

**group etc.  
(As of July 19. 2010)**

'None of the characters in here are based on real characters.'

Disclaimer is always a good start. It's a head start. To my taste at least. At least to my taste. It's cold and serious and prevents you from falling into Q&A sessions with narcissist acquaintances who self-consciously think of themselves as muse in any possible way.

The first story I made up was before I knew how to write. It probably wasn't the very first one but it is the earliest one I remember; it was the story of a man who sold ice creams and someday when he was thinking of money that he would earn as summer was approaching, the coins in the cloud above his head started to pour on his head. I made it up for the painting I made when I was 5 or 6. I also said a series of poems about cookies that were told orally. My mother managed to preserve one piece of it on a tape she recorded with my voice. That piece of poetry is probably the first piece of audiovisual creation preserved from me. It goes back to when I was 4. I asked her what her first story was. She couldn't remember it. She applied another layer of sun protection on her left arm and said impatiently: "let's just enjoy the silliness of this day... forget about the past. Let's just enjoy the moment. In a month, we'll miss this sunny weather." Then she picked up her half bitten

apple, turned her head around and added: "Haven't these people got a job or something? It seems like everyone is on holiday or something!"

**Notes On A Train I Never Caught**

The wheel of the luggage broke while I was dragging it to J's car this morning. The handle of the handbag also broke when I was carrying it out of the car. Either I'm too clumsy with handling my things or it's the bad quality of the cheap things I have. No way I take these as signs... In a life of frequent moving I can't consider such as signs. They happen all the time. I have to get rid of the stuff, goldfish, plants, cooking utensils...and things break, things disappear, things show up after long absence when digging into closets that I need to empty; signs are everywhere. Even the sky above my head gets stormy the nights before I move. I can't care about them. I simply can't afford such a luxury now. I can't afford other luxurious things as well. At the moment a train ride sounds luxurious; something that I didn't have the time, extra money and motivation to exchange for this bus ride. And what if I consider them? Does it make a difference? No. There are certain matters that are out of my hand. It's not about the drunk taxi driver who smashed your legs to the wall you were walking next to some milliseconds ago. It's nothing you can do about it. You've already taken the precautions; you were walking in the sidewalk and he was 'supposed' to drive in the car line but he didn't and

you can't blame yourself for being there at that moment. Considering 'the butterfly effect', the 'karma', your 'dreams leading to your destiny' it's still hard to blame yourself. The only thing that may tickle you is the remembrance of the signs you saw the very morning of the accident. You saw them but you ignored. They didn't stop you from going out to the street. You probably associated them with something that occupied your mind at the time; the house you were about to buy maybe (don't think about it anymore, it doesn't have a lift and you don't have legs) or the girl working in the R&D department that you wanted to ask out (don't think about her either)... the signs would point at anything but the taxi and the wall.

Still 7 hours to go. The heat is unbearable. I want to get the most out of being caught on this bumpy bus but I've developed a slight headache and feel too wasted to do anything that needs me to think. From a week before I was planning to write a review of the last place I'd been to and the people I've met. I want to keep busy but I fail even focusing on the landscape outside. Everyone on the bus is as bored as me. Music, movies, video games, books and magazines don't amuse us anymore. The heat is swallowing everything. The guy sitting next to me is ready to attack. We've passed the smile/ nod/ small talk phase. I imagine how it will continue: a small talk with dreary questions: "Bloody hot, ey?", "You're not from around, are you?", "Where are you going to?" "Why?", followed by my

contribution asking after each answer: "And you??" Then we'll keep talking about the heat, summer and the dried landscape outside then he will show me photos of his dogs back home and then the more discreet truth will come out: his 27 year-old daughter whom he hasn't seen for 16 years... This will be interesting. I will think of all the dramatic causes from prison to incest to the hysteric mother of the girl to being in coma for the past 16 years... This is the limit of my imagination. I look at him with inspecting eyes once again and see no dog person or a prisoner in him. He probably doesn't have a daughter either. He returns my gaze, dries sweat from his forehead, smiles and says: "Bloody hot, ey?"

