



**TRANSIT LOUNGE 2009**

**MOVING  
WHILE  
STANDING  
STILL**

**CONVERSATION THREE**

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## THROUGH A LENS

Switch off the computer close the windows  
walk out of the house to somewhere  
train station platform  
already running late but  
not so very late  
no need to panic very much  
just a slight swoon  
perhaps that's just  
my neck is stiff my ears are blocked  
and anyway I was always a nervous one

The journey is not important  
means to an end  
the destination is the key to this trip  
a birthday in another city  
my sister's birthday  
beer and old friends  
hour and twenty minutes on the train

Turns into somewhere over two hours  
on a bus crammed next to the biggest man passenger  
sleeps and leaves me little room  
but I have a book  
and my video camera faced out the window  
capturing images  
it's not the journey that's important

The project's almost finished  
finding it consuming right now  
almost finished still work to do  
taken the night off  
and I've been slack most of the week  
haven't got the work done I had hoped  
need to book venues for tour  
promote my local gigs

finish videos, work on DVD  
somehow get writing done at the same time  
Haunted by faces lately  
when I'm supposed to be concentrating  
dreaming of old loves, some not so old  
still eyes towards new love possibility  
I promised myself this year would be different  
that I would knuckle down  
so many ideas and projects  
work to be done, work that I love

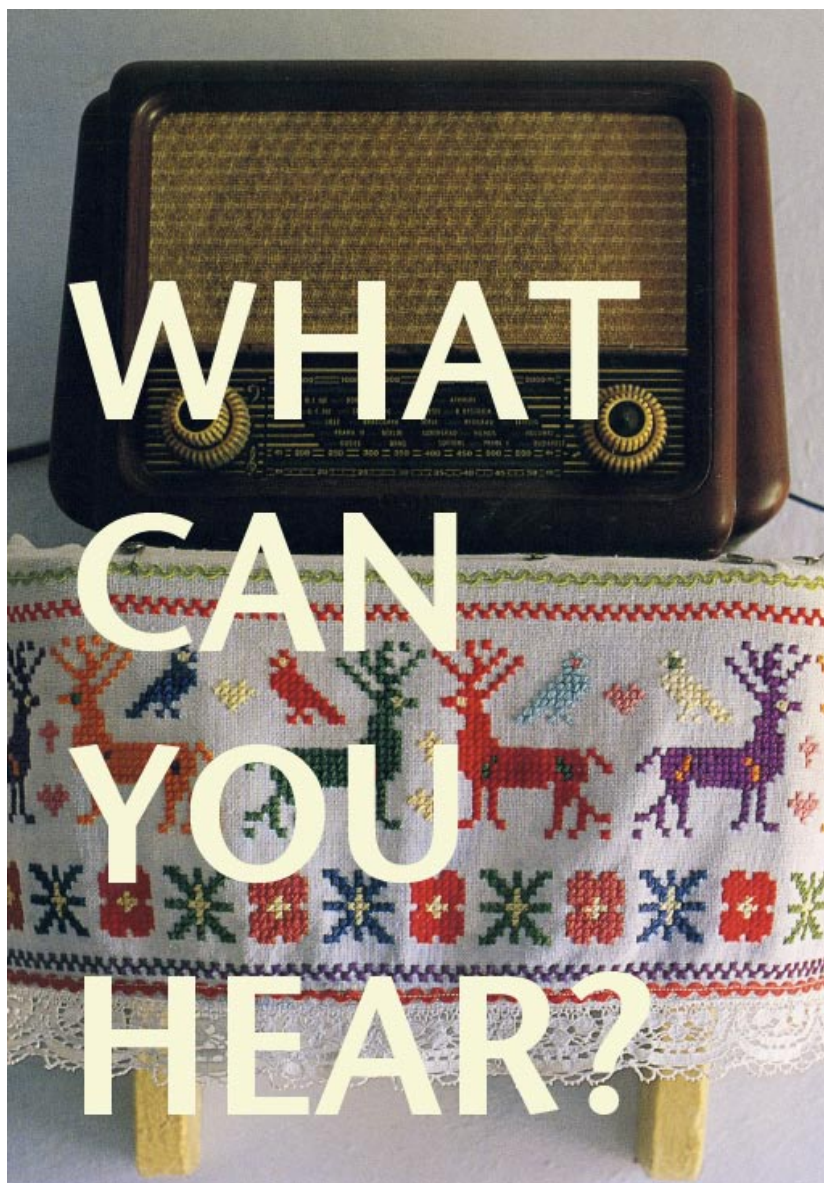
I'm not drinking so much  
not going out  
sometimes I find it hard to focus

