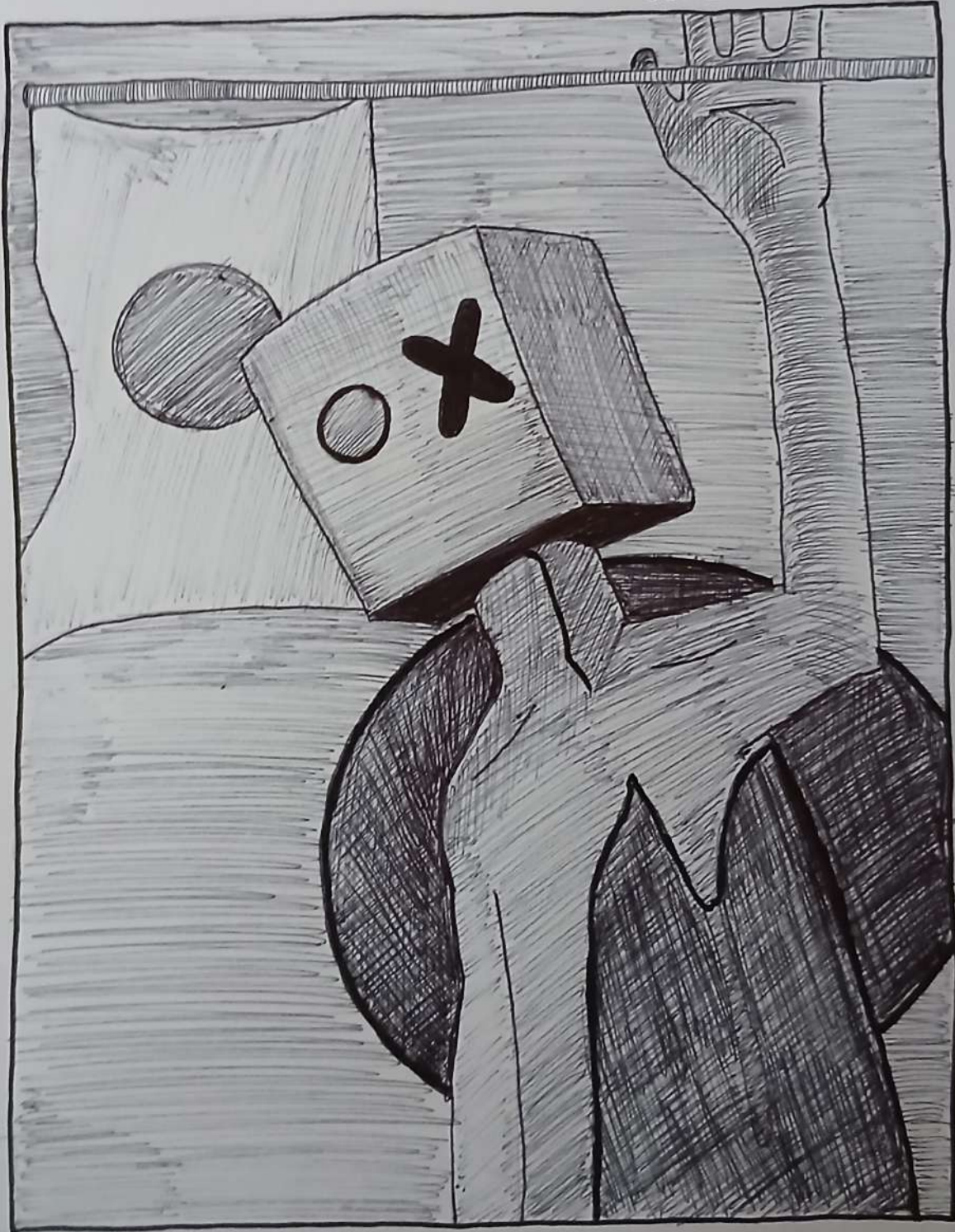


KONTAKT

ISSUE # 2

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KONTAKT

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About the author

Jonas von der Beutelratte is a writer working somewhere between fiction, essay, fragmentation and self-destruction.