**First letter from Lillith**

Dear Joseph,

Thank you for your letter. I agree you do have rights. And I might owe you an answer. Though I didn't know you were already in the middle of things. (Neither did I have any idea you were hanging out with David again.) Anyway, the woman on the train is right you know. We do get mixed up as we live our lives. But her husband, or rather husbands, are also the works of her own imagination. He is not only what he tries himself to be but he is also what she fantasises him to be. Even though we are both the sender and the receiver of images, gestures, communication, we can not be both at the same time and what is more

important we cannot see ourselves the way we are seen by others. This I know you know. Characters is a good word for the images we play since it is like a theatre. I like that as well. Though I don't think of the set as a play but rather just a stage where you can enter and exit as you wish. There is no script. Unless of course you are unfortunate to be brought up in an old-fashioned environment and compulsively keep up the bourgeois role-playing games. I am thinking of the more creative ways of playing roles and using characters. Like you are doing right now when taking the mythical name Joseph, the grandson of Abraham and the stepfather of Jesus. (And you hang out with David!) I take your choice of name as a kind of provocation but I am not sure it is supposed to be. Is it? What to me is attached to Joseph is old, traditional, religious, patriarchal and disturbing. He is not the mythical figure I would want to revive. But perhaps that is ignorant of me. Maybe he is precisely the one who needs to develop. What if Joseph could change? It is an interesting idea. What then could motivate him to do that? Is he in doubt? Are you haunted by the woman on the train? That she might be right and you had no idea? I think that this is not new to you. Only you haven't been able to explain it so the experience of meeting someone who did, and in such a plain way, was shaking. And it got you started. You want to express these ideas. And you need help telling them since you know that the author can never see himself. And you need to be seen. You want

to be able to look at the meaning of your role. How are you playing? What difference can you make? How will it be perceived? I think it is a good intention. A man I know is struggling with sort of the same issues. Though he is very powerful. He is the Wizard. I work for him collecting images. Rosa sorts them into the big archive. Eventually he thinks he will be able to see something, a pattern or a greater picture. Or, which is what I think is more likely to happen, he will realise that there is no greater picture and there is no pattern. There is only him and his projections on the big white screen that is our common interests, our attempts at understanding something, our desires to see and know. So if you start from there; Joseph knows this and he is wanting to change intently, carefully and together with someone else who can be the Other for him, whom he can be the Other for. What shall I do? Shall I be the Other? I know exactly how to be that. It would be very easy for me. But it would be great to play a different part for once, perhaps being the subject.

Love  
L

### Second letter from Lillith

Dear Joseph,

I am so glad that you have finally answered my letter. Like you say we are already in the middle of things and I think therefore communication from now on has to be speedier and clearer.

The Other – the one you are playing – is still very vague. You need to work on him more. Like what is his ambition? Where is he going? Who are his friends and what are his surroundings? I find him hard to believe. I can only see the little Jewish boy (who is still hanging out with David!) or the cardboard cut out picturing the old stiff patriarch. If he keeps this going he will soon need a wife/girlfriend and that's the end of that story. So you see what I mean!? Time is of essence here. We need to avoid the narrative taking over, ending up with its conventional closure. What can Joseph do? Can he start over?

Love  
L

### The Shrink

One of the advantages of seeing an analyst is to put the blame for the recent 'weird' behavior on her treatment. In my late teenage years my mother tried very hard to convince me to see her shrink at least once but she never succeeded. She was seeing this woman regularly and she advocated the whole idea of seeing a shrink as a necessary part of nowadays life. I would firmly reject her suggestion with a childish antagonistic statement saying that I was not 'mentally sick' so I wouldn't visit any sort of doctor to cure my 'imaginary' mental problems that only existed in her head. We had many discussions on the subject until my mother somehow noticed that my resistance

is not towards her analyst or any other analyst in the world, but is pointing indirectly at her will to keep her role of the ruling mother in relation to me. She gradually gave up but every now and then, while talking to other people in my presence, she would bring up the subject of the individuals in need of moments of detachment and rethinking, specially in stressful times. She would say that in order to feel completely detached and secure, one needs to see someone that is a total stranger. I always wondered about this other that my mom felt secure in her presence... where would she confide? Did my mom's analyst also see another practitioner of her sort? Was it possible for her to sit in front of a mirror (or lie on her Freudian couch with her back to a mirror) and jot down her own thoughts?

Being away from my mother, I feel free to see one in order to try out a new sort of conversation. I always loved the scenes in Woody Allen's movies that the neurotic character confides in his analyst and quotes his analyst to his friends. I thought as an artist, I should try an analyst and examine their knowledge and learn something. I knew nothing in the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis other than the conventional names I'd heard and brief definitions of key notions that they'd thought me in the art schools I'd been to. Freud, Lacan, Oedipus conflict, medusa's head... I wanted to meet someone who knew more than the art-related people who know everything and know nothing. At first I wondered how to find one

that would feel comfortable talking in English with me. It's always a hassle to communicate in countries that you don't know the language even if their knowledge of English is well.