And so I'm on this bus  
knowing this is more important  
this is family, my sister who I love  
knowing too that I'll have to come back tomorrow  
that I'll have to be serious  
justify this existence, this life I have chosen  
that seem sometimes out of synch with the world  
am I just wildly optimistic?  
the journey is just as important  
more so when you don't know the destination  
catch a bus to the end of your life  
hope it stops for cigarette breaks  
even though you were meant to quit  
stops for toilet breaks and sometimes  
you just need to stretch a bit

This life that I have promised myself  
is the one that I want  
no other choice in the matter  
this journey  
that has so many opportunities to trip and fall  
not a long life expectancy  
some days I think I must be going mad  
but it's mine and I've earned the little I have  
not afraid of being motionless  
still needing to move not to remain  
in a fixed position for long

I am not of no fixed address  
these wall this desk my home  
my heart is transient my head on a plane  
I see you smile and I want to run as far as fast as I can  
so I don't remember that that smile nearly killed me  
when it disappeared and took you with it  
life is such a strange mess  
I am such a strange mess  
this is not the end it's the beginning  
always the beginning of something  
I might seem erratic but I try to be positive  
I do try so very hard  
want you to know that I tried  
and this is my beginning of something not end

Steve Smart



**HOW DO I SEE MYSELF WHEN I GET THERE?  
SHOULD I GET MY DEEP TISSUE OUT AND CRY IN IT?**

How do I see myself when I get there?

As a bird in Paradise?

As a long lost relative?

As a little girl who never came home and who washed her freckles off by dipping her finger in moist places.

Am I still expected not to like cocks?

Am I the success story? Am I still the little girl who shouldn't walk around with only one shoe on because she will never get married this way?

Am I still the little girl who should see Jesus floating on clouds?

I am still the girl who should stop eating bread on a Friday because Saint Joseph suffered for our sins?

But I don't want to ride to heaven wearing my chastity belt.

On the first day of the year, I don't believe in eating fish and never invite priest in to air my sins. Am I still a good little girl?

Am I still a favourite cousin, niece, goddaughter even though I don't like to wear cardigans or underwear and worship my whips?

I enjoy adorning my body. Should I be the porn star, a Madame or a whore? I think I like being a slut.(repeat)

Am I still the good little girl when I like to argue, be a nag and disobey? I don't want to be scanned only for my childbearing hips, my pretty smile and as a promised wife. My eyes are not naïve but they do flutter when I see those pretty people.

I don't worship money and I am ready to defy.

How do I see myself when I get there? Should I cry? How do I see myself in a deep tissue?

As a bug on the footpath, screaming for attention?

As a squashed bird with no self esteem? As a missing link?

Hell no, I am ready to party and ready to celebrate my roots and my good fortune.... I am....my way. (repeat)

Gaby Bila-Günther



LAST NIGHT,  
WE ARE  
CERTAIN OF IT,  
WE SAT IN  
A ROOM LIKE  
THIS WHILST  
WE LAY  
SLEEPING..

