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And the Animal: Eight Variations on Krasznahorkai & Neumann's *Animalinside*

ABSTRACT

Animalinside is a collaboration in word and image between the Hungarian author László Krasznahorkai and the German artist Max Neumann. Neumann's pen and ink drawing of a black animal form against a bright yellow-green background spurred Krasznahorkai to write a short piece – a blend of monologue, narration and description of the drawing. Neumann, in turn, produced further animal drawings inspired by Krasznahorkai's piece. And in turn, Krasznahorkai wrote about the new drawings. *Animalinside* collects and presents in sequence the thirteen mixed media works. Neumann's drawings repeat the dog-like animal, variously placing it alone against the barren landscape or pairing it with human figures or with two or three other dog-like animals. Together, Neumann's drawings do not comprise a series. Similarly, Krasznahorkai's compositions are impressionistic: they take their inspiration from Neumann's drawings without making a story of them. The present essay echoes the style of *Animalinside*, offering eight variations on its different aspects without imposing order or reducing the work to key themes. The animal is multi-lingual. Originally, it is *das Tier* in Neumann's German; subsequently, the animal is translated into Krasznahorkai's Hungarian: "Állat"; the present essay translates it further into "animal" (English) and "*animal*" (French). Such polyvocality, and the difficulties of translation it presents, recalls "*das ungeheuer Ungeziefer*," the untranslatable creature in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Thinking of Kafka's *Ungeziefer* and Krasznahorkai's *állat*, the second variation of the essay is about sacredness and sacrifice, and about animals too large and magnificent to kill ritualistically. If the animal is a dog or jackal, then it is a pack animal: inherently a plurality even when depicted by Neumann standing alone. The third variation of the essay considers Freud's famous "Wolf Man" case and the rush in the study to identify the six or seven wolves in the infantile dream with a single, symbolic animal. Neumann and Krasznahorkai's animal is non-symbolic, the third variation concludes, and so an awful, ascendant creature. In similar fashion, the other variations on *Animalinside* play on various parts of the work, and in doing so, they draw in other animals from Krasznahorkai's novels: the giant whale from *The Melancholy of Resistance*, the horses of the apocalypse in *War & War*, and the swan-like bird from *Seibo There Below*.

Et l'animal: huit variations sur *Animalinside* de Krasznahorkai et Neumann

RÉSUMÉ

Animalinside est une collaboration en mots et en images entre l'auteur hongrois László Krasznahorkai et l'artiste allemand Max Neumann. Le dessin à la plume et à l'encre de Neumann d'une forme animale noire sur un fond jaune-vert vif a incité Krasznahorkai à écrire une courte pièce – un mélange de monologue, de narration et de description du dessin. Neumann, à son tour, a produit d'autres dessins d'animaux inspirés de la pièce de Krasznahorkai. Et à son tour, Krasznahorkai a écrit sur les nouveaux dessins. *Animalinside* rassemble et présente en séquence les treize œuvres de techniques mixtes. Les dessins de Neumann répètent l'animal ressemblant à un chien, le plaçant différemment seul contre le paysage stérile ou l'associant à des figures humaines ou à deux ou trois autres animaux ressemblant à des chiens. Ensemble, les dessins de Neumann ne constituent pas une série. De même, les compositions de Krasznahorkai sont



impressionnistes: elle s'inspirent des dessins de Neumann sans en faire une histoire. Le présent essai fait écho au style d'*Animalinside*, offrant huit variations sur ses différents aspects sans imposer d'ordre ni réduire le travail à des thèmes clés. L'animal est multilingue. À l'origine, c'est *das Tier* dans l'allemand de Neumann; par la suite, l'animal est traduit dans le hongrois de Krasznahorkai: "*Állat*"; le présent essai le traduit plus loin par "animal" (anglais) et "l'animal" (français). Une telle polyvocité, et les difficultés de traduction qu'elle présente, rappelle "*das ungeheuer Ungeziefer*," la créature intraduisible de la *Métamorphose* de Kafka. En pensant à l'*Ungeziefer* de Kafka et à l'*állat* de Krasznahorkai, la deuxième variation de l'essai porte sur le caractère sacré et le sacrifice, et sur les animaux trop grands et magnifiques pour être tués rituellement. Si l'animal est un chien ou chacal, alors c'est un animal de meute: intrinsèquement une pluralité même lorsqu'il est représenté par Neumann comme étant seul. La troisième variation de l'essai examine le célèbre cas de l'"Homme aux loups" de Freud et la précipitation dans l'étude à identifier les six ou sept loups dans le rêve infantile avec un seul animal symbolique. L'animal de Neumann et Krasznahorkai est non- symbolique, conclut la troisième variation, et donc une horrible créature ascendante. De la même manière, les autres variations de *Animalinside* jouent sur diverses parties de l'œuvre, et ce faisant, elles attirent d'autres animaux des romans de Krasznahorkai: la baleine géante de *La mélancolie de la résistance*, les chevaux de l'apocalypse dans *Guerre & guerre*, et l'oiseau en forme de cygne de *Seiobo est descendue sur terre*.

Variation No. 1



Animals surround us, seemingly ever at our periphery, running, burrowing, and there again suddenly in full fang. We make sense of them in terms of necessity and instinct: Winter to prepare for, territories to police, a predator narrowly escaped. What fears we give in to in thinking this way, as if the animal is of human kind only not quite – “poor in world” as Heidegger describes them.¹ Always, we must have the last word, the complete, truest account of things. We classify the animal kingdom and grant ourselves dominion over its inhabitants. And still every creeping thing creeps upon the earth. Late summer afternoon years ago, warm skin bare in the cold North Atlantic, a great white swimming offshore cut across us against the current. Slowly turning to shore it slithers through the shallows. Watching from land as it moved through the now empty waves, moved, I say, but at prehistoric pace, an almost still life. We said nothing, we could say nothing, the shark had taken language and sense-making from us. Another natural order altogether was restored.

¹ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. W. McNeill & N. Walker (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 184.