## No. 1. The Boy

The first time he mentioned his friend was the fall before he disappeared. He got a call on his phone and as he was talking politely but intimately we noticed that there was something about it. The male voice on the other side of the line sounded serious but comforting. When he hung up, he briefly looked at us in silence and then he smiled. His friend, he told us, would pick him up in 10 minutes and he would sleep in his place that night. He slept in his place that night and the night after... From then on this unseen friend became part of our daily lives. We used to have coffee and hung out together with him, and once in a while a phone call would pop up. Always from that unseen friend. But our curious questions about his identity were always left without an answer. He just smiled and smiled, and remained silent. 18 months ago there had been a sign when the handle of the handbag had broken. But I had ignored it.

## No. 2. The smarty

The adjective that can truly describe him is 'self-centered'. But this word describes the whole human race, doesn't it?

He was always gossiping behind the mutual friends calling them 'users'.

He believed that the reason he was being ignored was that he was not needed by them. He called me only when he was truly bored or in need of help. He would never ask for help. He would make it seem as if you must be thankful to him that was giving you the opportunity to do something for him. He would ask: "do you wanna come over and paint my kitchen table with me?" At first I didn't notice the trick. After a few times it became obvious that what he asked was not my opinion but he was ordering me to do what he wanted me to. I started to change my answers from silence to real answers: "I don't want to paint 'your' kitchen table. You want me to do it? Why don't you ask if I have time or interest then? You should say: 'can you please help me painting my kitchen table?' Then I will help you painting it." He wasn't all that useless though. Once he wrote me a letter of recommendation. I didn't finally get in but at least, it was a nice gesture from him.

## No. 1. The letter

June 24, 2005

Dear Andra Konton,

I am writing to you in support of Ami Nara's application to the Free Viking Movement project. Ami Nara (1979, Tokyo) works and lives in Lulea (Sweden). Ami works with the mediums of drawing, performance and installation. His artistic practice questions the narrative strategies and explores culture, representation

and subjectivity. Ami's writings evolve from letters of rejection, skype conversations, blog entries, newspaper articles, official documents, spam emails and such. In his writings, he intertwines imagination and memory by utilizing storytelling and performativity. Ami often collaborates with artists, critics, writers, historians and actors as his readers/ advisers/ colleagues while telling a story. Participating in Free Viking Movement would be ideal contexts for Ami to continue this growth and discovery. The project would challenge him and I believe his participation might also represent an unusual and vital opportunity for exchange among fellow colleagues.

I hope you'll be able to find a place for Ami in the project. I think you would really enjoy working with him and I know he would benefit enormously from the experience. If you have any questions about Ami please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,  
Sista Chansen

## Chapter 13 (Friday)

He was always gossiping behind mutual friends calling them "users". But again he came from another world – from the future. Could he then be one of them? She asked him again: "Would you join our nationality or would you stick to the one you will get in the future?" so you couldn't really call him a mutual friend but they used him anyway... to measure themselves.

But they could not really know what the future is even though they could see him now. The future was in the present and already a repetition of the past. Only some of them knew of this cycle and they wished they had never been told. It was the godfathers who believed it was a good idea that only a few knew about this fact while the public was unaware of their circular destiny. The child started screaming. He wasn't fond of children either. He got irritated by the voice, turned to her and said "I've got a reason to call them users! Take Mia for example; she always wants to leave her kid and her dog with me when she's going on a date! Once I asked her to take care of my cat for some hours while I was away visiting my father in the hospital and she refused! Her excuse was that she is allergic. I know she's not. Such a user!"

"Where are you going to?"

Hmm, what is a frame? Is that a frame in time, a picture frame, a window frame- a boundary line between one thing and another. Can there be a hole in the frame? Is it still a frame? After a while the man turned into a frame. Not extra golden one but rather yellowish. The doctors were quite happy with this result of a year long experiment at the Smithsonian Institute so they decided to call the press. While the rest of the public this remarkable ..., Tony was asked to straighten up the frame. Tony thought about the hole in the frame: "A frame becomes a frame with the big hole in it. There couldn't be an object called frame if there wasn't a void. The

absence is the frame.” “Hurry up the press is coming. Everything must look perfect. Stop gazing at the wall and clean up!” said the manager.

