

**Ivan Viripaev**

**Unbearably Long Embraces**

**a play**

translation by Cazimir Liske

*Do you see that blue dot, son? Enter it.*

Dedicated to my son Gena.

*Impulse.*

CHARLIE: Now I'm taking you by the hand and leading you to the altar.

MONICA: Now I'm going with you to the altar.

CHARLIE: Now the priest is performing the rite of holy matrimony, and we are becoming husband and wife.

MONICA: Now the Lord God is blessing our union.

CHARLIE: Now by the power invested in him by God the priest is pronouncing us husband and wife.

MONICA: Now, after the wedding dinner we are returning home.

CHARLIE: Now I am taking off your bridal gown and entering you.

MONICA: Now I am giving myself to you and dissolving in pleasure.

CHARLIE: Now a spermazoid is uniting with the ovum and another human appears.

MONICA: A month and a half after that, Monica goes to the hospital to have an abortion.

CHARLIE: Charlie knows nothing of this, and has already lived for some time with the thought that soon he'll become a father.

MONICA: Now Monica is lying in a specially-equipped armchair and spreading her legs.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is just wandering the streets, enjoying the sunny autumn day. The last day of November.

MONICA: Now the doctor is scraping pieces of living material out of Monica and then throwing those pieces out into a container designated for waste of this sort.

AMY: And now--Amy.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is meeting his ex-girlfriend Amy on the street and the two of them go to her house to talk about how they both feel fucking terrible "in this shit-caked, plastic world where nobody feels anything and it seems like this time the planet is definitely fucked."

MONICA: Now Monica is coming home, drained, and she falls onto her bed. She is crying, because she feels she has done something terrible. She feels she has killed someone, because the the little pieces of human tissue that the doctor threw out into the garbage container were a form of life, a life which was cut short because of Monica's lack of desire to have a baby right now.

*Pause.*

MONICA: Now Monica is lying on her bed and crying.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is taking off Amy's underwear and lying down on top of her.

AMY: Now Charlie is slowly entering Amy, and as Amy closes her eyes she quietly whispers, My goal is to end up in heaven, Charlie.

CHARLIE: I'm not God, Amy, I'm just Charlie, whispers Charlie.

AMY: Hi Charlie, whispers Amy, welcome to my inner, inner world. Now Amy is thinking that she and Charlie should have been together, but this stupid fucking plastic life is designed such that everything all around you is upside-down.

MONICA: Now Monica is lying on her bed and crying, she tries asking God for help, but it's exactly in these moments of her life, more than ever, that Monica clearly understands there is no God.

CHARLIE: When Charlie gets back home, Monica is already asleep. On the kitchen table Charlie finds and reads a note Monica has left: Charlie, I killed our baby. Don't touch me. Charlie goes into the room where Monica is sleeping and sits on the bed, watches Monica sleeping, and cries. What the fuck do I need this life for? - Charlie wonders. Mistake after mistake, and I'm not learning anything, so what the fuck do I need this whole lesson for?

- What the fuck do you need this whole lesson for, Charlie?

*Pause.*

AMY: Now Amy is lying on the bed. What the fuck do I need this whole lesson for? thinks Amy.

- What the fuck do you need this whole lesson for, Amy?

MONICA: What the fuck do you need this whole lesson for, Monica? Mistake after mistake, and you're not learning anything...

AMY: Now is no time for answering questions, now is a time to pause and wait it out.

CHARLIE: Right now I just need to wait it out, thinks Charlie. He goes into the kitchen, gets a bottle of vodka from the fridge and drinks himself into a slobbering mess. Now it's time to pause and just wait it out.

*Pause.*

MONICA: Now Monica is sleeping, and she dreams of this strange colorful pattern, it's as though some unknown being has come in contact with her. She dreams that some thing from another galaxy has flown to her specifically to teach her something.

- What's your name? asks Monica.
- You can never pronounce or remember my real name, so let's just say that you're speaking to the universe.

- But you're a woman? asks Monica in her sleep.
- Right now, yes, answers the pleasant woman's voice.
- Can you teach me something? I don't know anything at all. I'm thirty years old, and I know nothing, absolutely nothing. Teach me. Please, teach me something, anything. At least teach me how to get myself together and stop being a piece of cellophane.
- I can teach you how to be alive, says the universe, and Monica wakes up in tears.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie's drunken body is sliding off the chair and under the kitchen table. Charlie is completely detached from reality.

MONICA: At two o'clock a.m. Monica goes into the kitchen where Charlie is curled up into a ball, asleep, and next to him lies an empty bottle of vodka. Monica sits in a chair and looks at Charlie.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is asleep and he dreams of an empty street. There is no one on the street. A dog appears on the street. Then some kind of snake appears on the street and then he sees the bloodiest, most vivid nightmare, a nightmare so powerful that Charlie screams and opens his eyes. He looks at Monica, he can't understand where he is or what's happening.

MONICA: What's up? asks Monica.

*Pause.*

AMY: It's two o'clock in the morning, but Amy is not asleep. She decides to text Charlie's phone. She herself doesn't know why she's writing. - Charlie, I love you. And she presses 'send' and almost simultaneously Charlie's telephone, lying on the kitchen table, vibrates and lets out a melody, notifying that a text message has been received.

MONICA: Charlie's telephone is lying on the table, and Monica is sitting on a chair nearby, so when she hears the ringtone, Monica automatically picks up the phone and reads the message.

CHARLIE: Charlie is coming to, he looks at Monica, then drops his head and, exhausted, mutters, I feel like shit, Monica.

MONICA: Well that's alright, says Monica, because Amy loves you, and Monica puts Charlie's phone on the table.

*Pause.*

AMY: I wonder: what's a person got to do in order feel that he's alive?

MONICA: In order to be alive you must stand up and leave the kitchen, states the voice of the universe inside Monica's head. And Monica leaves. In order to be alive you have to get yourself together and get out of the apartment. And Monica goes out. In order to be alive you have to go to the park and sit on the grass. And Monica goes to the park, but the park closes at night, so Monica goes to a bus stop not far from the park, sits there on a bench, closes her eyes and tries to be alive.

CHARLIE: And Charlie goes into the bedroom, gets into bed, curls up into a ball and falls asleep. While asleep he once again meets the dog, and then he's once again overcome by the inconceivable cruelty of reality and then another total shitshow full of snakes and pieces of bloody meat.

AMY: Now Amy is lying on her bed completely naked and masturbating, imagining that Charlie is inserting his dick into her anus.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is asleep and dreaming that a bloody snake is crawling along his white pillow.

MONICA: Now Monica is sitting at the bus stop and learning how to be truly alive. In order to be alive, you must go through hell, says the tender female voice of the universe in Monica's head. And suddenly, snow begins to fall. Motherfucking winter, Monica thinks.

- Monica, look around--it's beautiful!, - says the universe, - Bus stop, five in the morning, the snow is falling. The first snow of the fall!
- Motherfucking motherfucking winter, Monica thinks, and she stands up to leave.

AMY:

- You will have to go through hell, - an unfamiliar voice suddenly speaks in Amy's head and in the next second Amy has an orgasm.

MONICA: I'm in such pain after that abortion. My entire body is getting torn to pieces from pain. I should be lying in bed, and I'm sitting here in the cold, at this motherfucking bus stop, and in addition it's fucking snowing. I guess I just have to go through this hell to feel alive--?

AMY: Am I really going to have to go through all this hell? thinks Amy, before she falls asleep. A red neon light forming the letter H flashes before her conscience and disappears.

CHARLIE: Charlie opens his eyes and sees that the red snake on the pillow was a dream. But the white pillow that Charlie was sleeping on is nonetheless stained with blood. Why? And then Charlie realizes his nose is bleeding. Pressure - says Charlie to himself - motherfucking pressure from all sides, from the outside, from the inside..

MONICA: Now Monica is headed home, she takes off her clothes, gets in the shower, sits on the tiled floor, sits under the stream of warm water. She's under tremendous weight. And she doesn't feel the least bit alive. Right now she is in hell and, she must go through this hell.

AMY: And now, here's Kristof.

*Pause.*

KRISTOF: And now here's Kristof.

AMY: Now Kristof is buying a plane ticket from Berlin to New York.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is at the check-in kiosk, he needs to check his luggage.

AMY: Now Kristof is walking onto the plane and looking for his seat.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is asleep in his seat by the window, with a blue blanket under his head.

AMY: Now he is deboarding at John F. Kennedy Airport and going toward the train to the city.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is walking into a vegan restaurant in Brooklyn. He read about this restaurant online, and has dreamt of eating here for a long time.

AMY: It is one of the best vegan restaurants in New York.

KRISTOF: Kristof was born and raised in the Czech Republic. For the last few years he has lived in Berlin. In his thirty years he's been to many places, but this is his first time in New York, and indeed it was a dream of his, to one day visit New York.

AMY: It really is one of the best vegan restaurants in New York.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is enjoying his food in one of the best vegan restaurants in New York. Kristof is a vegan. He does not eat meat, fish or dairy products. When he comes to a new city Kristof always looks around for the best vegan restaurant, and compares its tastes with those of previous restaurants. And it seems that right now Kristof is in a restaurant that turns out to be much, much better than all its predecessors. This is perhaps the very best vegan restaurant of all those he's ever been to.

AMY: This is the the very best vegan restaurant, Kristof, you did the right thing by coming here.

KRISTOF: Now Amy walks into the vegan restaurant to have some beet juice and an apple strudel--no yeast, no sugar, and with a scoop of soy milk ice cream.

AMY: And here she sees Kristof.

KRISTOF: That's how they meet.

AMY: They just notice each other

KRISTOF: And immediately feel mutual attraction.

AMY: Hi, says Amy, as though they've known each other a long time.

KRISTOF: Hi, answers Kristof, a little amazed by their quick introduction.

AMY: What's up? asks Amy and, without invitation, sits down at his table.

KRISTOF: Nice to meet you, says Kristof, smiling.

AMY: My name is Amy, it seems to me I was supposed to come to this restaurant to meet you. Okay?

KRISTOF: If I understand you correctly you think that we were both destined to come to this restaurant to meet each other. Okay?

AMY: I think that's right.

KRISTOF: I'm from the Czech Republic, Prague. It's my first time in New York. I of course heard that everybody here is unusual, like you, because it's New York and all that and I was pretty much prepared for that, but actually hearing about that is one thing, and crashing into it in reality, it's kind of blowing my mind. Everything here, everything is totally, exactly how they describe it in the movies and online forums. The very best vegan restaurants and the weirdest, craziest motherfuckers on the planet. Welcome to New York City, Kristof. I think I got here just in time. Late fall is the perfect time of year to be a newcomer in New York .

AMY: Now Kristof and Amy are sitting in the restaurant and chatting like old friends.

KRISTOF: Have you been a vegan for a long time, Amy?

AMY: I ain't no frickin' vegan, I just like eating at this restaurant.

