they're deeply engrossed in their own ass. But I continued to be angry about the war that had spoiled my big-trivial plans about what to speak about during the morning meeting and what to say at the committee meeting that was cancelled because of gas

attack drills. Gas again, suddenly I understood the cyclic connection with the Holocaust.

The morning was gray, morning exercise and preparations for the Friday night party passed by like a dream. My excitement allowed me to appear in another consciousness at the exciting moment, my parting from the ward. Once I thought it would be a joyful moment, a conclusion of hard work, but it was different.

Excitement and *deja vu* sensations - as if I had once been in this situation. I was outside, I managed only partially to detach myself from the inconceivable chains of reality and in a strange and unexpected way to be actually close to myself, something that is difficult for me in the presence of others. It seems that it's a ceremony that brings you closer to yourself and helps you at this terrible moment. Ten o'clock on the dot a farewell meeting in Jeremiah's room. The party begins at eleven and at one o'clock I'm out. It sounds crazy to endure all this. I entered Jeremiah's room, but he glanced at me briefly and without any introduction said to me in English, "Shoot." I smiled to myself in pain, probably because of the lack of intimacy of this introduction, but I began to shoot like he asked. I began with my numerous and precise complaints about all the things that Zohar had done to me and no one had come to my rescue. It's their job to be a little objective at least, I didn't ask for much. Jeremiah let me finish and then said: "It's time for you to stop thinking that everything anyone does to you is directed against you." That's what he said, no more. I asked if he really thought that this is such a pronounced tendency of mine. He answered simply yes and this trick didn't work. Maybe we exchanged a few more words. I, of course, said that this was only one part of the story and I added many words of praise for the staff's work and myself for my real and hard work but these I don't remember. I was dismissed from

the room when Jeremiah began fidgeting, as if signaling me that the conversation had come to an end. I was insulted, of course, but I'm well trained in that. There are some differences between a farewell party and the routine Friday party. Songs are selected in pairs in order to save time and there is no internal or foreign news. After the singing, each adolescent says a few parting words if he or she wishes. After the adolescents the two counselors say what they have to say. Then Jeremiah and finally the departing adolescent. At the very end they show the adolescents' drawings, the presents given to the adolescent upon leaving and his or her present to the ward. I didn't want to pick a song, perhaps I had no strength and didn't think that there was anything that would really express me. Silence drifted through the room. A bit too long but it was actually Shirli who broke it. She spoke with total sanity, to everyone's amazement. True, there was something condescending and insulting in her style and contents. With a kind of audacity she said that they'd never forget the uncompromising patience I had shown towards the irritating adolescents. "You tried so hard to forgive, to always forget what they had done to you, not to be hurt or bear grudges even though they sometimes did horrible things to you." There's no question that she hit the mark and truly described an authentic part of me. When she finished the dam burst and the adolescents spoke according to the seating arrangement. Julia said: "Thank you for listening to my nonsense." Shuki asked forgiveness for what he had done to me and said that he loves me and mentioned the moments when I agreed to play with him, but true to himself at every farewell meeting he never forgets to mention, in the same breath, the bad things I had done to him "And then Shuki got angry" he added. Simon divided the period of our acquaintance into two: the first, when according to him, I was the most beloved adolescent, and the second, when "something happened to me and he doesn't understand exactly what," I became like all

the rest. He said that he remembered me for the first part and was thankful for it. In a flash I remembered some of the analysis sessions in which it seems that my progress was reflected in my ability to stand up to Simon's unrestrained misdeeds in the ward, and not to smile at him in agreement and say to the others give him another chance. Amos, true to himself, was silent, in a prolonged depressed silence, retreating into himself, smiling faintly and then I knew that warm words were not to be. He mentioned how I used to annoy him with my caring about him, my questions lurking around every corner, what's going on with him and what's he thinking about now. I was a bit ashamed. But he immediately added an unexpected sentence about the interesting conversations we had, particularly about sex. I was consoled with this modest addition. Rona simply said that I'm a good person and I helped her in difficult moments of crisis and that she would miss me and hoped that we would keep in touch after the termination of the three-month ban, she added with emphasis. An adolescent leaving the ward is forbidden to contact the ward for the period of three months in order to facilitate the process of parting. The majority of the adolescents don't make contact and don't come even after this period is concluded and carry the memory of the ward like the memory of a good mother who died and all that's left is inside. Na'ama spoke about her inner hole that I helped her to fill. Zohar simply said that he hated me during all this long period and now he understands that perhaps it's only in his mind, "like you sometimes told me," he added. Matti came to the party and that's rare since he doesn't take part in any activities whatsoever and he even spoke up and surprised everyone. He said that he's sorry that he hadn't managed to really get to know me, he said this and no more. The counselors spoke about my great willingness to invest and my impressive ability to be helped by them, like a lever for progress. Jeremiah's turn came, the room became silent. He said: "At moments like this I have

to distance myself, not to be, not to add anything in order not to spoil anything."

After a brief pause he continued: "You represent suffering in the ward." He has the habit of saying at every farewell meeting what each one represents in this bizarre group, and this time he really surprised me. I didn't know I was suffering so much, I always thought that it was a joke, a game. And even to represent human suffering in the war, among all the other lunatics, that's too great an honor for me. Na'ama's distorted face reflected a different feeling that was latent in me, and she said that it's not a great privilege to suffer, and it's no great honor either. He continued: "I don't want to sound dramatic but you've come a long and difficult way, a very constructive one." Silence ripped the air. I retreated into myself and knew that now it was my turn and all eyes were on me. Amos's piano tune flashed through my mind. There was something relaxing in it. Another moment of silence and then I said: "Leaving is very sad for me." I said this and finished. At moments like this others used to deliver emotional farewell speeches, about the long way they had come. I didn't find within me the strength nor did I feel the need to carry this burden on my shoulders. One more moment of truth and I felt that I wasn't parting, I'm leaving or perhaps I'm being disowned. It's simply that this place and these people are dear to me and I don't want to leave. The silence was drawn out. I feared that I was dragging it on too much. When I raised my head from the the floor Jeremiah's smiling face and now warm look awaited me. He nodded in answer to the question whether it's all right and can I continue. Gifts from both sides were presented. Mostly drawings painted for me, as if they were saying "take me with you." But Amos and Simon didn't draw or give me anything. I rightly saw their difficulty in terminating relationships. Their unconscious said: "Something here is not yet finished or complete," time will tell. I presented a reading lamp to every room, I wanted them to have light. At the entrance

to the station I still lingered for a few minutes, refusing to part. I thought they would all encircle me for the last time but found myself alone. It was hard for them, but more for me. "You helped her maintain her sanity," that's probably what Jeremiah will say at the morning meeting on Sunday when Zohar will point out this truth. The one o'clock bus will save me, I have to push on, that's the bus that saves all those who leave and which has witnessed tears and bereavement. And when the mountain breeze and winding road hit my face Rona burst into the room, stood before me for a whole second, and before I had a chance to understand what was happening she screamed: "*Yallah*, come on already we're going on a trip and quit petting your dada." I tottered down the stairs, experiencing the pain of uprooting, trying to weave the last threads of a daydream.

30

Miriam comes into my mind for a moment saying strange things for a moment it's all a dream. We'll fix everything right away. What a strange power it is that drives you to what they call growing and perhaps it's regression. Yet it's a kind of old dream with a happy ending. Mother makes promises, Miriam doesn't keep them. You won't have a home you won't be a great person. No, that's not what she says, she talks in a different way, listens in a different way, comes from a different world.

When I entered her room I didn't see the heater burning so I realized I was cold. First you have to feel and then look for external clues, she told me as though I didn't know that. I squirmed on the couch, I wanted to stop being afraid of her, an old-new wish that will never be fulfilled. I thought of different actions that would free me of the shackles of eternity. To get up and look at her, no, that's too aggressive. I searched

and finally found, I told her that I wanted to lie on my side and not on my back. I realized that actions would not release me from my bonds but a change of feeling that does not necessarily bring exhibitionist actions of rebellion, licentiousness and release in its wake. The manacles are not on the wrists but the soul. She said that first I felt like taking aggressive action like lying on my side, which actually means turning my back to her, and then I feel that she has bad and aggressive intentions towards me.

