

# Drug Monologue\*

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I was born in 1967, I'm thirty. I was brought up in an orphanage and I was cared for by the state. My mother didn't want me, she put me in a nursery, then I moved from place to place. Till my first school year I'd been to a lot of institutes, then I attended the first year in the country. I didn't seem to be able to adapt, as I was neurotic. Then I was taken to a reformatory in Budapest. That's where my career began, if I can put it like that, where I began to grow up. I attended the second class twice because there was no normal teaching, always some building going on, and teachers came and went in quick succession. There was practically no proper teaching. We studied there and got our report at another school. The exams were also held there, and I failed. In every subject, even P.E. There was no teaching at all, not even any physical exercises, so I failed in nearly everything. I had to attend the second class again. Then we were taught in our institution, and the school report was also issued there, so I passed with middle grades.

Up to the eighth grade, I always had marks around the middle of the scale, there was no subject I was good at. I didn't learn, I wasn't interested, I always thought I'd learn and change when I'd grown up. I didn't care about anything. All I cared for was sucking away at sweets and reading books. Books really captured me. We had a very nice teacher, he taught us Russian and literature and he enrolled me in the library, on his own responsibility so I could go to the library every week. I didn't read children's books but books for adults. At the age of 13 I was immersed in Kafka. I loved him, I did. I guess I grew up too fast, both physically and mentally. I was over-age, a misfit among the kids my own age. I didn't have any friends, boys or girls. I had a girlfriend until the seventh grade, but then she was transferred to another home as the enrollment at our place had to be reduced. I was really sad I was left behind, for at the other place there was decent teaching going on and the system was different, school-leavers were sent to a better training school. Only those entering the eighth grade were transferred, and as I had repeated a year, I had to stay behind. Our friendship broke off. Once I happened to meet her. All I know now is that she learnt to be a hairdresser and lives in America.

I was recommended to three kinds of work. They said I could choose from among foodstore shop-assistant, embroideress or shop-assistant in a perfumery-detergents store. I picked the third, so it was all arranged that I got a place in the dormitory of another boarding school after the eighth grade. From there we went to the training school. The dormitory was mixed, half from reformatories, half from the country or Pest. They weren't the richest

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\* The original interview was made by Mária Hoyer in 1997. The interviewee committed suicide and died in November 1998.

that's for sure. I got trained in this line of work, with intermediate grades again, I also have the certificate...

At the time when I finished, every trade had jobs compulsorily available at certain firms. It wasn't like it is now, that you can easily become jobless. Then the firm arranged for me to get into a shop. Later, of course, I worked in several shops. Most often in paint shops where I got physically strong as I had to haul paints and rearrange the stock all the time. I was in germicides and benzine and turpentine up to my neck, as they were still sold by measure. That was quite another world.

I was very unhappy at that time, too. I always wished to be dead. Not even in my childhood did I want to live. But, to return to the boarding-school years: we only had one male teacher. That was too few. But we liked him very much. He was an elderly sportsman, he always took us on excursions and arranged everything about the trip. We were about 8 or 9 when we went to the Tatra Mountains. I remember clearly because it was a children's exchange program with Czechoslovakia. Orphanage children came to us, and we went there. And as I had great respect for this teacher, and I liked him a lot, I didn't hurl myself off the cliffs of the Tatra.

That also had some antecedents. A year earlier, there was a girl who resembled me very much. We were like twins. Everyone said we were twins. We were even mistaken for each other. I can't understand sexuality as a grown up, and I could understand it even less as a child. Once we kissed, and then the children and the teacher who caught sight of us behind the curtain called us lesbo. I was seven, and then that girl punched a glass with her hand a week later or so. Then we learnt that she had died. That was when my conscience began to bother me. Since that event, I've always wanted to kill myself.

But up there, on the Tatra peak, which was of course fenced off and there was a railing, I could have jumped off in the middle, there was just enough room. But then the thought struck me, what would happen to the teacher if a child in the group he had taken for vacations died, how bad it would be for him. Then I remembered how bad it was for me, and I thought I should do it. I was wavering for a good five minutes. I remember it occurred to me it would be nice to know what my fate would be as a grown-up, what I would go through. In the end, after much hesitation, I allowed myself the chance of growing up. What a bad choice it was! If only I had done it then! If only I had known what was in store for me! It is said that those who are dying have all their lives reeling off in a sec. Had I had my life reel off in front of me there, had I known what was awaiting me, I would've done it. It was a great mistake not to do it.