KRISTOF: I see. Well I've been a vegan for three years. No animal products whatsoever.

AMY: What made you decide on that?

KRISTOF: It was after my dad died of cancer. He was sick for a long time, and he had the best doctors available, and one day his doctors were saying to him that the cause of cancer is animal protein and basically animal fat. He was a really good doctor, a real scientist, a professor and all that. And right before his death my father called over and in a really serious voice he said "Kristof, the doctor told me that I am dying because I ate a lot of animal protein, and so I want to tell you here on the way out, my son...eat anything you want, because that's not what people die from at all.

*Kristof is overcome with laughter. Amy looks at Kristof and starts laughing too. They both laugh.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is going into the bathroom, there on the floor of the stand-up shower lies Monica. From above water from the showerhead pours down on her. Charlie touches Monica but she doesn't react. Charlie takes Monica in his arms and carries her into the bedroom.

MONICA: Why don't I feel any life inside of me? Because you've lost contact, - answers a beautiful woman's voice belonging to the universe. - There is life inside of you, otherwise you wouldn't be alive, but you do not feel contact with this life. You don't feel contact with the source. The source of everything. And what is the source of everything? - asks Monica, who is unconscious. Charlie carries her into the bedroom. The source of everything is impulse, answers the universe. The point is to find contact with the source and live a fulfilling life, - says the woman's sure voice, - just as trees, plants, animals and even stones. Why are people unable to live that way? asks Monica as Charlie puts her limp, wet body down on the sheets. Because the universe created you to do more than that, answers the voice. For what? - asks Monica. To one day go through hell, says the universe. What about God? - Monica interrupts. God? - asks the woman's voice. Well yeah. Is there a god? - asks Monica, as Charlie undoes the buttons on her soaking dress. God is very, very simple, - says the universe, - everyone thinks that God is something complex, but it's quite the opposite, it's something very very simple. God is so simple, it's hard to believe. - I don't believe, - says Monica, as Charlie removes her dress.

- You have to go through hell to feel it.
- I am in hell.
- You have to go through **this** hell.
- 

CHARLIE: And now Charlie is turning Monica over on her back to get the wet dress he just unbuttoned out from under her, and he suddenly notices blood coming from Monica. A steady stream of blood coming from between her legs.

MONICA: Now I'm losing blood. Twenty-four hours ago I had an abortion, I needed to take a break, but instead I set off deep into hell, now I am bleeding, and I'm pretty sure at this point that I am truly, totally fucked.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is calling the hospital, he can't take care of this alone. He needs qualified medical assistance.

KRISTOF: Amy's apartment. Now Kristof and Amy are sitting in the room on the floor, smoking marijuana, listening to music, drifting closer and closer to one another on their inner vessels.

AMY: Damien Rice, I used to listen to this music a long time ago, when I first came to New York, thirteen years ago, and just now I decided to start listening again. Oh, God, Damien Rice--hasn't gotten a day older. He's so sensitive, pierces right into your god-damn soul. And Amy's inner vessel is mooring up to Kristof's inner vessel.

KRISTOF: Until today I couldn't stand this kind of music, but right now I think there's something to it. Damien Rice--he's like a piece of sugar melting on your tongue, it's lusciously sweet but when you swallow it, you end up wanting more. And Kristof's inner vessel throws its braided hemp ropes aboard Amy's inner vessel and their vessels press close to one another. Kristof and Amy are in bed. In the same bed where just twelve hours ago she was with Charlie. And where eight hours ago she masturbated, imagining that Charlie's dick was entering her anus.

AMY: And now she starts off straight away from there--in her right hand she takes Kristof's dick and inserts it between her buttocks.

KRISTOF: Kristof is no longer amazed by anything--after all, this is New York City.

*Pause.*

MONICA: The woman's voice inside of me is not the universe, not at all. It's the voice of the girl who, twenty-four hours ago, was scraped out from inside me and thrown into a dumpster. She would have become a woman with a beautiful voice and maybe wavy hair. Those little bits of tissue thrown into the dumpster might have become a magnificent woman, she would have been called Gloria or Karolina or Julia. And now a river of blood is flowing from my groin--that's Julia crying. Those are her tears. A stream of unborn Gloria's tears, flowing out of me in a bloody river.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is telling the doctor who has come to the apartment about the abortion. I didn't know she had decided to do this, - explains Charlie, - I wouldn't have let it happen. That doesn't matter, - says the doctor, - you need to take your wife to the hospital. I can't provide her the help she needs here. But can you stop the blood? - asks Charlie.

MONICA: It's not blood, it's the tears of your unborn daughter, Charlie - thinks Monica and at that instant her thoughts shift into a multicolored pattern.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie and the doctor are taking Monica to the hospital.

MONICA: Monica came to New York eight years ago from Poland. She was born in Wrocław, a very beautiful historical town. Monica wants to feel like she's alive, but it seems she's indefinitely stuck in this sticky-endless-dream-like hell.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof comes simultaneously with Amy, and this fact elevates him in his own eyes.

AMY: Now Amy comes simultaneously with Kristof, but she used to come simultaneously with Charlie too, she just knows how to come when she wants. But for her Kristof is still better than Charlie because Charlie was born and raised in New York and therefore knows all there is to know about this shit-caked plastic world, whereas Kristof, like Amy, is from a different world and for him it's all a magical, mystical fun-ride, and maybe if he takes the right recreational drugs and finds himself a good job, he may never even know that this magical, mystical world is in fact just a plastic bag that's been tossed by the Heavenly Father into the dumpster.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Monica is being wheeled through a narrow hospital corridor, while Charlie has gone to sign some papers. He's so sick he wouldn't even be able to describe it to someone. And there's not much of anyone around to describe it to. Charlie was born and raised in New York, of course, he has friends that he drinks and chats with, but a person he could talk to about his real life--he doesn't have any friends like that. Charlie has had no real relationship with his parents for a long time, and he and Monica still haven't managed to establish any kind of true contact.

MONICA: Because Monica is always somewhere far, far away.

CHARLIE: Monica is always somewhere far away, and Charlie is just a regular guy. A regular guy who quite frankly has no spiritual potential, absolutely no spiritual potential whatsoever.

*Pause.*

AMY: Listen, Kristof, if you don't have a place to live you can stay with me for awhile. And--and if you don't want to sleep in the same bed with me every night, we can buy you a mattress and put it here on the floor.

KRISTOF: You know what, I think that I do want to sleep in the same bed with you every night.

AMY: You mean you like me?

KRISTOF: I like you a lot. I'm pretty much totally floored by everything that's going on. I just got to New York and immediately wound up at the best vegan restaurant and met the best girl I've known in my life.

AMY: I see you like sweet stuff, don't you?

KRISTOF: I love sweet stuff.

AMY: You probably love dessert?

KRISTOF: I love dessert.

AMY: Well then, I'll give you our a-la-carte New York blowjob. You ready?

KRISTOF: I think I found you, Amy, - says Kristof with a little smile.

AMY: And Amy swallows Kristof's dick, takes it in deep, as deep as humanly possible. As deep as humanly possible.

KRISTOF: As deep as humanly possible.

*Short pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is returning home from the hospital. He is walking through the park. Charlie stops and sits on a bench. A good thing he thought to wear a hat and coat, because right now it's snowing.

MONICA:

- You're going to feel something unusual right now, don't be frightened.
- What is it?
- It's impulse.
- What? What is it?
- It's impulse.
- My god, what is that?
- It's impulse. Don't be afraid, it's normal. That's how the universe began. There was an impulse--and movement began.
- Oh god, it's like an orgasm!
- No, it's impulse.
- But it's so nice!
- It's what everything moves toward, aspires to. It's why you're here, why life exists, it's why orgasms exist, it's why you live. It's impulse.
- Oh my god it's so terrifying! It's the most unusual feeling I've had in my life.
- What you felt is impulse. Every movement, all of your thoughts and actions arise from this impulse.
- I think maybe that was the most important event of my life.
- Impulse is the most important event in the universe.
- Oh my god, it's so scary, so unusual! I feel totally, completely alive. And everything around me is so alive. I feel life. I'm alive.
- That is impulse.

Now Monica is unconscious. She is at the hospital. Attached to her arms are special sensors measuring her pulse, blood pressure, and other information. Medicines are entering her vein and flowing through her entire body. Monica is unconscious. She will have to return from where she is now.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is sitting on a bench in the park. It's snowing. Motherfucking snow, - thinks Charlie, - Why the fuck do I make all these mistakes if I'm not learning from them anyway? I'm thirty-five years old and I have no idea what the meaning of my life is. Right now I'm sitting in this motherfucking park watching all these little jogging-with-my-headphones-on people and I think--life is just this unbelievable pile of bullshit. It's snowing. Why?

- Because it's being precipitated by the clouds.
- What?
- It's snowing because it's being precipitated by the clouds. Snow comes down from clouds--didn't you know that?
- I think I knew that.
- It's snowing because right now the clouds are precipitating snow over your head. You understand me?
- No.
- Well, what don't you understand?
- I don't understand who's talking to me.
- The universe is talking to you.
- I don't understand, who is this?
- I am a living being from a very far-away galaxy, I have appeared inside you to help you come alive.
- Cut it out, I know this is all a bunch of horseshit, a bunch of motherfucking hallucinations, but I plan on finding my way out of this god-damn mess.
- I'm here to help you.
- Fuck me in the ass if I'm gonna sit here and keep talking to some dude inside of me. I am not going crazy. No, no, no.

*Pause.*

- It's snowing. Very beautiful.
- What's beautiful about that?
- The snow. How it's falling. Slowly, each snowflake finding its own specific place.
- Listen, I am looking right now at that snow and I'm thinking, that there is just a bunch of cold motherfucking snow, what could be beautiful about that?
- You don't know what's beautiful about that?
- I don't know.
- But you could find out, if you wanted to.
- Find out what?
- What real life is.
- I know what life is. Life is a huge-ass good-for-nothing pile of horseshit.
- Perhaps you'd like to know a little more about it?
- A little more?
- Well yeah, a little more than just that life is "a huge-ass good-for-nothing pile of horseshit." Would you like to find out any more about life than just that?
- I think I've gone crazy. I mean I'm talking to myself right? I think it's time to see a doctor.
- I am your doctor.
- Who are you?
- I am here to make you come alive.

And then Charlie jumps up and starts running. Now Charlie is running.

AMY: Now Kristof is coming in Amy's mouth and she is swallowing all of his semen. I think I've made a mistake, - thinks Amy, - this might be the point in my life where hell begins, the hell that I'll have to go through.

KRISTOF: That evening, Kristof once again asks Amy for pleasure.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is running. Running through the park. Running through the street. Running along a red brick wall. Running up stone steps. running down stone steps. Running all the way to his house, all the way up to his apartment on the third floor. And then he lies down on the floor there in the hall, he lies there with his eyes closed, and the 'motherfucking snow' keeps coming down inside his head.