I walked around the ward shooting rapid glances at every passer-by in order to catch them in their true colors before they managed to spread the smile or the defensive look over their faces. I have developed the first second theory which states that in that second, falseness which is slower than the truth, does not manage to make its mark. That is to say that the first second contains all the true information and has no equal, and any addition only detracts. The first second is the pre-defense erection second, I explained to Shuki, who understood. In the first second I thought that they could see right through me and in the second second they think only good things about me, that's an example, for instance, of a typical defense erection. The first second is the one that must be expunged from our memory as quickly as possible because it is the unbearable one. And then when I saw Simon I suddenly connected with myself, he was a real pompous ass and I was just like him. Through him I heard my own voice climbing upward and wanting to burst out, for what? Do people connect with themselves through me too? Do people see from outside what I see from inside? Well, that's an eternal question you'll never find an answer to. Even when all the mysteries of the universe will have been solved and this question is finally resolved, its time won't reach the End of Days.

It was particularly difficult for me with Zohar. He got under my skin, tormented me professionally and in the past he made my life unbearable. In short he connected to my exposed emotional world like a leech and tried to suck the marrow from its bones. What I didn't see in myself he helped me and advanced my analysis in this sadistic way. In his presence my unconscious would control me even today. He was the knight of my dreams. He came into them morning and night and went wild in them at times of fear and terror. It was he who told me "Stop keeping quiet already" at those moments of panic when the words stuck in my throat. It was he who told me to stop smiling when I was flooded with anxiety because of the group and especially when he shouted "Stop groveling, be yourself for God's sake, you and your indecision" as though he longed for my rapid rehabilitation process.

He came to the ward as a Hero of Israel. Later he became the Miserable Creature of Israel, that was during the period when Shuki appointed him to the position of deputy counselor. One day and in some strange way, call-up papers bearing Zohar's name were mistakenly sent to the ward and aroused the sleeping bear from his hibernation. In analysis with Rivka he began recreating with a preciseness greater than the reality and over time that was longer than the event itself, events that surfaced in his mind. On the couch, under Rivka's protection, the moments hours and days during which he felt himself a national hero whose functioning had gradually deteriorated, resurfaced in his imagination. Only now as he dived down into the depths of his soul did he discover the experience of not being a Hero of Israel but a Miserable Creature of Israel as he called himself. He felt incapable of doing anything. The draining increased and its intensities were accompanied by authentic feelings of chaos. Only then did Zohar realize what diving down into the depths of hell really was. Only then

did he understand the power of this black hole. There, in the depths of his consciousness he had no escape from a total experience of helplessness and inability to do anything, even the simplest and most elementary things. He imagined himself getting lost again in the field thanks to his terrible orientation among the blows of humiliation that pounded him like a torrential flood. There, among the soldiers and officers and tents and the blue sky they all joined forces against him and held the lock that would lock him in in order to flog him and humiliate him until he got up and hit them only to be hit again. He was held under lock and key in the humiliation camp of his inner world. The company of men and the coarse sexuality of the officers slowly began to drive him crazy but this time under the protection of Rivka. She spoke softly, first about the trauma he has from this framework to a degree that makes him unable to look at her with the minimal remoteness essential to any emotional understanding. Later she spoke to the Hero of Israel within him and said that with a background like that and fantasies like those, the Insult of Israel is taking shape. But Zohar, who heard the word background, paid no heed to her words and continued her associations and told her about the red background he always dreamed he would have under his paratrooper's wings. This meant, he explained to her knowledgeably without her even asking as there was no doubt about the emotional significance of the continuation of this sentence, a combat jump. Under fire or not under fire, he debated with himself aloud, and Rivka was again forced to look at the tremendous pain concealed in this getting lost.

After the psychotic calamity, after the trauma of birth, a person never goes back to what he was, Amos explained to me. I had a trauma that changed my life beyond recognition, and that was my hospitalization. The foundations of my being and

personality shook and the door posts of my soul collapsed and were rebuilt in that event. What would Shirli and Rona, Simon and Julia and the rest have to say? A person suffering from a serious illness no longer relies on his body, once he has handed it over to the doctors, the surgeons and all the rest to save it. A person who has undergone a psychotic trauma no longer relies on his lost soul. He builds a thin skin of sanity for himself, a thin membrane that separates him from the most terrible fear of all, the one lurking in his soul. He becomes smaller, checks each thought, perhaps it's that same sick thought that heralds the approaching additional stumble. The defenses undergo erection and become stronger, the imagination diminishes and the fear in the eyes gradually increases. Look at Julia's eyes, for example, that frozen and frightened look that comes from them, she's really waiting for and inviting the devil and knows that he'll come for her. The breaking down process, Zohar once explained to me, is the feeling we don't know each other. What exactly breaks down? I asked, the body, the soul, everything, he replied. Is it like leprosy when the limbs fall off? I asked. And indeed, those were Rona's dreams following the crisis she went through. But it wasn't her limbs that dropped off but scraps of thoughts and ideas that took wing and became autonomous. They dropped off from that logical basis in which they were previously embedded and flew far and wide. Is there a more monstrous inner experience that's more frightening than that which they will carry with them all their lives and to the grave? How can one rely on what's going through your mind after this? Familiar, no? I said to Zohar, and he agreed.

I won in the eternal test of projections, for years I've been fighting to remain pure and not be a whore's daughter and I've been convincing myself that I'm pure and without

imperfections. Only a paranoid has experiences of purity and perfection like that, the good is inside the bad outside and whoever hasn't experienced it has lost out.

They say that in war the borderline case functions best of all, when he hears the air raid warning he never gets excited and it's clear why. He has always known it from inside, this inner alarm is his daily bread that he takes to analysis day in day out. An external or real warning is nothing but a well known and needless confirmation of an inner reality. Then when there's an air raid warning in the middle of the night and everyone runs hysterically to the sealed room, Zohar and I walk there, smiling. Matti says that under stress I function better than the counselors, but I know that when you need to fake it, I take the prize.

The war reminds all the homeless that they have no home. Internal ruins instead of a home exist more than anything in Shuki's soul, so we all agreed in the dark of the room. Collapsing houses I've got, I repeated and confirmed, but a soul without a home is something fantastic. It means that the soul roams in strange houses searching for refuge, consolation and encouragement, that's to say that there's no home inside, in the stomach, to go back to. In other words, everyone I talk to is a safer home than mine, enough said, I concluded. Shuki understands, everyone said, and asked him to pay attention. "A soul without a home," I repeated and said that I wanted to found the Wandering Souls Home. No, I haven't become a penitent Jew, I said to Matti. When Shuki talks to someone his soul searches for refuge and shelter in a strange house and it's terrible to sleep every night every hour every second in a different house. Every person I meet and, hup! I change houses. What did my mother do by not giving me a home? What did she do that I have never been familiar with the labyrinth of rooms in

my home? True, ours was an abandoned house, dirty, untidy and open to the four winds. A home must be nurtured, Rona told me but I continued sleeping at the neighbors. The homeless are well known the world over, Shirli explained to me, they sleep under bridges on the stormy winter nights. No, I'm not talking about that, I replied. I mean this smile, the critical millimeter that makes me homeless, the quantum second in which I'm not in me, wandering to the home of the person facing me and so on. I was a street kid, don't you understand? Even when I was called home, in my soul I remained outside. The space by your bed looks like a public toilet, Shirli told me. Let's build ourselves a house, each of us on his own but we'll help one another, I proposed at the noon meeting, and they all laughed. I'll nurture my house and in the end I'll have a home, I promised them all. My first visitor to my room will of course be Miriam who has helped me to put up the precious walls that separate inside from outside, home from no home. Yes, my Miriam is helping me build the bedroom, we haven't got to the living room yet. Yes, the war reminds all the homeless that they have no home.

