

In a coffee shop, any day.

MONA: I see a person and with them places, rooms, a pavement and objects. I have often the sensation of being lying down, or of being in a position of weakness, on the ground. There is violence, policemen beating, soldiers firing, tear gases and bullets. Sometimes all is quiet and mostly sad and silent. But some other times, it happens in great confusion, bones crack under gigantic tires, the sound of batons on skulls are chilling and terrifying. A gasp, a last breath, collective disorientation, or extreme solitude. It can be a relief, as the final lifting of an unbearable endless pain.

NYGEL: I see a person and an image passes. It is an event that crosses my mind and then vanishes. It is as when you know you had a dream but can not recall it. I look into a memory that is no more, and its reconstruction is hopeless. It is a dark form in the dark and it cannot be retrieved, though its existence seems irrefutable. An irreversible loss of memory of an impersonal dreamlike event. I'm left with an emotive impression without being able to link it to anything actual, only that veiled vision.

GIULIANA: I see a person and I see a herd of ghosts. I feel

cold and a dizzy spell. These ghosts I know, and their interrelations I remember. There is love and problems of a thousand kinds. I feel like a reel of emotions that belong to the person. I know their taste and their disgust. Fears and hopes mingle. I feel the heat of the side walk on which their heart has been broken once. I can search for stories within the person, moment and chances. I remember cracking open my head while playing with a plastic truck. The ghosts know something. A little unease flew over them. Their coffees were cooling. They searched for comfort but the coffee shop had no other client, and they only saw the waitress standing behind the counter, looking at them with a disproportionate and almost silly grin. They tried to ignore that smile by shortly looking through the window but the industrial view behind it was rather resembling a wasteland, not their city. They eventually managed to shyly smile at each other while their hands desperately searched for support from the cups, spoons or saucers. Having shared one of their most intimate secret seemed to be a mixed feeling of both exposure and alleviation. Reality resumed when the stealth arrival of the waitress gathered their attention.

WAITRESS: Hey. Enjoying your coffees? You don't drink much, it seems. But, let's get to the point. I must confess I was listening to you and didn't miss a word. I'm glad you finally came. I'm the waitress and was waiting for you for some time. Reality again slipped away.

WAITRESS: It is never easy to meet each other. We never know the odds, and within the universe, they are closer to none than anything else, right? I almost lost hope sometimes. Truly. It is such a relief. You know, sometimes it drives you mad to believe in something and keeping convincing yourself that it must be true but never occurs. You know what I mean. I guess you do. But I wouldn't have you wait any longer, that's my job.

Well, now that you are here, and as the most important part went through, I will deliver my message, that I have been keeping since your Goddesses withdrew. Such a long time ago, I can hardly believe it myself. Well, I'm glad, as I said. Somehow you are back, even though I cannot say you have been here before. But never mind. You ought to know, to choose and work on your Alde.

MONA: Alde?

WAITRESS: Yes. You cannot be alone now, and each of you should aim at helping each other. Though you know now what you are capable of, you may not do it alone. Your Alde will determine the purpose you give to your abilities. You may profit from them, gain power or decide to serve other causes. But be mindful that if you wish to profit from it, other people will pay and suffer from it. It is unavoidable. Your Goddesses would be highly disappointed. Nevertheless, I'm not in the position to prevent any choice you will be making.

NYGEL: Goddesses?

WAITRESS: Yes. A long long time ago they were watching over your world. But they had to withdraw when a new power took over. It is now the world you live in.

The choice to serve it or resist it is upon you. Though you have discovered your ability, each of you will complete what another misses. You cannot do without each other. I guess you know everything you needed to know.

GIULIANA: But who...?

WAITRESS: I'm the waitress. Didn't I say that already? I was thus assigned to wait, haha. Well, I'm done here. Coffees are on me.

They left as the waitress went back on smiling behind the counter. They crossed the concrete plain unfolding on the doorstep of the coffee shop. They soon reached the net of the railway sorting centre in disuse. They could smell the rust of the tracks heated by the sun. They were reflecting. Before they met, they all knew well the city, and, though troubled, they walked, without a word, in the right direction.

They stopped for a while and sat on the steps under a porch. The middle of the afternoon was hot, and everything seemed blurred by the lack of air.