MONICA: Now Monica is riding home in a taxi. She takes her phone out and calls Charlie. Hey. I'm in a cab. Can you meet me? I don't have any money to pay for the cab.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie slowly gets up on his feet, walks out of the apartment and goes to the elevator.

AMY: In the morning, as soon as he wakes up Kristof once again asks Amy for pleasure.

KRISTOF: First Amy inserts Kristof's dick between her buttocks, then she gives him a blowjob and then they brush their teeth and head off to the vegan restaurant.

AMY: Once upon a time Amy was called Bilyana, because she was born in Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia--she is Serbian. Bilyana was raised in an Eastern Orthodox Christian family, her father was a criminal boss, and her mother was a housewife. Naturally they were religious people, so along with values of the orthodox faith Bilyana also accepted the idea that happiness can only be gained through suffering, that only suffering purifies, and that the fundamental meaning of life is to go through the pain of this world and come to heaven. But as soon as war broke out in their country and the Americans started bombing Belgrade, Bilyana's father suddenly decided they had to leave. He managed to get his family to Germany, and there he even bought a small apartment in Berlin. And so they came out of one world and into another one, this one completely different. In some time, when Bilyana turned 13, her father was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in literally just a few months, and when Bilyana turned 18 her mother got sick with cancer and also soon left this world. In Berlin people die of cancer, - thought Bilyana, and she sold her parents' apartment and went to New York. Now she's called Amy, and this Amy is always up to all sorts of suspicious business, pawning things, making agreements with someone, convincing someone of something, having sex with someone, conning someone, and in the end with the money she makes she rents a Brooklyn apartment. Gaining practically no pleasure from life, Amy is nonetheless convinced that she is flying very, very quickly toward heaven. Of course, the closer she gets to heaven, the more often Amy is visited by unpleasant thoughts of how she's going to have to go through hell.

KRISTOF: Could you tell me something about your aim in life? asks Kristof suddenly.

AMY: My aim is heaven.

KRISTOF: What do you mean?

AMY: Heaven is when you always, always feel fucking awesome.

KRISTOF: Is that even possible?

AMY: After death, of course.

KRISTOF: But what can you do to prove that?

AMY: Prove what?

KRISTOF: Prove that there is anything after death.

AMY: Who needs proof?

KRISTOF: Well how can I believe in something without proof?

AMY: I personally don't need any proof at all.

KRISTOF: May I ask you how old you are?

AMY: You already asked. I'm thirty-two. You?

KRISTOF: Thirty-five.

AMY: Do you like how I suck your dick?

KRISTOF: Very much.

AMY: There's my proof.

KRISTOF: What do you mean?

AMY: I can be anybody. I can be whoever I want to be. I can be for you and I can be for someone else. I can be mean, I can be kind. I can be happy or unhappy. I can get angry or I can be pleased. I have a thousand names. I don't know who I am in fact. I have no position, no world-view. I don't love anyone, and I love everyone. I can do anything, I can sleep with anyone, I can suck anyone's dick, I can come when I want. I can eat anything I want. I can be a vegetarian, I can eat pork, I don't care. I can say that I am an Eastern Orthodox Christian, or I can be an atheist or sermonize the ideas of fundamentalist Islam. I have no position, no religion, no prejudices. I have no core. I have no interests. I have no life-goals, except one. I simply know that one day I will consciously end it all. I will end this life. By myself, by my own will and strength, I will end this life, whose meaning I have not understood. I will do it myself. And I know that in that case, I will have to go through hell. I will go through hell, and I will land in a place where I will always, always feel fucking awesome.

KRISTOF: You're going to commit suicide?

AMY: Why not? It's my life after all, I can dispose of it however I see fit.

KRISTOF: What, you really think you'd be able to kill yourself?

AMY: Probably tomorrow morning.

KRISTOF: You're fucking nuts. But I don't think you're being serious.

AMY: Yeah, probably tomorrow morning, around five in the morning--so don't be frightened when you wake up. I'll be in the bathtub.

KRISTOF: You're absolutely fucking nuts. But I'm going to take care of you and everything will be okay. Are you done eating? Kristof can't wait to have sex again and Amy still hasn't even ordered her favorite raspberry strudel with a scoop of soy-milk ice cream.

AMY: You want to leave?

KRISTOF: Yes, I want to go home.

AMY: Do you want to go to the Metropolitan Museum? It's a really, really nice museum.

KRISTOF: To be honest, I'd like to lie in bed a bit. And after lunch we can go to the museum.

AMY: I'm guessing you want another blowjob?

KRISTOF: To be honest, yes.

AMY: You like sweets too much, Kristof.

KRISTOF: And you?

AMY: And I like to give people pleasure. Let's go.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie and Monica are sitting facing one another at the kitchen table. Monica is drinking tea and eating bread and cheese. Charlie is smoking a cigarette. Why didn't you tell me you wanted an abortion?

MONICA: You don't need a baby, Charlie. I didn't want to drag you into the murder of a human being. Now you're innocent, and there's no baby.

CHARLIE: Why do you think I don't need a baby?

MONICA: Knock it off, Charlie.

CHARLIE: I never told you I didn't want a baby.

MONICA: But you didn't say you wanted one either.

CHARLIE: But you could have told me, and we could have decided together what we should do.

MONICA: Stop it Charlie, I'm exhausted.

CHARLIE: Do you know what love is, Monica?

MONICA: Do you know what impulse is, Charlie?

CHARLIE: I can't live with you anymore, I'm sorry.

MONICA: I'm leaving tomorrow, Charlie.

CHARLIE: For where?

MONICA: Berlin.

CHARLIE: Where?

MONICA: I hope you won't mind if I take my parents' money from our account?

CHARLIE: Berlin? What the hell for?

MONICA: Well, they say Berlin is just like New York but a lot cheaper.

CHARLIE: Fine, if you need to get out for some air, go for it. But I'd like to get an official divorce, so don't get stuck there too long.

MONICA: You think you can get married again?

CHARLIE: That has nothing to do with you.

MONICA: You're disgusting Charlie.

CHARLIE: And you're a bitch. And Charlie stands up and leaves the room. Monica drops her head to the table and cries. Charlie goes to the bedroom and falls face-down on the bed. He would like to leave the house but he has nowhere to go, it's snowing outside, and he has no friends.

MONICA: There's no hope, no hope whatsoever that I can live through this. I'm not going to make it through this hell, - Monica realizes, and for the first time in her life she experiences a true desire to use drugs. Monica gets up and leaves the house. She has a wallet in her bag, which contains an ATM card with fifteen thousand dollars in the account--a gift from her wealthy parents in Poland. Now Monica is walking down the street, and she can afford a remarkable number of things.

CHARLIE: Charlie has been lying face-down in bed but suddenly jumps to his feet--it seems that for the first time in his life, Charlie has a plan...

*Pause.*

AMY: First there was a blowjob, then they went to the Metropolitan Museum, then dinner in a restaurant--for the first time in two days not the vegan one. They had a bottle of wine, got back home at 11:30, got undressed, sat on the floor, smoked pot and turned on some music. You think maybe we've heard enough Damien Rice? asks Kristof. Today is the last time, - answers Amy and lights up the joint.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is digging through the wardrobe where Monica keeps her things, and he finds a duplicate of her ATM card. Monica has two cards, in case she loses one--something that's happened several times already. Charlie takes the card and leaves the building. On his phone he has all the PIN codes for all the banking and credit cards that he and Monica use.

MONICA: Now Monica is calling her Polish friend, Wojtek. He's lived in New York for a few years, working as a bartender, and he knows where to get various so-to-speak "totally seriously unlawful substances".

KRISTOF: Now Amy is swallowing Kristof's dick as deeply as she possibly can.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is approaching an ATM, he inserts his card and starts withdrawing Monica's money, as much as the machine will allow him to take out in one transaction.

MONICA: Now Monica is receiving text after text, telling her that money is being withdrawn from her account, now two thousand, and now three thousand dollars.

AMY: Now Amy is swallowing semen, all of it, to the very last drop, doing her best to deliver Kristof as much pleasure as possible.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is withdrawing money at the ATM, his phone is ringing in his pocket, it's Monica, but Charlie doesn't pick up, he wants to withdraw as much as time and the account's limit will allow.

AMY: Now Monica is calling Charlie, but he's not picking up. So Monica runs to the nearest ATM, inserts her card and the machine informs her that the "Withdrawal limit has been exceeded." Monica reads the text messages she's received from the bank--five thousand dollars withdrawn, her limit. There are another ten thousand dollars in the account, but she'll only be able to withdraw them tomorrow. Monica understands that since the second ATM card is in Charlie's hands he will most likely continue stealing from it tomorrow. What do I do?

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is going to the airport. On a special app in his iPhone he is searching for the next flights to Berlin.

MONICA: Now Monica is calling the bank and blocking her card. The card has been blocked, but Monica only has three hundred bucks in cash. You can't fly to Berlin for three hundred bucks. However it is enough to set out on a different, more interesting journey. And Monica sets up a rendezvous with her bartender-friend Wojtek.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is going to John F. Kennedy Airport. He's buying a ticket to Berlin. He doesn't comprehend much of what he's doing, but he knows one thing--he needs to fly to Berlin.

MONICA: Now Monica is setting the syringe aside, lying on the floor and closing her eyes. Pleasure streams through her veins, as warm and as much of it as possible.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is sitting in a cafe in the airport, drinking beer.

AMY: Now Amy has locked herself in the bathroom and is sifting through the small top shelf of the medicine cabinet. Amy takes out a plastic bottle of pills, shakes the pills into the palm of her hand--she takes no small amount, a whole handful. A whole handful of little green pills.

MONICA: Now Monica's hands, legs and her whole body quickly lose weight, falling into a warm sticky honey.

AMY: Now Amy is coming out of the bathroom and going to the kitchen. She picks up her phone, writes a text message, but doesn't send it immediately--she enters the exact time when the message should be sent to its recipient. This text will be automatically sent at exactly two o'clock.

MONICA: God, please...stop.

KRISTOF: Now Amy and Kristof are lying in bed. Kristof guides his dick into Amy's anus. Amy closes her eyes. Hi, - says Amy in a strange voice.

KRISTOF: Hi, answers Kristof in total confusion, thinking that maybe in New York it's customary to say "Hi" when someone inserts his dick into your bottom.

AMY: Hi, Amy smiles and closes her eyes. Perhaps closes them forever.

MONICA: Will I ever be able to get out of this warm honey? - Monica thinks and at that moment she permanently loses her ability to think. Now she softly and irrevocably disappears into the warm, sticky, unending heroin honey.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie boards an airplane and takes his seat by the window. Before he turns off his phone he reads a new message which he received just seconds ago--it's a message from Amy. It contains one word: "Hi." Charlie turns off his phone and puts it in his pocket.

