

BELO HORIZONTE

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“kidnapper”: Rivane Neuenschwander

The ground was cold. An oval sheet of iron that served as a backrest was cold and still. They fastened a chain at the height of my belly. Everything was still as if something was about to happen. It was a still moment, a critical moment. One of those moments before earthquakes, pledges of love, farewells. It was long enough to fill my lungs with air and the ground began to move under my feet. To the right, spinning faster and faster. A powerful pressure of air pressed my body against the iron wall like a magnet. I no longer needed to hold the chain with my hands. I felt like an extension of that sheet of iron, a protuberance, a callus, a boil. It was as if I was part of that thing. It dictated the movement, it took from my brain the functions for movement. I was stuck to the wall of that thing like a rock within a tornado, a speck of dust in a black hole. My life spinning in reverse, returning, returning...a centrifuge of remote images, the blender of adventures of my childhood. My hands became smaller, my feet found room inside my shoes, pimples dotted my face, the school, the amusement park behind the school, a white wall beside a blackboard...and finally a child, a child that was me and that always visits me in circular movements until it arrives at an imaginary point on a white wall in a classroom.

The occasional punishment dealt out by the math teacher was to remain staring at an imaginary white point on a white wall. Staring at an imaginary point on a white wall not only made that point appear real but also made me, standing still, begin to walk in the direction of that point. The great feeling of the impossibility of ever reaching it! The feeling of how I learned to enjoy staring at that white wall! Initially I felt queasy and this was followed by an effort to break free from the teacher's voice and, finally, to immerse in a world without form, without limits and without thought. How that child was able to grasp the notion of the infinite, uttered in vain so many times by the math teacher. A nonexistent point on a white wall taught me more than all of the math teachers in the world. The zero of things, the emptiness of things, the gaze emptying of things, the lost gaze and things.

When the child went away I opened my mouth and no word came out. I thought, for some reason, that this schizophrenic exercise of being “kidnapped” was a convincing attempt to accelerate the natural process of growing old parallel to a

certain infantilization. The machine whirled and within me everything whirled with it. For a moment I felt like an idiot and at the same time like the happiest person in the world. Until the machine began to activate its brakes and, along with them, the internal brakes of this strange machine inside me.

I became sad again and less of an idiot. Once again I had my whole legs back inside my trousers and my feet suffered humbly for being large. Everything remained there inside that thing of which now I am no longer a part of. That thing that surrounded me and made me go around.

One day an imaginary point was in front of my eyes. Today it is real and it looks at me from behind.