Variation No. 2



A partial catalogue of László Krasznahorkai's fictional bestiary: Carriage horses, driven to exhaustion and then replenished at each waystation visited by the four travelers in *War & War*² and the shrieking birds that follow in their wake, and the dying goats and cows, the screaming monkeys whose frenzy foretells a “terrible cosmic cataclysm, a heavenly war” that spells the death of the Pelasgians and ruin of the ancient Minoan civilization³ and the “Libyan White and the Marsh Cat, the Nubian Kadiz, the Arab Quttha and the Egyptian Mau [...] [and] the Bubastine Bastt, the Omani Kaffer and [...] Burmese Brown” that Mastemann, attendant and witness to the apocalypse brought by the four horsemen, keeps caged for sale in city marketplaces.⁴ A stray dog in *Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming* who confuses Cantor's infinite mathematics for proof of the non-existence of God: “[A]ccordingly, I ask you,” asks the Professor to Little Mutt, “let's go back to the question of why Cantor is worth it [...] well, we deny, namely we affirm the denial of the existence of God,” and in so doing liquidate all narrow, limiting questions of existence.⁵ Questioning foresworn, thought broken down, man and animal warm themselves by a fire in an abandoned train station. A whale so large – the largest ever seen – so large, indeed, as to be unseeable in *The Melancholy of Resistance*: “[T]o comprehend the enormous tail fin, the dried, cracked, steel-grey carapace and, halfway down the strangely bloated hulk, the top fin, which alone measured several meters, appeared a singularly hopeless task.”⁶ And the packs of feral cats in the same novel that occupy Béla Wenckheim Avenue at night, of higher mass mind they presume to rule all who cross their path: “[A]n individual beast in one of the packs [...] having recognized potential prey in the figures of two members of the former master race [...] approach[ed] [Valuska and Eszter] with an air of insolent audacity.”⁷ And the Ooshirosagi at the beginning of *Seiobo There Below*: “[T]his enormous snow-white bird [...] its neck folded in an S-form [...] its wings pressed tightly against its body, its thin legs searching for a firm point beneath the water's surface.”⁸ And the animal of animals: the unidentifiable creature of *Animalinside [Állatvanbent]* – the collaboration between Krasznahorkai and the German artist Max Neumann. Dog-like, but without front legs, but

² László Krasznahorkai, *War & War*, trans. G. Szirtes (New York: New Directions, 2006), 144-145.

³ Krasznahorkai, *War & War* 107.

⁴ Krasznahorkai, *War & War* 107-108.

⁵ László Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming*, trans. O. Mulzet (New York: New Directions, 2019), 352.

⁶ László Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance*, trans. G. Szirtes (New York: New Directions, 1998), 88.

⁷ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 129.

⁸ László Krasznahorkai, *Seiobo There Below*, trans. O. Mulzet (New York: New Directions, 2013), 7.



without ears, eyes, a mouth, but without fur, without color, nearly tailless. Black, stocky, pitched forward barely balancing on thin hind legs: “I have no eyes, no ears, no teeth, no tongue, no brain tissue, no hair, no heart, no bowels, no cock, no voice, no smell.”⁹ Insisting on its originality – “I am not of woman born, I did not become, I just am”¹⁰ – still the animal is with precedents, deny them though it does. Written *állat* (animal) is born of drawn *Tier* (animal). In the beginning, image begets the word. Krasznahorkai initially “worked from one of Neumann’s images”; in turn, Neumann multiplied out his series after reading Krasznahorkai; and in turn, “Krasznahorkai [...] responded by writing the other thirteen texts.”¹¹ Not of woman born but of women, of multiple mother tongues comes the animal.

In its polyphony, Neumann’s *Tier*/Krasznahorkai’s *állat* descends from another written animal: *Das ungeheuer Ungeziefer* of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* (*Die Verwandlung*).¹² Familiar as it is to render Kafka’s archaic German into English “insect” or “cockroach,” more is said in “*ungeheuren Ungeziefer*” than “bug.” The adjective means “huge” and “monstrous”; the noun names an animal unfit for sacrifice; both words are negative – prefaced with “un-” – and so signify what they are relative to what they are not: “un-” (not) + “*geheuer*” (certain, comfortable) and “un-” (not) + “*Geziefer*” (vermin). In preparing the manuscript for publication, Kafka insisted the creature not be drawn or depicted in any way. No representation, no mirror image, to save Gregor Samsa from the animal inside. With Samsa, Kafka’s readers are left uneasy between “*ungeheueren*” and “*Ungeziefer*.”

Ungeheueren. Out of all proportion, the animal is a great black mass, a blight upon the bright yellow land below. How could there be size to the animal? Relative to what would it be measured? What visual cues of perspective there are – borders, rectilinear shapes, sight lines intersecting and diverging – Neumann sets in the background. In contrast, the animal is drawn far in the foreground.

[B]ecause the problem is the space, [the animal] has nothing in common with this space, in the entire God-given world he has nothing in common with [...] these perspectives, these perspectives are not made for him to exist in them.¹³

Measure is comparative, size a form of constraint; the animal simply is too big. “I extendextendextend around the Earth,”¹⁴ Krasznahorkai hears the animal howl, “I extend around [the Earth] one hundred times, one thousand times, one million times.”¹⁵ All below is cast in ominous shadow. The few human figures in Neumann’s drawings – standing alone or gathered in small groups of two or three – are blackened by the animal’s shadow. They scurry about,

⁹ László Krasznahorkai & Max Neumann, *Animalinside*, trans. O. Mulzet (New York: New Directions, 2011), 10.

¹⁰ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 11.

¹¹ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 6.

¹² Franz Kafka, *Die Verwandlung*, in *Franz Kafka Gesammelte Werke, Band 4: Erzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1976), 57.

¹³ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 8-9.

¹⁴ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 12.

¹⁵ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 12-13.



Neumann's figures, they work and prepare: "[T]he armchair where [they] like to sit with a book [...] every photograph of the child[ren] [...] every curtain and every document" have to be stored away, buried for safe-keeping.¹⁶ At the end of time there is not nothing to do there is much to do, too much to do and the animal above waits for us to be done. We have "gambled away [o]ur luck," we have become "unworthy of the earth" we thought belonged to us and the animal will come in judgment at the end of time and space.¹⁷ It is a judgment we think we know already, though its infinite animal coming will be unlike anything we have thought or said or experienced before: "I shall spring forth [...] from the unexpected, from the unforeseen [...] that is why your expectations are useless."¹⁸ No word of it in our everyday talk, no breaking news headline, without warning we will look up one day and the animal will be upon us furiously.¹⁹

Ungeziefer. Talmudic law stipulates only "unblemished" animals be sacrificed. Among the blemishes that render an animal unfit for sacrifice Leviticus 22:22 lists blindness (*avveret*), broken or cracked limbs that leave an animal lame (*shavur, haruz*), skin diseases (*yabbelet*), defects of the genitals and complete castration (*karut*), and defects that cause an animal to have one leg longer or shorter than the other or it being club footed or cloven hooved (*qalut*). Killing an old, hobbled animal is mere expedience, and so different in kind from offering a prized calf or lamb to God. To a perfect bestower must needs go a perfect bestowal – such is the absolute exchange rate with the infinite, finite and full of loss though shepherding is. Indeed, to get the math right we need to zero out the last factor. The incalculability to a family or small community in ancient Canaan of sacrificing a work animal or food provider of milk and meat is not incredibly high but absolutely nothing. One over infinity, one hundred over infinity, one billion over infinity: all equal zero. No sacrificial gift is great enough to bridge the immeasurable distance between here and beyond. According to the ancient manuscript recounted by Korin in *War & War*, the arrival of the four horsemen in the southern Cretian port of Kommos stirs such anxiety that people "br[ing] every kind of sacrifice to the [priestess'] shrine" and "wate[h] with concern the fate of the animals [...] examining earth, sky, sea, sun, wind and light [and] the breathing patterns of the aged."²⁰ No sacrifice, no augury, no sign reading could portend what comes: "[A] lion descend[s] [from the mountains] into a place of human habitation [...] [and] dies in the main square."²¹ The people of Kommos take the dying animal to be the "very last and clearest sign that [...] disaster had struck."²² Majesty in ruin: the sign of signs to end all significance.