31

I want to pee, you have organized yourself around peeing, she said. I see a big prick entering, I said, you've organized yourself around sex, she said. Whenever I find it hard I recruit these tricks to help me, I thought to myself and found release from the cruel fantasies that enter my mind. If everyone were like me the world would be unbearably cruel. Just give me the chance to free my lost fantasies and the world will immediately be stained in the colors of blood and black gloom.

When Shirli overdid it with her exploits, when the honorable committee members, headed by Na'ama, in whom signs of cracking-up were never apparent, began raising their hands, Jeremiah began talking at the morning meetings about the ward's ship's bow not withstanding the breakers and the sailors getting dead drunk every night. Shirli came and went as her heart desired and there was nothing to be done. At the Wednesday meetings, when we select a movie, the adolescents' voices thundered saying that Shirli's participation in the vote we took on which movie we would go to isn't fair because she's seen them all. But they couldn't help but ask her if it's worthwhile seeing such and such a movie and thus, indirectly recognized her monopoly and her comprehensive knowledge of what is going on in the big world outside, beyond the hospital gate. The committee members walked the halls of the ward, humiliated, heads bowed, every time Shirli, enraged, passed them. It was clear that the staff had to do something about it. And then, one Monday morning Shirli was called to the staff meeting. One single shout was heard blaring from the room, echoing through the ward for many long months. This was Jeremiah's irrefutable insight, suddenly shouting at Shirli who was sitting a few inches away from him, and the entire staff around them: "Shirli, the time has come for you to stop singing!" Suddenly everything became clear, every day and every hour Shirli is acting out her name, which means sing-to-me, practicing her mother's age-old curse, that she never stop singing, a sneering smile will forever be spread on her face and her lips will never stop producing songs and melodies known only to her. Shirli came out and told us that she had asked to go home for a week and the staff had agreed. We were dumbfounded and the staff's shame and mortification enveloped us. Only at the Friday party, when Shirli was no longer with us, Jeremiah told us in a strange way something that is usually not said without the adolescent's approval - it had been

decided to distance Shirli from the ward for a week in order to give her time to think. On her return she will have to promise not to run away if she wants to stay in the ward. Shirli returned, upon her arrival she went straight to the staff meeting and when she came out explained to us all that she had managed to fix things up. Shirli didn't stop running away. But her attempts at running away stopped making front-page-news as a result of a new collection of misdeeds. Once again the keys disappeared. This time the noose gradually tightened around Shirli's neck despite the absence of solid proof. Even Ya'akov, her analyst, so the story goes, admitted that he had the impression that she invented her most private and immediate associations for his benefit. Shirli was recalled to the staff meeting where she was given an ultimatum - either return the keys or be expelled from the ward. And if it's not Shirli who's guilty of this theft, Na'ama asked, it's really character assassination, she protested to Jeremiah at the Friday party. Jeremiah kept his silence, like one safeguarding a secret, but it was clear to all that there was no real proof. Temporarily Shirli had triumphed. She found a clever way of solving the problem. It seemed that she fished this solution out from the depths of her psychotic unconscious, because this kind of sophistication mixed with pure sadism can't be the fruit of secondary thought processes, guided by logic. Julia found a key near the bathroom. After it was examined it proved to be the key to Jeremiah's room. Why did the one who chose to torment pick on Julia along the lines of not taking unfair advantage? Julia was in a state of panic lest the blame be put on her and attempts to calm her down were of no avail. But it was agreed that even a lie detector test wouldn't help since Shirli is not lying to us but rather to herself and there's nothing you can do against this kind of sophistication. Her attempts to escape continued but received minimal attention. This time Shirli, in a rage of fury, hurled the ping pong paddle at the TV when Matti

refused to switch it off for the Friday night lighting of the candles. The screen was shattered into a thousand smithereens. The dry words of the law oblige the adolescent to automatically undertake paying for the damage. Shirli publicly proved that she had no money. Rona screamed that she could go work as a prostitute and Matti answered that most likely she would be unemployed because as far as he knew men went to prostitutes in order to feel good while only bad could come from Shirli. The committee, covertly encouraged by the staff, decided to allow her to substitute payment with doing some kind of work beneficial to the ward. Shirli, who apologized this time, proposed to embroider a tablecloth for the clubroom. But the tablecloth was embroidered and embroidered, winter went by and so did the summer and fall was on the horizon and the tablecloth that looked almost finished became more and more ragged. Shirli explained that she wasn't satisfied with her work and wouldn't produce anything for the ward that wasn't perfect, a magnificent work of art. The committee, tired by now of bringing up this ongoing topic at its weekly meetings, gave her a new deadline each time. I imagined the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise and I brought this question up with Simon. The staff is approaching Shirli from behind, getting closer each time, almost but never catching up with her. How is this possible? Simon, who this time got the humor answered me that unlike the case of Achilles, here the staff will finally catch up with her and he was right. After one of the staff meetings, on a rainy Wednesday, Shirli emerged smiling. She told us that she had a deadline by which she had to finish the tablecloth and if she didn't, or didn't pay up, she would be expelled from the ward. The deadline was approaching and Shirli didn't show any signs of distress. She promised everyone that she'd finish on time. The evening before D-Day she suddenly unraveled the little she had done and began working in an indescribable fury. The drama reached its climax, would Shirli

complete her assignment or would she be expelled from the ward? She worked all night, that's what the night watchman, who followed the shadows behind the curtains, said. When morning came we found her sprawled out exhausted on her bed, at the foot of her bed a beautiful embroidered tablecloth with only a few ragged threads. She didn't appear at the committee meeting that day to present and deliver her tablecloth, she was simply sleeping. It was Shuki's measure of mercy that tipped the scale and determined that her work would be accredited even though she had managed to humiliate everyone once again. Nevertheless Shirli was distanced from the ward by the staff, but they kept a door open for her. She was told that if she wanted to be accepted again she would have to undergo the entire admission process from scratch. She returned to the ward after she took a month's break, something that aroused envy in all of us. She also explained that she had actually come to an agreement with the staff that she be allowed to take a month's vacation. Each one remained loyal to his perspective, Shirli and the staff. Shirli brought the belongings she had refused to remove during the month as proof that her arrival was nothing other than a direct continuation of her stay in the ward, and the staff regarded the change in her admission date in her personal file as poor proof of its own triumph. Shirli protested about this, suddenly she had to accept the fact that she had become the novice of the ward, at least according to the records, something she quite obviously didn't like.

The psychic mechanism, I explained to Simon, is pure shit, an old fashioned mechanism that doesn't work well. Today I lie on the couch and after I finished my arguments was simply left with this shit, that's what you're left with when all the reasons have been exhausted. Simon thought otherwise, he claimed that when

everything is over, when we finish peeling away all the layers, only a vacuum remains. I replied that there's no such thing as a vacuum, what you call a vacuum is not a vacuum, just plain shit. After listening quietly to my words Simon sat down to what he calls the Mother of Life's Labors, to plan the improvement of psychic mechanisms. First he said that the repression thing should be totally abolished, he thinks this mechanism of ignoring facts and feelings is outdated. Then the question arose of how could we simultaneously process this huge amount of information and what does he plan for us while we're sleeping. Fundamental questions pertaining to Man's basic ability to understand himself and is there room to leave something automatic so we can rest quietly while our automatic pilot navigates its course through the darkness of night. Simon spread before us various types of models. Each of us selected the model suitable for him or her, according to personal taste. The argument was actually an ancient one: whether to taste from the Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge. Is the most important thing to understand what is happening to us, or quite the opposite, leave us alone to live quietly, devoid of knowledge and wisdom, but possessing a state-of-the-art repression mechanism capable of burning up unpleasant information and hiding it in such a way that it won't appear even in our unconscious during the hours of night. Julia wanted life and I wanted knowledge, to each his own. The Western world, I heatedly preached, is based on the quintessential value of self-realization. Life without realization and fulfillment is not life. Man's obligation is to utilize his potential to the full, all abilities and skills, before the worms get to work. It's hard for me to envision myself not creating, without totally fulfilling my dreams and desires and even more. Shirli agreed to represent Julia with whom no one agreed. She said that in most countries in the world self-realization is not an important value. The individual assimilates into the group, whether it be collapsed