## RANDOM BATH RESPONSE

Tonight it's hard to leave the safety of home  
to go into the wild city night  
I don't feel wild right now  
I feel tired  
not – a dust speck of energy drained –  
more needing the comforts of a quiet night  
the erratic rhythms of the tap tap tap  
of the keyboard catching up with emails  
good food, lots of it  
perhaps a video  
an early night  
a bath  
indulge in my bad habit  
of falling asleep submerged in warm water  
til water turns cold and has to be topped up  
hands and feet turned to wrinkled prunes  
drift back into sleep  
told this is strange, foolish, dangerous  
and true it may be  
true my skin will itch for days  
true the waste of water in drought time  
is unconscionable  
call this a guilty pleasure  
only when I'm tired and need to  
escape the world  
I have done this in hotels  
across the globe  
but home is best, you see  
sometimes you're stuck in a place  
and sometimes that place  
offers its own rewards

Steve Smart

## FOLLOW THAT SMELL

Tuica alias slipovitch alias palinka, alias plum brandy alias peasant's drink, eighty two percent pure alcohol, guarantees no hangovers or your liver back. It is delicious, it is pungent, its taste may never grow on you, but it will stay with you forever. It maps out my life: moments of glory and moments of grief. As I young child I remember toothaches and bleeding gums resting underneath buds of cotton wool dipped in tuica.

Misty eyes fogged up at night.

Sweet comfort inside my mother's brace.

Switching the lights off with my eye keeping the colds at bay.

I remember a dream where we were startled into flight and heavy drumbeats surrounded into the night.

And I saw stars, and stripes and pillowcases floating in the streets.

I remember my mother's eye wishing me a warm good night and rubbing hot tuica on my heavy breathing. Stirring health back to my chest.

I remember family's Easter reunions, pigs on the roast, tuica in the barrels, gypsies bathing themselves in it while playing their fiddles, gypsy bitches telling fortunes, tying chicken wire around your middle finger, smiles on their faces, luck in your palms. I remember three days weddings where the mirele (the proud groom) drinks his tuica to lure his mireasa (the blushing bride). I remember tuica as dowries, liquid gold, "bogatia pamintului". Cu cine the insori mai, are tuica, ma naraule, vino si bea tuica cu nasu tau.

Sa-ti traiasca mireasa si copii. Noroc sa ai!

I remember tuica used as barter to because money didn't matter. It never bought anything useful anyway. Only foreign money looked like gold in our pockets. Tuica was used to get victims out of trouble with the authorities. Every Securitate member liked to be tipsy on the job. Their memory dipped in tuica would lapse in front of the judge. Tuica was the bribery tool to open the gates the communist haven where the more barrels one brought and consumed the higher up the party ladder they climbed. When the barrels where emptied and parched so was their careers. When their brain was sober once again so was their memory and lives were broken behind bars or working on fruitless fields, oozing for better memories.

As an older child my holidays in the mountains at my uncle's who would come home, his clothes wearing this very smell. "Are you ready for some gossip?" his tipsy breath tried to entertain our moments of childhood. "I haven't got time to argue"; his wife turning an upper lip

would watch him collapse on the bed. “Not even ten cuckoo clocks can wake him now!”

We knew that. My uncle loved consuming tuica and snoring its flavors away. The next morning he would be up when dawn would crack ready for another bottle. I never saw him chunder. Only whip his horse during his dark moods. Beat sa fi noroc sa ai. Drunk to be, and luck to have. He would lie at the bottom of his cuce, curled up and with good fate bestowed upon him while his horses would pull his drunken contents all the way up the mountain. They never missed a turn.

As older this smell takes me back into the kitchen at parties where I was searching for drinks containing the alcohol percentage of this smell. I drank it until I was spitting mult foc (ferocious fire). My teenage angst was that I wouldn't get enough of the stuff. Then I would be driving the porcelain bus all the way home and be awake for hours.