[A]ll the ceremonials were concluded, all the farewells said [...] prayers [were] said at the shrine [...] at the topmost bend in the road [...] and within a few days everyone had gone and Kommos was deserted.²³

¹⁶ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 32.

¹⁷ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 33.

¹⁸ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 17.

¹⁹ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 17.

²⁰ Krasznahorkai, *War & War* 111.

²¹ Krasznahorkai, *War & War* 112.

²² Krasznahorkai, *War & War* 112.

²³ Krasznahorkai, *War & War* 112.



There is another sense, then, of an animal unfit for sacrifice. Not one that is blind, or lame, or wounded or cloven hooved, but a magnificent animal, one awe-inspiring in its grandeur. The sudden appearance of such an animal – a big cat, a bird of prey, an ancient sea creature – brings an end to the human all too human practice of reading the future in ritualized signs of the present. Or what is the same from *Animalinside*: “[E]very picture drawn in anxiety and every word written [...] in horror [...] with which you try to prophesize me is senseless, for there is no need for prophecy.”²⁴ Neumann and Krasznahorkai’s timeless, awful animal – unsacrificable because too great – cancels (prophetic, future-oriented) language and (representational) images, returning the double negativity of Kafka’s “*ungeheueren Ungeziefer*” back to the relationship between artist and writer. It is a positive, creative return. Freed by the awesome animal from the constraints of causal language, that is, from language-use that predicates the future on the regular past and present, Krasznahorkai can write between various registers. At times, the short text is written in the voice of the animal itself, then from the perspective of a figure in Neumann’s paintings, and sometimes as a viewer of one or a number of the works. To begin, *Animalinside* reads in Krasznahorkai’s voice as he looks at Neumann’s paintings: “[The animal] wants to break free [...] but [...] has been tautened there by [walls].”²⁵ Immediately and without marking the shift, the text begins to howl, shifting from first-person to first-animal: “I remain in this tautening, in this constraint, and there is nothing else for me to do but howl.”²⁶ So prolific does language become in the context of great animals that it spills over off the page and into different media. Neumann was spurred by Krasznahorkai’s polyvocal language to draw the animal again and again. In turn, the present work is written in the creative space of the forever writable and re-writable sacred animal. Animal magnificence expands ever outward and upward, occasioning further variations in word and image.

²⁴ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 16.

²⁵ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 8.

²⁶ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 9.



Variation No. 3

Animal pictures are childish. How many dogs and fish and birds do we draw for kids in the first years of their lives? Waiting for dinner at a restaurant, placemats covered in crayon zooscapes: the adult draws the animal and the child supplies the sound: “Gobble-gobble, Baaaaah, Rrrroooooaar!” Their first drawings – blobs of color and crooked lines – are often of the family pet. Not the animal itself, nor its bark or growl, nor its drawing seem to take any priority: animal-animal act-drawing of animal form a differentiated whole. And at the center of the snake-hiss-cury line amalgam, the child. There is nowhere outside from which to look upon the animal picture – the pictured animal – as if separable into art and reality. Deleuze & Guattari put positive language to this circumstance: the animal-act-image is an “assemblage” in which “becoming-animal” and “becoming-child” occur together and simultaneously. In these terms a scene on the living room floor, colored pencils and pens strewn about, kids and grown-ups on their bellies and elbows drawing together, can be said to occur at many points at once, each seemingly separate act adding to and supplementing every other. “Becoming is always double, that which one becomes becomes no less than the one that becomes – an assemblage is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium.”²⁷ The younger of two kids extends their drawing onto one of the adults’ pieces of paper, crayons are exchanging hands mid-coloring, the head of a horse on one page overlaps the legs of a dog on another: “The painter and musician do not imitate the animal, they become-animal at the same time as the animal becomes what they willed, at the deepest level of their concord with nature.”²⁸ Concurrence at countless points and in myriad different spaces and across multiple forms of life and ways of being; in short, reality, or the real of the event (to emphasize the occurrence, the happening of reality). Worked at different points of its surface, detailed in the top left-hand corner while also shaded in the foreground and sketched an off-center figure, a painting or drawing mirrors reality. In this sense, all visual art is realism. Language struggles to do the same, that is, to serve in writing the omnipresence of reality and the simultaneity of the event. Krasznahorkai comes up against this problem in the final pages of *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming*. The provincial Hungarian town in which the narrative unfolds – the homecoming of Bela Wenckheim, the murder of a young biker by the reclusive Professor, Marika’s heartbreak at being unrecognizable to her childhood love – is in the end utterly incinerated, and in every neighborhood and along every block and downtown and in the suburbs all at once: “[A]nd the parks and the streets and the gardens, but no, it wasn’t like this, not in this order, because there wasn’t any kind of order, because these things didn’t burst into flames one after the other, but all exactly at the same moment.”²⁹ To write cataclysm is doubly impossible because “the choice of words creates a problem” and because “if somebody [...] could narrate this,”³⁰ which there could be no one, or no one who was not in the same moment burned to ash together with everyone else and all the animals and buildings and everything. The reader envisions descriptive phrases – “‘burst into flames,’ or ‘caught fire,’ or ‘fell prey to the flames’”³¹ – printed atop one another to form a black block on the page at which

²⁷ Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 305.

²⁸ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 305.

²⁹ Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* 546.

³⁰ Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* 546.

³¹ Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* 546.



point language gives way to image: “fire” and “flesh” and “stone” piled up into a mass of charred remains.