I've always been confused about sex, especially after the suicide of my "twin sister." I was a nice girl, sensible, open-minded and I don't know how it happened, who started it, anyway, I was in the seventh grade when I had an affair with a lady teacher. It lasted for two years, for I was already being trained for my line of work when I still kept visiting her. I remember I could spend the winter and summer holidays with her. Then something terrible happened. We had a joint friend, a man, who was very good at music and was quite an interesting guy. I was very much for losing my innocence, and I was curious, too, what men looked like. I went up to his place. We had been chatting and drinking for some twenty minutes when the teacher lady arrived, and it turned out they only wanted me to play the third or the padding role, or what, they had been dating for a long time. I lost my head, I got an epileptic fit. I felt hatred, love or jealousy, I don't know, but I turned completely inside out. I changed utterly.

But I finished the training school. Then I had a friend, my age, who took my virginity on a New Year's Eve. He betrayed me with a classmate of mine. I remember I was 17. You see, I always felt I was left in the lurch. All those I loved or took to always duped me, let

me down or stabbed me in the back. I felt I was utterly confused emotionally. All this was so unexpected and incomprehensible. Then I shut myself up completely. I was reading a novel by Stefan Zweig, *The Chaos of Emotions*, and I had a chat with a teacher who lent me the book and I confessed to her I had a homosexual relationship with a teacher at the reformatory. She was scared and called the psychologist with whom I had a lot of talks, and eventually she introduced me to a psychiatrist who made me do scores of tests and talked to me, introduced me to a psychologist and asked me to regularly visit him. Of course, I didn't.

Later I met this psychiatrist when I was no longer working but pensioned off for my goiter that had begun when I was a child. After my operation, there were doctors who said I should not be pensioned off on account of my brains. Some said I should be. In the end, I was put on pension. Things were arranged differently at that time. Those who spent a long time on sick leave had to be pensioned off. I had been ill so much that there was no other choice. I was 22. Since then, I've been a pensioner.

After this affair with the lady teacher, I was afraid of people, men and women alike. Still, it's funny, it was a reformatory teacher again who was my next affair. Our girls' college met regularly with a boys' college, preparing various programs together. Anyway, I met a teacher of the boys, and I fell in love with him. He gave me loads of books, took me to museums, kept moulding my intellect. He was very nice and I loved him terribly, This affair lasted three or four years. In the end, he rented a flat from a friend of his so that we could live together.

Unfortunately, however, this also broke off, as he was the maker of his own fortune, too. He started at a high school and visited people where I was an awkward burden. Then he married the lady he had broken up with for me. I was first put under psychiatric care when we broke up. It was not the National Psychiatric Institute or Lipót as it's called but a ward of a more liberal place in the outskirts of Budapest. It was led by a very nice man, dead now, unfortunately. There was a doctor who undertook my treatment. I am still in touch with him. I call him: Father.

I could easily take to people, but there are very few with whom my relationship is lasting. There is only one or two. There has always been one at a time. Father is one like that. I am straightforward, outspoken, easily striking contacts, easily handling people, but I can't really love anyone. I just drifted into this... Now, I'm mixing things up, I won't keep chronology, well, I was talking about the training school when I met this teacher friend, with whom I had this love affair for nearly four years. Then I had to leave the boarding school because training was over and I passed 18, that is, 19, because I attended the second grade twice. At 19 I was given 40,000 forints by the state to go where I wanted. I was given the name of a department store where I should spend that money and then do what I wanted. I was looking around at the store, with the money in my pocket, but actually nothing struck me, I didn't really find anything worth buying. Then it occurred to me maybe I'd go one day to India, I had always wanted very much to go there, and I purchased a suitcase, a chequered case that I still have. It's very dusty and the zip is bad, but I have it. It's a very old old keepsake... That forty thousand didn't help me much, I guess a place to live would've been better to get, or something like that...