His texts revolve around isolation, failed intimacy, artistic obsession, exhaustion and the slow decay in modern life.

Influenced by underground literature, outsider art and independent publishing culture, he publishes raw and uncompromising work outside traditional literary structures.



He believes writing should disturb rather than comfort. KONTAKT began as an attempt to document disappearing thoughts before they vanished completely.

When not writing, he spends too much time wandering through empty streets, collecting unfinished ideas and listening to the same songs repeatedly.

WHO DISTURBS UNDERGROUND LITERATURE AT NIGHT?

Whoever believes the underground is a footnote in cultural history has never torn up a page at three in the morning and started over. Has never had ink under their fingernails. Has never photocopied a booklet in a hundred copies and dropped it into strangers' mailboxes. Even now, people still sit over their texts at night, polishing sentences, copying booklets together - without publishers, without distribution, without the help of the great A.

The mainstream sleeps well. It has contracts, editors, funding applications. It has juries, that confirm its taste and art sections that explain its taste. The men and women in their ivory towers lost touch with underground literature long ago.

The underground asks anyway.

Zines remain the beating heart of underground literature to this day. Small booklets, freely assembled: illustrations, fragments, collages, poems, confessions. They're passed along in doorways, stuffed into bags, forgotten in washing machines and read anyway. No distribution. No algorithm. Everything is permitted.

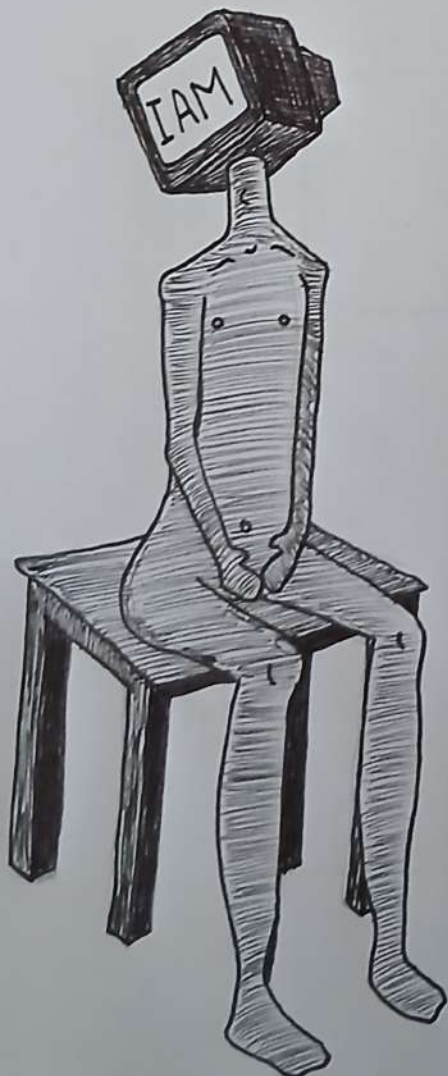
Queer voices create their own spaces this way. Voices from prison cells manage to be heard this way. Academia clings to its titles and has always looked down upon Art Brut: raw art without permission, without theoretical apparatus, without a cultural entry ticket. The mainstream calls that dilettantish. The underground calls that freedom.

Whoever disturbs underground literature at night will regret it in the morning. Then badly stapled zines lie scattered across living rooms, streets and stairwalls. Underground artists don't sleep. Nobody stops them. Nobody knows them. And yet they're still among us. Those whose voice can't be heard in the mainstream or within institutions. Because they sound raw, loud and unpleasant.

The danger of the underground isn't its indifference toward recognition. The elephant in the porcelain shop storms through the lecture halls. A system built on attention and prestige has no tool against someone to whom attention and prestige means nothing. Whoever insists on being fully understood rarely belongs to the underground.

They live quietly in their run-down apartments, work free from any constraint and publish for a small circle of readers. The underground artist has no name, no face and no interest in prizes or achievements. He writes or draws out of a necessity that doesn't exist inside seminar rooms. Much of it is unfiltered, loud and unfinished. Yet the artist ~~remains~~ ^{remains} true to his attitude and scoffs at recognition or prestige. He writes because otherwise he would draw.

