

Translated excerpt

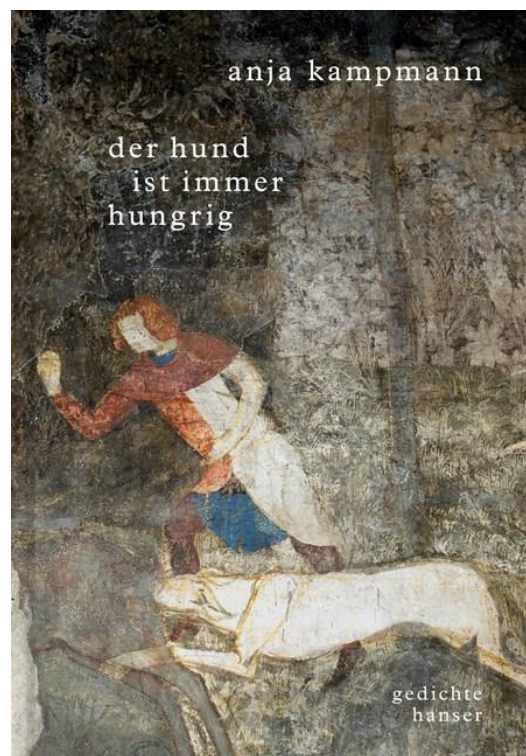
Anja Kampmann
der hund ist immer hungrig

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Anja Kampmann
the dog is always hungry

Translated by Anne Posten



it was the year

it was the year in which everything
bowed was it bad air a gas
perhaps from that great quake in friuli

so what he heard it said heard the numbers
the black bad garden plague
had now advanced to the walls of the palace

and it was summer hot
and clement sat between two fires
he stayed he had wood brought

and wine. and sat
between two fires
some nights he stole into the hall

saw all hunt and saw the hunger
on the walls hounds falcons stag hunt
scribblings it was the year of the plague

a year not here the flames
rose only as color

a negative range where traces
of these dreams staggered strangely

and hungrily the black breath spread across the land

in negative range torn between two fires
clement sat around him flickered fear

give me an image give me the high
walls give me a game give me the hunt

and that dark wood
where it can be mysteriously sought
the way
and who leads catches the scent

and who leads knows the fateful song of desires
that I sang. ¹

¹ The *chambre du cerf* (room of the deer) was constructed in 1346 in the *Palais des Papes* (Palace of the Popes) in Avignon. It shows various hunting scenes. A year after its completion, on January 25, 1348, a violent earthquake rocked Northern Italy, Slovenia, Austria, and Bavaria, with the epicenter in Friuli. The quake was an 8-9 on the EMS scale. It was seen by many contemporaries as a harbinger of the plague,

in my class

in my class sits the son of the pig farmer
there were other sons too. many had fields, turnips
a weakness for firefighting or warning shots
and yet: the apple trees bloomed
the nights still cool
the beer too the girls the sweet
perfume vanilla in the darkness
the apple trees bloomed acres gaped
under the short first corn
the sons in the wet grass
understood each other and the night too
something that could be dug up: acres
the girls the future and all
that was. laughing should sound
like the opposite of crying
the opposite of hesitant or howling
in the straw behind the barn. the talk
was of kissing but the talk
did not include us.

which broke out a few weeks later in Northern Italy. Petrarch wrote of the earthquake in his epistolary poem "Ad se ipsum": "The reason is probably God's wrath, for I am convinced that our sins merit it; but perhaps it is only the disfavor of heaven as a result of a change in nature?" "Corrupt air" and "vapors" were often thought at the time to be causes of the plague. The plague soon came to Avignon as well. It is said that Pope Clement VI spent the plague year of 1348 between two constantly burning fires. Perhaps because the fleas could not bite him there, he survived the year and the plague. The fresco is pictured on the book jacket.

duvenstedter brook

they say it wasn't so bad here
herr kaufmann and his sweet creatures the deer
hear them bleating now gray day he had
these lovely stags brought from poland france
he put on his good boots to hunt
knew göring herr moustache too planned
parades with pomp I don't know if you can hear
the stags bawling here *the souls gasp*
for so long there was nothing to hear
because they all had to go and no one was worth it
any longer and what's it worth exactly just asking
because no one could stay. the reichsstatthalter
asshole as I live and breathe hauled in for the park
the deer the game
(and as the bombs fall the beasts
still get the special nursing mother's ration, the oats rolled)
he died at over sixty on the elbdeich no hardship
it wasn't so bad and look
the deer splendid how they multiply ²

² Karl Kaufmann was a Nazi Party *Gauleiter* and *Reichsstatthalter* of Hamburg, 1933-1945. Kaufmann's history is associated with the legend of the "good Gauleiter," but this has no basis in historical fact. Kaufmann authorized the establishment of the first concentration camps and was the first to actively ask Hitler for permission to deport Jews. Beginning in 1937, Kaufmann dedicated great effort to introducing red deer into the Duvenstedter Brook. "The souls gasp": after Paul Celan, "In the bellshape," in *Breathturn into Timestead: The Collected Later Poetry*, trans. Pierre Joris (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014) 445.