In the boarding school there was a social worker whose job was to find lodgings at workers' hostels for those under state care who had finished schooling. First I got to a workers' hostel which wasn't bad, I was together with people of my kind. It was good, located in downtown Budapest. But after a brawl which wasn't my fault I was kicked out. I was quite militant, I didn't apologize, though I could have stayed if I had apologized. But I didn't, because I was proud, so I went to a suburban hostel, which was awful. It was horrible. It branded my life for good.

There was hardly any warm water in winter, luckily I could wash myself and my clothes at my place of work. It wasn't kept clean, we were seven in a room, they kept stealing one another's clothes and broke into the wardrobes. My wardrobe was also often broken into when I was out. I and my suitcase sometimes travelled, when I had had enough money in my bank account. I went to France, Southern France. It was a marvellous experience. The sea, the gulls, the different air, the whole trip was beautiful. But when I returned, my wardrobe had been burgled. Then I went to Germany. That was a nightmare, for I went out to break all ties with Hungarian folk, with all the people, everybody, especially Father who I was head over heels in love with, I have always been in love with him, I still am. But at that time I felt like putting an end to this relationship for good and all.

So I went to Germany. The beginning was already bad because the girl I asked to arrange for the passports made off with ten thousand forints. Then in Germany I was locked up in a man's flat all day, for I was afraid to go out. I kept watching horror movies in my fright. I was fat at the time, so I took slimming pills, based on some narcotic stuff. I could tolerate it somehow this way. That fortnight was terrible, I could hardly wait to get home.

I haven't had too many jobs, for I was always taken back. There was a firm in my line of work, the name changed a lot, of course, where I worked as a shop-assistant. I was taken back four times, they knew I could and liked to work, so I went back four times. Of course, after my pensioning off I had many odd jobs. I worked at a hospital, as a cleaner, I liked that job. I had an old friend, back from the reformatory, whom I met and she asked me where I was working. So I told her, in the hospital. She asked: could I get Noxiron, Hydrocodin and Coderit for her. I didn't know what they were but there was this stuff at the hospital. I had access everywhere, nothing was prohibited, but I didn't take anything, everyone could see I was not on the dope. True I was put to sleep by Noxiron as a child for I fell asleep very slowly. Ours was such a neurotic boarding school. If someone had some trouble, couldn't sleep, or was taken ill, she got immediately medicine. They liked you to be quiet and peaceful, and inoffensive.

It all started when I was 7, a schoolgirl. Noxiron was the sleeping pill most easily available at the boarding school, so that's what I got. I was ill a lot, I can't hear well in my left ear, I had my middle ear constantly inflamed. When I had the goiter, I was also given a large amount of medicine. When I was in psychiatric care, it was the same. Shots, pills, pills, shots. More and more of this stuff accumulated in my body over the years. When we were at boarding school, we tried grass and the fag just for fun, too.

We were dossers. We were the dossing people. That was ours, that dossing time. We went to Moscow Square and there were the parties and aggro. There was no hard drugs at that time, heroin or the like. Only slimming pills and such things. I don't remember the names. I am heavily built, I've always wanted to lose weight, so I kept taking this slimming pill, and did lose weight, too. Now I know it was a narcotic, too, actually. It was also withdrawn from the shops. Then later I had to hire myself to a friend to built his house in return for grass. Then he gave hash.

I was 19 when I left the hostel, I was working as a shop-assistant in a detergent shop. Prior to it, my friend, the teacher, got me pregnant. We had a common friend, a girl, who told him to take me to a doctor. The injection that causes spontaneous abortion was not yet known. I got some injection, but I had no idea what I should expect, what consequences it might have. I wasn't even told if I was pregnant or not. I didn't get myself examined, but I was constantly sick, with nausea and faintings. The teacher knew I was pregnant, but I didn't. I was very naive. So am I now, unfortunately. Anyway, I had such bleeding in the hostel from the spontaneous abortion that I thought I'd die. I couldn't ask anyone to help. I sat there, all night bleeding. It was horrible. In the morning, when no blood remained in

me, I fainted. They found me unconscious in the toilet. I didn't dare tell anyone what had happened. So, I really had bad experiences with that friend of mine.