communism, a religion that befuddles your mind or some other tyrannical regime that hasn't a drop of respect for the individual or his self-realization. Shirli was right but I can't see myself without self-realization, that's the essence of my life, right? So in the model I adopted life went on at night and night became day. When I was carried on the waves of association, like a ray of photons deserting the planet Earth, I saw reality below so small and distant, so unimportant. I left my defenses behind me, they have also been abolished long ago. I was in the heart of experience, time became nothingness and stretched to infinity, actually there was no past and no future, but there was an order of events like in the world of dreams. There was no negation either, yes, there were no opposites, only positives. And the moment negation was cancelled, defense mechanisms fell like flies and with them the essence of cyclic logical thinking that confuses and clutches everything in its snare. Just imagine, I enthusiastically clapped my hands, there are no implications, no reversals, certainly no repressions and splits, what else can one ask for. There are certainly no maniacal defenses, obsessions have disappeared, rationalizations are forgotten and so on and so forth. You forgot the main thing, Amos reminded me, you are simply left with the shit and wake up from your nightmare like it's in the middle of the night when you have to piss. He was right, Simon's plans don't apply, he didn't get to the deepest roots of the problem, the infrastructure, the emotional backbone, which stabilizes our personality because inside, beyond all the defenses, I simply feel shitty.

When Rona was transferred to a closed ward, waiting for the storm to blow over, I found myself sleeping in her bed and dreaming quite a few psychotic dreams. I was stuffed with medicine and here I am running along the walls, passing through the halls like a shadow, reaching my balcony. There I meet Jeremiah and say to him that the

medicine is no good for me and I protest about all the different kinds they prescribe for me and beg for mercy, let them stop already. Yes, I identified with Rona who was crammed with medicine from way back when and particularly during her recent crisis. They altered her intimacy with her thoughts, Na'ama told me, can it get any worse? She wanted to shift herself into first gear and suddenly found herself in reverse, Zohar explained to me, that's the way it is when they change your medication, until you get used to a certain dosage and its effect on your modes of thinking and all of a sudden they change your gear. I looked at poor Rona and didn't know what was the result of the crisis and what of the medication. No, there was a bizarre tone to her thoughts, a strange and new tone I had not heard before and I had no alternative but to relate it to the terrible medication. Suddenly everything was working extremely slowly, everything was blocked, memory too was forgotten.

32

When I was interviewed on television I was asked whether you change in analysis. I replied that I wouldn't have expected a question like that from someone who had read my book. After the book, I said, questions like that were out of place. What is change? I went on, is it the behavioral change that others can indicate, or another qualitative change connected with the patient's feelings? Behavior or behavioral change, I continued, is a small, marginal part of change in general. Is what is important to us mainly what people will say about us? Is it not a process of growing and getting to know ourselves more important, even though it might have no behavioral consequences? In other words, for my part the central value of analysis is your knowledge of yourself and that's something tremendous, all the rest is negligible side effects. It's like theoretical research. The question is frequently asked whether

or not there is room for an abstract, theoretical, academic study that has no foreseeable application, even in the long run. Greater and wiser minds than mine have already answered that pure science is a value in itself, even if it is not practical. First, it can become practical in the future as has happened on more than one occasion. Theories developed for the exclusive development of a theory have later been discovered to be practical as science progressed. In other words, study for study's sake is a value in itself. But even if it never has any practical use, which is something that cannot be foreseen, this is the driving force of humankind – curiosity. Curiosity is the mother and father of science and human progress, and it is science that is the basis of all human motivation. So how is all this connected with analysis? I continued to ask the stunned interviewer facing me. Understanding, awareness and self-knowledge are in themselves of unlimited value, interest and curiosity. How do I think? What do I feel that I don't feel? Where am I equal to or different from everyone else? And what pranks does my brain play? Is there anything more interesting than the curiosity of science when it is directed towards the self, to the study of human experience? Is there anything more addictive? Even if I were to be told that I would not change by one iota in analysis, their value stands alone as the value of science and knowledge. On looking back, I undoubtedly grew in my understanding and recognition of myself. Has my behavior changed? At the basis of my personality, certainly not. I am capable of coping with different situations and reacting to them accordingly, this certainly changed. I am capable of weighting my distortion, but not immediately and not always. Usually first the mistake is made and the corrective mechanism begins to work later, but that's something too. There is no doubt that my inner experience has changed, in my intimacy with myself, but my behavior has also changed to a certain extent, and people around me will testify to

this. And again this is the less important part of your change in self-recognition that is a value in itself. A change in behavior depends on many things, the environment, the content of the specific behavior, and the depth of analysis, and there is no guarantee relating to any behavioral matter as a result of analysis. Analysis sells curiosity, a peep into an inner world, but it does not sell behavioral change and evidence of this is provided by the thousands of lunatics populating the mental hospitals, and they're connected with themselves.

Miriam lights your way but doesn't make any comment to you, said Na'ama lightly, sorry, enlighteningly. Yes, I hear everything as a comment and not as a constructive elucidation and a desire to help me. You're missing that inner part that says that what people tell you is for your own good, you only have the part that says it's to your detriment, Rona explained. Go believe that things exist that you can't see, that is don't feel, go believe that there are other models of mental life you don't have. Today on the couch it was a different experience, I knew that when I crossed the threshold the experience would vanish and that's what happened. Maybe it's mystical but it's most probably me who encounters myself with such authenticity so rarely. I lay down on the couch without much network interference. That is, sexual associations now and again, here and there some other distractions, but relatively few. What happened mainly was the feeling of a lot of loneliness, a lot of emptiness with the inability of knowing if everyone's this way or just me. Yes, just me, I thought to myself. And again I stretched this experience over the entire fifty minutes and it was hard. Miriam kept quiet as she does on these occasions. Once she said that I touch but I don't want to go inside, where to? I didn't understand, in my opinion I'd said the bottom line. I felt really shitty but that was unrelated to the circumstances, and it's what I carry

everywhere I go. Even if I were to hover in space, I thought, I'd feel the same shitty way, a hard inner feeling that I take with me wherever I go and to every meeting without exception. Something that is mine more than anything else that is mine. Miriam wasn't with me, so I felt, I also understood that she couldn't help me because these really are my emotions so much mine. By the door too she won't be able to compensate me with her good intentions and her maternal, warm and supporting look. There's no remedy for it. It was simple, when the thoughts were finished when I remained alone with her silence I couldn't find an oasis or a rose garden there. I did find a lot of shit, a lot of loneliness, and there was nothing pleasant there as I perhaps had hoped I might find. I thought that perhaps a vacuum is something unpleasant for everyone, to be this way with yourself on the couch, but that's not true of course. These are emotions that can only be experienced in analysis, only in that protected and special situation . Beyond the mountains and the arid desert of thoughts, beyond the valleys of the emotional wilderness, after going around all the emotional defenses and obstacles you'll find shit. An emotion of the shitty type agreed Simon and that shows you that you've reached the end of the road. Shit without words or shit that can be described and put into words, asked Matti as though I were a prophetess. What do feelings and words have to do with anything I rebuked like Jeremiah. Perhaps because Mommy wasn't with me, I thought. Kaka and pee are fantastic things, authentic emotions of a need that can be used, that can be unloaded. Miriam asked why I always have to and must do something with what I feel.

