

# MARTOR



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## Another egorhythm. Algorithm for the concealing of the own self

Călin Torsan



There are objects in this world with precise utilitarian destinations, but which, in case of necessity, are used for various other purposes. These new functions eventually get to define the respective objects.

The necessary condition for the success of such use reorientations is represented by a certain morphological availability of the respective object towards its new use matrix. Hence, you can very well scratch your ears with a pencil, whereas you cannot do that with a belt. Yet, the belt can be used for very successful teaching purposes. That is by means of body corrections applied to naughty children. Thing, which, again couldn't be accomplished with, let's say a key. Which, between you and me, could be used to open a bottle of beer. Living surrounded by objects, we very often end up being one with them. Being like them.

I was a bit more than an object when, in July 1989 I was discharged from the army. Physiologically speaking, I had the specific behaviour to a living organism. I was breathing and this managed to sustain my vital functions. There had been nine months- which could have, theoretically, lead me to a different life- since entering University. Forever groping when coming to screwing a bulb, I was ardently preparing myself for becoming an engineer. An electrical engineer.

Not even today can I say what that means. Yet, the word seemed interesting to me. Being a very diligent student during the twelve years spent in school, I had no other option at the moment. With a sickly panic regarding everything, which dealt with the electrical current- dating far back from my summer holiday in Tatarciuc when one of my colleagues had died electrocuted on one of the locomotives in the North Railway Station- I was getting ready to serve it for a lifetime.

Yet, as the objects I have speculated on, due to the December coup d'etat, I ended up having a different destiny than the one I had prefigured.

I, as well as my entire generation, had to live the tumultuous nineties. Those were years of complete reconstruction. Years when I learnt to stand on my own two, like a baby, even if I had already turned twenty. Step by step...

**The first step.** Even if the entire tradition as brilliant student was as heavy a burden as it could have been for an adolescent, the first step towards my redefinition as a person was to abandon college. It took time to make up my mind because I couldn't identify with anything in that school. I had no friends, because I had already become sick of them from the army, I found no subject able to attract me, or teacher to make me want him as a model.

Anyway, the insecure teaching situation wether I let myself into, made my decision easier to a certain extent. I had already achieved the counter performance of having to retake exams during the autumn session of exams. Right from the first year. If I hadn't passed my algebra exam I would have failed to get my remove. Rightfully. The day I found out the news, my walking towards home had been incredibly slow. I was recreating all kind of soothing scenarios for my parents. I finally got home. But nobody was waiting. My mother had gone out with my nephew and my father was still at work. I didn't feel like eating, I actually didn't feel like doing anything, I was just under the pressure caused by the fact that I had to let my parents know that I was a dropout. A night before I had received a cassette from Alecu, a hippy friend. Pink Floyd. Of course I hadn't heard of them- the fact that I had never had a cassette player played its part in that situation- and my poor English was even making me mispronounce their names.

Actually, I used to have a cassette player after all, like any other Romanian, but the way it popped up in our house practically made it unemployable. Another sense shifting. It happened that one of the kids taking Maths tutorials with my father had died in a car accident. Making proof of the generosity specific to stricken people, but also getting rid of something they didn't need anymore, Costel's parents gave us his cassette player. As charity... the machine was left locked in a cupboard for months. Nobody felt like using it. It represented the exponent of the tragedy lived by the Stănescu family. It had that heavy significance that the alms had. You can't eat that like éclair either. Eventually, we started using the machine. At the beginning only on Thursdays. In the evening. The way we used to push the *play* button as if a ritual and the way we rejoiced as if indigenous when seeing every facility it was offering us was definitely worth of a documentary. We had played the same two tapes for months. Both with Julio Iglesias. My father had brought them from one of his col-

leagues, more skilled at stuff like that. I remember my mother's regrets when I dared to wipe some of those songs out in order to record I don't know what crap from the radio.

The cassette player was something you weren't supposed to play with too much.

So, I put the tape into the machine, sprawled on the carpet and pushed *play*. *Shine on you crazy diamond* was the bird, which gave me wings in order to differently perceive my newly dropout condition. It was then when I simply realized that, on earth, there were important things and things which only seemed important. The fact that I was dropping out of school had no importance to me. Of course, that way of perceiving the situation could have been a very risky one for my future. But that was how Pink Floyd had taught me to think. Those Englishmen had offered me the first moment of grace in my life and I had no intention to give it up from then on.

I had understood that music existed and that it was worth looking for in every corner it could have been hidden.