Still 7 hours to go. That’s about a plane ride to New York. Maybe that’s why I always have a kinesthetic reaction to the notion of 7 hours. Not maybe, for sure. New York is magnetic and I suffer from this power. It’s religious. Once is paradise. Always longing back. However, what’s the reason to call for what we already know is beautiful. Let’s open our eyes and stare at the ugly. What do you see? The beauty? The ugly duckling maybe. The ugly duckling in reverse action; it looks beautiful at first; it becomes monstrous when you look longer, when you give it time to grow and get into you. 7 hours to get another view of the duck. If only I could see it again. Instead I’ve got 7 hours to stay silent, calm down, take it easy, relax and empty my body from disturbing thoughts. And if then you still want me to tell you what the ugly looks like I will try to describe what I found in myself. Maybe it’s all in me the beauty and the ugly but if you wake me up and take me to New York it will all be a different story my dear. Don’t you think? No I’m sure that the beautiful and the ugly will be the same wherever you go.

Still 7 hours to go before hell breaks loose. Hell is here. On earth we’ve got the hell! As a matter of fact I’m working in it. I’m working under the supervision of the great “Devil” – the greedy owner of this black hole. 1 hour is gone. Still 7 hours to go; to serve these pricks at their tables with their

annoying kids with running noses, their wives and mistresses with deformed breasts and faces who think of themselves as beauty queens right out of the office of the plastic surgeon who eats lunch here every other day. “No, no, no” he answered back. “Nature is hell on earth.” Regarding to Antichrist heaven is something you think you have but realize that it’s always linked to sadness. Antichrist is one of the most remarkable films I’ve seen, but now I’m not at all continuing your words and sentences. But tell me more about this black hole... We’re here, aren’t we? Are we in a black hole? Maybe on the edge where we have the choice of going either way... the devil can keep himself in the black hole. I agree: let the devil stay where he/ she is. We have enough to deal with. So were the hell does this writing lead us? Maybe a new word here and there. Some I do not use very often. Maybe a few new pictures in our heads – bad ones, good ones. We will remember some.

### **No. 3.**

The bus rode fast through the gray landscape. And I would look out the window following the circuit of a drop of water running through the glass. It was raining a bit, and the person that sat by my side, listened to his ipod music. Suddenly I remembered the same bus ride, 18 months before. It had been during the summer and it had been a bloody hot day. Curiously, that had been the day that had started a new chapter in my life. So many

things had happened. The only trace left from that day are the marks it left on my memory. Recently I found this passage that I’ve apparently written the same day in my diary:

“Abuse. Amuse. Muse. Muse melt. Melt. Ice melts. The ice melts quickly. The ice on the river which is not the ice discussed which melts quickly under the warm March sun. Lying exposed without its blanket of snow, the ice on the river melts quickly under the warm March sun.

He thought, while looking to the river, through the window. But inside was warm. Really warm. He was melting too. Melting into a she. Abused. Amused.”

Memory plays variety of tricks to distort itself, to present the past in a new way each time. How come I’ve written such cheesy poetic love-related lines on a day like that?

### **No. 1. On memorizing poetry**

I used to write poetry on cheesy days. But not anymore. Days had just stopped to be cheesy and sorrowful events were just happening in an avalanche of emotions. Life had nothing to do with poetry. With ice melts and muses amusing themselves how could one expect a poetic life? Life had more to do with which one? Abuse? Use? Life was just using me, wasting me, eating me up. I felt for a long time that I’m too good to be consumed by life, too smart to suffer but I wasn’t. The older I get the more I notice how naive my thoughts were. I am and I was not in a good

mood today. Would it be forever? Why wasting life like this? Melting the days and seconds with uncontrolled emotional disorders, uncontrollable passion for living and for dying at the same time. The snow was now ice, outside my window and I was sitting at the kitchen table next to the window. She was lying on the coach in the living room. With my back to the wall that separated us, I could hear the sound of the movie she was watching. I imagined her wrapped in her blue blanket, with her glass of beer placed next to the coach on the floor. I imagined her sympathizing with the female character. Her heart would beat faster when the guy was almost shot but magically got away with it. I could depict her there without actually seeing her. She was fond of movies. At the beginning, we had a hard time deciding what to watch each time that we wanted to do it together. After some weeks I found her sentimental, she found me a snob; we hardly watched anything together anymore. I was sitting at the kitchen table trying to focus on the article I was writing. Every now and then I was distracted by the sound of bullets and cries and screams. The male voice said: “this is not a magazine story, this is real...” This was the last straw. The very last one since I was typing: “... but the truth is...” I just wanted to be alone for some hours. I noticed that I hadn’t been alone for around a week. My walk in the city some hours earlier had revived my need for solitude. What bothered me so much was not her presence; it was her gay