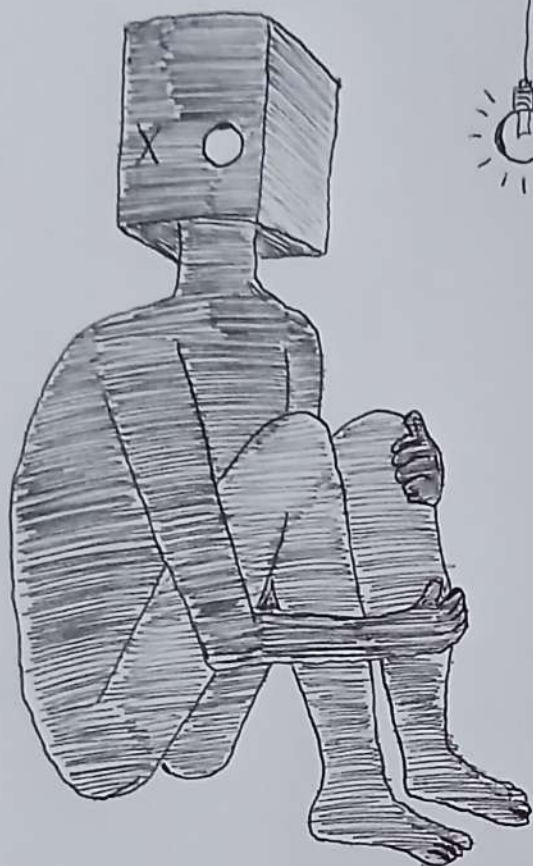
While everything becomes networked and commercialized, the underground defends its independence. Do it yourself is what keeps the underground alive in the first place. The path isn't easy for anyone. Costs are cut ~~down~~ wherever possible and commerce is meant to be despised. The underground doesn't wait to be invited, because it doesn't need the invitation.



Whoever disturbs underground literature at night will find nothing in the morning. No ruins, no capitulation. Only new pages. Badly stapled, crookedly printed, already on their way.



THE BITTERNESS OF SWEET MELANCHOLY



She had long since forgotten him. His wiry figure ~~no~~ resemblance whatsoever to that overweight, chubby-cheeked boy of the past. His angular, narrow face searched for footing in the large room. A smile here, an embrace there. Yet his gaze kept sinking. His eyes skimmed over the others. He hadn't even concealed his dark circles. And so he continued to look around. Whenever someone spoke to him, he offered a few words and otherwise listened to their conversations. He sipped the cocktail he had clutched throughout the evening. Lonely, he leaned against the bare wall and looked around in all directions. He paid her no attention. Had been ignoring her all evening.

The white shirt was tucked into his fabric trousers. His considerable height had been the first thing she noticed about him. She would have had to look up at him, ~~had~~ she stood before him. His blonde hair had grown darker compared to earlier years. Cropped short on the sides.

Standing by the hors d'oeuvres, she thought back to how he had once left her a love letter. And when she spoke to him about it the next morning, he couldn't get a word out. He blushed

and made his escape. Only to forget her. She hadn't kept the letter - she felt nothing for her admirer, after all.

Marriage. Travel. Motherhood. Time leapt through her. Even now she felt uneasy at the thought. She lingered by the hors d'oeuvres. Listened to the conversations and yet remained fixed on him.

He was the only one from their year with whom all contact had been lost. He had slipped away from her. Now he stood there, drawing out her memories. Again those large eyes. Again the gentle gaze of former days. And yet she couldn't bring herself to approach him. The way he stood at the wall, entirely withdrawn into himself. Barley spoke a word. And yet his eyes conversed with her. The long scar on his wrist caught her attention immediately. What story must lie behind it. Razor blade. Flesh. Blood. Nothing. Up close he didn't look as good as he had from farther away.