Your trick is to say things on behalf of others, to ask their opinion, to keep silent and tight-lipped mainly to disappear and not be in order not to get hurt. To say something, anything of your own, for you it means getting hurt. So you're saying that I can rely

on myself, I asked aloud. Again *I* say, what do *you* say? Even your speech does not pass through you but through those around you, she said. You want to be invisible that is your way of being non-existent. “Stop! Stop! Stop!” I screamed, “Stop! And again stop! It’s too much.” “Only someone who doesn’t exist is invulnerable,” Zohar assured me. But with me everything goes through those around me, my eyes replace theirs and through them I see how I must behave, it’s a well-known trick, he replied. Running behind the enemy and seeing the battlefield from his perspective. But before I begin the outflanking movement, I told him, I create an atmosphere of camouflage on the battlefield, what they call the fog of battle. And then my thoughts replace theirs. And they too become confused as a result of my confusion and we’re both in the same boat that’s slowly sinking to the depths of the ocean.

Everything happened after one thousand years of silence that they suddenly allowed me to speak. “Don’t move,” I told her when I was speaking. You were told don’t interrupt, don’t talk, you’re little and foolish, she told me. I’ll talk about my book, I said angrily. You want to talk about the compensation and not the insult, she said. Then I remembered home. Nothing special apart from simple scenes of loneliness. Here, there I’m standing alone in the middle of the living room. No, I’ll talk about what I want, I reprimanded her. You fight everyone who doesn’t want to listen to you, she said. After one thousand years of silence there’s so much to say.

The proof of my being is Miriam who hears me and she is with me exactly exactly. Alone I’m split and with her there’s integration, I am with the pain and the difficulty and they’re bearable. She is perfect for the simple reason that she complements me exactly. Merging with her prevents the existential suffering that’s unavoidably bound

up in recognition of the other's existence. She listens to me quietly and then we're really together, when she talks it's not as good. In the era of perfect identity you will never be alone anymore, there inside the blackness of your darkest impulses she's there. She's waiting for you there at the most frightening point at the brink of the abyss. In the era of perfect identity when you're together together she is yours and you are hers there are no more countries in the world and the ocean of eternity is all-embracing. There you dive together into the mysterious world of the soul and search for the hidden treasure. There is neither tension there nor the difficulty of relating to the other and there is no need to listen to what is different from you and there is no effort there and there is no conflict, threat or danger. There is nothing there except you yourself serene and calm in the Nirvana that was perhaps in the womb. There you are without drives and without needs they have remained behind a long time ago. That's how it is when me and Miriam are together.

Mommy came to visit me on Saturday. What can I tell you? I won't tell you. Just that a picture of my cunt with a screwdriver stuck into it flashed through my mind and that is truly consoling. What happens to me when Mommy's there? A kind of diminishment not only in my body so that I barely move but also in my thoughts, I empty out, stop thinking and maybe smile a little all the time. Your mommy doesn't stop talking, said Na'ama, you can't even get a word in edgewise. I realized that I have no reason to talk because my words will fall on deaf ears. Or she'll finish a sentence for me, realize she's made a mistake before I open my mouth again, correct herself and so on and so forth for all eternity while I look at her frightened and astonished. On another occasion she won't even notice that I've said something and on another she'll correct a sentence I've said or something I've done before I've even

had a chance to finish or understand what's happened she'll correct it over and over again. From my point of view the optimal action is to shut up until it's all over. But to smile too so they won't think I'm unhappy God forbid. You look tired and drowsy all the time, she said and suggested I take a pep pill. In my lair at night I heard Na'ama whisper to me from her bed, she never thinks that there's any other way except drugs for coping with emotions. When I withdrew into myself I heard: Mommy's not here Mommy's not there, Mommy's not here Mommy's not there. Where is she? No, I didn't meet her on Saturday it just seemed as though I did. And again she swoops down on me out of the darkness and envelops me and all the world with her wealth of colorful words, creating her own world full of mountains and buildings she's created from her empty words as though only she exists. Mommy was here on Saturday and didn't touch me. No.

33

The grandeur of the notion that planet Earth revolves around the sun, for the first man who thought this, perhaps Copernicus, this greatness stems, I explained to Matti, from the mere fact that you understand that you are enveloped in a reference system that doesn't allow you to understand. Everything is in orbit, go believe you're revolving. I have to understand and believe that I criticize everybody and repeatedly look for what's wrong with them. If that's what I do every day and every moment, go understand that there's another way and that's what I do. It's not hard to see according to what's going on here and how you view me how you can be so critical, Miriam said. But I don't see anything and that's annoying. You invite wars, she says, and again I don't understand. When my entire being is criticism I have to be Copernicus in order to reveal the truth and that's not so easy, right?

In the end you'll really make me believe that I'll leave analysis of my own free will and not because you're going to throw me out. Seven years five times a week and you're not breaking?! God, where do you get the strength? Don't I bore you? Aren't you fed up hearing the same stupid things again and again, with no end in sight? I'm your child, I whimpered, just so, otherwise how could I understand your commitment to see me every day every day all the time without any limits until I'll want to leave. True you didn't promise me that you wouldn't throw me out but what your intellect doesn't do, time does. And now I am really a member of the family here, or perhaps, to be more precise, a member of the family in the depths of my soul. I know better than ever the pitfalls and the obstacles the sharp curves and the dangerous passes. I have put up traffic lights at every corner and I try to obey them. It's hard to put into words, I always tried only to understand but perhaps quantity has become quality otherwise I have no explanation for Miriam's inner presence in my world, the basis of which she has changed. So I am overwhelmed by the towers I have built and have lived in and I didn't know they were so tall and beautiful and mainly so disconnected from their surroundings and environment. I can already smell a rat, I even know what it is, and what Miriam will say. Ancient rules of the soul have been replaced by enlightened ones, the rules of insanity and their instant hints have moved and made room for something else. According to the laws of the Kingdom of Insanity, hints and hints of hint are the hit-tune, one thing leads to another like one offence leads to another, and you know and are familiar with the course even without thinking, you've taken it endlessly but nevertheless it is always enthralling, the course of insanity. You scatter candies all the way and there's nothing left for you to do but take the same course again and gather the fruits of your victory over your genitals. The laws of

insanity explicate Miriam's Law and lavishly thrust upon them a host of good things. Ah...I have come to understand the game and its rules, I'll say this... I'll say that... and I'll change harsh-sounding reality. But Miriam's Law explains the rules of insanity and she mercilessly whips me with her interpretations and tries to topple my towers, shatter my castles and breach the walls of my defenses. It's a cruel war to the finish, life or death, Miriam's Kingdom versus the Kingdom of Insanity.

You're old and ugly and this is doubtless insulting, I too would be deeply insulted if someone said something like that to me, I told her when I lay down on the couch. You think that what people say to you is true, she responded. When people who meet me greet me it is for me a fundamental examination of the person facing me, but what can I do if I'm able to see, I complained and apologized, should I shut my eyes, she didn't answer. If someone says that you don't look well and another and another you suddenly feel sick, that's well known. But she said that I only need one person and I'll immediately feel that he's right and knows what's happening to me better than I do.

Yes, Miriam is an example of a New World Order I didn't know, sole and exclusive proof in my world that things can be different. My thoughts wander, I get confused and my thoughts challenge each other because Mommy wasn't there, with no anchor nor harbor, roaming and wandering the face of the earth, like Cain of ancient times, seeking comfort. Does the way I am annoy you? I asked Rona one mysterious night, whispering in our beds. Not now, she answered and that hurt. What you say is true but the atmosphere is wrong, Matti said to me when we were still friends. Only Matti is capable of differentiating between body and soul or between the material and the spiritual. An emotional stand, Madam, an emotional stand! Zohar humiliated me once

more. War, war again, Simon endlessly screamed at me. And Amos smiled and only Julia came and patted me like a wounded cat knowing that there was no remedy for my pain and no limits to my afflictions, I am to roam the face of the earth with an overdose of air in my lungs.

When I entered I felt she was looking between my legs...later I asked her to repeat what she had done, sorry, said. She asked if again I wanted to feel that she's criticizing me, penetrating me and giving me pleasure. In my imagination I entered the room once more and this time she didn't look anywhere and I was left alone.

