Czech Ingenuity

I have to go already. It’s misty outside and just above zero degrees. Weather that smells like a wet dog. A weather made directly for days like this. I quickly grab my backpack and for the last time check if I have everything. Wallet, keys, phone. Health insurance card. Your diary. Everything as it should be.

Evening trains are sparsely populated. Well, what would people do there, they have enough fun for distraction. “Night trains are for contemplating Reality. Reality with capital R, not the charade we call everyday life,” you told me once. It takes almost an hour to the clinic. Enough for me to suffer through our memories yet again. I need to think all the stuff through for the last time. One young couple sits here, probably going to some city party or whatever, and one old woman with a tired face. No one who wouldn’t belong here. That calms me down a little. I open up your diary. There’s few chapters I want to go through again, one for each stop. The trees start to flicker outside the window.

*Another dorm party. How tf am I supposed to have fun. Arrogant guys who must hide their lack of personality by competing in wannabetoughness. Jokes about booze, farting and booze. And dogsoup [author note – this is an untranslatable czech joke]. Pathetic treadmill. The party crown is awarded to some asshole for getting more wasted than all the other asshats. No one has more imagination than you could hide under a corner of a fingernail. Nothing for a girl with social anxiety. Jfc let me get out of here already. But as if a girl suffering from crippling loneliness has a choice. So let’s drink half a wine bottle and chase away that intrusive feeling I’m missing out.*

Eli, those people aren’t as bad as you thought. If you got to know them better, you would find how almost everyone surprises you with some hidden depth. I’m sorry you felt that way, however I believe I helped you a little. At least I hope so.

Up to the next stop I’m trying to remember any detail of said party. With a little success. Perhaps you were right, I didn’t see it then, but perhaps they are all really the same. Next stop is at request, no one goes outside. The sign just flicks outside the window. I open up the next page. This is where you first mention me.

*My drunkass pathetic self managed to get out contact from the girl from Japanese class. She has a spark which attracts me. It’s probably how open and warm she acts. I wrote some bullshit, spend half an hour circling around the send button. Then I finally clicked, drowned a xan bar, turned off the router and hid my head into the pillow. I’m afraid to turn on the router.*

Oh, how can those two cheap college credits turn one’s life upside down. I immerse myself in the memory of how I noticed you even before those classes. You were alone in an evening tram. Glitter in your eyes, your face behind the orange-blue evening sky. Big earphones and a wistful smile. You hid your sight and played with your fingers when I tried to look into your eyes. Like one big secret.

We are approaching another stop, no one stands on the concrete pavement.

*Jul ♥ is so AMAZING. Finally I have someone for long talk about my life goals and all that other bullshit. Nothing forces her to stay with me, yet she stays. She’s terribly normie, as everyone is, but she listens. I believe I fascinate her somehow. How am I writing this, it sounds like I’m some object she studies out of bizarre curiosity. But I feel so good with her. I don’t have other choice than to trust her.*

Yep, I made a bet with Mark. I will dig out the secret of the scared starry girl. I think he wanted to hit on you or something. But I genuinely fell for you once we got to know each other, there’s was no falsity after that. I hope you would forgive me.

Those life goals you talked about, I remember you telling all over how you never want to die. It made me intrusively doubt myself. What if I’m pushing myself at work just to escape similar thoughts? If I have time to think, do I find out that nothing connects to nothing, because everything turns to dust in the end? But what kinda life is that, if all I do is just distraction from this existential darkness at the bottom of all things? But I didn’t want to talk about that, I wanted to seem strong and stable, I wanted to be a solid support for you to lean on. So I just joked. “Only twenty years and no one will die anymore. When you feel sick, you get a brand new robot body. iImmortality.” Sometimes I get the feeling that you never smiled more genuinely. But perhaps that’s just my imagination. I will never know.

Next stop. Again, no one steps inside or outside.

*♥Jul♥ . Someone cornier would write something about giving them new will to live. It’s so corny to need someone else to live. Below my level. Or is that just something I want to believe? Whole goddamn day I look forward for you. You come with your Ozymandias t-shirt, throw around some crap about the mum of your boss or something. Then we have a beer and play Magic. I love how I enjoy even this crap I would just hate otherwise. I’m not even thinking about dying so much♥.*

Why did you find it “below your level”? I’m still not sure what went in that your blonde head all the time. As if each layer was just a mask for some different, deeper one. What was all the way down there at the core? I would love to believe I won the bet, that I really understood your secret. But I would be lying to myself and to Mark and he wouldn’t eat it up. What trauma caused that yours bristling cat syndrome?