**Initiation.** It was Saturday. A rainy day. I had finished playing the weekly football match we used to unfold in the courtyard of the Favorit kindergarten and we were all ready to go home. Silviu invited me over to show me how he had managed to put a song from *The Other Words* on guitar. I had thought that about music for a long time, meaning that it had to be put on. From cassettes and records. At the time I couldn't have imagined that I would have been able of creating a song. As modest as it would have come out... If you had told me that somebody knew how to sing, that would have automatically meant for me that he knew all the usual mountaineer hits. And that was it.

We went upstairs, at Silviu's, in OS-1 block and he played me a song that really impressed me. While my ears were following Silviu, my eyes got caught by a handicraft whistle, like the ones you find in Sinaia and Predeal. Red and

with some carved ornaments. Even if common, that thing meant a lot to me. It practically changed my life. It gave meaning to this long way we all take from dippers to coffin. It made me a musician. It gave me the possibility to meet interesting people, who taught me various things. It took me all over the country, to Greece, Italy, Hungary and Serbia. As a matter of fact, that glimpse, that peep made these memories possible.

So, seeing that handicraft whistle, I asked Silviu if he wanted us to try *Whistle Bud*, Phoenix's song. What we got was a mishmash, but our immature grown-up irresponsibility made us feel happy. Till I left, and that was late in the evening, we managed to produce some other famous refrains. I with the whistle and Silviu with the guitar. 'I have a weird whistle at the countryside, not like this one.' 'What do you means weird?' 'Well, it has more holes and it is bigger than this one. It is foreign.' 'Foreign?' 'Yes, yes, foreign. German or something like that. My cousin used to play it. The Painter. It sounds like a flute, it is brilliant. I'll bring it to you maybe you learn how to play it. I think it also covers more musical notes. I have to go to the countryside next week and I'll bring it with me.'

This is how I got my hands on the first block-flöte- how the Germans usually call it- of my life. It was the spring of 1992. Then others and others followed. Forerunner of the flute, that block-flöte was an instrument very famous during the baroque age. There is an impressive musical literature dedicated to it. Suffice it to mention Bach. Nowadays there is a tendency in music consisting of the reinterpretation of the scores of those times using instruments built by the modern string-instrument makers following the patterns of the respective age. You can see it – the right flute – every week on Mezzo. If you can get this channel.

In a few weeks we would have ended up in the street. I cannot even remember how we got the idea. I must have seen it in some movie. Silviu, Alecu, Tibi, Jean and I. All guitarists, apart

from me. We only knew three songs we kept on rehearsing. Like a barrel-organ. *Whistle Bud*, *Fade to Back*- one of Metallica's songs on flute, can you imagine?- and a blues Alecu had shown us. We had been the first to take to the streets and play. I am not saying it in order to brag. I am just stating facts. Of course that we represented a model for other generations of musicians who abandoned their inhibitions and started singing down the streets, but we opened the path.

Between 1992 and 1994 we had been the first street singers.

**The third step.** We played for two years at Kretzulescu's, under the arch which now shelters a religion library. We started working at around ten. We fixed our buttocks on the stone stairs and step on it! We used to break for about four hours, for a *shaorma* and for the small football match we used to play using a small ball that Silviu had made of cloth. We used to play exactly in the same place where we used to sing. Our games were kind of horrifying for the passers-by. The little ball would fly God knows where. Either in the head of a respectable gentleman or in the shop windows of the library next to which we were actually manifesting our talent. Everything we managed to build through music was ruined by football. 'How can that be? Isn't it enough that you keep on stepping on our nerves from dusk till dawn?' the bookshop assistants were shouting at us- and I have noticed that the respective type of shop assistant has a particular ego, which means that, dear God, they work with books and not with salami and sausages.

The money we would earn was quickly spent on sweets and the dinner we used to take at Lido's almost every day. We also took up pipe smoking, out of snobbery of course. And we had two pipes each! Now, you can't get your hands on them because they are extremely expensive! Not to mention that we preferred good-quality tobacco, Captain Black. There had been years when we could have purchased instruments, but

who was to know that the folly was to carry on even after a decade?

At that time I was attracted by the Movement for Romania, urged by the late-teenager bravado. Actually, it wasn't the movement itself that was appealing to me but its newspaper which had the same name, spelled in green on the frontpiece. I was taking delight in flicking through the pages of the respective newspaper while travelling by bus. I used to fold the magazine in such a way so as to make the title fully visible to the passengers.