This came to my mind on account of suicide... What a great role suicide has always played in my life. One summer, the teacher took me on vacation together with his children, who were only two or three years my junior, and there, too – I don't remember the place exactly – I went into the water and wanted to kill myself. I simply didn't come up from under the water, just kept swimming and swimming and my throat was full of water. Then he noticed on the shore that something was wrong, for I didn't come up for a long time. He realized I wanted to kill myself, and he swam for me, dressed as he was, and took me to the shore and gave me artificial respiration. We packed up and returned to Pest. Our relationship began to deteriorate from then on. That story was not long after the miscarriage. And after I got crab-lice from him. Well, terrible things have happened to me, really.

I was seventeen when our liaison began, as we met when I was in the hostel. Until 20 or 21 I had two great relationships, both ending in terrible disillusionment. Now, looking back as a grown-up, I can say neither was natural. In the first, my partner was of my own sex, in the other, the age difference was immense. He was twice my age. So I was really a queer fish for the outside world. Everything was so unnatural.

I have had to live with a bad conscience all my life. The point to these relationships was that I loved these people, but always with scruples. Later I never had true relationships, at least I didn't feel they were real. And gradually I began to feel that when I find myself in a normal contact, it felt unnatural. And when I had a contact like that, it was always me who was the loser. When I lost my virginity at 14 and half, my classmate won my boyfriend, my date. Whenever something seemed to work out for me, I was surely deceived or let down. And they always succeeded. It was never my fault, the others were always to blame.

That was when I had goiter, my complaints increased as this relationship had broken off, with the teacher, and after an attempt at suicide I got to the psychiatry in Pest. They looked for a job for me in a protected environment. They got this cleaner's post at a hospital. That's where I first got free access to medicines. I began taking Dolor and Ridol, these strong painkillers. I did have excruciating pains at that time, so I was constantly on these medicines. In a short time my goiter condition deteriorated so much that I had to be operated on. I had pains in my abdomen and waist. I've also had lumbago, I bent and just remained like that, I couldn't straighten up. I'm heavily scoliotic, too. So I began to medicate myself with these painkillers, quite heavily, too. So much so that I could no longer go without drugs. Then my friends told me that Noxiron and Coderit were also strong painkillers and even produced a pleasant state of mind. You feel fine, nothing aches, you aren't hungry, everything's alright as it is. So I began to take that combination.

From that point, I can't remember precisely how my life continued. I know I've had various jobs, I was cleaning sometimes, then I went to Germany with the intention of never coming back. But I did. Of course I wrote a letter to the hospital, to my boss, that I'd gone to Germany and would never return, and so on. They took it amiss, how on earth could I walk out on them like that, and didn't take me back. Then I cleaned on and off, in offices at night, and I don't remember. Yes, once I was a bookbinder for a very short time, a few months, but I was ill a lot. Usually I just worked a few months a year and ended up at the psychiatric ward. Normally for attempted suicide. It was hard to bear the hostel where I lived. Or my living circumstances. I didn't belong to anything or anyone, and I had no other tool to bribe myself, the world, everything and everyone but suicide. Then, when I had got over the goiter operation, I was released and told that I could go anywhere and do

anything I wanted if I was all right. But I wasn't. Something happened to my brains and they took me back to the psychiatry.

After the goiter operation I got some illness that landed me in a railed bed for more than half a year. I was taken there by car from the hospital and then I was kept there for over half a year. In a railed bed. It all began when I had immense pains. I felt – how to explain it – for instance I was watching tv and, say, a serial was on, or something, about some hospital, with operations, and I felt I was being operated on. I kept passing out, feeling ill, I had diarrhea all the time, well, I was in a bad shape. I always fainted, I was so ill. When I improved a bit and had some cigs, I distributed them among the patients. I didn't like to have any piece of clothing on me, I went around naked in the hospital. So I was not accountable. Or, maybe I was accountable but I was not in a condition to be in a community. So they put me behind bars and kept giving me shots from morning till night. That's why at thirty my ass becomes inflamed all the time, there are lumps like my fist there. The doctors didn't tell me anything about what this illness is called. Or they put the diagnosis down on the hospital report, but I've forgotten it. It was in Latin.