She wants me to get excited about her, afraid of her, that I should enter a weakling, a poor thing and ask her to referee between me and myself and if this is what she wants I'm game. Yes, many times people want me to be afraid of them, so why not? Is *really* being afraid better? I'm willing to donate my body to her and not go and pee. And from my negotiations with Miriam - the factors responsible for maintaining my body and its integrity - I suddenly got up in anger and went to the bathroom. Suddenly it was clear to me for the first time that it's all in my mind.

What are my repressions compared to those of the nation, Zohar confided in me. Remembrance Day for the fallen in the Wars of Israel has been set one day before Independence Day, he explained to me, and not by chance. The passage from sorrow and grief to happiness and merriment is connected ball and chain to the foundations of personality. An entire people remove their mourning masks and put on the mask of a clown. Yes, I don't have a different name for this inexplicable and bizarre passage dictated only by the clock and by no emotions whatsoever. Remembrance Day, he

said to me, is a good day for the many freeloaders who find it difficult to bear their suffering during the ordinary days of the year and on this day enjoy unexpected salvation, the entire nation is engrossed and absorbed in their souls and they are absorbed into the soul of the nation. Like a tiny dinghy they are carried on the ocean's waves of the bereaved families' infinite suffering and their pain vanishes. But I was still fixed on Holocaust Day that for some reason falls one week before Remembrance Day. I continued to believe that there is no holocaust like my own inner one, which I carry within me from my mother's womb and it will be with me till the grave. There is nothing comparable to the holocaust of distorted infancy that castrates the soul for ever and ever and no enemy, adversary, oppressor or despot can compare. My mother, the Mother of all Holocausts has done this to my soul for eternity and there's no remedy. There is nothing like castration that makes you happy, castration that casts a glorious light on your face, which will never perish and you know that this will be your course in life for ever and ever. That is when you look in amazement between your legs and your heart fills with joy.

I loved her on the couch, I really loved her. The big green eyes waiting for me at the door. Yesterday they were so close, so much with me, I love you, I said to her, the warmth of your body, I fantasize that we are hugging and kissing, you are mine you are inside me. No doubt there is something real in this, I said to her, what do I have in life, my mother? No. It is you who are with me each day over the rocky road of life, it is you who is inside me inside my soul at every decision at every moment. But she spoke about the fact that I feel that I have nothing and that I feel I need her. About my feeling that I have to love her because I have no other alternative which I feel I possess or is mine, I have nothing and being with her in this confrontation is

unbearable for me so I choose to love her. I stayed on the couch, in my imagination, after she left, alone, alone I felt the source from which everything grows and to which everything returns. It was a shitty feeling, a feeling that is not a building, a construction and therefore I found it hard to describe. But near the door despite everything she had said about my need to invent our love and despite the fact that she obliterated me by her words, in her eyes, near the door, she was there again. This is my Miriam and today I understood that in analysis I simply sang a painful and true love song for her. Will our love ever be fulfilled or perhaps it's already fulfilled now? So why am I not satisfied and weep because of love and longings?

Again on the couch and this time it's slightly different. I tried to take her body warmth from her, her sex organ, the beautiful flowers she has in her room and everything else. She seemed to me huge and enormous, someone who has it all. When she spoke and finally said something I felt that I had her words. But usually she didn't let me. I have the book I'm writing but that helped me only for a few seconds. It is well known that it's hard to keep nothingness, one has to work at it for many years in this psychoanalytical circus. But suddenly I solved the equation, I've got it! I proudly announced, I have my irrefutable love for you. Not you love me and I'm dependent on this charity but I am the loving one. She said that this doesn't help me or my feeling terrible and I didn't agree, I didn't give up this brilliant solution to my feeling of nothingness. And the truth is that I really have her and it makes me feel good. On the couch I still tried incessantly to take something from her in my imagination, words, talk, movements of her head and without knowing how.

When Zohar asked us to join him on his journey we slung our backpacks on our backs and went off. The sun was about to set and a hard day was coming to its end but we continued walking. From there we passed, according to his instructions, through a familiar doorway into another world. For me this was the stone fence in the garden of my childhood. The Indian tribes in South America used to set out on journeys of this kind. The guides were ex-psychotics who managed to overcome crises, they were the only ones to know the road to the paved depths of the soul and they were also familiar with the exit route from this dead-end labyrinth. Therefore they served as guides for anyone who lost his way in the tangles of his soul and couldn't find his way out of the labyrinth. Each of us would meet one animal in the depths of the dense jungle which destiny had designed for him. I couldn't believe whom I met but it was a hedgehog. Rona found a peacock, Shirli encountered a snake, Zohar suddenly found himself encircled by a pack of hyenas, Julia stepped on empty snail shells and Matti looked for geckos. Amos encircled a scorpion with a ring of fire and watching it sting itself and put an end to its life, with no alternative, gave him much pleasure. Na'ama met a goat, looked into its eyes and saw indescribable sadness and longings that were out of this world. Simon almost fell for the charms of a terrible spider web and Shuki didn't find anything, that's when he understood that animals like him would never have survived. There is no question that the wondrous Animal Kingdom has room for all the pathologies, each animal has its own emotional stand with which it enters the world, the guide explained to us. I strolled around other people's experiences and they appealed to me so much. I understood that my experience is a drop in the ocean of experiences which is so variegated among adolescents, each person and his own private world.

After years of analysis I looked sadly at my scarred, bitten and wounded hands from so many years of analysis. Every time it was hard for me I used to bite myself to connect with the pain.

Afterwards Matti went off to masturbate. To masturbate until blood flowed or until death, he swore to himself and left. On the bed while he grasped the flame of his outpouring soul, his memorial candle, the milk spurted onto him. From the blood of the fallen from the milk of heroes, he recited to himself as he saw the milk dripping onto his hand and forming new tissue in him that wasn't there before. A memorial candle that dripped until the very end and dried up. He called me to see the milk, I stood there astonished in the face of the suffering that enveloped his hand and surrounded the sheaf of his soul. The milk of heroes is more exciting than the blood of the fallen, I thought to myself. I'll never forget the white fluid that formed flowing blobs flowing blobs on his hand, that's the milk of heroes, I thought to myself as his memorial candle was gradually extinguished and softened and like a snail retreated into the shell of his hand.

When I went into the room I found Na'ama lying on the bed, cuddled up to her cloth cat and extending her long beautiful neck to the slaughterer. I found myself going over to her without understanding that she was inviting it, she didn't know it either. So I sat without saying a word for minutes on end without knowing what to say. That feeling of being invited into the holy of holies and you're ready to do anything in the world the main thing is that they won't be angry at you for soiling such a sensitive place. My breathing was measured and I directed my eyes to where they'd do no

harm. This embarrassment that descends on me when I meet a person who has come in from the cold of another world, that awe that causes me to think before each movement, that missing heartbeat, Na'ama made me feel this too. That's her sadistic part to hold me in such a fragile situation. But I later decided to do everything that's forbidden with she who wants to die simply to break this unbearable situation. I slung my knapsack over my shoulder, recruited Na'ama and a wild good-looking guy and we embarked on a pleasure trip of sex and food in the secret primeval landscape. I ordered Na'ama to have sex with him every which way, to eat of the treasures of the land and drink from the nectar of the mountains and canyons, the setting sun and the reflecting sea. At first Na'ama didn't want to have sex, at least she wanted someone else to do the work for her like a baby. But once she'd been had quickly, her desire quickened. She gave her body to the waves, relaxed her muscles to embraces and the penetration was easy and joyful. She simply enjoyed someone else doing the work for her. And towards evening as she sat facing the sunset, her thighs spread in the famous lotus position, she knew a new joy. There amid that scenery as we know you cannot show any aggression towards the self, it's simply a waste of energy. And if you still want to punish yourself you can always give yourself up to penetrations with disgust and in filth and enjoy the world's glow another way not only with thoughts of suicide. Yes, for her this surrender contained a kind of death and rebirth, a merging with primary sources that resemble the womb and which were perhaps its precursors. No one has yet committed suicide on a desert island, I explained to her as we cooked a barbecue that night, with darkness falling she had not yet fulfilled her obligation of the tortured surrender she so loved. To return to the ward from that journey was very hard for me too and I again understood Na'ama's wish to die. She continued lying in her bed snuggled up and smiling, so it was clear to everyone that she was thinking of

how to die. A smile signifying a victory over loneliness, I thought to myself when I realized that thoughts of death give her a little satisfaction.

