

Translated excerpt

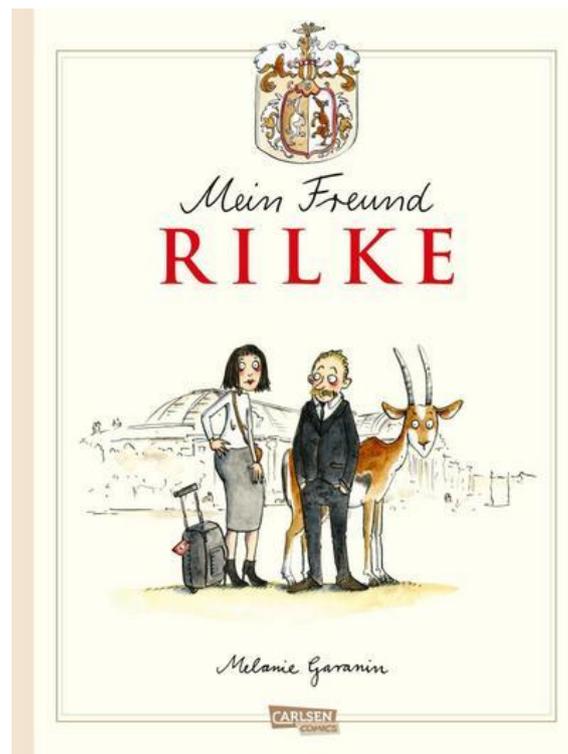
Melanie Garanin
Mein Freund Rilke

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Melanie Garanin
My Friend Rilke

Translated by John Reddick



*It's quite a walk to the 'Grosse Kunstschau Wornswede'
exhibition space.*



Right then: duty calls.



Here we go: this
is the official bit...



Some formal speeches to start with, which I can summarize as follows:



Speech #1: Even after 124 years the mayor still seems to be miffed that Rilke didn't decide to settle here for good.

Speech #2, given by a woman on the museum's staff: Her refreshing take on things is that to her mind Rilke was nothing more than Clara Westhoff's ex.

Rede #3, by a literary scholar: Guff about vowels, marshland and birch trees. I didn't get it all, but what I did get was a complete load of nonsense.

Speech #4: An actor from Bremen who is planning a biography...

I think I'll go
and check out the
lunch.



*I get the feeling that for Rilke
this place amounted to little more
than a swimmer's starting block*

*- a useful device
for plunging into
fresh waters.*



*Whenever I read him
it speaks straight into
my soul. Or at any rate
this particular poem with
the angel does.*

*I find him
incomprehensible.
And that really
appeals to me.*

*Ah, Rilke manages by the use of simple
words to transform phenomenally complicated
things into something completely different.*

*We
love
it.*

*I love
this
woman*

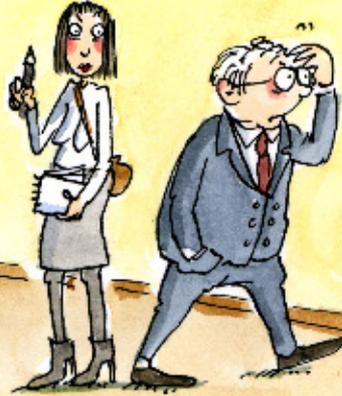


Hello. I'm a Journalist and I write for an online maga...

No, not the Bremen Daily News, but even so, may I just ask you:

Why Rilke?

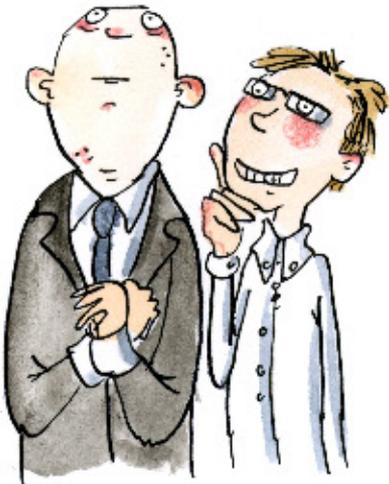
I don't do interviews!



He did have that awful mother complex; but look what he made of it...

Art - indeed!
But then: what about all those poor woman?!

I've got the feeling that I'd do better to stick to the facts; to be strictly objective. But all the same...



I have to admit that the days are long gone when I thought that professionally speaking I needed to give it my all - That's what I aimed to do back then.

But my ambition was no match for reality, and that's no bad thing.