I guess it was all triggered off by my goiter operation. A big change occurred in my state. That's why I went back to the asylum for half a year. I was very thin before the operation, but I was fattened to ninety kilos, and then I felt better. I got mentally much better, too, so I was put into an open ward and shortly afterwards I was released. Then I wanted to kill myself again because I was not satisfied with myself, my surroundings, the people. I don't like people, to be quite frank. I liked myself very much at some times, but I no longer do. I've always had a father complex, and unfortunately this father complex was always mixed up with sexuality. Well, it's never been very good, and it's not good now, either.

I'm not telling it right. When I left the asylum after half a year, I didn't commit suicide but took up a job with a dry-cleaner's as an assistant. I did it very well, but my colleagues told me I shouldn't expect to work always at the same place but I would be transferred here and there. So I was. I had to work with different people all the time. It was rather tiring. Anyway, in the end, I got to a shop in Buda and I worked there. I got on well, I was liked so much, we were only two, not many people, I mean three, and they were considering training me as a real cleaner not only an unskilled assistant, but a skilled cleaner. I handled the money and did what the rest of them did. It was just the closing and laundry delivery when the dirty clothes were taken away and the clean clothes delivered was not my job. My boss did that, the rest I could do just like the others.

One day I get a phone call to go up to the head office for my health papers were ready, they had decided to examine my state of health and see if they would employ me or not. I went and there they told me I'd had so many months and years on sick leave that I would be pensioned off. They simply told me they'd pension me off. I was working all right, I had no complaints, and suddenly they pensioned me off. When I had applied for it, then it was justified, for I was really ill at that time. But when they summoned me!? I was perfectly well.

When I had my goiter operation and then for half a year I was locked up in the asylum, they started that process of admission into a mental home. When I got married I received a note from the local government that I was admitted. That is, it took several years to find out there was a vacancy and I would be admitted to the mental home. I went to the local council where I lived in Pest. I had to make a statement. I was given a paper to sign that I didn't need the place for I'd got married. We were given a one-room flat by the local government, that is, my life was back to normal, more or less, I wasn't living in a workers' hostel, and although I was pensioned off, I also worked and putting me in a home was not justified.

I had to put all that down, and they withdrew my application for a place at the mental home. That's what happened. I've been thinking a lot about it ever since, practically for

two or three years all the time. Maybe it'd be better to get in there, for I'm so helpless, there's nothing but the dope, the dope and nothing else. I can't read, I'm not interested in anything, I do practically nothing. I just fetch the drug, take it, go home, watch tv or listen to the radio. But at a very inferior level... All those American films now, those dumping programs, and all that's going on... Anyway, the level is very low, I mean the level I represent, I live at.

Since I got married I've undergone several detoxication cures, twice with my husband, twice alone. In fact, he got me into drinking poppy-tea, real opiate addiction. Noxiron and Coderit, as far as I know, are not opiate derivatives. But the poppy is an opiate. I was first given poppy tea by my husband. He told me I should taste it, as he was drinking that. When we got married he told me I should be prepared that he was a drug addict, and I told him I couldn't cook and wasn't much of a housewife. I told him I didn't drink alcohol, or just a very little and very rarely, because I completely lose control of myself, that's why I didn't drink. And it didn't agree with my stomach, either, for I had ulcers in my stomach and duodenum.

The two teachers, the woman and the man, were only sort of fleeting relationships in my life, there were no more serious contacts. I've had periods of four or five years when I wasn't together with a man. When I got married, I had sex relations with my husband in the first year, but then that stopped, too. Then again for a while, then a break of a year or two came, then again this summer for a few months, broken off again. Now, I have no sex again. At that time, I lived in the district where the hostel was. I had to regularly visit the neurological outpatient ward of the district, to get some injections, fortnightly. Xanax, Seduxen and the like. Then I was told to go there for therapeutic work, the time would pass better, I wouldn't be in the hostel all day, it'd be better to have some company, I'd do a little work and get some money, too.

Then I went there and met my husband, who was very strange compared to the others. I mean he wasn't like the rest. He had personality. His personality consisted in not talking to anyone like the others, not doing anything, yet having a certain presence. He didn't do anything, yet he was there, you couldn't help noticing him. I remember he had a red chequered shirt, he still has it, I don't allow him to throw it out, though it's worn threadbare. Somehow, I began to like him. He wasn't so old then as he is now, I wasn't so toothless either, and, I don't know, such a wreck. He was sort of nice. We chatted, went to concerts together, I remember, that band was still going, I can't remember their name, it was on the tip of my tongue, well, he said he was living alone in temporary lodgings 11 m2 in area, he'd got it somehow with the help of the doctors, since his parents and family refused to have him. His father, first of all, because he was eccentric. He was pensioned off, like me. I was just being considered for pension when I got to this sanatorium. Then I got my pension two-monthly, I mean some advance, because the process was still going on, so I was short on beans. He's never been on good terms with his father.