Sweet years later when I revisited my uncle, I rediscovered the smell in his empty kitchen, on an empty stomach, on a very early morning. His cupboard empty of food filled only with ghostly bottles. No wife, no kids they had enough of his stench. I went there to get away from the bars in Berlin where the smell made me see only doors, floors, and shoes and cowboy boots. Stretchers, men in white carrying victims after Tuica Slammers competitions. The winner never knew he was carrying gold. Intoxicated, he never remembered.

I followed the smell to Prague where it was cheaper than our daily bread. Searching for our last Koroners, we wine and dined with it. Gypsy mothers asked for dimes while the Danube lifted its tide and greeted its departure to coughed up wretched cans of filth around its rocky ridges, it looked morose and lone at the drop of a coin.

The very smell got my friend Lola into trouble after her inebriated mind won her an invitation into a rapist's home. She was lucky she couldn't remember a thing. My grand frolic partner, Lola was always an enormous binger. Her soggy breath intoxicated her whole aura while her turmoiled behavior lured men between her sheets. Why do some women do this to themselves? Then they wonder in dull innocence why some men take advantage of them.

The smell complicated my life on various occasions. Now I follow it to celebrate my roots, a better life and my good fortune. I raise my glass up to the sky and shout: Noroc si la multi ani. Sanatate mare! Good health to you!

Gaby Bila-Günther

## OF CONTRADICTORY NATURE

Things move too fast  
never fast enough  
I don't have time  
I waste time  
I sleep too much  
I haven't slept  
I want to grab the world  
I want the world to come to me  
I want to be out in the world  
I want to hide from the world  
I want the life I have  
the life I have frightens me  
I don't want to want so much  
But I want and want and want  
haunted by the idea of impossibilities  
I see endings in beginnings  
things would be easier  
if I wasn't so hard on myself  
this room isn't big enough for the both of us  
I am the only one here  
if the world doesn't end  
what will become of all my excuses