KRISTOF: Now, Kristof comes. He opens his eyes and looks at Amy, trying to understand what she's feeling. Amy, I think I love you, says Kristof, not knowing at that moment that his dick is currently in the rectum of a woman who has died.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie's plane is taking off.

*Pause.*

AMY: Now Amy is in hell.

*Pause.*

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is in deep shock. He withdraws his dick from Amy's dead body and only now does Kristof begin to truly understand what it means to live in New York.

*Pause.*

MONICA: Now Monica is flying into a black hole.

AMY: Now Amy is flying into an unholy eternity.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is flying into Berlin.

AMY:

- Do you see that blue dot?
- I see an incredibly terrifying nightmare. My one and only wish is that someone would tear me to pieces as soon as possible.
- Do you see that blue dot right in the center? Don't look at anything around it, look right at the center. Do you see the dot?
- God, help me.
- Do you see the dot?
- God, please I'm asking you God help me!!! I don't want this!! I made a horrible mistake!!!! Forgive me!!!! Help me!!!
- Stop. Calm down now and listen to me very carefully. Do only what I tell you. Calm down.
- But I can't, I can't!
- You can, but only if you truly want to get through this.
- I'm very scared.
- That's not important right now. Only one thing is important. Right in front of you is a small blue dot. Do you see it?
- Yes.
- Now look right at it, nowhere else. Only at the dot. Do you see the dot?
- Yes.
- Look only at the dot.
- I'm looking. God, help me!
- If you need help, it's right in front of you. That little blue dot is the only thing that can help you in this situation. Do you understand?
- Yes. But can I say something to God?
- The small blue dot right there before you, in the present situation, is God. You understand?
- Yes.
- Right now look only at that little dot, not at anything else. Are you looking?

- Yes. What is it?
- It's your center.
- You said it was God.
- Those are the same thing. Right now you have no time for philosophy. The only thing that can help you is the blue dot in front of you--watch it, fix your gaze on it completely. That is your center. Right now you will start exiting through that dot.
- But I'm scared!
- That means absolutely nothing. You must do only what I tell you. Now you will exit through that dot. Are you ready?
- I don't know. I'm so scared. God, can you forgive me?
- There is no God other than the blue dot in front of you. And now you are going to slowly exit through that dot. Get ready. I will count to five and you will start to exit. May I start counting?
- Oh God, oh God!
- I'm counting. One, two, three...
- God, help me!
- You have no choice but to do everything I tell you. Collect all the strength you have and go. Four. Five. Go.

*Pause.*

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is calling the police and telling them of Amy's death.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is in a plane flying from New York to Berlin. Charlie is thirty-two years old, and for the first time he is crossing the U.S. border.

MONICA:

- What is that?
- It's connection.
- Connection?
- You are connected with impulse. Through this connection you feel impulse, where movement begins. All movement arises only because it is continuously connected with impulse. Everything moves because everything senses impulse.
- But I never knew that, and still I was alive, I lived.
- No, up to now you have not yet truly lived.
- And what then was all of this, these thirty years of my life?
- It was a preparation for the possibility that one day you might begin living.
- You mean I can get out of here?
- You can get out of anywhere. Where there is an entrance, there is surely an exit.
- But aren't I in hell?
- You may be in hell, but you have to get through this hell.
- But isn't it impossible to get through hell?
- Well, if you can enter hell, then you can exit hell. Everywhere, if there is an entrance, there is an exit.

- But isn't hell forever? In church they told us that hell is forever.
- That's probably just how they wished it were.
- But it doesn't just depend on how we wish it were...
- Of course it does.
- But I didn't wish to end up in hell.
- Yes you did.
- But I thought hell didn't exist.
- Will does not depend on thought--thoughts depend on will.
- Isn't will born from thought?
- No, quite the opposite--thought is born from will. You always wanted to go through hell, and here you are going through it.
- But I'm not sure I can.
- You can. Now you are lying on the floor, your blood is full of heroin, your consciousness has plopped down into a sticky honey, but you are here. You are completely fine. You have come here to learn how to be truly alive. You came to me so that I could teach you. And now I am your teacher. And now I am going to teach you what it means to "be alive." Are you ready?
- Maybe, I might be. Who are you?
- I already told you that my true name is impossible to utter in your language, so I am just a part of the universe, just the same as you are a part of the universe.
- You're not the little girl that was scraped out of me and thrown into the dumpster?
- No, I am a living being from a different galaxy. And by the way, the person you disposed of was a boy.
- What? What?
- The pieces of living tissue that you got rid of when you had an abortion would have become a boy. But they were destined to become something else.
- Didn't I commit a deadly sin?
- The thing is, deadly sins do not exist, because there is no such thing as death.
- And that means people can do whatever they want?
- People *do* do whatever they want. Everyone does whatever he or she wants, and receives in turn whatever he or she has earned.
- And aren't I going to suffer terribly, for having killed that unborn boy, aren't I going to suffer?
- Aren't you suffering?
- But I should have to suffer even more.
- If you want to, so be it, but if you want to end your suffering and feel connected with impulse, then you must listen to me, and do only what I tell you.
- But I'm scared.
- That means nothing now. If you came here to learn, then you must leave all your doubts and fears behind. You must gather all your strength and do only as I tell you. Are you ready?
- I don't know.
- Who knows, if not you?

- God help me, I'm in hell!
- Do only what I tell you to do. Are you ready?
- I'll try.
- In fact it's not that difficult. Do you see that blue dot right in front of you?

*Pause.*

KRISTOF: Right now Kristof is sitting in Amy's apartment and providing evidence to the police. Across from him sits a policewoman, and in the other room, where Amy's body lies, are two policemen and two paramedics. At what moment did you understand she was dead? - asks the policewoman. And Kristof can't get his tongue to spit out that he understood Amy was dead when he decided to take his dick out of her bottom. I don't know, - says Kristof. We were having sex. I love this woman. I feel terrible. I have to drink something. Can I have a drink? There's a little whiskey in that cabinet over there. And at that very moment from the other room comes the voice of one of the paramedics: This woman is alive. What? - says Kristof, dumbfounded--his head is spinning. The policewoman quickly rises and goes out of the kitchen. Kristof jumps up and opens the cabinet. He rummages through glasses, jars of cookies and packages of food. Kristof finds the bottle of whiskey and with trembling hands he opens the bottle and he drinks. He drinks. He drinks. He drinks almost half of the one-and-a-half liter bottle. He would drink more, but the policewoman reappears in the kitchen and says - your girlfriend is still alive, they're going to take her to the hospital--do you want to go with her? And please, stop drinking, we might need your help.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is in the plane. He's asleep. As usual he dreams of the bloody snake. The impossibly long bloody snake is crawling directly into Charlie's mouth.

- What the fuck is going on? Why?
- Because your mind is a garbage can, Charlie.
- My mind is a garbage can?
- Yes, can't you see that? Look carefully. Take a look at your mind, it's completely full of trash. Feces, bloody snakes, fears and hangups.
- And what should I do?
- You need to purify your mind, Charlie.
- Well I can hardly just get up and purify my mind, can I?
- You have to strongly desire to do so, Charlie, and only then can I help you.
- You?
- Yes.
- And who are you?
- I already told you, I'm a being from a faraway galaxy, I'm here to help you. We can come to an agreement. You decide to purify your mind, and I offer you help. Well, Charlie--what do you say?

- I need to think about it.
- Think about it. But keep in mind that you've been thinking the same thing for thirty-five years.
- And what do you look like, can you show yourself to me?
- Excuse me.
- What?
- Excuse me, sir, and Charlie opens his eyes. Before him is the lovely face of a young flight attendant--You'll need to put your seat-back up and fasten your seatbelt. Our plane is landing.

*Pause.*

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is sitting in the hallway at the hospital where Amy has been admitted. He's very drunk, because before he got in the ambulance Kristof went ahead and poured the remaining contents of the whiskey bottle down his throat. And now Kristof is sitting in a plastic chair, his head dangling downward. His body is rocking slightly back and forth. Kristof is somewhere on the borderline between dream and reality. Now and then he fades out for a few seconds, but some force opens his eyes again. Across from him in an identical plastic chair is an elderly man with Latin-American features. The man looks very calm. Like he's in his right place. I'm so hungry! - cries Kristof suddenly. Shh - sounds a sudden whisper. Kristof raises his head and looks at the man. The man gives out a strange hissing, whispering sound, like the whisper of a snake, and then the sound turns into a light whistling, but still half-whispering: shyuu-shyuu, shyuu-shyuu, shyuu-shyuu. Kristof incredulously glances at the man from whom the sounds seem to be coming. What are you, pretending you're a snake? - asks Kristof. The old Latin-American man answers with a laugh. What are you, crazy? - Kristof says, gaining confidence. I'm taming the snake, the man says smiling, but very calmly. What, you're a snake? - asks Kristof. No, the snake is you - even more surely retorts the man. I'm a snake? So you think I'm a snake, is that right? And who are you then? I'm the snake catcher. Ha! - exclaims Kristof, - so you mean, you're gonna catch me? I've already caught you, - says the man, smiling, and very, very calmly. You caught me? Well, that's news for me. What's with you, man, have you lost your mind? Are you in here for good or something? My wife is dying, - answers the man just as calmly and with the same light smile. Holy shitballs man! Your wife is dying and you're sitting here playing games? No, you are playing games, while I am simply sitting and waiting. Waiting for your wife to die? Perhaps she will die, - answers the man very simply. And you're pretty relaxed about that, are you? Perhaps I am relaxed, - answers the man and smiles very, very sadly. Why were you hissing? - asks Kristof. He suddenly feels he is sobering up. To tame the snake, - says the man. And where do you see the snake? the snake is inside you. What? What?!! Tsh-sh-shyuu, - hisses the man again. At that moment a male nurse approaches them from the depths of the hallway. The man stops hissing and rises. The nurse goes up to the man. I'm very sorry, but your wife died while unconscious. Can you come with me right away? Yes, yes, - answers the man very calmly, and then turns to Kristof, and with the same light smile utters, - there is a black snake within you--either you chase the snake out or the

snake eats you. And the man follows the nurse down the hall. Where did you come from? - Kristof calls out behind the man. Mexico? Peru, - answers the man. How do I chase out this black snake? calls out Kristof again. A woman can do this, - says the man without turning around, and goes out down the long hallway.

MONICA:

- What is this?
- It's movement.
- It's movement?
- This is how movement happens. This is its beginning and this is its continuation.
- Right now I'm at the very center.
- Yes. Right now you're at the very center.
- I am the center.
- Yes, you are the center.
- And what am I supposed to understand?
- You must understand the main principle.
- And what is the main principle?
- Movement.
- And what am I supposed to understand?
- You must understand how movement arises.
- From the center?
- Yes, from the center.
- That's movement?
- Yes, that's movement.
- My god it's so beautiful.
- Because you've gone through your hell.
- But I'm so lonely right now, it's like in my childhood, when I was little I felt nobody loved me, nobody.
- I love you.
- Really?
- I can't not love you. Love is the main principle of movement.
- I'm so lonely.
- May I embrace you?
- I guess so, yes.
- There.
- Oh God!