I can be glad that I always managed to write little pieces on the side, and that my boss never completely forgot about me. Strangely enough, now that I have more time on my hands I feel completely wired out.

That sounds bad, but it doesn't bother me at all.

And that is bad.

Or completely unimportant.

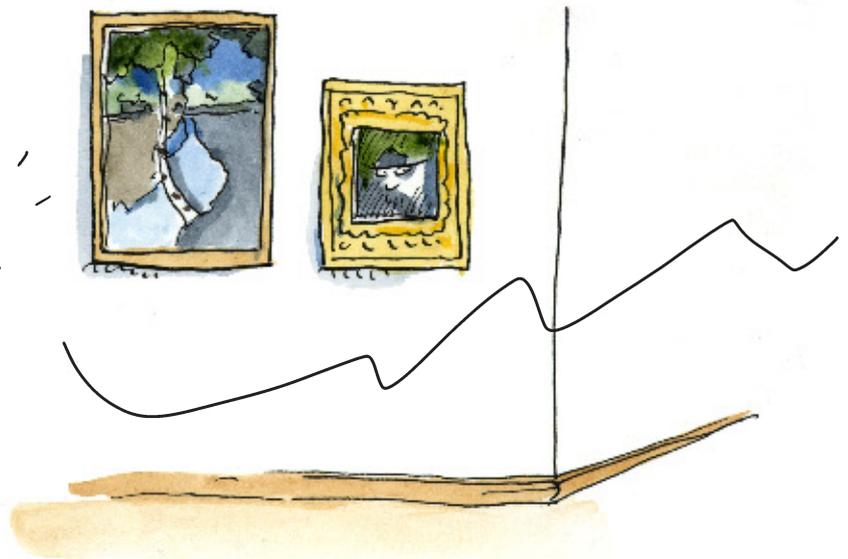




*I'd better get going.
I'll crib the rest
from the internet.*



*'Wham-
bang!!!*





So sorry!

Fancy a glass of fizz?



I was just going...

Has fortune smiled upon us?

Really? Well, yes.
I'm here for professional reasons. But so what?
How about you?



Um...

What I meant was... What a stroke of luck I've had!



Well, let's say that I'm also here for professional reasons. But as you were in the process of leaving, we're

Is someone asking who I really am?

actually only here for our own amusement now!
How very delightful!



*Do you like the paintings?
This is my favourite.*

Really?

Why's that?



I really like the dog.

Me too!

*Not to mention the house,
the roses, the woman.
The whole lot.*



What do you reckon? Do you think Heinrich Vogeler deliberately left Rilke out of the picture?



Wenn
was it
painted

1905. Yes, I know he wasn't there any more by then — or at any rate only for occasional visits. But there are people who claim to see...



The bare flat land was alive with expectation of a guest who never came; the anxious garden posits the question again, its smile then slowly fades.

... things they
can't really see?

Someone wrote an entire book about the missing poet.



Did they
really?
Is it any
good?

(...)



Rilke probably wasn't in the picture simply because he was out in the fields looking for the dog's lost ball.



Or perhaps he couldn't stand the music. Judging by the faces of the other people, it wasn't...
Haha.

Haha.

Seriously, though: why couldn't Rilke stand it here? Perhaps banal reality just didn't measure up to his high-flown expectations?



You still have your professional hat on, I see?
Come on...

Finding completeness beyond the realm of art. That's what it's all about.

) True, but I'm just wondering... (

What influence do you mean, if you don't mind my asking?

The conception of the background seems somewhat ambivalent with regard to that suggestion, and ...)

I think some further form of metaphorical transcendence was based upon it.)

Yes indeed)

No!)

Quite right. /

Not bad. /



Did you know that the
wife of - you know who
I mean - the mayor...

)
Really?
No?!

)
I hear the roar of a thousand cherubim
when chained to my desk by work;
it seeks me out in days of tumult
and I resort to it when stillness returns

)
So what's
your opinion?

)
Um.

)
Such is the song that constitutes your life

)
To me it's quite clear: too
much is simply too much.
)



What on earth was
all that then?!?
When if ever, did
anyone listen so
attentively?
Oh heavens! What
nonsense have I been
spouting?

When did
anyone laugh
so much?



My soul yearns for sudden bliss...

Such a funny fellow!

for a miraculous illusion, brief and crazy...

Talked such nonsens.
But captivating nonsense.

As though we'd known
each other for ever.