I contradict myself  
this one thing at least is certain

Steve Smart

## HOW DO YOU ESCAPE HOME WHEN YOU HAVE THE WINTER BLUES?

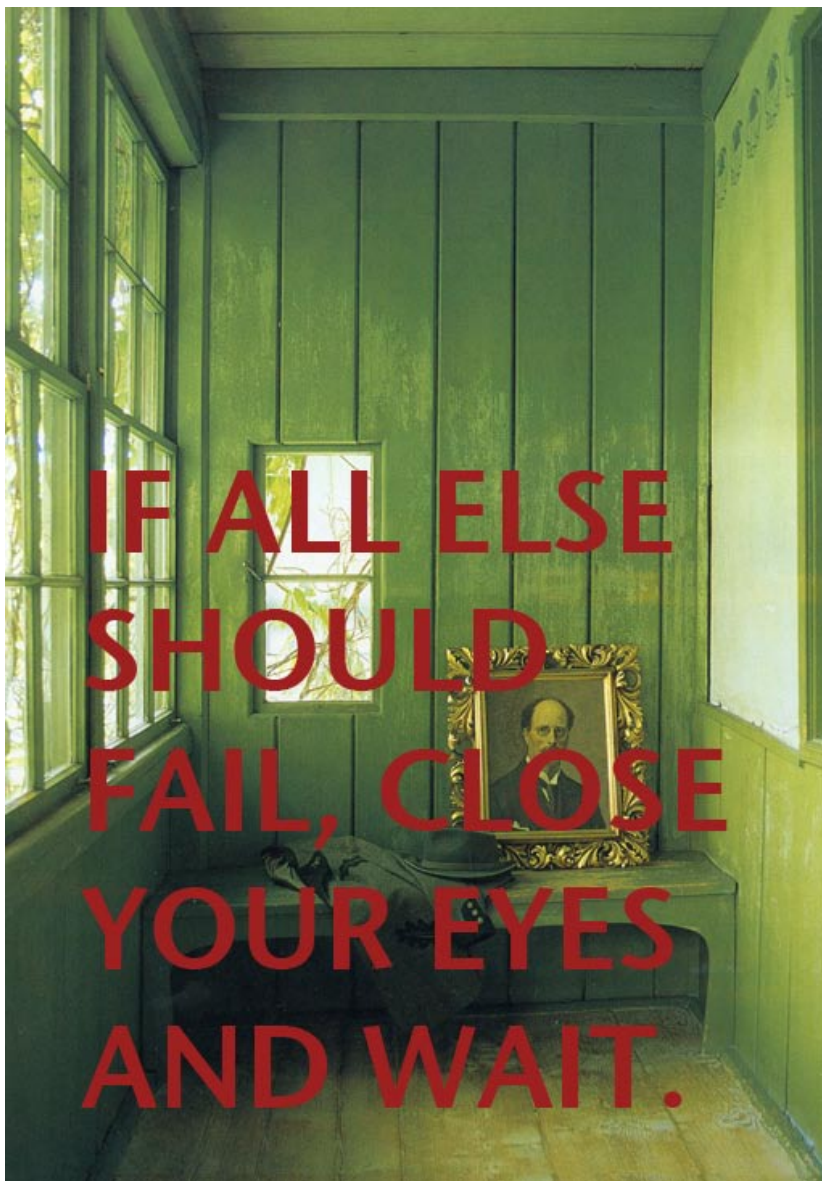
Out my door, its grey and miserable  
your steps skid down wet footpaths  
the clouds havent given the sun a chance in days  
the snow melted away the last hope of winter happiness  
we are back to trampling on urban mud  
hot emails from sunny places from steve and gracia and louise  
turn me on, explosive heat  
i hope my words melt in their mouths  
do you have summer blues sinking in your hearts?  
at least they can see the sun from inside their rooms  
i have the winter blues when i gaze through my shades  
bulletins shoot online about a missing Portugese man  
who works as an investigator at a techology company here in Berlin  
last seen at 4am leaving a club last week  
his footprints still fresh on the dance floor  
employer and friends are searching for his remains or his whereabouts  
a happy photo of him attached to me  
has anybody seen him?  
maybe he escaped back to his sunny roots, Portugal  
away he went with his winter blues  
my sunny roots are far away  
and even though i drink Aussie wine and imagine my escape  
i still dont feel the ocean's breeze or its sand blowing in the tropical wind  
on TV i see surfers and swimmers loose their flesh to sharks  
i see hurricanes blow rooftops away  
i see a plane floating on Hudson river  
after all these news?  
how can i escape the Winter Blues?  
when leaving home has become impossible?  
i will tell you how. i will imagine.

Gaby Bila-Günther

## A YOUNG MAN WAITS

I am large but frail  
clumsy  
don't always fit into spaces  
you might think I might – wrestle with  
great doubts but try to be  
positive  
pos  
it  
ive  
want to be caught  
to be held  
not aloft, close  
I'm here, where I've always been  
but moving still I  
blink  
and the world stops  
try to find out where I was last night  
and with whom  
smoke like a grave robber  
all passion and futility  
I look up  
down  
maybe should look left  
right?  
but I'm here  
still  
waiting to be there  
wait for me  
I won't be long now