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now it's early morning. Charlie exits the airport in Berlin and gets in a taxi. I have a return ticket for three days from now, - thinks Charlie, - I have three thousand dollars. And for a second Charlie closes his eyes, and the black snake flashes momentarily in his conscience. Charlie opens his eyes. I'm going to try for just this once in my life to experience

as much pleasure as possible, - Charlie decides. Berlin city center please, - he says to the cab driver. There is no center in Berlin, - the driver replies, and the car starts moving.

KRISTOF: Now it's early morning, and Kristof is leaving the hospital where he has just spent the night. He sways a bit to and fro as he goes. This was the most difficult night in his life, not to mention that he drank a one-and-a-half liter bottle of whiskey. The doctors said that Amy may survive, though the pill's effects were very strong--she lived through a clinical death and by some sort of miracle came back to life. Now Kristof is sitting on a park bench. It's snowing. Motherfucking snow, - thinks Kristof. Maybe there's something wrong with me..? And here for the first time in his life Kristof is visited by the thought that there's something wrong with him. It seems like I came to New York at the wrong time...It's already cold. I should've come in the summer. The whole summer I sat around in Berlin. Made some money. I felt great in Berlin. But God damn it I've always dreamt of New York. I guess I just came at the wrong time. I should've come here in early spring, and I came here in late fall. Guess that's my mistake. Best to live in Berlin in the winter. And since it's going to be winter soon, I'll probably have to go to Berlin and hang out there till spring. Right? I think that's right. And early spring in New York. Around March. That seems about right, ha? That might be pretty sweet, right? So that means right now I'm off to Berlin? Straight up from this park I'm gonna head to the airport and fly to Berlin. What about Amy? Don't I love her or whatever? Naw, hell no, that's no kind of love. She just gives an incredible blowjob, and I love pleasure.

- You love pleasure, Kristof?
- Yes, who is this asking?
- Right now it doesn't matter who's asking, right now what matters is that you have no idea what true pleasure is.
- No shit! And who the fuck am I speaking to in my head right now?
- True pleasure, Kristof, is when you are completely, completely, absolutely, thoroughly content. And that's never happened to you.
- And who am I speaking to?
- Do you believe that somewhere, in other far-away galaxies, other living intelligent beings exist?
- Holy fuck! I think I'm losing my mind. This city has a very shitty effect on me, I've got to get back to Berlin right away, - thinks Kristof, and right from that park, he heads for the airport.

*Pause.*

AMY:

- What is this?
- It's you.
- It's me?
- Yes.
- And where's Amy?
- Here.

- That's Amy?!
- The Amy that you knew before no longer exists.
- But what is this?
- It's you.
- It's me?!
- Yes.
- And where is hell?
- You went through it.
- That fast?
- Thirty-two years and four months.
- I'm thirty-two years and four months old.
- You went through it.
- And what now?
- Now you will start truly living.
- And when is that going to start?
- It has already started.
- And what do I do now?
- Now I want to embrace you. May I?
- I'm sorry, who are you?
- I'm just the universe and right now I want to embrace you. Come to me. There.
- Oh God! God I've never, ever....,

*Pause.*

AMY: Now Amy opens her eyes. She's lying on a hospital bed in the intensive care unit. Wires and sensors are attached to her body, and she wears an oxygen mask on her face. Amy opens her eyes and feels pain. Amy looks at the ceiling--there she sees many many tiny holes, probably to keep air coming in and out. Amy looks at the ceiling--tears stream down her cheeks. She is in pain, and for the first time in her life she feels that she is alive.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is traveling from the airport to the western part of Berlin. He sits in the back seat of a cab and looks out the window. Berlin. Charlie tries to understand the difference between Berlin and New York. He sees that there is a difference, but what is it? The first thing that comes to mind are skyscrapers--Berlin doesn't have skyscrapers like that. And the people on the street look a little different too. But that's not the main difference. What is it? What's the difference then? - thinks Charlie. And here Charlie realizes that the main difference is within himself.

MONICA: One, two, three, four, five, - Monica opens her eyes. She's back. Monica is lying on the floor of a cheap hotel room in some hotel in Harlem. Tears stream down her

cheeks, she is nauseous, her head is splitting in pain, but she is happy--for the first time in many, many years, she feels happy. I think I'm alive, - whispers Monica and she cries. I think I'm alive, - whispers Monica and she smiles. I'm alive, - whispers Monica and she cries. I'm alive, - whispers Monica and she smiles. I'm alive, - whispers Monica and she cries. I'm alive, - whispers Monica and she smiles. I'm alive, - whispers Monica and in an ancient forest of mighty black trees a flock of birds bursts into the sky and they fly to the moon. The dark silhouettes of strange birds slip across the starry sky illuminated by the silvery light of the moon. The first bird reaches the moon and becomes as silver as the moon herself. The second bird reaches the moon and becomes as silver... The last bird reaches the moon and becomes... And suddenly Monica matures. She feels that it's happening to her this very moment. She is thirty years old and for the first time in her life she clearly feels that her childhood is past. Now she is truly a grown woman, capable and commanding of respect. Monica is thirty years old, and now she reaches the moon and becomes as silver as the moon herself.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Stop next to that seafood restaurant please. Charlie gets out of the cab--he has a sudden craving for fish and white wine.

- Fish got hooked, eh Charlie?
- Fish? What fish?
- You're the fish, Charlie.
- Steamed seabass with rice and vegetables and a bottle of white, - Charlie tells the passing waiter.
- What sort of wine you prefer? - inquires the waiter in poor English.
- Bring me your best German white wine, - says Charlie, and he knows that soon he should be feeling very good.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is sitting at a bar in the airport. He still has three hours before his flight to Berlin leaves. Kristof drinks a fourth glass of beer, closes his eyes, and falls asleep.

- Do you know Monica, Kristof?
- No. Who is she?
- You need to call her.
- Who is she?
- You'll find out when you call.
- How am I supposed to call her?
- Her number is +19177934321
- And what should I tell her?
- Tell her that right now you need each other very much.
- And who is Monica?
- Monica is the woman who will chase out the black snake.

MONICA: Now Monica is walking into a branch of her bank to block her account and get a temporary card.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is eating lunch in a seafood restaurant in west Berlin. His mood keeps getting better and better--it seems like he's getting exactly what he was missing: air. He was out of breath there, in the city where he was born. He was like an infant who can't seem to get out of his mother's womb. Thirty-two years he lived in the womb of his mother called New York, in the stomach of his mother named "I work all week, so that on the weekends I can sleep in and drink beer with my friends." And so, finally, Charlie is free. He has made it out of the womb, he has come into the world. Charlie is eating fish and washing it down with excellent German white wine. Jesus, what a blessing that I got out of New York, Charlie thinks, - thanks to Monica's parents, for their money.

MONICA: Now Monica is on her way out of the bank. She now has a new ATM card, and on the card are ten thousand dollars, which are under no threat whatsoever, or at any rate under no threat from bad-boy-Charlie.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is leaving the restaurant in the center of Berlin, he's in a good mood, and he's got about three thousand dollars in his coat pocket. First, quality drugs and alcohol, - decides Charlie, - and of course, amorous adventures. Thanks again to Monica's parents for their money.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is waking up at the bar table. He goes to the bathroom. Now Kristof is peeing in the bathroom, and looking at the white-tiled wall in front of him. Suddenly a series of numbers appears in his mind: +19177934321. I have a terrible memory--why do I remember that number? - thinks Kristof, - and wasn't there some woman's name there too?

- Monica.
- Yeah, Monica.

MONICA: Now Monica is on her way to the airport. She has already bought a ticket to Berlin online. She herself doesn't know why Berlin, of all places. As a child she and her parents went to Berlin many many times, as her hometown Wroclaw was only a few hours away from Berlin by train. Why Berlin? Why New York? Why Wroclaw? Why Charlie?

- Because this is movement, Monica. Everything in this universe moves, nothing stays in one place.
- I think I've understood something. Movement, therefore Wroclaw, movement and therefore New York, movement and therefore Berlin, movement and therefore Charlie, movement and therefore me. Movement and at that very moment Monica's phone rings.

KRISTOF: Hello, is this Monica?

MONICA: Now Monica is walking into the airport terminal and approaching the check-in counter. She is on the phone. Yes, this is Monica, hello.

KRISTOF: My name is Kristof. To be honest I don't even know why I'm calling you.

MONICA: Who is this?

KRISTOF: Well I said, my name is Kristof. I'm calling you because...Jesus! I don't know why I'm calling you. Maybe we could meet up and talk, though actually I'm about to fly out of New York.

MONICA: Why should we meet? Actually as it happens I'm also flying out of New York right now.

KRISTOF: I don't know how to explain this. Just don't think that I'm crazy or anything. But some kind of voice inside me told me your phone number. It was in my sleep. As if it were the universe talking to me, you know? Oh God! I understand what you think of me right now, but really, I'm not crazy, but I had a dream with your phone number in it and this voice told me that I had to meet you... I understand that this is all really really stupid and all of this just sounds like a giant pile of shit. I'm sorry Monica, I'm not going to bother you anymore. Goodbye.

MONICA: Wait. Actually I'd be willing to meet up.

KRISTOF: Really?

MONICA: Problem is I'm flying out of New York right now.

KRISTOF: Right, I'm flying out of New York right now too.

MONICA: I'm at the airport already.

KRISTOF: I'm at the airport too, Monica... Wait a minute, what airport are you at?

MONICA: JFK.

KRISTOF: Where are you flying to, Monica?

MONICA: Berlin.

KRISTOF: Flight 2819?

MONICA: Yeah.

KRISTOF: Monica, there is a black snake living inside me, and only you can chase it out of me, okay?

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is sitting on the bed in his hotel room, he is not wearing pants. In front of him is a prostitute--she is giving him a blowjob. On the nightstand near the bed are bottles of whiskey, martinis and, of course, a flat plate bearing the royal guest of the evening--cocaine. Monica's parents in Wrocław probably feel something special today, because Charlie, for almost the entire day, almost every hour, has been addressing them in thought with kind words of thanks.

AMY: Now Amy is sleeping. She dreams of a dolphin. She is submerged in water, and a dolphin is swimming nearby.

- Hello. What's your name? - asks Amy.
- Dolphins have no names, - answers the dolphin.
- How do you call one another, - Amy wonders.
- We send signals.
- But if you want to address a particular dolphin, if you want just him to hear you, only that one dolphin?