But I remember those days. I liked those moments too, you know. Beer after work and your look which finally lost some of its shakiness. It was the last period I still had enough time. The wonder days. But I’m losing everything after them in a mist. I had too many new obligations, too much rush, too much tiredness. The life of a person finishing university and entering the job market for the first time. I was new in the team, we analyzed the flow of goods through dark web markets. We watched the parallel reality of crime unfolding, like mycelium spreading around everyone’s good Christian lives. I got carried away, I should have known what was really important.

We stop in Ratichovice, an old man gets on.

*I’m not feeling great again sometimes. I got strikes of some weird pain under my left ribs. As if there was something stuck or something inflamed. Hopefully, just another symptom of my trash body syndrome.*

I was finishing my thesis around that time. There wasn’t much space to see each other anymore. But when we met, I noticed once and only once. It was like you suddenly, from second to second, lost all your enthusiasm and retreated into yourself. And you seemed tired and isolated. When I asked, you haven’t said anything. But you couldn’t hide your fear in those lovely blue eyes.

Last stop before the city, some middle aged man standing on the platform.

*Today I went for a pizza with Jul for the last time. I’m terrified I’m losing her. I’m afraid to speak first. What if I’m obtrusing? The last thing I want is anyone to be with me out of pity. As like I’m a dog they won’t put out just because they are too weak to deal with their conscience.*

I went to Brussels for a half year work stage. I’m sorry, I wasn’t in mood for anything, I was overworked and tired and life flickered around me then like those trees outside the train window do now. It wasn’t your fault.

First of the city stops. I’m beginning to feel a bit nervous again. I watch who’s going inside. Someone flickers on the corner of my eye and enters the second carriage. Am I really capable of doing this?

*The pain returned again. I should visit my gp. But the fuck I don’t want to. So much. She will ignore me again, look at me as if I’m some goddamn hypochondriac whose entire life purpose is to annoy her. I spent weeks reading what it could be. I did what I could diy, I even begged money from mum, enough to buy me an ecg watch. It all everywhere says that crap about how it can’t measure anything but simple arrythmias, but that’s nonsense. Thank god for sci-hub. I stress tested by myself, I even used the watch to measure precordial leads. I haven’t found anything. That comforts me a little. Thank god for sci-hub.*

Everyone can do almost complete ecg at home. But they are told they can’t. It’s terrible how many useful things get buried by regulations. All we can do is search for remnants in pirate libraries. I learned the system is not set to care for human life, but to avoid responsibility. If everyone does everything by the tables, no one can blame them.

This is how whole society works, you told me once. All activity doesn’t connect to anything, everyone just cares about their own comfort. But we could be much more. This is not how it should be and people need to realize.

The suburban hospice slowly drags behind the window. It makes me want to throw up. The old lady goes outside at the stop.

*So I really went there. I did all my preparations, I went in my head over how I will tell her what I believe it could be for 45674 times, but what did she tell me? That’s it’s psychosomatic, I should just look at how depressed I am, darkening her room whole room by standing there all in black. Then she rxed antidepressants and patronized how there’s nothing shameful about taking them. I stood there as if doused in boiling water, and I was too weak to say anything. How none of that makes any sense.*

She did few basic examinations, which found nothing. “I did all I need to do”, the tables say. No need to do more, no need to care about the human. It’s morally wrong, but not legally. There’s nothing to do from within the system. At best I can write a negative review, haha.

We are moving closer to the city centre. Next light burst of adrenaline. There’s nothing to worry about, if they knew, I wouldn’t be sitting in this train anyway, they would have busted my ass already. But I can’t let go so simply, emotions are independent of rationality, they always do whatever they want. Young woman with two kids goes inside. The boy coaxes a tangerine and peels it. You told me their smell reminds you Christmas. Such a random remembrance. But it calms me a bit.

*I felt better last time so I ditched her again. But it always returns. I must get there again, even if I have to beat real care out of her. I can’t go on this way and ignore it just because I momentarily feel better. I will go this Monday. I can’t be this weak. Shit doesn’t happen to those who deserve it, it happens to those who can’t stop it. I understand, but what can I do if I want to throw up just from the thought of seeing her again?*

A man in blue uniform enters the train. My hands start shaking. I’m paranoid, but who wouldn’t be? I repeat to myself that the brain produces fear out of wild imagination, not rational thought. I repeat this sentence as a mantra for the whole segment.