Steve Smart



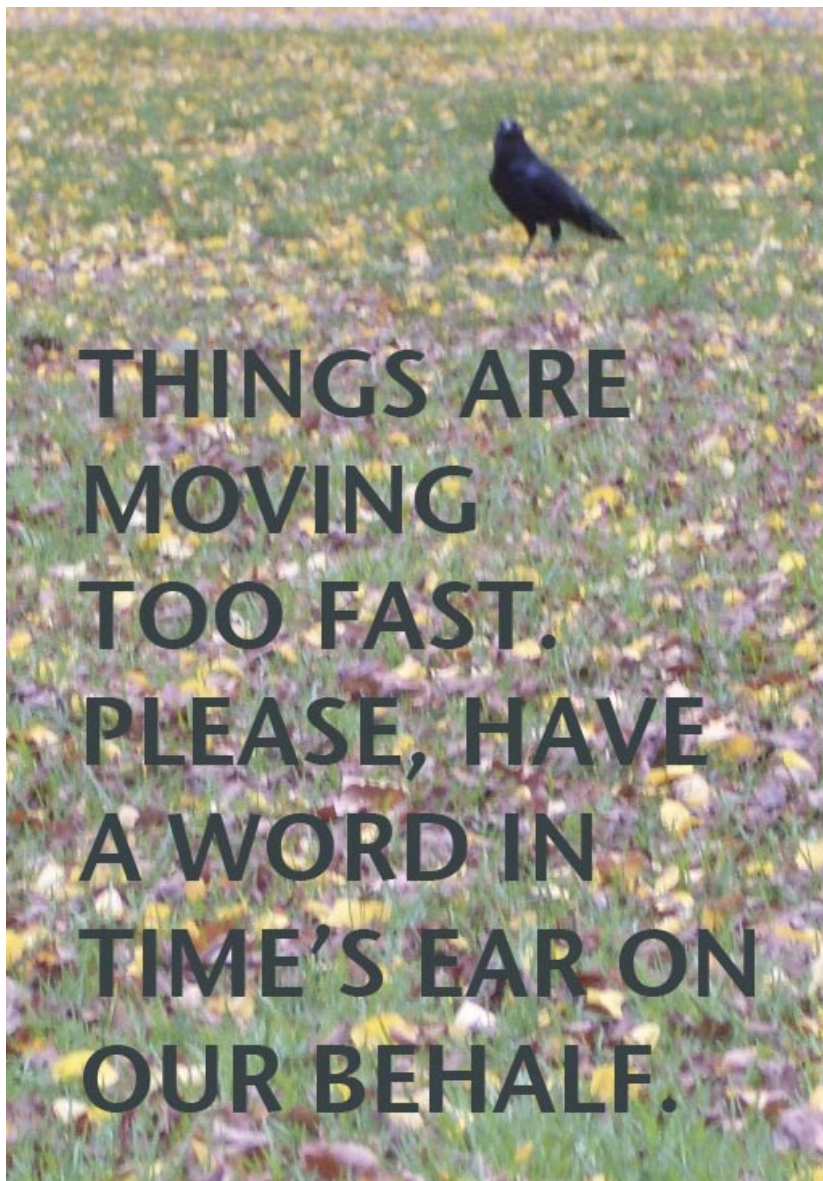
## CONFESSIONS OF A WOMAN

I am a 21st century girl  
I am a 21st century  
modern girl  
I don't want to saw  
I don't want to do the dishes  
I hate scrubbing floors  
I keep my dust brush in the bin  
I don't carry shopping bags  
Cans or beauty maps, or even retirement plans  
I don't make any appointments  
I don't see a therapist, a shrink, a priest,  
Don't believe in clans, Kabala or new age freaks  
I am not a Born-again, Jehovahs or 7 day peddling adventist  
But just for the hell of it, sometimes a Buddhist  
So please don't shoot me in the eye  
I don't hire babysitters,  
I don't juggle cooking pans  
My kitchen is not a feeding gallery  
I don't believe in trends  
I am not desperate for sexual catering  
I don't trim my lawn  
I keep mine Brazilian  
I never even had a wedding or gave birth at home  
I don't believe in mortgages and never took out a loan  
I do believe in poems and other language forms  
Expensive facials my waste of time  
I speak and follow my own mind  
I play hard to get but for chocolates and dates  
Just sms me your love  
Let us celebrate Valentines Day  
With chocolate and cream  
Leather aprons and totally high  
I am a modern girl  
21st century modern girl  
Just sms your love for me  
Email me your longings  
I wont shove them in the junkbox  
Will keep them in my heartbox