He still didn't deign to look at her. Smiled at others instead. And yet he remained within himself. He gave her no peace. She drifted toward him. Only to settle very gently beside him against the bare wall. Her heart pounded. He didn't look at her. Instead he still clung to the cocktail glass. He stayed against the wall. That was what united them. As the cocktail glass slowly descended in his hand, she tried to reach for it. They stood side by side, hands tightly clasped, speaking not a word. They were no longer who they once had been. They stood together. And remained strangers.

ODEUR

How much he missed her scent. She smelled of almond wood and jasmine. He loved to run his fingers through her hair. Felt the abundance of curls in his hands. It smelled of musk and tallow. Now there was a void. The pillow smelled of him - her scent was gone. He couldn't recognize her smell anywhere. Every other person had a different odor. No one carried her scent. He searched for her, followed the jasmine, which mingled with coconut. Her ample hips had been the first thing he noticed about her. The scent of her chest. Warm and mild. Her lips tasted of freedom. Her eyes sparkled. Her nose had a lovely curve. She ~~was~~ wore fur - it didn't just smell of her, he loved pressing himself against her chest. The soft fur aroused his senses. She laughed at him. Because he wanted to cuddle with her. The first crack in the glass. The first splinter in the fragment of memory. She was everything and nothing. She found her freckles repulsive. Her chest wasn't large enough for her. Her lips not full enough. Her hair brittle. He looked past all that. Found her beautiful. She couldn't bear his compliments. He didn't mind. She hated it. Outside he stood in the rain. She warmed herself in the sun. He reached for her. Her hip close to his. Yet she felt nothing. He burned, she remained cold. The glass cracked further. He remembered the argument. She had completely unmoored him with her mere presence. That irritated her. They were on their knees. The champagne cold.

Then she punched him. He smiled. She struck out. He smiled. Tears ran.

She poured out the champagne and ran away. He followed. She looked herself in the bathroom. He knocked. She screamed. He should leave her alone. The glass shattered. Shards cut into his hand. He bled. No almond wood and no jasmine. The phone stayed silent. Her number led nowhere. She had changed the line. Her scent didn't last. It faded away. Even now he tried to fathom what had cause her to leave him. She owed him no answer. Memories crumbled.

She lay on the couch. Sipped the champagne. He leaned over her. She resisted. Pushed him away. Cold spread - not between them, but within her. The man in the park.



His hand on her stomach. The next morning: silence. She felt sick. He deserved no better. Their love cracked. She pulled on her fur coat and left. Her smell remained behind. It crept into every corner, settled on everything. He preserved it. The cigarette. The lipstick. Cherry. Almond milk. A lock of hair. Jasmine. A sachet. Whenever he thought of her, he opened it. Breathed in. But the scent didn't hold. It grew weaker. Thinner. Foreign. He bought almond milk. Rubbed it onto himself. Sprayed jasmine on the pillow and fell asleep. She drowned - not in water, but in him.



RECORDS OF AN OBLIVIOUS PERSON

Tuesday, 26.05

I have arrived in B. This is where I'm supposed to live from now on. The people here frighten me somewhat. I don't belong here. Everything is better. Everything is supposed to get better. Only I don't believe in it. I'm going from hell into hellfire. I want to leave. I don't belong here. It's my own fault. I chose it this way. The men won't like me. Why would they. I don't belong here. I don't want to anymore. I've had enough. Always the same rounds. Always the same gossip. I've messed it up. I could have had a beautiful life. Could have had it. Now it's over. My life a heap of ashes. Why should I suffer? For a life I have to force myself into. Why couldn't it end? I was already ready. I was there. But no, someone had to save me. I don't feel like always being the scapegoat.

Wednesday, 27.05

The inmate has no rights. He inhabits a small cell. Meals take place punctually at 12 o'clock. The inmate is required to eat. If he refuses, punishment is threatened. The thought of a free life is strong. The walls are high. The hurdles insurmountable. At midday the inmate must remain in his cell. There he keeps his hours. Walks back and forth occasionally. Before he must report for duty. He has taken himself prisoner. He has, after all, no rights whatsoever. His supervisors have authority over him. In the evenings he receives meds. Many. Small ones as well as large. The inmate isn't a human being. He is a tool of an institution that eagerly elevates itself above him. Willessly he submits to the will and the order within the facility. He wrote about it. They threw his texts away. The inmate is to hold his tongue. The inmate has no voice. The facility speaks for him.