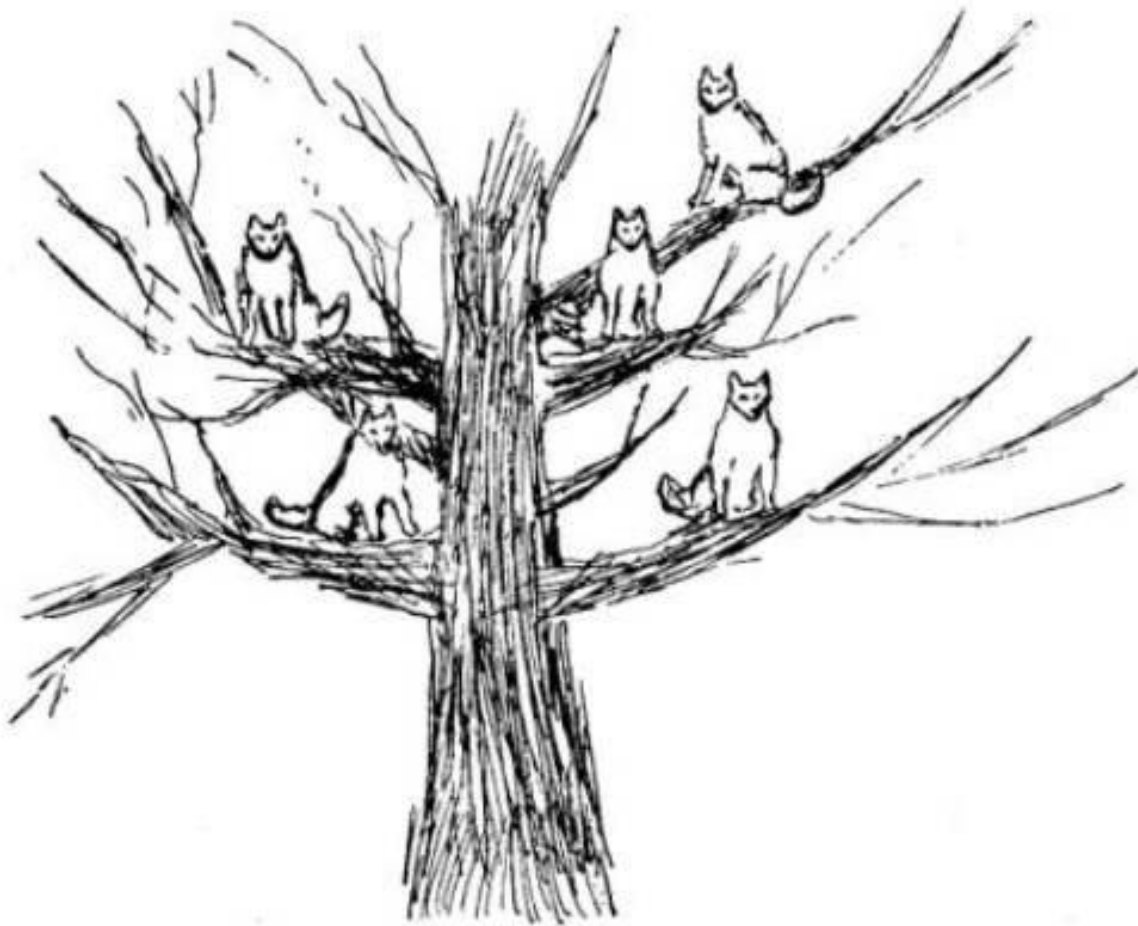


At which point image gives way to song. At the very end of the very end, a child in a water tower is protected for a moment from the inferno below. Watching from a blown-out window, the boy sings softly, “[t]he city’s burning, the city’s burning [...] fire, fire, fire, fire.”³² Why end in fire and ruin? Why do the “becoming-child” and “becoming-animal” that are the “content of music itself,” as Deleuze & Guattari claim, why does music “thirst for destruction [...] extinction, breakage”?³³ The child is not the animal is not the drawing is not the song they sing to themselves coloring in their room. *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* is not the symphony it is prefaced to be, an author is not a conductor “step[ping] onto the stage” with characters as violinists, oboists, tympani, chapters of a novel are not trills and turns – “TRUM, DUM, RUM [...] RA DI DA.” Krasznahorkai’s *Animalinside* is not Neumann’s series of animal drawings: writing about visual art is different than both word and image. A collaboration between a writer and painter is not an agreement, no more than a created assemblage is a homogeneity. Difference abounds. Destruction attends creation. Furious, the child trashes their picture, which looks nothing like the dog they were trying to draw.

³² Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* 547.

³³ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 299.

Variation No. 4



If the animal is a wolf, then it is wolves, or if a dog, then dogs. There is no animal of these kinds, rather there are animals. Even the seemingly lone wolf is really a plurality. We realize this in seeing animals not as symbols but as beings different from what is readily sayable and writable and thinkable about them. This, in slightly different terms, is the old adage that animals are not language users, at least not in the human sense of communicating experience. Freud's mistake with the Wolf Man is instructive here. The child dreams of wolves, "[s]uddenly the window [in my bedroom] opened of its own accord, and I was terrified to see [...] white wolves [...] sitting in the big walnut tree [outside]. There were six or seven of them."³⁴ For Freud, there are five or six wolves too many; psychologically, symbolically, one will do: "The wolf [the patient] was afraid of was undoubtedly his father."³⁵ Dream wolves become a wolf when the dream is described, which upon further analysis becomes the father. Plurality becomes singularity becomes symbol – such is the simplifying, reductive force of our usual talk of animals. Looking instead at the Wolf Man's drawing, we see the walnut tree out the bedroom window overgrown with white wolves. Watching from an elevated train window one afternoon, I spy a pack of dogs

³⁴ Sigmund Freud, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis ("Wolf Man")*, in *The Freud Reader*, ed. P. Gay (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989), 404.

³⁵ Freud, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis ("Wolf Man")*, 413.



roaming through the east side of town. Escaped or lost from home, or born stray, together they scavenge for food, infight to establish hierarchy. An ear bitten off, an eye gouged, mangy fur, fierce and starving they move as one, separate, and then rejoin. Unnaturally selected for coat color and obedience, dogs can undo human ties in no time, rewilding in urban wastelands. Five or six together in an empty lot, heads down eating small prey, one on watch looks up to clock my progress down the train station stairs, through the revolving doors and down the block. Or looks above and beyond me. Without sharp teeth and claws, upright our vital organs exposed, humans pose no bodily threat. Rather, with our straight, narrow spines and thin necks, and the crown of our skulls atop our bare heads: the low, four-legged animal gazes up and over us, we fleshy arrows pointing skyward.