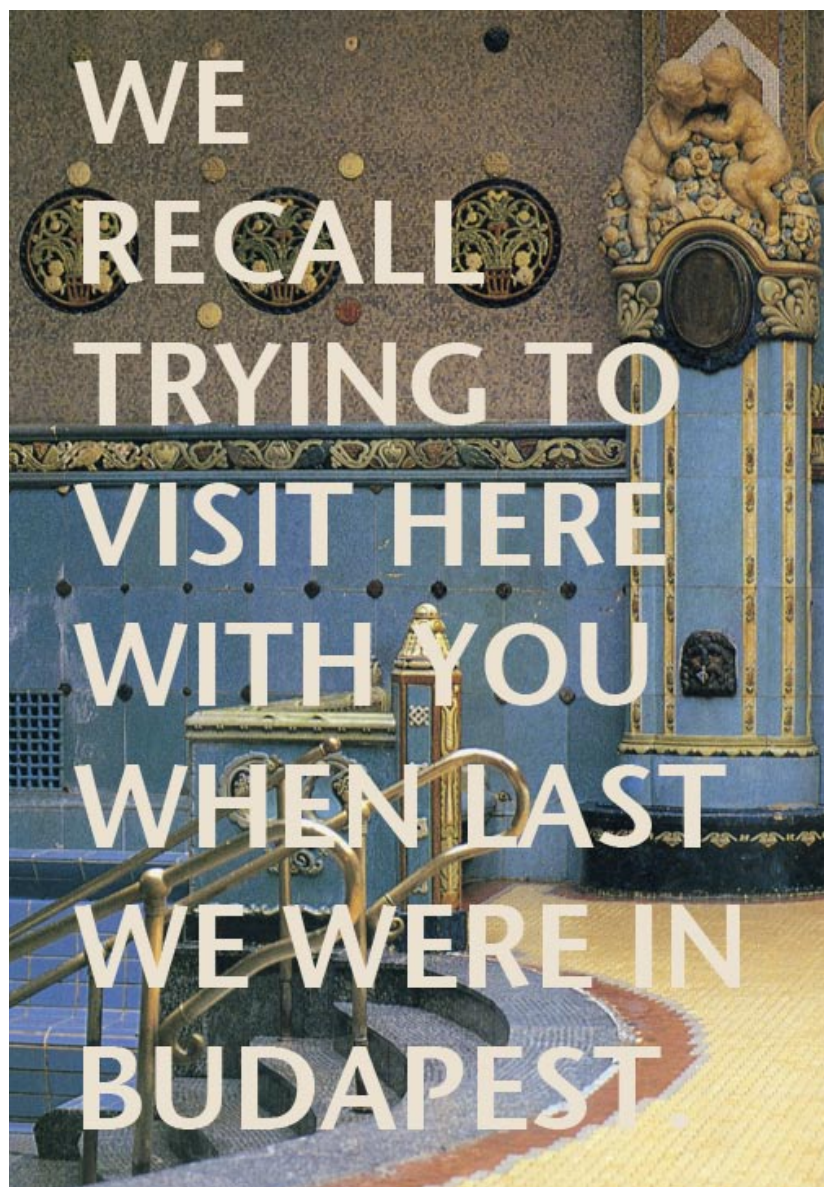
Let me be your fantasy for the rest of your life.  
I am a modern girl  
I am a modern girl  
I am a 21st Century  
modern girl.