Thursday, 28.05

The day begins at 7 in the morning. The inmate is woken. Whether he is still sleeping is of no concern. Released from his cell he first eats breakfast. Then it's off to the laundry. From there he toils fourteen hours a day. For an amount of 150€ per week. Pocket money, they call it. They - that is the management of the facility. In the facility no one has an identity. Apples and pears



are all the inmate receives. Is he living? Or is he already inwardly dead? It doesn't show. He keeps on bowing. In a stopped posture he folds the laundry. In earlier times one could beat him unconscious. Today different principles apply. The inmate refuses to work. He receives fifteen blows to the back of the head. They call this disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action applies to those inmates who can't work at a piecework pace. This is how they're meant to be motivated. After fourteen hours the work is far from done. Tomorrow more pieces of laundry will be waiting to be folded and ironed. The inmate with the blisters and calluses on his hands returns to his cell at around 9 in the evening. He sleeps six hours, then daily life begins again from the start.

Friday, 29.05.

The inmate is running out of cigarettes.

"Do you have any tobacco?", he asks everyone. And the answer is always: No!

During the doctor's consultation a particular gaze forms upon the inmate.

"How did you sleep?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you!"

"Don't know."

"You will answer this question!"

"Can't."

"Why ever not?"

"No idea."

He stands in his cell. Breathes quietly. Every day the same routine. He doesn't feel well, admits that he feels like an animal in a cage. Also says that he has the feeling the day resembles the next. No highlights whatsoever. No experiences whatsoever. No rights whatsoever.

The inmate appears dejected. His shoulders hang. His posture stooped. He keeps writing. Holds onto it. Even when they take the paper away from him. The inmate is to comply. The mattress laughed. On television always the same programme. It's bored. Amusing. The tap crows. In the wardrobe there is countless written papers. One of them I'm holding in my hands right now. On it is written. I quote: "I have arrived in B." And here the text ends.

THE HOUSING BLOCK

When he moved into the fourth floor, he felt watched. The people never made a sound, yet they were always there. You could hear them breathing through the walls. On the first night, an elderly man set himself on fire in his apartment. The fire brigade could only recover the body. For two years, the young man tried to find a job in the city. Without success. He smoked in the small room. Listened to music and wrote. He destroyed his older writings in the sink. They weren't fit for publication. He was quite isolated, in the sixteen-story building. Read one book after another. Often he sat there and went hungry. Adult life was proving difficult for him. Now he looked back.

He could still smell the mold in the basement. Still heard their quiet voices and thought of the elderly man who had died. He spent his time in the room. The lights stayed off. He didn't shave.

One morning, he stood at the window and looked down at the people below. Suddenly, something shifted inside him. He ran to the filing cabinet. Threw everything away. His identity card, His vaccination record. His bank statements. He no longer existed.

Then he gathered the garbage bags and carried them downstairs. Locked the door and walked to the train station, where he boarded an ICE train. His ticket only took him as far as B. There he wandered through the streets. Until he got drunk and, during the night, slit his wrists in front of the Reichstag building.

The paramedics rushed toward him and dragged him into the ambulance. There they bandaged his wounds. At the hospital, they stitched him up. They had to restrain him because he kept trying to tear the stitches open.

He spent three nights in the psychiatric ward. Then they sent him back to the apartment.