I was talking of the sanatorium. Earlier, young people made music there, and stuff like that. There was good company. Now, the place is miserable. When I met him there, it's standards were already going down. There was no social life, few people were coming, everything was getting worse. My husband eked out his living by doing walking-on parts for films. He took me, too, so I might try it and get some extra money. We went quite regularly. So regularly that we walked on two or three times a month. That was going on for some time but then I got pregnant. We were not married then, I got pregnant in September, and we got married on 11th January. When it turned out that I was pregnant the lady professor told me the baby would be addicted and wouldn't be normal, so I should go to a famous doctor and there they would decide after various tests if we could keep the baby or not. We went, and

the doctor passed me on to a psychologist who was very inquisitive. I was interrogated and my husband, too, and our family tree was registered, all our illnesses, and all that. The point is that eventually they told us not to keep the child for it wouldn't be healthy.

I asked the doctor to give me a certificate that the child had to be aborted. I went to the hospital, I didn't have to pay, the operation was done quickly. It took only a day, the next morning I could leave. It wasn't pleasant. I mean, it was so odd. And from that day on, my relationship with my husband has changed. I'm sure it was so because I no longer liked him so much. And we didn't come close to each other. Our marriage is like being friends or brother and sister. We still live like brother and sister. We get the dope together, the money is common, each of us tries to get money the way we can, then we pool it and live it up. That huge amount of money, for his pension is little, and so is mine.

In the meantime, he had his femoral neck fractured, since then he's been put in a worse category. He is in category number two, while I'm still in number three. But, I think my condition is worse than his, for I've also jumped off the Fishermen's Bastion. My spleen was injured in a suicide attempt so it had to be removed. My liver was also injured, my leg went wrong, it slipped inside somehow. I have bad pains in my leg and waist, but they don't put me in a worse category. But it would be much better, because I might then get more money and I would be registered as ill for good and free medication would be my due, whereas now I have to apply for it every year, which is a hard procedure, and either I get it or not. I take very many drugs, and now my lungs also cause problems for once I had haemorrhage of the lungs.

Mind you, that was great of my husband, when I had that lung bleeding. My lungs had been bleeding for two days when he called for the doctor, and I felt then I was very much alone. I was in the flat and had no strength to move. I was all the time wondering how I could have enough strength to go to the corridor – we lived on the second floor – to hurl myself off, to put an end to all that suffering. But I didn't have that much strength, to get that far. My husband was on a trip, lying immobile. He didn't help, no matter how much I was wailing and moaning. He even shut the window. I kept yammering for two days, it was on a weekend, that Friday night I began coughing badly, I'd had pneumonia for a week then, and then, on Friday, this haemorrhage of the lungs began. I showed my husband, look, blood's coming from my mouth. He said it'd stop, and that it wasn't blood, I must've eaten something. Then, on Saturday, my lungs bled again. I used such large handkerchiefs, sheets. Then again on Sunday, and then at last he called the doctor on charge. He came immediately, and had me taken to that central pulmonological ward in an ambulance.

A hospital again. I was subjected to all sorts of examinations again, which wasn't pleasant. Pulmonoscopy, gastroscopy, so it was very unpleasant. I decided to give up smoking for I felt really awful. Then my husband brought me a lighter as a present in the hospital. But I'd told him I wanted to quit. I smoked very little, maybe half a ciggie a day, I was so unwell. But he didn't want me to give up, maybe because once he wanted to give it up, too, because he ran, he also ran the marathon before his fracture, and then it was me who didn't want him to quit. So, taking revenge, he brought me a lighter. Or I don't really know, maybe he was scared I'd want to quit the dope, too, because the two are so close. I don't know. But surely he didn't want me to stop smoking.