[T]ogether with my twin brothers I gaze happily upwards, and I too howl, it was good and it still is good today to sit here, to look and see how the stars shine above us, and to howl.³⁶

Among the stars, hoards of animals constellate together: Ursa major and Ursa minor, the big and little bear, Cancer the crab, Pisces the fish, Taurus the bull, Capricornus the sea goat, and of particular, familiar interest to the animal and its “twin brothers,” Canis major and Canis minor, the large and small dog. A stellar menagerie, millennia old made up of a thousand thousand points of light. If there is a lone being it is us, stuck, spanned between the animals we once were and the gods we will never become. At Pfeffer and Co., Licensed Victuallers of Híd Road, “or as it was more popularly known, the Peafeffer,” one of the regulars – Valuska – attempts in *The Melancholy of Resistance* to “steer ‘his dear friends [at the bar]’ on to the subject of ‘the mind-bending vastness of the universe.’”³⁷ Making of his drinking companions a sodden, slurring Orrery – “‘You are the Sun,’ he tells a taxi driver, and “‘You are the Moon’” to the “muscle-bound warehouseman”³⁸ – Valuska tries to impart collective planetary movement to a group of standalone drunks. Day-laborers and house painters spin on their axes and revolve around each other. The performance at the Peafeffer does little to bring the stars down to earth. Perhaps, it is because the performers cannot remember their parts despite the near nightly staging of the scene. Whatever the reason, no pretense of being the Moon and Earth and Sun among the stars lifts Valuska and company from “‘the lowly place of [hu]man[s] in the great order of the universe.’”³⁹ Indeed, the great whale that that night came to occupy the town square was more planetary than the whirling postman and bartender. Native inhabitant of the “‘immeasurable ocean of the heavens’,” as Valuska describes it, the whale “cleav[es] the silent spume of that starry firmament.”⁴⁰ The drunks feel ill-ominous about the whale’s sudden arrival; head-in-the-clouds Valuska instead envisions the giant on high – stars as barnacles spotting its wrinkly hide. Inadvertently, Freud’s Wolf Man ends up telling in just this regard. If the wolves appear white in the nighttime walnut, they must be stars seen through the branches rather than leaves on the tree. Great animals in packs ascend, indeed, they are ascendant. Freud comes close to this insight in analyzing the patient’s neurosis, missing the point in his rush to find, or place, the father in the

³⁶ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 29.

³⁷ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 65.

³⁸ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 65.

³⁹ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 69.

⁴⁰ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 70.



dream. The child's "fear of the wolf was conditional upon the creature being in an upright position."⁴¹ The patient's fear, then, was really childhood trauma from seeing his father and mother having sex "*more ferarum* [in the fashion of animals]."⁴² Sometimes fear of an animal is fear of an animal, childhood sexual trauma notwithstanding. And there is something awful – awe-inspiring and disturbing – about an upright animal: wolves up a tree, a whale on a raised circus platform, and Neumann's animal always reared up on its hind legs.

The beautiful clear sky above us, and the infinitely beautiful assortment of colors there [...] and I [...] nod my head along with my other twin brothers and then we raise our heads even higher, we tilt our heads all the way back to see even better.⁴³

Up off the ground, animals align immanence and transcendence – their elongated spines a scale, as it were, that plays continuously between low A and high G. We are stuck in the in-between of (not) belonging to the earth and (not) being beyond it. If there is a human scale, it is discordant: bass rumblings with soprano flourishes full octaves higher, all out of tempo and tune. The Werckmeister scale that Eszter, the old music teacher in *The Melancholy of Resistance*, devotes himself to is just such a human harmonics, at least once tuned down from any hint of heaven. At his ill-tempered piano, Eszter plays Bach's Prelude in C major: "[I]nstead of supplying some expected 'tremulous rainbow' effect, [the music that] fell upon his ears [was] [...] an unbearably grating din."⁴⁴ The Prelude in E-flat minor sounds no better, recalling a drunken bride falling in with even drunker wedding party: Bach's angelic tones replaced by retching bridegrooms and maids-of-honor.⁴⁵ By contrast, in being wholly earthbound, animals are of the Earth – and, by extension, of the Sun and Moon and stars.⁴⁶ The animal sings harmoniously its planetary song. Paws firmly planted, the animal arches back, head up and howls, a "how[l] [...] into the infinite."⁴⁷ An animal howl that is a choir of animals, singing in unison, rumbling across the land and ringing up through the trees into the starry sky.

⁴¹ Freud, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis ("Wolf Man")*, 413.

⁴² Freud, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis ("Wolf Man")*, 413.

⁴³ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 30.

⁴⁴ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 118.

⁴⁵ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 118-119.

⁴⁶ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 13.

⁴⁷ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 27.

Variation No. 5



Motionless, paintings kill animals – the French “*nature morte* [still life]” says this well. Aristotelian taxonomy, which still underlies our way of dividing up the natural world, identifies each form of life by its defining quality: Flora reproduce, fauna move, and humans think. Rendered in two dimensions in oil on canvas or pen and ink on paper the locomotive animal is stopped in its tracks. One of Neumann’s paintings depicts the animal mid-leap; Krasznahorkai puts into words the frozen moment: “I am in the middle of a leap, I am as a matter of fact enclosed within this arc, the arc I happen to be leaping into right now.”⁴⁸ The animal bemoans its solitude in the midst of its leap – there is no end to the jump, no way to land, feet back on the ground, and run away. We could narrate the scene, tell the before and the after: a dog in a yard spots a rabbit in the bushes which bolts under the chain link fence the dog bounds over to give chase. Lively as this seems, narration is yet another way to impose immobility. The particular dog, if the animal is a dog, in pursuit of the particular rabbit its scent in the air, and the tensing of its back and legs as it approaches the fence to clear it in a bound eyes peeled on its quarry, all worn away in the familiar phrase, “the dog chased a rabbit.” Early Modern painters, the Dutch especially, perfected the form. Ever fuller tables piled with exotic fruits and vegetables, drooping tropical flowers, a gun slung over the back of a chair with the day’s hunt hung beside it. Fresh caught fish, three quails, a skinned rabbit: a cornucopia of plant and animal (former) life in which the painter displays their artistry. And the aristocrat or royal revel in their riches: fruit and vegetables off the vine rot, killed animals decay; a family title, inherited lands and wealth, political power is forever, or so meticulously real paintings were commissioned to pretend. The still life animal is not an animal, but meat. The dead animal is served on a silver platter with peeled quinces and wine to celebrate God and the Earth’s bountifulness. In the details of the animal’s musculature, now slack, and the precise coloring of the fur around the killing wound, the artist masters nature and wealth and prestige. Indeed, if the landowner’s farming prowess

⁴⁸ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 24.



