

Nagybánya, doorway

Once upon a time, there was a girl who was searching for the meaning of life. Although she was poetically young and had one foot off the ground, she still wanted to get to know and embrace the world; she didn't want to be afraid of it. One day she saw Oszkár Nagy's artwork, that smear he'd painted on the canvas, which crazy art collectors bid on, only for the paintings to be locked away in Romania. He resolved that come what may, he would go to the former Festőbánya to admire this orange gate and look for someone who might have known the artist, though yellow is closer to his heart, for yellow can be detached from everything and yet serves living culture, namely the visual arts. Perhaps it is time for him too to turn a little yellow, like the golden rain, the yellow lily, the yellow rose. If he does not step out into the light, he will never notice. At home, he cannot imagine what a gateway is like, that one can slip inside, have a chat there, or even strike up a conversation. She couldn't have known yet that she would be stepping into the mansion of a wealthy city, where she would meet an old man. She had always been drawn to older people, because there is such gentleness in them and one could listen to them forever. Her very first impression of the old man was that he was rather non-figurative. He looked a bit worn, his wrinkles were deepening; perhaps he had no home or simply didn't know how to occupy himself, which was why he was standing in the doorway. The sun was beating down on his face. It wasn't necessarily the girl who was making him glow, but rather the person he was with. For as soon as the girl struck up a conversation with the old man, a blazing sunshine began to shine. She asked him what she needed to know about Nagybánya, because she couldn't possibly know everything. That was all she had to say, and from then on the old man couldn't be stopped: he explained that Nagybánya is the county town of Máramaros. Right, Máramaros, a county name with a nice ring to it. The girl was starting to get a bit tired, though of course she didn't regret bumping into the old man; it's just that old men love to link history with the present. The girl asked whether this architectural marvel had not already fallen victim to the ravages of time. The old man replied that as long as he could sit here and compare this aesthetic building with the famous painting, and reflect on humanity's relationship with aesthetics, he was content even without company. The girl's mouth fell open in astonishment. She realised that life is a delicate picture with its shadows, but if we paint those shadows beautifully onto the pillars of the house and paint the roof against the blue sky, the sunny side of our existence dawns on a solitary afternoon. What had seemed merely the painting of a mad artist was now filled with meaning. Life often seems like an empty space, with worn-out tarmac, but if we let the spirit out of the bottle into the gateway, we will not remember empty wooden shacks or tombstones, but we ourselves will become works of art; we too will want to look at that house, we will want to call out to the old man, for without questions and thought we wither away, just as the interior of this house does at first glance. On the second look, however, we examine that mercilessly blue sky, the chimneys, the sun that gets on our nerves in summer, but the sun is the greatest happiness hormone, which has a history, just like everything else: a tie, a pair of glasses, a sentence, a diary, a moustache, a hand, a chair, everything. Why is a poem successful when it describes an object? Why is a painting successful when it is about nothing, yet when we open our eyes, we are struck by our surprise at how mysterious Baia Mare is, how cunning the painter himself is, who has awakened the girl. After that, he will go home, sit down in front of a building or a painting, and simply observe. He

concentrates on one thing, shutting out his heartbreak, his studies, the people around him, because one cannot be blind if one cannot even identify the houses and trees. Why is street painting a perversion for Oszkár, why did he choose Nagybánya for it? Nagybánya is worth its weight in gold, but is our life made of gold too? If the walls of our house are golden, do we too have colours like ? One must mix the colours on the palette to depict living reality, and life, in most cases, begins in a house where older and younger people sit; and just as they see reality at a certain age, so too will the next generation. Perhaps the next generation will take over, but I think people like the old man (whether they're real or UFOs, that's a good question) will still be there behind those doors. We go to them, listen to them, or we never dare to create. The girl wanted to create; she wanted to create in collaboration with a whole colony of people and hoped to find perfection in simplicity. And since people often tie their lives together in these mansions, she asks for the gentleman's contact details, for she still has things to say to him, but now she must leave, for she cannot yet sit down; he must stand and tremble with the spiritual and intellectual delight he has experienced, and which has made me feel as beautiful and self-assured as the shutters, arches, coats of arms, the yellow, white, brown, green, blue and grey that almost pierce the eye. Six components that came together in Nagybánya in 1930. Can they not come together today? Of course they can. On the way home, he felt nothing but that he had arrived empty, only to be filled. If he hadn't emptied himself, he wouldn't have reached this image and couldn't have imagined this story. Setting aside his artistic illiteracy, with his virgin eyes he saw more than he had planned, and this filled him with satisfaction, excitement, pride and happiness. As he loved to get emotional everywhere, on the way home, with tears in his eyes, he wrote his own drama; his associations ran wild and he almost understood why Bolond Istók had given him this task.