So it all remained in the old rut. And maybe I don't even show what a wreck I am, in what a bad condition I am, though I feel awful. I suffer a lot physically, but I don't show it. Nor am I well emotionally. The only help I have is Father, who I still visit when I can. It's been over ten years now, more or less regularly. Sometimes we didn't meet for three or four months, but there were periods when I went every day. Quite uncalculably, irregularly, regularly, but he is always available. I have this possibility and he always receives me and always gives me help. He helps how he can. It's been like that for a very

long time, unfortunately. I'm only sorry I can't get out of the state I'm in, and I'm getting worse and worse.

I noticed when I last met him that with the passing of the time everything had been getting worse. Not because of him, but it's strange that everything – my drug abuse, my psyche, my financial state, everything has been getting worse simultaneously. As the years pass, as we live, things are all getting worse. But he still helps a lot. He couldn't make things take a different turn. I realized that there was that doctor here who understood me, knew my life inside out, knew me better than I knew myself, yet he was unable to influence me to change. Although he had tried many times to direct me towards giving up. But he couldn't force me to establish normal relationships, I mean, for example, to go to the countryside after a detoxication cure, or continue it there, and then divorce my husband with whom I had no sexual relationship anyway, only friendship or brother and sister relationship, or a symbiosis as the doctors call it, and then try to find a normal companion, and live with him.

I've pondered a lot that in this world today there is no job to be had, let alone a workers' hostel. Were I to come up from the countryside now, where could I put up? For, if I get back into the same environment, I go on with the dope, everything goes on as before. Now that Noxiron was cut off completely, although it was agreed that they'd only reduce the dose, I got so sick I jumped off the third floor in the stairhall, so they won't take me back to that ward any more. You know, that wasn't a real suicide attempt. It was half suicide, half not, for a person wanting to kill herself will not shriek for help, help, and the fellow patients were running to fetch the nurse, but then the person jumped. You don't commit suicide like that – at least not in my opinion.

I can't remember it all clearly, though it's just happened lately, for I was so confused, I had hallucinations, as if I were literally not in this world, I mean, it was all different... I can't tell you... I was completely confused and wanted to perform all the time. When I was given Depridol I declined, saying I didn't need it, though I was dying for it. So I wanted to show them, to satisfy them, and in the meantime, I was constantly harrassed by the idea of having to go to the country after this cure but then, how would I keep in touch with Father, as he was in Pest? I kept wondering and wondering till I was completely unhinged and ended up like that. Then came the accident, the fall, and traumatology, neurology.

The whole fit began when I went to the toilet because I had my period, it was already quite bad, having it more frequently, twice a month, as the Depridol and Noxiron doses decreased. As the mediaments decreased, my hormonal activities changed, for I live by my hormones. I had my period again heavily, I went to the toilet and there I was seized by this indisposition. I pulled down my panties, I passed out, and I don't know... I can't remember. There were these faint convulsions inside, I felt the nerves twitching inside me and I couldn't stop it. Such minor fits I had had earlier, too, but there in the toilet I felt very bad. And the railing was there, the distance was very little between the toilet and the rail.

It's funny that I fell three storeys and I didn't seem to get too badly hurt. First I only thought my neck was hurt for a neck tendon was displaced. But then a rib turned out to be cracked, and my eyesight has been very bad ever since. When I read at home I put on my glasses, but in the day I don't for they dim over when it rains. I can't use them during the day, it bothers me. I've had lapses of memory since then. I want to concentrate, to remember something, and I am unable to. Only accidentally does it occur to me. Earlier it wasn't so, I didn't need so much time to remember something.

All my life is great failure. My only contact is the opiate, that I still have and where I haven't failed yet. Without that I wouldn't be alive. To be on this maintenance cure means I won't be taken ill, I will bear the next twenty four hours till I get the next dose. But with