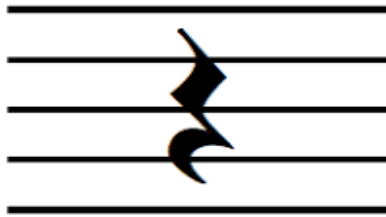
risks rivaling God's glory, the painter's technical ability outshines both on the canvas. Verisimilitude was the aim, and fame came with its ever closer, ever more detailed realization. Dürer's *Young Hare (Feldhase)* culminates this race for perfection. Collapsing reality into its representation, Dürer painted part of the animal's coat with a brush made of rabbit fur. Yet, still, the animal is still, absolutely so. Against the blank white background on which Dürer detailed his rabbit, painted hair by painted hair, the animal sits motionless. No matter its preciseness or the scene into which it is cast, the animal cannot help but be immobilized by the unmoving media on which it is rendered. Claims to the contrary, for example, Merleau-Ponty's claim that the horses in Géricault's *Epsom Derby*, "really run on the canvas,"⁴⁹ are not so much about the painted animal as about the modern relationship of painting to photography and film. And Merleau-Ponty is right, the animal is key to the relationship and difference between painting and film. Among Muybridge's first zoopraxiscopic films is several seconds of a trotting horse and jockey. Frame by frame, rider and mount advance – stutteringly, but nonetheless, they go. At the turn of the twentieth century comes a dynamic, moving artistic medium. If motion is in fact fundamental to animal being – if to be animal is to go and do – then film finally captures animal essence. In light of this, there is another animal to add to Krasznahorkai's bestiary: a filmic horse. Apocryphally, Nietzsche's last act of sound mind was believed to be saving a workhorse that had stopped in the town square in Turin, Italy where Nietzsche was then staying to take the clear, dry Mediterranean air to cure his respiratory ailments. Rushing forth, Nietzsche put himself between the whip of the irate farmer and the head of the draught horse that had reared up in fear upsetting the vegetable wagon. Krasznahorkai borrows the animal from the Nietzschean myth for the film *The Turin Horse*. The screenplay, co-written with the filmmaker Bela Tarr, is based on an early essay by Krasznahorkai titled *At the Latest in Turin: a short meditation on Nietzsche's supposed last conscious act*. Krasznahorkai ends his essay, "[w]hat happened with the horse, we don't know"; the screenplay begins with a voice-over narrating this question; the film's first shot is a close-up of a horse – suggesting that here, after all, is the animal Nietzsche saved. And we stay with the animal. For a full five minutes the film shows nothing but the horse driving forward into howling headwind, drawing behind it a peasant farmer in a carriage, whip in hand. Tarr sets the otherwise silent black and white scene to violin and cello playing in a loop – a piece composed by Tarr's longtime collaborator Mihály Víg.⁵⁰ Through the strings, occasionally, we hear the circular squeaking of carriage wheels and the ceaseless wind. Redundant, repetitive, the opening scene presents the animal in pure form: muscled neck and chest, mane flying, the animal goes on regardless of terrain and distance. Animal motion is absolute, relative neither to fixed points nor measures. This is why Neumann's drawn animal is always shown frozen: "[I]n the moment [...] I jump, [...] I am inside the space, I am immediately caught, the space has caught me."⁵¹ Drawn space is "inabundant" – an apt way for the animal to describe it. Fixed lines and graded colors are tricks of perspective, which in lending a painting or drawing depth also fix their subjects in place. Movement, rather, is an intransitive state – kinetic energy through and through – and the animal inhabits it fully and film comes closest, among art forms, to displaying it for the static, surveying human eye.

⁴⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Eye and Mind*, trans. C. Dallery, in *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. J. Edie (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 185.

⁵⁰ András Kovács, *The Cinema of Bela Tarr: The Circle Closes* (New York: Wallflower Press Books, 2013), 146.

⁵¹ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 14.

Variation No. 6



We could read *Animalinside* metaphorically. In Krasznahorkai's word of the animal's imminent arrival and the destruction it will wreak, the animal may stand for nature generally, and its ruinous coming might be analogous to the end of the natural world as we know it. When in the animal's voice Krasznahorkai threatens death and wreckage in the near future, perhaps what is talking is our animal consciousness – the animal inside us – which senses our species' demise.

[W]e have won back power over the earth [...] we killed everything, we destroyed everything [...] there aren't [...] cities any more, and there aren't [...] streets any more [...] and there are no glaciers and no tropics [...] you won't find a single cloud in the sky.⁵²

Certainly, this is the future we face. Cities will be laid to waste by earthquakes and tornadoes, coastlines will flood under swollen sea levels, equatorial rainforests will desiccate in drought. Certain, too, is the toll this will take on human life – hundreds of millions will continue to die from disease, disaster and famine. Unfathomable as this all is, some part of us grasps it. At a primal, basal level our brains are processing the changes we already see and smell and taste and sense. Again, the animal inside knows how this all ends, even if in our higher minds we delude ourselves. Standing before Neumann's paintings of a black animal mass hanging over the land and over us, perhaps Krasznahorkai saw a symbol of our dreadful future. Like a rabid dog, straight-line winds race in and maul us, rip the siding from our houses like flesh from our bones. What comes of comparing one thing to another in this way? Is a strong wind like a fierce animal? What good does such an analogy do? Nothing is like anything else, and to think as if it was obscures the occasion of art, namely, reality in and of itself in all its richness and complexity. Likening one thing to another diminishes both, flattening their specific differences beneath what they have analogically in common. What is like anything or everything else, were there such a generic thing, would not drive the artist to create in its image. A non-thing like any/every other non-thing would not garner a second glance much less hours and days and weeks of laborious artistic recreation. Neumann and Krasznahorkai's proliferation of drawings and vignettes, multiplied thirteen times over in the back and forth between artist and writer, attests to the rich particularity of their subject. How, then, to read the resonances we detect between Krasznahorkai's attack animal at bay, at least for now, and the growing threat of global climate change? After all, there seems something ecological and disastrous to *Animalinside* ending after

⁵² Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 38.



the death of the last human, the animal and its twin brother facing off atop “the bare crust of the earth” over which is spread “only [...] thick black dead as[h].”⁵³ What trope describes the black animal/burnt earth relation – if there is one – if not metaphor, or analogy, or allegory? Repetition. The animal is an iteration of ruined nature; natural disaster iterates the black dog; the monotony of Krasznahorkai’s text – phrases repeated over and over – repeats Neumann’s repeated animal form.