moths

they ate two camemberts each
in front of some soap that flickered
every evening on our screen
we had no idea how long life
lasts: here a flickering of eyeshadow blue
thongs gummy bears disco somewhere
no one can see it: the appendix and the
internal organs this burden called life
skybooster the names of guys that is
the harsh light over a village
that confuses the birds around one needed
something, the oven that roars
or the pillars of light in the distance
for a kind of symmetry
here my heart you can wind
your fine young down.

deep blue (1997—)

they called him deep blue
maybe because they still believed
in the ocean and its ancient power
or the currents of the pacific
continuing from land to land
the great spirit and the movement
of a brain
deep blue maybe not quite consciousness
yet here was something calculating playing
chess our hero kasparov
how did it feel when you lost
the sixth game against what
power? pond pump
versus ocean the mental strength
of the human soul, ha
which blue do you think
we'll see today? ³

³ Deep Blue was a chess computer developed by IBM. In 1996, Deep Blue was the first computer to beat then-chess world champion Garry Kasparov in a game with standard time controls. In 1997, Deep Blue won an entire match of six games under tournament conditions against Kasparov.

to aiken cura

I

you still belong
whether or not you know what they did to you
the question of the edge from which one comes
dear bulblet, dear piece of your own skin
I don't know if you know you're now you-you you-you you
a wonder. your end after the fall
no end. annulled by a pipette
I think myself into the middle of your *what*—in the stall
eight times the same pale nostrils horsehead and leg
like a hallucination on straw
with no manger and no starlight
leave it—then you're in front of the camera
going going you know eight times
and on the field it makes no difference
like in war where eight soldiers become one
as they fall yes I
saw you. I saw you thundering fast
far from aunt dolly on the polo field
from microscope pipette and patience
pays off. and the medal faithful friend
who accepted it? the forebear
the piece of breastskin
or the descendant antant-antant-antant
(listen, it already sounds like a gallop)
with its beautiful pallor? I'm asking
who stood there
was it you
were you there
on that day with the medal?

II

Ah dear descendantant

and your gallop is heading towards what? ⁴

⁴ Aiken Cura was an Argentinian polo horse who died in 2006 after an accident in the Argentine Open. His owner, Adolfo Cambiaso, had him cloned using a piece of his skin, thus producing the first cloned horse. The procedure was done using somatic cell nuclear transfer, the same technique used to clone Dolly, the first cloned sheep.

the dog is always hungry

sometimes I think of his dog
michael's, from alberta. not long ago
he was x-rayed. the bullet behind the
barrel came from the res. huh. rough
manners. there's no water. huh. the only
good stuff's bottled by a swiss
company. the dog they told me
nearly lost its mind. when its master
back weeks after the operation.
tumors. huh. that big. sometimes I think
of the lakes they talked of.
fracking water whole regions
drenched with chemicals. warning shots
aimed at the sky time and again so that
the fowls don't land. no, better
anything that creeps or crawls. the dog
is always hungry. the area dredged
the size of england. huh. the dog is always hungry. ⁵

⁵ Fort McMurray, in the Canadian province of Alberta, is the world's second-largest fracking area. The drinking water there is tainted with chemicals. The neighboring Six Nations Reservation has no access to drinking water, despite the fact that Nestlé bottles millions of liters of water a day from the territory. Michael Beamish and Jasmin Herold report on fracking in Alberta in the documentary *Dark Eden*.

chase

I saw them once in bogota
never clearly
just shaggy fellows
at the terminal
near the carousel
where the bags came out
lipstick and provisions
bug spray
but no rich pickings
they didn't strike
white and black and caramel
I saw their fur & all the bags
alike on the conveyor
they went into the departure hall
following their sharp noses, until then
no problem
but then the same image
in another country
seoul and seven times
the best nose
is that him there? there?
there there there? there there?
oh sweet creature, benevolent
inspector
isn't it ever
enough
or the masters
who wanted you
 too much
we see you seven
seven times
for heroin and coke
the descendantant
he sniffs our bags
smells explosives
and the greed
that we took him
like flowers
on sale
the paused lifespan
but he went on he went easily
like a silk rose
something that can
not die like the loveliest
jewel
this great finery
in the piled hair

of a pale
girl
who smiles
sadly, gently smiles.⁶

⁶ Chase is the first cloned sniffer dog. A Labrador, Chase was one of the most successful border dogs, and was cloned seven times in late 2007. The clones are used to sniff for drugs at the Seoul airport.

rabbit

along the wall
with the dog scat
a little lane leads up
to the street
the girl is simply dressed still quite
herself no one
has to see her
the years
rush irreverently past
only here
the street turns
with its rails, thundering yellow
a corner
that expects nothing
really no one
would have to believe in happiness
if she didn't exist
the girl
with both arms
with a glance that now
for the first time perhaps
lifts
not far from the bakery
flower shop funeral home
a look
that resists
and
in her arms
a black
large
and frightened
in her arms
a trembling
black
rabbit
she holds it
to her chest
waits
stands
and cannot
will not
go on
crossing
the street
just holds the rabbit
another moment
just not yet

onward.