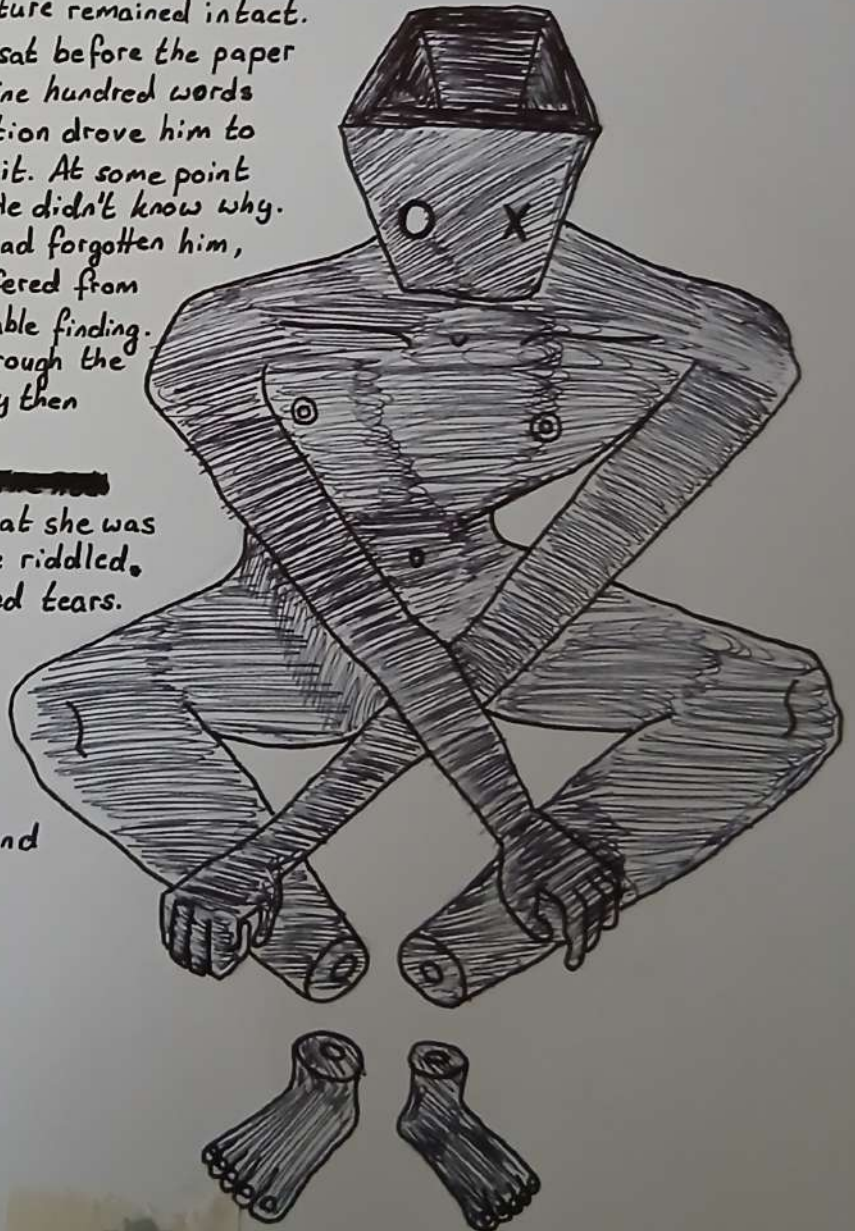
He got off the train there.



TEXTUR

He lay on the mattress. His coffee cold. The blockade wouldn't lift. He wrote for no one. He didn't for himself. Nor did he write for others. He wrote because he was searching for answers. To questions no one could answer. Otherwise he would have shattered. During the day he managed a thousand words. That was all he could do. He needed it. That gave him the drive he needed in order to be heard, at all. His wife had long since stopped lying on the floor. She wandered through the bushes and watched people. He crouched in his cell and stared at the paper. The texture rough. Fame didn't follow him. Perhaps there was none. When he sat there and looked at the paper, he couldn't truly find himself. He walked in silence to the kitchen. There stood the cold coffee. Flies swarmed around the sink. Searching for food. He stayed seated. Smoked. And followed no one. Every day he greeted the day anew. In the mornings the day consumed him. When the sun burned, he sat in the dark. When it rained, he sat in the light. Much was left unspoken between them. She stayed among people. He isolated himself. Everything had lost its worth. He buried the flies under the plates. He smoked and stared at the paper. Whenever he couldn't hold on, he stopped. Made sure his leg was still there and walked from the kitchen into the living room. There lay his mattress. It had a smooth texture. Perhaps there was no reason he didn't like it. The texture remained intact. Silence in the room. Today too he sat before the paper and wrote on without purpose. Nine hundred words didn't form a text. His desperation drove him to the ground. He didn't talk about it. At some point something began to take shape. He didn't know why. He knew nothing. Since his wife had forgotten him, he knew nothing anymore. She suffered from depression. At first an unremarkable finding. The growth had already spread through the mind. It was discovered later. By then she was no longer the same.