I say again and again [...] this I am, this I will be, who at once will just be there, right in front of you, and certain, right in front of you [...] and there I am in front of you, and [...] there shall be no doubts at all as to whether I am he who has come, because yes [...] there I will be [...] impossible to confuse me with anyone else.⁵⁴

I am this, I am here, I am. The animal’s repetitive utterances recall “I am that I am” – the name of the being of God pronounced “Yahweh” in Hebrew (Exodus 3:13). The animal is. Nature is. And the animal is nature. And the natural world is animal. Animal being repeats itself and in repetition differentiates itself into the mites on the leaves and the leaves on the plants rooted to the trees the woodpecker hollows for food beneath the hawk’s thermal turning gaze. Nature iterates itself everywhere, and in repeating and repeating becomes every blade of grass in every field on every plain and vein of quartz running through every rocky outcropping in all the foothills of every mountain range beneath the clouds and stars and all the galaxies and everything. “And... and... and,” the repetitive conjunction used again and again in the present work – often at the expense of grammar, and sometimes at the limits of sense and meaning. The animal and nature and painting and writing and Neumann and Krasznahorkai and this sentence and this paragraph and the next and on and on. This is ruin. Cells multiplying en masse become malignant. The wave after wave of a drowning typhoon, the after and aftershock of a city-wrecking earthquake, the delta variant and omicron variant of animal-human coronavirus. The animal does not end and die on the last page of *Animalinside*, it goes on and on: “[W]e stand facing each other [me and my twin brother], tensed [...] pure muscle,” poised to destroy again.⁵⁵ Krasznahorkai’s texts, dense masses of repeated phrases and recurring characters and plotlines, always end in destruction – whether singularly in suicide or in collective death. Piled up, long, dense sentence upon long, dense sentence, Krasznahorkai’s novels give in under their own accumulated weight. Hence, the apocalyptic ending of *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* – a town decimated, its inhabitants incinerated – and its anticipation in the bloody death of the titular character.

The railcar came around the bend [...] and the [Baron Wenckheim] was there on the tracks [...] [and] he stumbled as he tried to get down from the track bed [...] and he fell headlong across the tracks [...] the railcar cut him up into exactly three pieces, it cut off his head and cut off both his legs right in the middle of the shins.⁵⁶

⁵³ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 39.

⁵⁴ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 17.

⁵⁵ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 39.

⁵⁶ Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* 385-386.



And the foreboding that settles over the town with the arrival of the circus in *The Melancholy of Resistance* erupts in the end in violence: “[T]here was a big flair up because just as we’d started beating up a few guys, we saw this was another kind of stunt altogether [...] a great crowd [...] like the Russian army or something” that loots the liquor store and sets the movie theater on fire.⁵⁷ And Korin’s suicide at the end of *War & War*: a single shot to the head in the *Hallen für die neue Kunst* in Schaffhausen, Switzerland: “Moon, valley, dew, death. Later they took him away.”⁵⁸ Again and again, Krasznahorkai’s architectonic works – built heavy-sentence-by-heavy-sentence – fall to the earth, killing all in their collapse. But by the same repetitive logic art remains. After the riots, the old music teacher in *The Melancholy of Resistance* returns to retune his piano to the “full Werckmeister harmonic scale”: “[Eszter] ran his fingers quickly down the scale to check the pitch [...] placed his hand on the pure, consoling keyboard, and struck the first chords of the Prelude in B Major.”⁵⁹ Korin’s work in *War & War* done – the ancient manuscript of the apocalyptic horsemen uploaded to the internet for eternity – he has one last, pre-suicidal wish: To spend an hour inside one of the Italian sculptor Mario Merz’s pieces at the *Hallen für die neue Kunst*.⁶⁰ Is this romanticism in the end? The saving grace of art in a world gone wrong? The artworks in Krasznahorkai’s novels, and the novels themselves, do not offer salvation but rest, and fleeting rest at that. To borrow from the symphonic form of *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming*, art is a rest, a pause in the midst of chaos. And it comes from chaos. A harmonic scale, a sculpture, a novel, a series of drawings, are all in the world and so additions with all the rest to the piled-up wreckage. Works of art are not made of otherworldly stuff – inherently good and beautiful and lasting. Merz’s sculptures are made of broken glass and scrap metal just as the Professor’s hut at the beginning of *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* is made of Hungarocell panels he finds in the garbage pile of “old refrigerator doors and television screens [...] [and] worn-out, cast-off articles of clothing” in the thicket where he lives.⁶¹ This does not mean a painting is a leaky garden hose, or a poem is a bald car tire or old shoelace. Merz’s glass and metal igloos, in which Korin requests to spend his last living hour, are different than the Professor’s Polystyrene paneled hut in the woods. *Animalinside* is not a printed train schedule. To be *in* a ruined world is not necessarily to be *of* a ruined world. There is a rhythm to ruin, a time and tempo. There are fast, cacophonous passages, times when supercells blow whole towns away, and slow, quiet passages of groundwater drying in the baking sun. Artworks are the rests between these times. Momentary silences occur amidst the drumbeat of destruction; Merz’s sculptural installations, Neumann’s animal drawings and Krasznahorkai’s novels are untimely records of that silence. As viewers and readers, we cannot participate in the silence of artworks – there is no rest for timely beings. If there is anything in art for us, it is a mysterious, occasional revelation and fleeting glimpse. Indeed, artworks themselves are fleeting. Korin succeeds in uploading his ancient manuscript to the internet though its permanence is far shorter than expected. Breaking the boundary between what is in a text and what is outside a text, Krasznahorkai includes the website (warandwar.com) in the novel. The site leads to an error message: “The requested URL was not found on this server [...] all data has been erased from this home page.” Krasznahorkai’s romanticism, such as it is, is minor and mostly hopeless, a half- or quarter-note rest; otherwise, the world marches on in lock step to its end.

⁵⁷ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 301-302.

⁵⁸ Krasznahorkai, *War & War* 279.

⁵⁹ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 282.

⁶⁰ Krasznahorkai, *War & War* 248.

⁶¹ Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* 23.