On the couch I was pounded by waves of hate, love, loneliness and gloom without any order and without a past or a future. A huge wave came and washed up on the shore, passed without memories and without the ability of knowing what would come next. Yes, I withdrew into myself, to the world of my childhood and even before. To a place where I felt that there was no time but a continuous present. Everything was split and dismantled there. For a moment I loved and for a moment I hated and there was no connection between them. Each emotion stood alone as though only it existed. The exciting breeze brought with it a new and surprising emotion I had never known before. The wind stood still and the wind blew and again a new emotion covered me. Then I fell into a deep pit, into an abyss in my soul that had gaped open since my birth. I fell and fell and again I felt that time had rules of its own. There in the center of the experience I looked at my past and it didn't seem so bad to me and I immediately asked then why is the present so unbearable? I knew that this present too will become the past and change its spots. So am I happy or unhappy I heard myself ask Miriam from a dream of childhood without time and place. How is it that each day is terrible and the sum total is quite nice? And again I felt myself getting lost in the mysteries of lost time without order and organization. Everything is experiences, I remembered in a sentence from my childhood that explained the turning of the terrible present into an enchanted and mysterious past. I loved Miriam and hated her and her teeming isolation in the changes too rapid for me to understand. You're not with me, I said, you're with me the most in all the world, I responded. When she said her okay I recalled that she hadn't said a word throughout the session. She let me be

there in the center of the experience of my infancy without any order or organization at all.

In Simon's essay, "Pathology in the Service of War", he writes: "When peace comes we will no longer be able to say that everything is because of this shitty country."

Indeed war casts its terror over characters like me, and prosperity is my big enemy.

The nation's bereavement comforts me and blurs the borders between the pathological and the normal. We are all partners in this terrible pain in which I find relief, I merge with the nation's pain and my sorrows vanish as if they never existed. I quite frequently discover the parts in me that don't want peace, the feeling that this approaching catastrophe will cast shame upon me. For then there will be no more excuses, the distortion will appear in all its glory in the era of peace.

Psychopathology seeks an external reality that will fit the internal one that swarms inside it, an inner war seeks the external and peace only widens the intolerable gap between inside and outside. 'It's all because of the situation in the country,' will be an unacceptable sentence and the inner reality will cry out to the skies.

The strings of my soul played delicate and different melodies today and Miriam was silent throughout the hour. It happens all too rarely, perhaps she really didn't have anything to say. Colors of nature hovered in the air, precious music of the four seasons sailed in space. First one tone and then another but always with sadness and loneliness. I touched a little on emptiness a little on gloom and a little on hope. No dramas no tragedies, the scents of the passing year were less dramatic, sadder and lonelier than in years gone by. Nothing has happened in it so far. No significant anchor, I mean, that can be stubbornly grasped. I'm becoming sadder as the years go

by, more connected and less optimistic as the end approaches. When I was there with my empty year she kept silent and I was sad. And yet it's easier for me to live.

The morning that Simon compared psychoanalysis to a spider's web that traps its prey I knew infinite sorrow. I saw Simon weeping without tears, I saw him laughing soundlessly, I saw him speaking of unparalleled pain and despair but there was something missing there. What's missing for God's sake, he asked me one terrible night, what's missing? Help me I beg of you, please you can do it. And again he spoke of despair and eternal sorrow but there was no mourning music and the strings of the soul that pluck the pain remained concealed. They call it feeling, I repeated in despair, but his tears continued to be neutral and his painful words were expressionless. They call it schizophrenia I realized at that terrible moment.

"You know I've noticed," said Miriam, "that every Thursday you're particularly critical of things I say." Yes I've also noticed that I note that today is Thursday that's not like any other day, and then after some brief thought I was able to isolate the feeling she was talking about. That feeling of sadness, loneliness and despair that comes with the weekend parting from her, which says that I won't see her for three whole days. "And then you turn this sadness and longing into criticism of the therapy and dissatisfaction," she continued the sentence. True, these are some of the signs of despair and disappointment that I feel with Thursday's parting every week. Every day has a tomorrow except Thursday. Then a certain sadness falls upon me that rapidly becomes anger and criticism of the value of analysis.

In his book *The Inner Experience of Madness*, Simon strips away once and for all the romanticism covering the mask of madness and puts it on public display as naked as the day it was born. He railed against all the romantics as the great humanists of our generation and all the various types of existentialists. Free choice, will and willpower, man is preeminent over the beast and his unique ability to decide his fate, and above all his ability to love his fellow man, Simon lays them all low at the feet of the monument called madness. In the era of madness, says Simon, the foundations of failed humanism breathe their last and a person is left dehumanized, empty and spiritually penniless. Take, for example, he explains, the hard narcissistic injury that enables a person to love himself and himself alone. The sickness has relieved him of the ability to love, and there is also a wound like this to the soul in which your ability to love is diminished amazingly. The fount of youth is taken from you and you are left reflected in yourself alone alone alone. In another place he discusses at length the ability of choice that is taken once and for all from the obsessives, mainly those with an obsessional psychosis like Amos, who are doomed to repeat the same sentence again and again for the rest of their lives. And the story still doesn't end there, will, willpower he writes enthusiastically, have you ever seen a depressed person who has had every taste and smell of life taken away? Willpower has also been taken away from him against his will and he asks what's happened to me? And there is no savior. That is how he sees his willpower from the side, gradually withering gradually waning gradually disappearing. But above all, man's suffering rises as high as an immutable cliff that same wound in man's soul that deprives him of the right to undergo therapy and improve, to work on himself and rehabilitate himself from his sickness. Those whose soul is split, in whom emotion has become disconnected from intelligence and they are like two separate entities. Take a look at Shirli who hears

the creaking cogs of machinery inside her, she senses the wall behind her full of the sea of emotion to which she will not come. Intellect can understand intellect and feeling feel emotion but understanding what it feels is far beyond her. Take a look at Amos whose sickness has deprived him of the ability to connect with himself, to recognize his emotional world and he is like a city to which the supply lines have been cut off. This disconnection within the soul is called schizophrenia. The saner and more balanced a person is he is freer, and free to choose, with no erroneous references and no crazy projections, and analysis is supposed to expand and multiply freedom by exposing the madness seething beneath and driving the cogs of thought. The inner experience of madness teaches us, he concluded, that the foundations of humanity in man are devoured by madness and how is the mad man preeminent over the beast?

Miriam's going away on vacation next week and I think that this is the first time I also feel something normal, that I'm sorry she's going. With her I'm close to myself, moving on the waves of my emotions with the wind, she and I riding the same cloud together. Yes, it's strange but with her I am closer to myself than I am with myself alone. She enables me so much to be close to myself, to listen to the soft melodies that accompany the dawning of my day, melodies that bloom with her inspiration. And again we're together in a leaky boat on the stormy waves of my emotions, sailing together, this time with a secure sail and a compass in our hands. Later the sea became stormy and with it came anger. Why are you going on vacation?! But towards the end of the session sad melodies of parting were played again.