- You will always be heard by those you are addressing if you are careful and exacting in addressing those whom you wish to address.
- I need to remember that. Can you say that again?
- Of course. You will always be heard by those you are addressing if you are careful and exacting in addressing those whom you wish to address.
- I have to remember that.
- And a telephone number.
- What?
- You also have to remember this telephone number: +19569732328.
- What for?
- Call this number when you feel that someone really needs your help, - says the dolphin and Amy wakes up.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof and Monica are sitting next to each other in the airplane. They are both flying to Berlin. I always dreamt of visiting New York but somehow it never worked out. No time, no money...And all of a sudden I made a little money on the side in Berlin, and I took off.

MONICA: And how was it? In New York? To Monica's right sits a young girl, very attentively listening to their conversation.

KRISTOF: To be honest, it was totally miserable. At first it was awesome. Vegan restaurants--I'm a vegan--beautiful young women, and then all of a sudden I wound up in hell. But I don't want to go on forever about what sort of hell it was, okay?

MONICA: Okay. But how are you now?

KRISTOF: To be honest, I'm just as miserable as I was before.

MONICA: What do you think is missing?

KRISTOF: Hell if I know, honestly. Maybe I'm just missing self-respect?

MONICA: You probably think you're shit, right?

KRISTOF: Well... I guess so, yeah. I think so. And I think the problem isn't just that I think I'm shit, but that I really am shit.

MONICA: And that's why you always want pleasure, right?

KRISTOF: Constantly. It's like I don't have enough energy. I even stopped eating meat, became a vegan, because fatty foods take away energy, and vegan food is very light and gives you strength.

MONICA: And whenever you're being given pleasure you realize that it's not actually what you really want, right?

KRISTOF: I always want something more, something bigger, something real. What's missing is pleasure, I'm missing real, true pleasure, total contentment. I'm missing wholeness. Missing some kind of togetherness. What's missing is some kind of absolute reality. Everything feels like a dream, like it's all in this rubber shell. You know? And the girl sitting to Monica's right suddenly jumps into their conversation. I know exactly what you're talking about, - says the girl almost screaming, - like we're all living in a plastic bag. Like we're all balled up in Saran wrap.

MONICA: Sorry for jumping into your conversation, - says the girl. Kristof and Monica turn around. My name is Zhanna, I'm from Russia. I'm flying to Moscow, I have a layover in Berlin--it's cheaper that way.

KRISTOF: I accidentally overheard what you were saying, and it's just exactly what I've been thinking about about all the time, - the girl continues. It's like I live, I eat, drink, fuck, but somewhere there deep inside me I know very well that it's all nothing, that it's all artificial, it's not real, it's fake, like it's all a copy, like they threw me in a bag and I can't get out of it, get outside, and everything around me is totally unreal. And so I always want more and more, more and more. Like I'm behind glass and I want to break the glass and breathe in real air, real life. You know what I mean, right?

MONICA: What if you try allowing yourself? - Monica asks Kristof.

KRISTOF: Allowing myself what? - Kristof doesn't yet understand.

MONICA: Everything.

KRISTOF: What do you mean, everything?

MONICA: Everything means absolutely everything. Just brave up inside and allow yourself absolutely everything.

KRISTOF: Even the worst things?

MONICA: Everything.

KRISTOF: Everything-everything?

MONICA: Everything that you truly want. Only not in the outer world, but inside you.

KRISTOF: Everything-everything?

MONICA: Whatever you want. You must allow yourself everything that you want, everything that you repress. Allow your intended action to happen. Just let go of everything. Everything, absolutely everything.

KRISTOF: But you have to control yourself!, - says Zhanna from Russia, sitting by Monica, unable to control herself, - we can't allow ourselves absolutely everything, because God doesn't allow us everything.

MONICA: Who told us that?

KRISTOF: God.

MONICA: God said that? When?

KRISTOF: When he gave us his commandments: thou shalt not kill, steal, and so on.

MONICA: I can kill, but I do not kill, I can steal, but I do not steal. That's the true commandment of a free being. And God never told anyone what to do. Man came up with that, out of fear of himself. God is impulse. I feel my contact with impulse, and I do only what I must. I allow myself everything, but I do only what I must. That's the main principle of the universe. I allow myself everything, I have a right to everything. I sense impulse, and I do what I must.

KRISTOF: I don't feel impulse. There's a black snake in the way, blocking access to something, to the most important thing inside me.

MONICA: Well let it go.

KRISTOF: I'm not the one holding it in, am I?

MONICA: Who else?

KRISTOF: I'm holding it in?

MONICA: We hold everything in ourselves.

KRISTOF: Of course! It's me! I'm holding everything inside me, I can't let it all out, - says Zhanna suddenly, almost screaming.

MONICA: Let's nap a little bit--I'm tired, - says Monica, and closes her eyes. But Zhanna from Russia, sitting next to Monica, can't settle down. She can't sleep. She is ridden down by the thought that it's all her fault, all of it is her fault. Zhanna grabs Monica's hand and presses Monica's palm to her chest. From the center of Monica's palm streams a thin blue beam of light, and that beam pierces into the center of the girl's chest, but Zhanna doesn't notice it. She sits there, eyes closed, and suddenly for the first time in her life she feels complete calm.

KRISTOF: Hello, my black snake. Let me take a look at you. Now Kristof is sleeping, and he dreams of his black snake. For the first time they meet face to face.

MONICA: I'm so thankful to you for making me alive, - Monica addresses the blue dot inside her. The soft blue light fills Monica from within and she falls asleep in the careful embrace of the universe.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is inhaling his last line of cocaine and he is realizing that a gram isn't going to be enough. Charlie pays the prostitute and she leaves. Maybe I should go out for a walk too, - Charlie decides, and starts looking for his pants.

AMY: Now Amy is lying on her hospital bed. How do you feel? - asks the young doctor. Amy looks at the doctor, but it's hard for her to focus her attention on one thing. I think I'm feeling much better, - pronounces Amy quietly.

- Today after lunch our psychologist would like to speak with you, is that alright?
- Can I go home? - asks Amy.
- I think it's a little early still, - answers the young doctor. So then, our psychologist will come in to see you after lunch, okay Amy?
- Okay, - answers Amy. She closes her eyes, and there behind her closed eyes is a dolphin.

CHARLIE: Now it is night. Charlie walks along an empty street in an unfamiliar part of Berlin. Charlie doesn't really understand how he got here. In his head are the unending sounds of two simultaneously ringing bells: the bell of cocaine and the bell of alcohol. Charlie wanders along the dark street, wavering from side to side. A dog appears from around the corner and runs in Charlie's direction. If only the black snake were here right now, this would be exactly like my dream, - Charlie thinks, and from around the corner of the next building, the bad kids appear. This is a dream, - Charlie announces, to wake himself up. And the next minute, they start viciously beating him.

AMY: +19569732328, - the dolphin reminds Amy and then swims away deep into her consciousness.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie's nose is being shifted somewhere off to one side, turning into a red paste smeared across his face. And now after an extremely hard kick to his right ear he hears a pop, as though someone were opening champagne. Charlie lies on the ground, curling himself into a lump, and the bad kids stand around him, kicking the life out of Charlie with their heavy boots. Charlie's consciousness flows out of him in his blood, from his mouth, from his nose, from his ears, his head. It's unclear what plan these kids have, but it's unlikely they just wanted to rob Charlie, though one of them does pull Charlie's money out of his pocket--two thousand dollars. They're unbelievably lucky, but it's doubtful they are beating Charlie to death just for money. Rather, they're just part of the universe's grand design. These kids are part of the universe, whose legs are kicking what's left of Charlie's brains onto the asphalt. Such is the will of the universe. A kick to the ribs, and two ribs snap like crispy bread sticks. Such is the will of the universe. Charlie's lungs overflow and hemorrhage with streaming blood, such is the will of the universe. The kids have a laugh and leave, leaving Charlie prostrate on the asphalt in a pool of his own blood. Such is the will of the universe.

- Now you must focus, Charlie.
- What?
- Now you need to get yourself together. Do you see me?
- No.
- Look here, here I am.
- I see some kind of dolphin swimming around inside me.
- That's right. I'm going to embrace you now. Okay?
- Who's talking to me?
- Can you see me?
- I see a dolphin swimming.
- That's right. Now I'm going to embrace you, because that's the only way to get through this hell. Are you ready?
- I'm afraid. I'm scared.
- You don't have any choice. Relax and allow me to embrace you.
- I don't know. I don't know. I'm talking to some goddamn dolphin, I'm bleeding, my brains are leaking out of me...
- And now I'm going to embrace you. There you go, Charlie.
- What is that?
- It's an embrace.
- It's so strange. What is it?!
- It's an embrace.
- But it's so strange! It's so strong, it's unbearable.
- You just don't know what true tenderness is like, Charlie.
- But those kids, who beat me, why did they do that?
- Because they know nothing about tenderness.
- Oh my God, I feel so good! But why is all this happening to *me*?
- Nobody knows. It's just the will of the universe. That's all.

KRISTOF: Now it's six in the morning. Monica and Kristof have just flown into Berlin. Kristof is reading a text message on his phone. My friend texted me that he left his keys with a neighbor, and he'll be back next week. So we can stay at his place for a whole week, in a nice apartment in a nice part of town. We'll take the bus and be there in an hour.

MONICA: I don't feel very good, - says Monica, - let's take a cab. I'll pay.

KRISTOF: It will cost around 50 euros.

MONICA: I've got cash.

KRISTOF: She's agreed to stay with me in the same apartment, - thinks Kristof, - we'll probably sleep together. I wonder when? Maybe even today? She's a pretty girl. Life is kind of coming together. I guess New York just isn't my town. But Berlin--I feel at home in Berlin.

CHARLIE: It's now six o'clock in the morning. A woman finds Charlie's body lying in a pool of blood and calls an ambulance. Now Charlie is being taken to the hospital. He is unconscious.

- But my god, why did I have to go through this hell?
- Nobody knows, Charlie, - answers the dolphin, - it's the will of the universe.

AMY: Now it's night-time in New York and Amy is asleep. She dreams of a girl she doesn't know.

- My name is Zhanna, - says the girl, - I'm from Russia. Right now I'm flying from Berlin to Moscow. I'm asleep, and dreaming of you. What's your name?
- My name is Amy.
- I'm dreaming of you right now, Amy.
- Aren't I the one dreaming of you, Zhanna?
- I don't know.
- I think we're dreaming of each other--you of me and I of you. We're in one dream.
- That's so strange--one dream for the two of us.
- You are radiating so much tenderness, Zhanna. Thank you for your tenderness.
- And thank you for this dream, Amy.
- I hope you have a nice flight, Zhanna, - and Amy wakes up, because the nurse is giving her a shot.
- That's it, I'm done, - says the nurse, - get some rest, sweetheart, - and the nurse leaves.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof and Monica are sitting in the kitchen of an apartment owned by a friend of Kristof's. They're having breakfast.

MONICA: Now Monica stands up and goes to take a shower.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is making the bed--there's only one bed in the apartment. Kristof finds a clean set of sheets and two pillows. But there is only one blanket.