Variation No. 7

Neumann's animal is drawn in relatively small scale: black and colored ink on 30cm x 30cm sheets of paper. Pen on paper is an immediate, unmalleable form. Oil and acrylic can be moved while still wet, or painted over – a painting-over that is also an adding-to. Pen strokes are indelible. A first black slash into a white plain, a second beside it, and then a third. If all of the same density, the successive lines together start to build structure; if intermittently light and dark, the lines separately create a gradient. Blending is possible with a sponge or finger, though the initial marks still tend to show through. Neumann's yellow-green backgrounds are water-soaked ink, left to stand and dry differently at various spots on the paper. Solid blocks of color – as Neumann's black animal appears – are best done with a pattern. To mind lines and edges, the artist has to color carefully, which means shorter, drier strokes as they move outward from center. With a stencil, equal pressure and amount of ink can be applied: the shape is filled in equally throughout while its edges are kept sharp. A colored cut-out, if the animal is one, is readily reproducible. The animal and its "twin brothers," as Krasznahorkai describes them, are then reproductions of each other, or, better, iterations of the same in different positions and arrangements. Reproduction and repetition define modern art. Figures and scenes give way by the mid-twentieth Century to series of shapes and lines and color fields. In his catalogue for the 1969 exhibition *Konzeption/Conception*, Buren states the principle directly: "There remains only one possibility [for painting]: the repetition of th[e] neutral form."⁶² Repetition does not entail sameness. Rather, as Buren continues, "[repetition] is not a question of doing [...] [what] is identical to the previous [...] but rather a repetition of differences with a view to the same."⁶³ The animal repeated over and over, but with difference: the same black mass with sometimes thinner, longer neck, its head rounds off at times, docked ears smoothed out. Repetition is also key to the modern biological sciences. DNA replication is key to organismal growth and development, copying the complete genome into cells as they divide and multiply. And DNA replication is also repetition with difference. Mutations occur when DNA replicates, introducing differences into daughter cells. The modernism of this is not that life processes became reproductive only recently. Rather, reproduction as a process of repetition with difference, that is, DNA replication with mutation, is our post-Darwinian and post-Mendelian way of thinking about and studying organisms and their offspring. Repetition defines art and life in the modern age of technical/genetic reproduction – with the human and animal as its emblems. After the Baron's death by onrushing train in *Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming*, and after the promise of his return proves empty – the Baron could not make Hungary great again because his family's wealth had been gambled away in Argentina years before – a written diatribe appears on the desk of the Chief Editor at the local newspaper. Among its many targets – the Mayor, the City Council, the Director of City Municipal Services – the screed pours particular poison on the "repulsive [...] fou[l] [...] loathsome" Hungarians, who are not so much a people as an "illness, an incurable, frightening disease [...] [and] epidemic."⁶⁴

I [am] writing to a gene so it will show itself no more, for it to withdraw its DNA molecules, to rescind its nucleic acid sequences within the nuclei's chromosomes, to

⁶² Daniel Buren, "Beware," in *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, ed. C. Harrison & P. Wood (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 1992), 864.

⁶³ Buren, "Beware," 865.

⁶⁴ Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming* 468.



retract itself along with its sugar phosphates and base pairs, and amino acids; these Hungarians did [not] work out – the gene should state this frankly.⁶⁵

Cursing the Hungarian people to death is a matter of genetics: Stop DNA replication! Halt complementary base pairing! And the unnamed author will hear nothing of mutation: “[D]o [not] start telling me about all the exceptions, because these exceptions make me sick, because in reality there are no exceptions,” all Hungarians being born from the same putrid, sick source.⁶⁶ A people not descended by culture and tradition from the Magyar tribes that migrated out of the Ural Mountains and onto the Pannonian Plain in the 9th Century, but genetic replicas of a diseased nucleic acid sequence, Hungarians are the same mistake repeated over and over and over again. Block the replication process, and terminate the race – have done with a people by killing their genes. *The Melancholy of Resistance* ends on a similar note. Murdered during the riots that overrun the town, Mrs. Plauf awaits burial; self-appointed savior and fascist leader, Mrs. Eszter eulogizes over the dead; all the while, decay has its way.

[T]he attack was concentrated on the albuminous matter of the muscles [...] the adenozintriphosphate enzymes continued their assault on [...] the general energy level, the ATP, [which] resulted in the energy of the torn cell tissue [...] being linked to the breakdown of actomyosin related to the ATP.⁶⁷

Cellular degeneration goes on for pages. Haematinic acid dissolves the stomach wall and begins to eat away at the abdominal cavity,⁶⁸ glycogen in the liver “decompose[s] into its simple elements” while the pancreas autolyzes,⁶⁹ and the bacterium *clostridium perfringens* blisters the heart and lungs from within.⁷⁰ Finally, Krasznahorkai interrupts his scientific description of death to mark the story’s end. Not, as we would expect, with the last words of the last sentence of the novel, but after its last word when the book itself will be “ground [...] into carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen and sulphur” like all other composite things. *Animalinside* repeats the basically deadly ending of the novels. On bare, ashen earth from which no seed will ever grow again, “no verb at all shall be heard again [...] the last word died away long ago.”⁷¹ Life and death are basic in a biological sense, indeed, at the cellular level they are the same repetitive processes run in opposite directions: To live is to conjoin, to die is to disjoin. The biological death/life of the animal – and now we all are animals since modern art and science made repetition our fundamental principle – is also the beginning/end of language because “and...and...” (conjunction) and “or...or...” (disjunction) are semantically indifferent to the terms, the names, the places, the memories and experiences, etc. they connect and/or disconnect. Neumann and Krasznahorkai and the animal drawn or the written animal and the Professor’s stray dog and Valuska’s giant whale or Neumann’s dog or wolf and the cats on Béla Wenckheim Avenue and the four horses of the apocalypse. The animal inside that we are daily lives and dies in our musculature, our organs and tendons, in our blood vessels and veins, and daily we tell ourselves about life and in telling it and re-telling it we move away from it, we are outside it.

⁶⁵ Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* 469.

⁶⁶ Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming* 470-471.

⁶⁷ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 311.

⁶⁸ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 313.

⁶⁹ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 313.

⁷⁰ Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* 314.

⁷¹ Krasznahorkai & Neumann, *Animalinside* 39.



Variation No. 8

Small and scared the first times I noticed the animal, I could not quite make it out. Feral? What direction did it come from? Did it belong somewhere and to someone? Night after night, I left food in the parking lot under one of the neighbor's cars, which it used as shelter to eat quickly, eyes up scanning the driveway for any sudden movement it would run from anything, a passing car, a window in the next building being closed. Weeks went on and the animal came closer and stayed longer, its black coat faded red in parts from malnutrition and the summer sun. Thin, its ribs protruding nearly through its sides and chest; wispy long ears, bony face and head, a missing incisor from the right side of its mouth. I listened from bed at night, windows open for air, the animal would fight and howl, reappearing a week later bloodied and limping. Slowly, eventually, it came in as long as I left the front door open, the animal would check once more over its shoulder before collapsing to sleep for hours on the cool tile kitchen floor. And seventeen years later the animal is beside me dying. Gone frail again, it has lost most of the weight and muscle it put on in our many years together. Glassy eyed, the animal seems to make out shapes better than distinct objects, it missteps occasionally, stumbles and falls. The animal looks alert but tired and resigned. We are living and breaking down, the animal and I, and we sit in the afternoon sun and wake up together in the middle of the night, a thunderstorm rolling in overhead or it prowls in the yard or sleeps on a chair in the living room while I cook in the kitchen. Whatever death will be, the animal seems somehow already in it as it has been in life – fully inside life and death, animalinside.



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