There, they pondered the message and tried to sort their thoughts. All of them had to select their own railroad switch to be rightly distributed. However, it wasn't an easy task.

MONA: I'm not very troubled by the existence of the Goddesses. I am more concerned by their plural. How many of them were they?

NYGEL: If they withdrew, where did they go? I thought God and Goddesses were some sort of concept. Or do concepts withdraw?

GIULIANA: We have exposed what happens to us when we see a person. It seems we were meant to meet.

They went on walking and were about to reach the hypermarket. They would arrive by the side of the parking lot. They saw no people and noticed no movement since they left the waitress. Only a faint distant rumble proved the city not entirely dead. What they shared and confessed made them vulnerable, but the message delivered by the waitress was even more dismaying. They understood they had to stick together, and turn on their aptitude where the other two may find themselves blind or powerless. But what did it mean? Were they to reinstate the dominion of the

Goddesses? They stepped onto the parking lot. A few cars were parked but still no people were to be seen, not even the security guard. The lot was huge, grey and soulless.

In one of the aisles, a shopping cart was lying on its side and they were heading towards it. They could see in the distance the shape of a person. They couldn't determine if it was walking towards them or in the opposite direction. All they could see was its disturbing smooth and precise walking, in a yet hazy blue garment. It was approaching. If it weren't the only life form they saw since the coffee shop, it wouldn't have been so eerie, its movement and stature being too slow and too confident.

It became soon evident that this humanoid was making its way purposely to them. Its face became clearer, smiling and oddly conversational.

THE INDIVIDUAL: Dear friends and fellows, I am most delighted to meet you!

They had reached the shopping cart.

THE INDIVIDUAL: I have been looking forward to this moment. I have been waiting for you.

MONA, NYGEL or GIULIA: Let me guess.

You are the Waiter?

THE INDIVIDUAL: I am known as The Man, and here I am to represent the Entity. My community is eager to welcome you among their most valuable assets. You surely have conversed with the Waitress. I reckon she has bred an inner conflict with which you can hardly cope. Do not trouble yourself, the Entity will secure all requisites so that you won't even understand the meaning of worry any more. There are answers. The entity is aware of the price of your powers, and will reward them accordingly. You may greatly contribute to the bettering of the lot of humanity. How incredible when coincidences set our paths in advance.

Will you miss anything? Money? Never, so to speak. Shelter? No, no, palaces. Goods? Of the finest. Health and wealth is the motto. Let me guide you to my vehicle that will transport you to a brighter future as our deal without a doubt is coming to a positive close.

Soon after, they could hardly retain their excitement as the Man was no more. Giuliana had remembered the lost vision Nygel had had, which was coming from the sky. Mona had the feeling of a harsh blow on the neck and a very short vision of a grid. Instinctively, as a cohesive and natural force, the three of them pushed the Man over the cart, who's head was smashed by a meteor like bloc of ice the size of his head. His brains splashed across the grid of the shopping cart.

What surprised them was their unexpected synchronicity. Put together, their visions had created a meaning and they had understood the outcome. They parted and when home, they couldn't wait to meet again. They had a lot to talk about. They often went back to the coffee shop, but never saw the Waitress again. Had she withdrawn to join the Goddesses? They sat under the porch and suspected the Entity had taken advantage of this ancient pullback, though they still did not understand what it meant and if even they would ever learn something further on that matter. They decided that if, as it happened with the Man, they could provoke a dormant outcome together, they could prevent it too. Their Alde was taking shape, along with a new drive.

They did not fear, but started to fathom their load of responsibility.

This short story has been written  
in occasion of

**ALDE**

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con Nygel Panasco, Mona Filleul e Giuliana Rosso  
a cura di Giacomo Galletti



Sonnenstube è un offspace fondato nel 2013, itinerante, con base a Lugano, che offre una programmazione regolare, flessibile e a volte inaspettata. Sonnenstube è diretto da Giacomo Galletti (1993, curatore), Giada Olivotto (1990, curatrice), Sandro Pianetti (1987, artista e interaction designer), Gabriel Stöckli (1991, artista), Gianmaria Zanda (1985, artista and musicista).