MONICA: Now Monica comes out of the the shower, wrapped up in a towel. She finds her bag and pulls out a white tee-shirt and underwear, slips them onto her attractive naked body, and burrows under the blanket in bed. I'm so tired, - says Monica, and she turns onto her side and falls asleep.

KRISTOF: Kristof's organism reacts to Monica's body with a brief impulse. Okay, - thinks Kristof, - let's see what happens next, - and Kristof goes to the shower.

AMY: Now it's four o'clock in the morning. Amy is lying in her hospital bed. She has just woken up. In her mind the number reappears: +19569732328. Amy is astounded that she remembers the number so well. Call when you feel that someone needs your help, - she remembers, and Amy feels that she should call the number. Amy dials the number on her phone, presses the "call" button and suddenly Charlie's name appears on the display. This is Charlie's number, - Amy realizes. I never knew his number by heart. This number was in my conscience, it's Charlie's number. Something's happened to him. Amy waits to be connected. "Hi, this is Charlie Highton. Leave me a message and I'll try to get back to you" - says Charlie's voice on the answering service. Amy physically senses that something is wrong with Charlie.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie's body is on a stretcher in the operating room. His face is covered with an oxygen mask, his heart is connected to an artificial life support system. Several doctors are bent over Charlie's body, trying to figure out if it's possible to bring life back to this body. They are trying to understand if it's possible to return to this face its former nose. They look at the hole in his head, they peer into the cosmic black hole, framed with protruding coagulations of dried blood. There in that black hole they can see the substance known as "Charlie's brain." The doctors palpate Charlie's broken ribs, and sigh. It looks like this guy is in really, really bad shape, -- that's their diagnosis.

AMY: Now Amy is walking down a narrow hospital corridor. She wants to run away. She feels that she needs to find Charlie, and it seems they're not going to let her out just like that, so Amy is going to leave without permission. Now Amy is going down the stairs. She doesn't want to take the elevator, fearing she'll run into medical personnel. Amy is coming down by foot from the sixth floor. Now Amy is in the front hall on the first floor. Now she is looking for a door that opens onto the street. Now Amy's head is spinning--she loses her balance and falls. Now Amy sees a colorful pattern. Hundreds of multicolored lines are woven into each other forming an unbelievably complex image. The image changes constantly, lives its own inexplicable life, something appearing here, disappearing there, the patterns within it being flushed with ever-changing colors in a show of constant motion. One inconceivable pattern morphs into another, even more unbelievable than the first. And right here, suddenly, right here in the middle of this pattern Amy is connected with Charlie. It's impossible to explain how this happens. There are no words to describe this process. It's as though a million living particles called "I love you Charlie" fly through the air to meet with a million living particles called "I'm sorry Amy, but I love my wife Monica." And these million particles flying toward each other collide at enormous speed and encompass one another in unbearably long embraces. Particle "I love you Charlie" holds particle "I'm sorry Amy, but I love my wife Monica" in unbearably long embraces. Millions of particles find one another in

the infinite cosmos. Millions of particles embracing millions of other particles. These are true embraces.

CHARLIE: And so Amy meets Charlie and Charlie meets Amy. And telephones for this meeting are absolutely unnecessary. They found each other in a different way. Millions of living particles found each other and joined one another in perfect cosmic embraces.

AMY:

- That's just how the universe is, Amy, - sounds the familiar voice of a being from another galaxy.
- Un-fucking believable, - answers Amy, and millions of Amy's particles hold millions of Charlie's particles even closer.

CHARLIE:

- That's just how the universe is, Charlie, - says the dolphin.
- Un-fucking believable, - exclaims Charlie.
- I'll leave you with Amy then, - says the dolphin tenderly and disappears somewhere within Charlie.

*Pause.*

MONICA: Now Monica is asleep. In her sleep she feels a man's hands caressing her body. Monica opens her eyes.

KRISTOF: Now she is in Kristof's arms. The curtains are drawn completely over the windows and it is dark in the room, although outside it's daytime.

MONICA: Kristof's hands slide across Monica's body, slipping under her tee-shirt, touching her breast, moving down along her stomach, under the elastic band of her underwear and beyond. Into her depths.

KRISTOF: Now Monica breathes deeply and turns over to face Kristof. In the darkness Kristof can clearly see her eyes glistening.

MONICA: If you want to know true pleasure, forget everything you knew about sex up to this minute, - says Monica, softly, surely.

KRISTOF: And the next moment millions of living Monica particles are flying toward millions of living Kristof particles. Monica approaches Kristof, coming closer and closer. Monica's particles pervade Kristof, going deeper and deeper. Kristof lies on top of Monica and spreads her legs apart.

MONICA: You can't enter me with your penis, because a few days ago I had an abortion, I can't do this now.

KRISTOF: Kristof stops.

MONICA: You don't need to stop moving, Kristof. Sex is the best way for us to learn more about one another. Bring yourself into me, but not with your dick. And don't stop. And Monica embraces Kristof.

KRISTOF: Oh God, what is this?

MONICA: Embrace me, just the way I'm embracing you now.

KRISTOF: And Kristof holds Monica tightly against his body.

MONICA: The strength of your arms has nothing to do with this, Kristof. Embrace me in the same place that I'm embracing you.

KRISTOF: Where?

MONICA: Right here. And Monica holds Kristof's soul closer to hers.

KRISTOF: How are you doing that? What is that?

MONICA: It's an embrace. Embrace me.

KRISTOF: I don't know how.

MONICA: You've just never tried. You're always focused on a result, you think of the orgasm. But true pleasure is here, Kristof--do you feel that?

KRISTOF: Oh my God, it's almost unbearable!

MONICA: Because it's pleasure that never begins and never ends. It's real life, Kristof. Embrace me.

KRISTOF: And at that very second Kristof breaks into tears. Jesus, what the fuck is going on?!

MONICA: What is happening right now is the most important event in the universe -- life is meeting life.

KRISTOF: I'm alive, - whispers Kristof, and he cries. I'm alive, - whispers Kristof, and he smiles. I'm alive, - whispers Kristof, and he cries. I'm alive, - whispers Kristof, and he smiles. I'm alive, whispers Kristof and the black snake transforms into "My god, I never knew there could be such tenderness inside me." And there's already no black snake left inside Kristof, there is only "My god, I never knew there could be such tenderness inside me." And now millions of Kristof particles are flying toward millions of Monica particles, and now they encompass one another in unbearably long embraces. God, I never knew there could be such tenderness inside me, Monica, - whispers Kristof.

MONICA: I meet you, you meet me. My tenderness meets yours, and the universe expands. That's the main secret.

KRISTOF: Holy fuck!

MONICA: And now Monica experiences an orgasm, though Kristof didn't even enter her.

KRISTOF: Holy fuck! Kristof experiences an orgasm and the universe expands.

MONICA:

- Because right now you're very attentive, resounds the voice of the universe inside Monica.
- Thank you, for everything, - whispers Monica.
- You're welcome, - answers the universe, and tides of azure light flow through Monica's heart.

MONICA: Now threads of azure light stream from the center of Monica's chest and bleed into Kristof's heart. Holy shit!, - he repeats endlessly, Monica! Monica! Holy shit!

- That's what perfect pleasure is, Kristof--you see now? - utters the voice of the universe within Kristof.
- Pleasure is just life, life that can never end, right? - whispers Kristof directly into Monica's ear.

- Yes, - answers Monica.
- Thank you for everything, - whispers Kristof.
- You're welcome, - says Monica and tides of azure light fill Kristof to his very core.
- Holy shit! - utters Kristof and the universe expands.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now Charlie opens his eyes. And now Charlie opens his eyes. Charlie opens his eyes. Amy, are you here? - asks Charlie. How are you feeling? - asks the doctor. Charlie opens his eyes. He's in the intensive care unit. A male doctor is sitting near his bed. How do you feel, Charlie?, - the doctor repeats his question. Charlie's hands feel out his body, the bandages on his face.

- I feel alive, doctor--and you?
- Me? - the doctor answers, amazed.
- Yes, how do you feel?
- Well, I didn't sleep too well last night, - answers the doctor, and then candidly pronounces, - my best friend has cancer, and he's suffering terribly. He'll likely die very soon.
- I'm so sorry, - says Charlie. Somewhere deep, deep inside, he feels that he is alive.

AMY: And now Amy opens her eyes. She's once again in her hospital ward. A nurse sits near her. You mustn't leave the hospital without the doctor's permission, - says the nurse, - please don't do that again. Yes, - whispers Amy, - I won't, - and she feels that she has no physical strength whatsoever. Our psychologist would like to speak with you, would you mind if he pokes his head in after lunch?, - asks the nurse politely. I don't mind, - whispers Amy and at that moment a red flower blossoms within her. Well, - thinks Amy, - I have no strength, but on the other hand I have a red flower blossoming inside me. Hi, - utters Amy aloud. What? - the nurse asks. I wasn't speaking to you, - whispers Amy, and she closes her eyes and falls down into the very center of the blossoming flower.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is walking down the street. After the night spent with Monica--the most wonderful night of his life, the tenderest night he can remember since when his mother stopped holding him close to her--after that night which smelled of eternity, Kristof suddenly felt insufferably heavy. As though inside him, something was preventing him from going on with life. It seems like something inside me is preventing me from going on with my life, - thinks Kristof and leaves the house to take a walk. Now he is walking down Wrangelstraße nearing the small supermarket on the corner. Suddenly his brain runs into something very familiar, and the next moment Kristof realizes he's hearing a voice speaking Czech. A few dirty, drunk men and women are standing near the store entrance counting up money to buy a drink. They're speaking in Czech. I haven't heard my native language in awhile, - thinks Kristof. These Czechs came to Berlin with no aim whatsoever and in the end they've fallen into the blackest abyss of this city. Kristof walks by them and doesn't stop. Where am I

going? - Kristof asks himself. And this question suddenly begins growing in size as though someone had raised an enormous magnifying glass over it. "Where am I going?" - resounds the enormous, enormous question. Stop, - says Kristof to himself, and he stops. Stop! - Kristof says aloud. And then he yells as loudly as he can, - Kristof, stop! Stop! Stop! Kristof, stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! - he shouts down the length of the street, in Czech--and the drunk Czechs in front of the store watch him, trying to decipher the signals they're receiving from their crazy-ass countryman. - Stop! - Kristof screams down the whole street, - stop!, - and inside Kristof everything indeed stops; Kristof slowly falls to the ground, wraps his hands around his head, curls up and falls silent. The drunk Czechs slowly approach him.

- If you have no aim, you will live like a madman, - sounds the voice of a cosmic being from another galaxy within Kristof.
- How do I know what my aim is? asks Kristof from within, and without he carries on lying on the ground clutching his head in his hands.
- What would you like more than anything else in the world? asks the alien.
- I want calm, answers Kristof.
- Well, there's your aim, - answers the alien, and within Kristof appears a tiny blue dot.