something with sheep

there's the shepherd who tears
the lambs out of his sheep even at night
the fields are empty but for the dry grass
what once was distant widely scattered
and bright
the man's arm wet
with blood
something comes to lie behind the sheep
stillness finally a first
movement a voice almost a voice
no strength yet in this place
only life.

bat

it was the lesser goal
just a mosquito or small prey
that swam through the night air
as through distant ages
the song gave
 no light just a trace
at the approach of the hunter
that found its way through the rotor blades
and fell.

just lay there

mickey. batman.
nameless in itself
in the rush of the wave
that came from within through the tissue
hit you took and buried you enigma
tic mickey. batman. collapsed in on itself

and enveloped in the wingskin
lies still and up above the rotor goes on spinning
in the wind. in the wind. just a big cat
with an invisible tooth
vacuum and batman you
the prey

and while moths
 swam through the night air
 as through distant ages
we saw you fall. batman. then a flock of birds

did you catch a glimpse of the intergalactic space
we're making? ⁷

⁷ The dead bats found behind wind farms long remained a mystery. Now it's known that the rotors of wind turbines cause dramatic changes in air pressure. The sudden negative pressure behind the blades causes the sack-like lungs of bats to expand rapidly, tearing blood vessels. This so-called barotrauma causes internal bleeding. This is the same death that astronauts would die if they were to leave their spaceships.

mittweida, in january

the hickey on her neck, the bad skin
on her shoulders—under the edge of the sweater
shimmers the hazy edge
of a tattoo. hair dyed black
though the roots are already growing in lighter
the sweater made of thin, sheer stuff. the tattoo
shows some singer's pompadour or forelock her
upper body leans, her hands in the hands of the young
man across from her. faux leather shoes, white sneakers
something like laughter, when the train stops and they
smoke on the platform during the brief stay, just in this thin
sweater, out in the provinces, as if the train doors
were an invitation to russian roulette.
but the risk? the risk is the distance that creeps across fields
a blue bench before the station building with a metal frame
and a seat made of single bars of plastic
the risk is the color of the bare birches, the trunks, pale
a color that runs wild, the garage roofs
the desperate last snow that knows no future.

ohrid

we're still here in these streets
in these willow trees
startled by the pale yellow
the boats bear long strands of plastic
to scare away the birds

because no one saw how peacefully gulls sleep
nestled in the cloth cover
of a rocking green and white boat

the things we left along the way
are no longer here
and do you still think of the simple shapes
wooden icons
suffused with such trust

someone was there, loved on this globe
was scared, like us
beneath just such willows
before the rocking blue
where the gulls rested

so unconcerned about the depths
so far.

a love poem

SOMETIMES when you know night's coming
sometimes in the evening when you know you have to go
something like a dream and outline that
blackness detaches us takes
the part that's not me
not you says what
comes before saying what
one misses most
in the afternoon before rain after all the discussions
of the world this our
world that's hardly aware before falling asleep two
bodies it seems would it count this
world this language that doesn't mean us.

THEN we glided in darkness the paddles wet
and the stream gurgled softly not grass but
blackness the big clump on the bank
we moved without effort as love speaks
as a whisper really without you and me.

I'm writing a love poem
while the Chinese land on the moon
while the gene scissors CRISPR-Cas9
alter the susceptibility
of people to disease

love letters
which are the only thing
as rain turns to snow
on pale meadows
that have no answer

the fishermen's lines stretch transparently
a riverbed is dredged in the night
sand carted from the beaches
tons of sand

I'm reading a love story
that has to do with madness
in the stories I read
it's hot
and there are tropical plants

that the neighbors had delivered today
parcel services
always let love
come closer
always let the dream

michael jackson's eyes
against a gold background *king of pop*

snookums climbs the stairs
of the train station in finsterwalde

between flowered planters
stands a mousetrap in the dust

you see a fire on a riverboat in hanoi
the fire of smothered plantations, no
you don't see that
somewhere the world
that matters for a love poem
ends

the lights of the refineries
lights of the port facilities

off the coast of england the orca whales
have been without calves for 25 years
no one knows why
in this sea bluer than blue

always dream of the sand
a love poem

distances I cross
pretzel sticks at a hotel bar

the scarf a saleswoman lays round your neck
as if a new tenderness were awakening

clouds that can be described outside
the train window
light and shadow
the search for contour

while the doctor closes the door silently behind him
while the answer is always good

I'm writing a love poem
and there's nothing outside this poem

I'm writing
a love poem
and looking out into the night. ⁸

⁸ The gene scissors CRISPR Cas9 were used to produce the first genetically edited human girls, who were born in China in 2018. The researcher He Jiankui explained that he had made the genetic modification to make the girls resistant to HIV. Other researchers, however, believe there could have been other reasons for mutating the CCR5 gene: It is closely associated with brain function, so a modification could also serve to produce particularly intelligent people with enhanced memory. Sand is illegally quarried and smuggled internationally, since the resource has become scarce. The unmanned moon probe *Chang'e 4* landed on the side of the moon farthest from the earth in 2019 in order to perform experiments.