more and more difficulties, too. Here are these ten Depridol pills, for example, I've been given it for one and a half years, but it's too little. People are grossly mistaken, by the way, when they think opiates cause euphoria. It doesn't cause euphoria. The Noxiron and Coderit did cause euphoria but taking Depridol and poppy doesn't. If you take poppy, Ridol and Noxiron with Depridol, you get into a terribly calm state for a short time. Wood can be chopped on your back then, as the saying goes. In this period of calm pains decrease and for a short while stop altogether. Absorption acts differently for everyone. It also counts whether you eat or not, and so on. With me, Depridol gets absorbed in three quarters of an hour, when I eat. When I don't eat, it takes an hour or an hour and a half. Its intense effect lasts about three or four hours. That is to say, I can go on living, I can talk, I don't pay so much attention to my pains. Of course, in a year or two you get accustomed to it, and then the effect becomes weaker, then Noxiron takes increasingly on this role. Now my legs and stomach hurt me terribly. But I've taken Depridol, so the pains are not so bad, I can go on. Then the effect gradually weakens, and by eight in the evening nothing remains of it. So I drink poppy tea with Noxiron lest I should have withdrawal symptoms: diarrhea, a fit of pains, running mouth or nose.

Mind you, I don't tell my physician I take opiate or poppy tea. But without it, I could never come to fetch my daily dose in the morning. Every morning I must drink at least half a glass of poppy tea. Doctors are usually displeased to hear it, for officially I am on a maintenance cure. Only, that's the trouble, because the maintenance treatment is no maintenance treatment actually, because – I keep telling them – the dose they give me is very small. Simply not enough. For someone packing him or herself full with the stuff, opiate or heroine or anything for five or ten years, this maintenance cure only serves to stop you falling under the tram in a bad mood. That's what it's worth. Unfortunately, there was a time when I gave myself Depridol shots on the weekends, but the other day I got scared, for it ended almost disastrously, my hand caused a problem.

Now, when this problem came with my arm, I was aiming at my vein but I missed or it slipped... I don't know. The point is that a central vein got inflamed. My arm was so ugly the dermatologist immediately sent me on to a surgeon. This surgeon was crudely impolite, he slighted me, kept me waiting. When I got in, I begged him to give me a shot, to anaesthetise it with Lidocain because it hurt so much. Then he asked why, when you inject it, it doesn't hurt? Of course he was right but the malevolence hurts you very much. The awful thing is that wherever I go I encounter this ill-will. At the dentist's, the pulmonology, dermatology, everywhere I turn up. When my teeth fell out for taking poppy, the first denture was also made like that, for the diagnosis was on the paper so they knew who the false teeth were for, for I was on the free medical care list, and even so it cost quite a lot... so this person made that denture so badly that I had to have it made again, for it was intolerable. Fortunately my dentist is a nice person, and he made it again. It wasn't him who spoilt it but the I don't know what those people are called who make them.

And there in that public health and epidemics thing when we go and apply for the extension there is one woman telling me: do you think we should pay for your Depridol consumption, because you only pay 225 forints?! And how long do you think this can go on, that lady asks, that your application will be extended so that you can take your Depridol, why can't it be reduced and stopped... They always make remarks like that, for it's up to them to give permission. Then there are their colleagues, who make faces that we give them work to do because they have to put it down, fill in the card.

But there is another lady there, who is very nice. Last time I was very hungry and didn't look good, not feeling ill, it was just noon, twelve o'clock, and the smell of some food was spreading and I said how nicely something smelt. That's all I said, and the lady

filled in the permit for free medication, put Depridol on, that I might get it for another three months and said come on let's buy something. And she bought me a glass of milk and two rolls. And she works just like that, and she filled it out in the same way. Of course, every person's different, I know, but it's not that I spend eight thousand a month on Depridol plus three thousand on Noxiron, that is, eleven thousand a month on the two drugs, and live on five thousand, buy cigarettes, keep the flat, together with my husband, I mean, I don't spend eleven thousand forints to get remarks like that. I don't spend it for fun. I know it costs a lot the social insurance, I know very well, but I don't take these for fun, but because I need them.

Unfortunately it did happen once, when I was in a very bad shape, that I sold some Depridol. That was a day when the police caught me, I mean, I think he was an undercover man, for he had mobile telephone, and he didn't look a drug user, he offered me three thousand five hundred forints. He addressed me first, he said he'd buy my drug. So he must have spied on me, that I was a drug addict, and he came to me at the pharmacy. So now I'm having a court case out of it. I don't know how it will end, suspended sentence or withdrawal of Depridol, or a money fine... Neither are good, but if they want me to pay a fine from my sixteen thousand, of which eleven thousand is for the dope, then I don't know at all what will happen. I don't know...

*Translated by Judit Pokoly*