*I didn’t go again. I can’t. When someone asks, I color it so it doesn’t sound bad. I don’t want to scare anyone. I don’t want to \** *disappoint\* them. I act like that bug from Metamorphosis. And I can’t stop it. I feel so alone, I need someone to tell me I’m not insane. What if I’m really imagining all this and she’s right? How the fuck I can tell what is still true? Jul comes in a week. I hope I will feel so bad that she kicks my ass down there herself.*

You hid it really well you dummy. How gaslit you were throughout your whole life? You mentioned you didn’t feel well sometimes, but who does? How have I missed all that? Damn, I can defend myself, anyone can make mistake like this. But what good it is if it doesn’t bring you back?

The guy in uniform leaves next stop. Thank god.

*I folded Jul a Robot origami. That’s all I’m capable to do. Should I believe she gets it?*

Get it? How was I supposed to get that? But it inspired that idea. It took a moment for the thoughts to fell together, but then, boom, the whole finished puzzle revealed in its whole insanity. I almost couldn’t sleep, I prepared myself for everything, if it really has to end that way. I hoped it won’t. In vain. Thanks to my work, I knew where to get everything I need. It was easy. Almost too easy.

Few stars went out on the dim sky for a short moment, above the roof of the next stop building. And hid almost immediately. No one moved. Everything’s suspiciously calm.

*“Born a Stranger.” A few piano notes containing all the fucking indescribable loneliness of my stupid lousy world. That’s how I will call these paper rags if I fail to survive.*

And I will publish them. I want to do it with your sense for drama. What more can I do for you? I let it go through my head for thousand and one time. But I’m still not sure, should I just scrap the idea and return to the charade of everyday reality? How you always said, shit doesn’t happen to those who deserve it but to those who can’t stop it. And we failed. What have I to return to? Only to meaningless work, only to escaping the existential darkness I feel at the bottom of everything.

Last stop. Two policemen enter the train. No. Jul… It’s ok. Look out of the window. They can’t read you then. I put the journal back into the bag. I’m watching the city outside. No signs of stars. Lights on the tops of dirty factory chimneys. Apartment buildings with half the lights on. A train running in the opposite direction. Sprayed with graffiti, only a few gray people inside. Time melted into formless grey matter…

…only to start flowing again once I’m going outside the train at the last stop. I will go the last part on foot, no way I can stand another stop. The sweat on my skin is cold. It’s roughly five hundred meters to the clinic. Stress neurotransmitters exhausted themselves. The doubts are gone, I will do it. I feel as if I passed some moral horizon. As if I finally let myself submerge into the flow of things, like some buddhist monk on his last path.

The girl at the reception wants my reason for visit. I need to see ms. Nejedlá. From inside sources I know she stays late today. “I’m visiting mr. Smutný”, I say to the receptionist. Prepared excuse. It works.

I go straight to the elevator. There’s a nice looking old man with me. I try my best hypnotizing gaze to make him go outside. He leaves at the first floor.

When I step at the top floor, I see lights are still on in Henley’s office. Good. The toilets are just next to the office, as I already scouted in advance. I go inside the toilet booth and put my backpack on the ground, then I put my ass down on the toilet seat. I open the zip fastener, and there it is, the wonder from a shady online marketplace, where Ted kaczynski’s grumpy head welcomes dear customers like me. Semtex. Czech Ingenuity. Enough to tear Nejedlá to pieces. I made my choice, I won’t return. I put the explosives on the ground, then search for my wallet. I take out your robot origami and hold it in my fist. Our way to immortality. “Born a Stranger” is already uploaded on the web. I put your original handwriting on my lap and open at the last highlighted chapter I highlighted.

*“Yesterday I was with Jul for the last time before the surgery. We took molly and sat together, huddled in warm fluffy blankets. For four hours I was painless. The softest pink light, the softest piano notes, the softest Robert Smith’s voice. The softest touches. Your sweaty hand in my sweaty hand. Then we stand hugging for half an hour* *♥. We stood in silence, there was no need to talk, only to believe. The softest fucking feeling in the world. And the worst return to the reality mud. But I feel stronger, I can’t accept it won’t work out. I just can’t imagine it. At least before Jul buys me the robot body, hihi.”*

There are speculations that drugs affected the creation of Christianity. If so, mdma is responsible for both the chapter on paradise and banishment from it. That’s what you told me then. I wipe the sweat off my face, look on the Ozymandias on my t-shirt, light the fuse and close my eyes for the last time.