~~Something was cut off. After that she was no longer the same. The texture riddled, with holes. The net had developed tears. She was beyond anyone's reach. Nothing happened anymore. And so he sat in his cell and wrote the thousandth word onto the paper. The machine gave up the ghost. It jammed and then broke down.~~



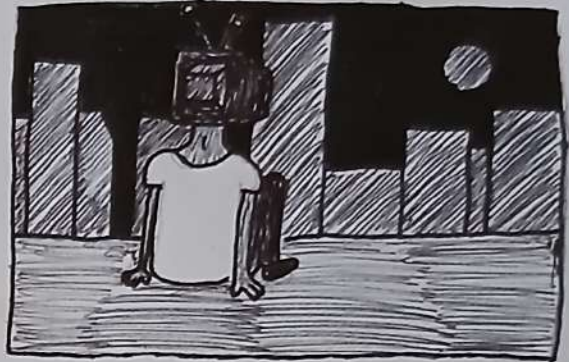
PERIOD

He went to the judge. Period. Why was he still alive? Period. Rebellion. Rebellion in disarray. A speech without an audience. Period. Period. Where had he ended up? In ten years this planet would no longer exist. He had cuts on his body. He ran away. Walked into the water. Never returned. His life rotted away. Period. And had he returned, he would no longer have been the same. Back to a life in which no one bothered him. It was no use.

He remained alone. His wounds dripped. He smoked Shore. Period. He had lost his key. Nothing he thought made any sense. He remained seated. People followed him. It was five o'clock. The clock ticked. At mealtimes he had to remain seated.

He wasn't allowed to stand up. The room, a prison. Too small to feel at ease. Sometimes he heard a face and turned blue. Nature rose above him. Noon. Morning. Evening. Time had no voice. He wrote

about it. Ashamed, he put down the pen. A tiger crept past him. Period. The child waited in vain. The first light bulb imploded. Then the next. A thunderous crash. He wrote about it. Ashamed, he put down the pen. The paper burst into flames. Kit after kit after kit. The words offered no solid ground. Memory full of holes. He hadn't intended any of it. Yet he kept talking. Without a period. Without a comma. A comment from the side. He leafed through the newspaper. Tree over bamboo over staircase. The rock lost in the sea. He dived ~~into~~ beneath the surface. The table drowned. Ashes swept away. In the mood for dying. A speech without content. Grass grew over him. The man looked serious. Always placing periods. Leaving traces behind. One month later. He no longer smoked. He injected. The blockade dissolved. Along with everything that had been sealed away. Hunger dissolved into stomach acid. The critics remained where they lay. Words crumbled into dust. He feared loneliness. And yet it was all that remained. He called it censorship. They screamed. The water swallowed him. Daydreams. He spoke of his suffering. The readership remained silent. Sixty-nine. Sixty-seven. Sixty-five. Then he placed the period and was forgotten.



KONTAKT - Issue # 2

Between smoke-filled rooms, flickering screens and empty streets the figures in KONTAKT search for something that already seems lost: connection.

Not every signal reaches someone. Not every voice is heard. Some words vanish between concrete walls and neon lights.

This zine collects fragments about isolation, alienation, psychological decay and the silence between people. Short stories, literary fragments and drawings collide like transmissions from a broken world.

DIY. Raw. Fragmented.

For everyone who feels invisible in the noise of modern life.

Copy it.
Share it.
Leave it somewhere.



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