I was lying on the couch, feeling cold and debated with myself for a split second what I should do about it. Whether to ask Miriam to raise the heat or can I actually get along without, it's really not so terrible and in any event this monster won't reach out her hand to me. That feeling of needing and wanting is unbearable for you, she said to me. Therefore you either don't need help or make me into a monster who won't help you. Why is this feeling of asking for something when I'm not sure that the answer will be in the affirmative so terrible for me? What is so unbearable about this situation that forces me to say to myself better not to ask because either the thing itself isn't so disagreeable, or I make her into a monster - the rules are crystal clear and it's obvious that I won't get my wish. On that terrible winter day she let me wait a few minutes at the door before opening it. I stood there, frozen and shivering, helpless in the heavy snow. Again I was waiting for her, again I was reaching out to her, again I was small and weak. But it's not so hard to ask, it's not so terrible to need or to wait for her or to come to analysis and feel cold, it doesn't make me a non-being or a non-entity, I argued with myself and she remained silent. Nothing really nullifies me and transforms me into dust and ashes. Neither waiting for her nor asking her for something. But why am I smiling when I think that perhaps you'll deign to raise the heater, something you have never done before. She says the feeling that I had fixed her, that I had triumphed over her, that I had forced her to do something she doesn't want, that's what gives me pleasure.

After the storms of my first years in analysis subsided, the autumn of my life began and with it came withering. What do these budding youthful energies that we shared

leave behind them? I asked her. I had no doubt that I'm boring her to death just like I bore myself. There's no greater punishment than being an analyst, I said to her,. The boredom that you have immersed me in after so much effort, the voice of silence, which has eluded me, and I am now just a regular person. For you, a regular person is not enough, she said to me, for you being a regular person is intolerable. I was flooded by the sadness of life when I thought about myself as a regular person. The sadness, emptiness and boredom competed with each other in my garden where the flowers of regular people bloomed. A regular person can also enjoy life, I incredulously tested myself. A regular person can be a human being, I tried again. And since I have long felt the desolateness of a regular person I began to understand that this is a new analytical phase I am in. No more childish dramas no more promises that someday things will be okay. Something is lacking in my bones, in my marrow, in the foundations, I began to grasp that Miriam will never fill this vacuum but rather continue forever to point it out. And once more I longed in my imagination together with her for those beautiful days when analysis was young, the beginning of life and not its end, when everything was still an unfulfilled promise. Then we knew the breaking of dawn, its scent still lingering and the bright blossoming even shook Miriam's calm. Yes, those were the days.

When I came down with the flu and my body radiated heat, I couldn't understand why it's so difficult for me to tell Danny the counselor that I'm sick and am staying in bed. Then she spoke about my perpetual feeling that I'm fixing someone, that someone is always fixing me, that you can't trust a soul and mainly that I'm incapable of believing myself that I'm sick but think somewhere deep inside me that now too I'm fixing them and I'm not really sick.

After seven years of analysis the colors have become fainter, more faded and less bright. It's as if you were on drugs, Zohar told me, and now you have stopped. I am enveloped in longings for the good and frenzied days when I gazed at my soul's distant worlds that have now disappeared. Where have the drama and the intensities of mystery gone, when I stood before Miriam's door in the *danse diable* of prancing and leaping thoughts, thrown at and rebounding from the walls, and the sounds of Miriam's breathing and movements. The real experience was undoubtedly different. The fervor was dizzying and the pathological flaw glared at me in its full intensity, well-defined and clear as daylight. Projection was projection and falsity was falsity, and today, they are, yes, I'm not saying that they have completely disappeared but the color, my friends, the color, where is the sea of colors that poured forth from my soul? Not to mention insight, revelations and understanding of man's foundations themselves. Historical truisms of years fell dead at my feet. And now the tones, yes the tones, are less discordant, more in a minor key but also less rich. Is this what they call depression? Sadness, grief, boredom and emptiness are new to my emotional lexicon. Was this oppressive journey worthwhile, ending not in a bang but a whimper? True, I know it is not only weakness, it is not only sadness and there is no other alternative either. Because there is a time for everything, and remaining in the realm of madness was not really an alternative. But, what about creativity? My productivity was taken from me, my ability to reproduce was stolen. The things I wrote and the way in which they were written will never be returned to me. So write differently, Na'ama said to me, but, but the intensities, but the drive, but the passion, what will become of them. I wept in disbelief. The truth is that this feeling of

diminishment has been with me for years, a fading that makes life less sweeping and more possible.

I looked at everyone at the noon meeting and felt that I had invented the wheel. Suddenly I saw what I always said but never say. Suddenly Atlantis, the lost continent of emotions awoke from slumber. My aggression, my aggression that had disappeared for a million years returned in one split second, never to be lost again. Yes, I looked at them and transformed them all into dust and ashes. I towered over them reaching the skies, I could see through them, I could understand them, and I knew what moved them to say every word they uttered and what they wanted to protect. They squirmed and wiggled like slippery eels and I saw it all. Not tenderness or love but a critical look, unparalleled examining and condemning. I was always there but suddenly I became aware of it. Indeed, Miriam's years of hard work produced fruit. Yes, in my consciousness I grind people into mincemeat, I am aggressive and not small. That's the way it is when one clear day you meet yourself, the things you lost in your childhood found again. From now on, since I have tasted the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, I won't be able to argue that I don't possess aggression, because I'm full of it up to the gills.

That emotional superficiality, that fathomless shallowness that I have long felt in my analysis, brings me to think that I have reached the end of the road. Breezes bring with them new scents never known to me before. A little depression, a little disappointment, a little emptiness and even at times some happiness, a bit of everything and nothing substantial. Emotions have no roots, I complained to her, they come and go with such ease as if they don't really have anything to do with me. There

are certainly no dramas at times like this but I'm talking about the shallow and superficial feeling that these emotions don't really interest you and perhaps they are really only barely your own. That's how it is on the couch when the soft breezes bring unexpected emotions but particularly emotions of longing, disappointment and despair. Nothing really interests me, I told her, she who had been silent for many sessions. I was a bit angry with her but I also missed her a lot. I knew that there was no one in the whole wide world who was really with me like she who listens to me and my breaths and my heart so well, so deeply despite the fact that she remains silent. And when she did say something it was so minute, no more than what she really can tell me, not anything lofty. Has my time come to conclude this chapter of the ward and my analysis? She doesn't tell me this either, this too I have to say by myself and I'm still not there. What is still lacking in my soul, perhaps only the strength to part and perhaps more than that, longings for Miriam.

On the couch I felt that her words were so empty, not giving me anything. Words can't be a substitute for contact, I said to her. I need you to take care of me, it seems to me that your profession is therapeutic, no? To touch I need you to touch me like a mother touches her baby so what are words? Words leave me even lonelier, emptier, with nothing in hand. I wanted to turn towards her, look at her and touch her, that should have satisfied me, bringing relief to my malady. I understood that I wanted to work more on my relationship with her, perhaps this is the subject of our finale? Our relationship, which for years has left me so lonely, as if there's nothing that connects us. But I continue to come to analysis so that someday my dream will be fulfilled, the fantasy that she'll be with me the way I want her to be. It will never ever happen I won't even get this feeling from her not to mention its fulfillment. Our relationship is

the most important subject now when the dramas have come to an end and I am lonelier and emptier than ever.

At night Miriam was there. I looked at her suddenly and understood the magnitude of the absurdity. For years I had lived with the illusion that I am forbidden to look at her and when I suddenly looked at her it was clear to us both that something had happened to me, a deep and significant change, a discovery that will never be reversed, I understood that I was permitted to look at her all those years and she was only waiting for me to discover it on my own. Her face was warmer than ever, fuller than ever, perhaps even fat. She had a funny gap between her teeth but I found a lot of goodness and warmth there. Yes, something definitely had taken place, I understood an important thing, that Miriam is a person and a person who is waiting for me and with me and not a hostile stranger. I can see her differently today, no? Within the entanglement of pleasant thoughts there were also bits of anger why didn't she tell me this before, perhaps more flashes of this kind. Yes, not everything was perfect but I didn't say this to her. At the door I felt that lost time had slipped through my fingers, I was angry with her that my time was up and she didn't utter a word.