MONICA: Now Monica is sitting on a bench in the park. For the first time in many years, maybe the first time in her life, she feels calm. Monica takes out her phone and makes a call. She's calling Charlie.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is lying on his hospital bed, his head is wrapped in bandages, his body aches. In one hand Charlie holds his phone. The ringer is switched off, but the light on the phone begins blinking in bright silver flashes. Charlie hesitates to answer, because he sees that the person calling him is Monica.

- Pick up the phone, Charlie, you need to talk, - he hears a voice say inside him.
- Yeah? - Charlie asks the speaker.
- Yeah, - answers the speaker.
- And with his right thumb Charlie presses on the "answer" button in the shape of a green circle.

"Charlie!" - he hears Monica's familiar voice. And at that very second it becomes crystal clear to Charlie that in fact he married Monica because he loves her.

MONICA: Hey Charlie.

CHARLIE: Hi Monica.

MONICA: How are you?

CHARLIE: I'm almost okay. You?

MONICA: I'm just fine, Charlie. I love you.

CHARLIE: And I love you, - says Charlie. And Charlie and Monica encompass one another in the long unbearable embraces of eternity.

*Pause.*

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is very drunk. He's drinking vodka with the Czechs, right on the corner by the supermarket at the intersection of Wrangelstraße and Falckensteinstraße. Kristof and his compatriots joyfully chatter in the same language. Now Kristof is drinking vodka, and letting go of everything. Everything. Everything. Now his compatriots are thinking, as soon as this guy lets go of everything, everything, everything, they'll in turn of course take his coat, his boots, his pants, his wallet and his phone.

AMY: Now Amy can sense that her strength is leaving her. She's now inside a marvelous red flower and it seems that's the only reason her body is still alive. - Hello Amy, my name is Eric Biron, I'm a psychologist. Can we chat?, - she hears an unfamiliar voice from the outside world, while in her inner world, Amy is at the center of a red flower. - Amy, can you hear me?,- her outer world calls to her.

- Amy, it seems at this point you won't be able to go back, - says the red flower.
- Sounds like my body has no strength left, right?
- It seems so, Amy.
- Yes, it seems so. Where do I go?, - asks Amy with childish levity.
- You can leave together with me forever, or you can be born again here on this planet and live out another strange life. It's your choice.
- You mean, I can be transported with you to another universe?
- There's only one universe, - answers the voice tenderly, - but what you have been yearning for since the earliest moment of your childhood is now right before you.
- But I always wanted to go to heaven.
- Do you know what heaven is, Amy?
- Not anymore, says Amy.
- Heaven is the moment when the flower opens, fully opens.
- And what does the flower become when that happens? - asks Amy.
- It becomes a fully opened flower.

And Amy opens her eyes for the last time in her life. The psychologist is sitting next to her bed. Amy looks at him through slightly squinted eyes.

- My name is Eric Biron, - the psychologist introduces himself.
- Hello, says Amy smiling, I'm five minutes away from becoming an opened flower.

KRISTOF: Now Kristof is lying on the ground under a bridge. He is no longer wearing boots, his coat, his sweater, and his wallet and telephone are no longer in the pocket of his trousers. His compatriots left him long ago, and took Kristof's things with them.

- Are you calm now, Kristof?
- I'm almost calm, because the life I lived, the life that was always running so far ahead, is now stopping.

- It seems that the life of a man called Kristof is ending.
- Yes, it seems so.
- And now you must decide: either to be born again here and once again live out some unexplainable life or leave with me forever. You must decide, Kristof.
- What's waiting for me out there, where you're inviting me?
- It's probably the thing you like more than anything else in the world. What do you like more than anything else in the world, Kristof?
- Well above all in this world I love endless motherfucking infinity and easy, slowly falling snow.
- You can find all those things there.
- In that case I think I want to go.
- So you're choosing infinity and snow, Kristof?
- I'm choosing absolute calm.
- Do you know what absolute calm is, Kristof?
- I suppose it's when my heart reaches absolute contentment?
- When will your heart reach absolute contentment?
- I guess when it stops working.
- Are you ready to stop your heart, Kristof?
- I think so.
- Then tell your heart to stop, and you and I will go along.

And immediately following these words Kristof opens his eyes for a few seconds. He is lying on his back, the grey concrete bridge above him. Kristof can feel a Berlin subway train crossing the bridge, because the bridge and the ground around him are shaking.

- Stop, - says Kristof, and the train stops right in the center of the bridge. - Stop, - says Kristof and his heart stops right at the center of the bridge. - Stop, - and his thirty-five years of inexplicable suffering come to an end. Slowly falling snow and motherfucking eternity! And the bridge stops at the center of the bridge. And the bridge stops at the center of the bridge. And the bridge stops at the center of the bridge.

*Pause.*

MONICA: Now Monica is going to the hospital where Charlie is staying. Monica is taking the subway. She closes her eyes and a dolphin appears inside her.

- Hi, - says the dolphin, - Amy said to say hello. Do you know Amy?
- No, - answers Monica. Who is that?
- A very nice girl with whom you'll soon be living in another galaxy.
- You think I'm going to go live in another galaxy?, - asks Monica with a smile--it feels kind of funny for her to be speaking with a dolphin.
- Wouldn't you like to find yourself in a place where living beings live in a completely, totally different way?

- What way would that be?, - asks Monica.
- It's the way of absolute mutual understanding, - answers the dolphin, and in the next second turns into a multicolored pattern, and in the next instant becomes a black bird reaching the silver moon, and in another instant everything inside Monica is slowly covered with slowly falling snow.
- I think I understand, - whispers Monica.

AMY: I think I understand, - whispers Amy and her heart stops working.

- Amy, Amy, what's wrong? - shouts psychologist Eric Biron, terrified.
- Hi, - Amy utters her last word and starts to leave through the blue dot, right through the very center of her unbeating heart.
- Amy, Amy, - the voice of the psychologist reaches Amy from the outside world. And someone, some very, very big someone, the biggest someone in the universe releases Amy from his warm embrace. And someone, the most ancient someone releases his long, unbearable embrace from this strange, very strange life, and a black hole opens into the beckoning, unfuckingbelievable eternity. The embraces unfurl and Amy slips out from them, and her fragile being falls down, falls down with the slow, white flakes of snow. And Amy turns into snow. Slowly slowly now in white flakes of snow, falls Amy, falls somewhere into heaven, falls somewhere into another galaxy, where from now on...where everything is always fucking awesome.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE: Now time goes by. A few minutes. Two hours. Three hours. Five. Seconds and hours. Seconds and hours. Eight hours. Nine hours. Now Charlie opens his eyes and Monica is standing by his bed. She's come to get him, take him away with her.

MONICA: Now Monica and Charlie are leaving the hospital, Monica is holding Charlie's hand, helping him into the taxi. Charlie's head is wound in bandages as before, and the place where his nose was is still wrapped in first-aid dressing.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie with some difficulty gets into the car, still in great pain from his broken ribs.

MONICA: Now the taxi is taking them to a hotel in west Berlin.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie and Monica are sitting on the bed in their hotel room gazing at one another.

MONICA: I'd like to tell you a few very important words Charlie--are you ready?

CHARLIE: Monica, I love you.

MONICA: Right now that's not important, darling, because those are just a bunch of words about some kind of love.

CHARLIE: About some kind of love?

MONICA: About some kind of love that might exist, or it might not.

CHARLIE: I think it exists, Monica.

MONICA: But it might not, Charlie.

CHARLIE: But I feel something.

MONICA: But you might not.

CHARLIE: I might not?

MONICA: You might not.

CHARLIE: And what can we do about it?

MONICA: We have to leave this place, sweetheart, because it turns out we're in the wrong place for our love.

CHARLIE: You mean Berlin?

MONICA: I mean this galaxy, Charlie. I think this galaxy is not the best-fitted place for our love.

CHARLIE: And what do we do then?

MONICA: We must go away to another cosmic system, somewhere where living beings are open to love.

CHARLIE: You think that kind of system exists? Yes, - sounds a familiar voice inside Charlie. Yes? - Charlie asks again, addressing the being from another galaxy within him. Yes, - answers the being from another galaxy.

MONICA: And at that very second Monica produces a nice little plastic bottle from her bag.

CHARLIE: Where'd you get that from? - asks Charlie ironically.

MONICA: I bought it from the nurse who was looking after you.

CHARLIE: Are German nurses even capable of such a thing?

MONICA: German nurses, like everyone else on this planet, are capable of anything, especially when a strong impulse is involved.

CHARLIE: On Charlie's face is a question.

MONICA: Three thousand euros is a strong enough impulse, even for a German nurse.

CHARLIE: Charlie's face is a question.

MONICA: You're doing everything just right, - says the voice of the being from another galaxy within Monica, and Monica pours out the entire contents of the plastic bottle onto the bed. One batch for you, one batch for me, my darling. And Monica divides the pills into two identical bunches.

CHARLIE: You're really not joking, Monica?, - asks Charlie feeling an unusual sense of unease.

MONICA: You and I have been married for more than a year, and I don't even know whether or not you've ever eaten oysters, my dear.

CHARLIE: What does that question have to do with this, Monica?

MONICA: Actually it has nothing to do with this. It's just I suddenly realized you and I have known each other almost two years and I still don't know whether you've ever eaten oysters. And many other things I don't know about you. And following these words Monica directs her handful of pills into her mouth.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie's face is a question.

MONICA: Now Monica is chewing the pills and making a face at their bitter taste.

CHARLIE: Now Charlie is gathering up the remaining handful of pills in the palm of his hand.

MONICA: Now Monica is going to the table, where there is a bottle of water.  
CHARLIE: Now Charlie is looking at the handful of pills on the palm of his hand.  
MONICA: Now Monica is drinking the water, and everything that was in her mouth is entering deep inside her.  
CHARLIE: Now deep inside Charlie a strange strain of music is playing. A few beautiful notes repeat the same melody over and over.  
MONICA: Now Monica goes to the bed, lies on her back and looks up at the ceiling.  
CHARLIE: Now Charlie is listening to the music inside him.  
AMY: Now Amy is in heaven, she has been transformed into the most incredible flower in the universe.  
KRISTOF: Now Kristof is crossing the boundaries of his galaxy and passing into an entirely different cosmic system.  
MONICA: Charlie, come to me, - whispers Monica.  
CHARLIE: I think I can, - utters Charlie rather nervously and sends his handful of pills into his mouth.  
AMY: I think I can embrace you.  
KRISTOF: I think I can let me embrace you.  
AMY: Embrace me, Charlie.  
CHARLIE: I think I can now.  
AMY: Will you let me embrace you?  
KRISTOF: Will you let you embrace me?  
CHARLIE: I let me embrace you.  
KRISTOF: I let you embrace me.  
AMY: I let me embrace me.  
MONICA: I let me...  
CHARLIE: I let you...  
MONICA: You embrace me...  
AMY: I...you...

CURTAIN