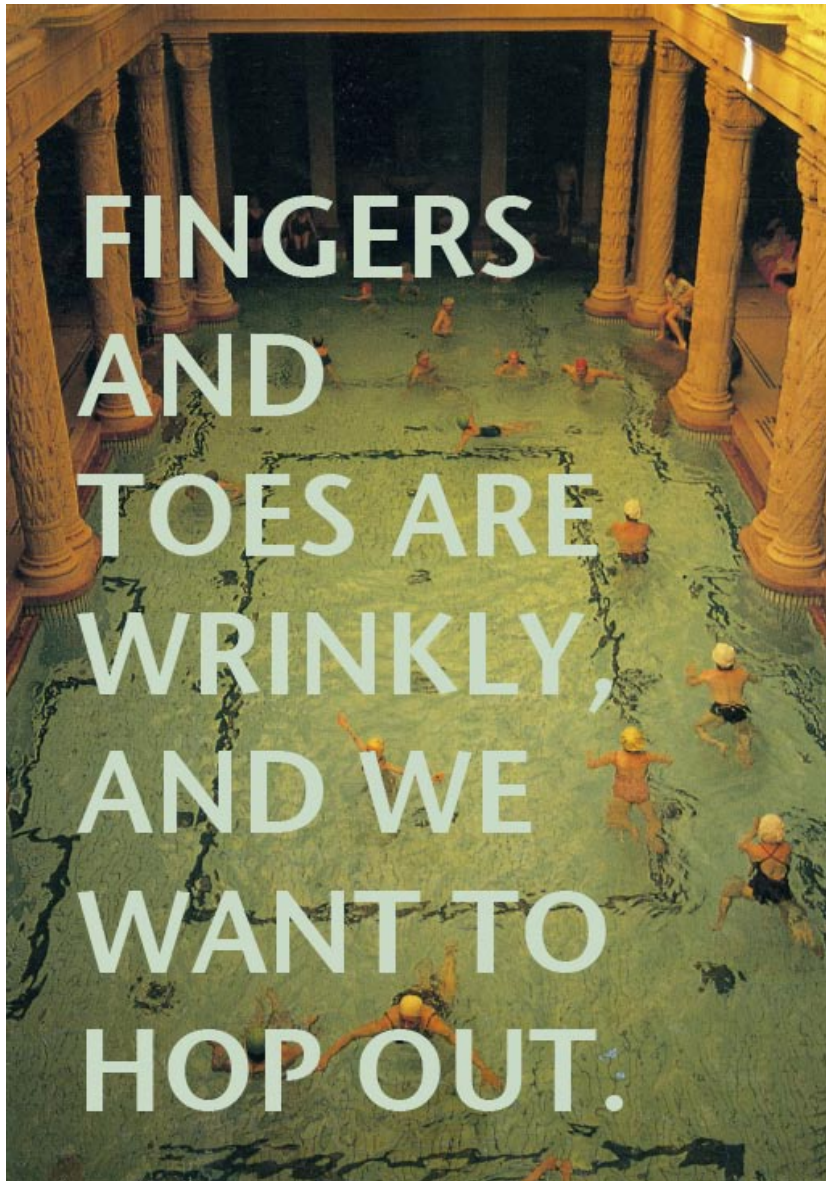
Gaby Bila-Günther





**THINGS ARE  
MOVING  
TOO FAST.  
PLEASE, HAVE  
A WORD IN  
TIME'S EAR ON  
OUR BEHALF.**





## AMBITION OF A YOUNG WOMAN

I go anywhere, anytime, any place anyhow I see fit,  
I'll be there.  
I go to small places, large places, hideous places,  
Smelly places, greedy places, horizontal places, perpendicular places  
Inside a circle I go in a straight line  
I'll crawl if I have to....  
I'll be there....  
Everything surrounds me and I surround everything else  
I am big, I am large, I am strong but you can come near me  
I look up...then I get there  
I look down.... And never fall  
I run.... Even if I don't have to  
Catch me but you can't  
I dare ...if you do  
I smile...if you try  
I'll look ...if you turn  
I'll be there.... Kisses and all.  
Watch me...

Gaby Bila-Günther



**CONVERSATION THREE IS**

+ Words by Gaby Bila-Günther

+ Words by Steve Smart

+ Images by Gracia Haby & Louise Jennison

[transitlounge.org/2009/conversations/conversation3/](http://transitlounge.org/2009/conversations/conversation3/)

A small zine of unlimited number.  
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