

Eklektic Show

Short Stories

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I am walking down the street. I can see people with shopping bags, handbags, with boots, winter coats, hats, with friends, with children. People. Here is a man, in his fifties, drinking his glass of vodka at Croco's. He is frustrated. His wife is cheating on him. Here is a little girl, whose father is holding her by hand. Here is a mother holding her baby in her arms.

And, here I am. I am walking. I am walking down the street. Watching.

I have seen an elderly lady dragging a Saint-Bernard, ridiculously huge in comparison with her tiny body. I have seen an uncle smoking a loooong long pipe, and a girl holding a balloon filled with helium. Look at that auntie in that colourful dress, how she is walking without a coat and wearing sandals on her feet in full autumn! I can see a bride, together with her wedding guests. The groom is standing beside her, holding her hand. Here is a bus with tiny lights. And, here is my friend, Alexandra, coming home from school. Today, she is wearing her high boots; brown, hussar-like boots. She looks nice in them. We greet each other and I move on. I see they have already brought the Christmas tree to the city centre. They have hung decorations from the street lights poles, although it has not snowed yet.

I think I can somehow make sense of this world: it is an *eklektic show*. Somebody might be walking down the street, just like me, they see me and say: "Look at that woman in her unbuttoned coat! I wonder whether she is cold". The truth is I am not cold. I have not been cold for ages. Life is warm and



beautiful; it is a show. I have always loved the smell of the perfume in the concert hall. The red chairs. Or the black ones. The gradins.. I feel at home there. The same way I feel anywhere in the world.

On my way back to my apartment in Violetelor Street, number 6, I see an elderly lady sitting beneath an entirely yellow tree. I can also see the auntie with the scale, an “*icon*” of our town. She lives in Sîncrai, but she comes to town by bus every day, displays this sign which says “one leu” and then she sits down on her folding chair and waits. Few people weigh themselves nowadays, but she never gives up.

For a few days now, I keep seeing this *homeless* who has been wandering about our neighbourhood. He is carrying three bags brimful of garbage, which stink awfully. As soon as I have passed by him, I can see people in suits, talking on their mobile phones, carrying their briefcases. I can see women with high heel shoes, girls with sneakers, boys on rollerblades or skateboards. I have seen a dog getting beaten with a chain. And a boy yelling for his toy. And a girl eating candy floss.

Everything appears to be an exhibition, and I- a collector. I take everyone’s photo. I take them home.

Once, I took the photo of an old man sitting on a bench, with a hempen bag beside him. He was holding the bag in one hand, and an identity card in the other. I assume it was his. He looked dejected. Next, I saw an extremely wealthy and beautiful woman. She was well-dressed; she might have been a bank manager or something of the kind. She was holding an unwrapped rose and was talking on the mobile phone.

And I saw a puppy which had made its escape, and was now dragging its leash. And a big gang of primary school children, who were making a terrible noise. I also saw Irina, my friend’s daughter, and Ștefan, an ex-classmate. I saw two elderly people wrangling over their pensions. I pass by them and smile. I am getting closer to my house. My ground floor neighbour is whacking her carpet on the clothesline. Her husband is smoking a cigarette, leaning against the entrance door.



I enter my house and head for the mirror. I look into it.

Today, I have seen the world and myself into it.

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