I was gradually turning into a small stall legionary. I had got a pair of army boots from my brother and I was putting them on be it winter or summer. I used to have barrack-like looks. Therefore, when it came to give a name to our band we insisted on *Little Green Sleeves*. It had a twofold meaning for us. *Little Green Sleeves* - a medieval English song - was one of the first songs we had rehearsed together. That since withdrawing from the shadow of the Kretzulescu church. Since we had enlarged our repertoire. We used to earn our money more and more honestly. It couldn't have passed a week without us learning two or three new songs. We mainly did it for us, but also for those who happened to pass us by more than once. We also did it for the bookshop assistants who were cursing us in silence. Since we were hurting their ears anyway, at least we were trying to do it in as varied a way as possible. The other meaning of the band's name, whispered to our close friends in a very complicit way, was actually concealing inter-war nuances. Hence, *Little Green Sleeves*. My first band...

**The acid test.** Everybody knows that in the long block in Kretzulescu, the one which runs across the residence which shelters the Musica shop, there are a few S.R.I offices. The irresponsibility we made proof of while singing there, all the more as we used to also play a few legionary hymns taught from a score book of the kind, indicates a certain freshness but also the

exact value of the happiness we employed in everything we did. We had no need to pretend or to fool anyone. We were just us. It was us and our music, lamer and uglier than the one we had listened on cassettes and records.

I have a strange and embarrassing memory of the S.R.I gentlemen. I used to shiver for a while after the conflict I had with them in a beautiful summer afternoon. We were close to our lunch break. *Shaorma* was popping out as the only life priority we had when two men in suits scattered the content of our hat with their broad palms. They were *stoned* and they found it appropriate to chill out with another beer, this time on the money we had earned for the respective day. We were shocked. We were starrng at the emptied hat without being able to believe our eyes. We quickly ran after them down the sidewalk parallel to the Musica shop. We caught up with them. They weren't in a hurry. They had no reason to be. The tramp granted by the badge in the pocket was very powerful. As a matter of fact, they wouldn't have been able to run anyway. They went stumbling along like in a weird dance. 'Our parents would never do such a thing!' we hurled at them in an ethical and moral tone. 'Hoy, go to hell you loafers! After letting you play for two years without saying a word, do you still cut figures with us?' 'Our parents would never do such a thing!' we hurled back and I don't know why that thing with the parents kept on eating into me.

Afterwards, one of them tried to hit me. He slapped me on the nape, but he only managed to partially hit me since I stepped aside. Anyway, that was a broad, big, indecent palm I still remember very well. I was going to see the guy again in a few years in various pubs in Bucharest. Either in Cişmigiu, or in Lipsani. Each time he was drunk. And each time he was telling those with him in a very loud voice about what he had done in the prisons were he used to work. He was a former chockey guardian. Watching over prisoners. A very lyrical life. When you see people like that, you can't prevent yourself

from thinking of the extenuating circumstances which can many times justify our deeds. Well, we depend on many things. On the way our parents wiped our arses, of the first marks our primary school teacher gave us, of the success of our first kiss. There are things we carry with us up to the grave, memories neatly folded up in the secret chest of the soul. In the majority of the cases we are what we are because of these things. So, that guy is trying to slap me. Things quickly get nasty because we try to fight back. I kick that guy in the arse and the two go crazy. They start running after us around the parking lot in front of the Telephone Palace. People gather around as if at circus. ‘Good people, take these two out of here, otherwise, we are going to have to hit them!’ I don’t know where I got those lines from. I mean, I know because I was dominated by the huge tension of the event. Of the follow-ups. I have always had an obsessive fear of follow-ups. I cannot understand why each step we take has to have consequences.

We kept on hanging around the parking lot and those two had no chance to lay their hands on us. Moreover, the people were quite having a go at them. ‘They are drunk and they stuck their hands into our hat!’ we were shouting to the astounded passers-by. ‘They say they belong to the S.R.I!’ And then, as a blessed breeze, as a cooling rain during a hot afternoon, we felt the public opinion pouring over the entire scandal. People let drive at those two and coked their goose, saying that, *what are they doing wrong, they just sing down the street to make pocket money, you keep on seeing things like that in the Occident, what, would it be better for them to be on drugs and hit us in the head during the evening because they have no money for drugs? Bloody bastards, together with your damned Security, the Revolution was in vain and people died for nothing because not even one hundred revolutions will ever change you!* Somehow, this shock cleared the pedants’ mind a bit. They just slacked it, a little too much—we should have thought about that— and they went up, on Victo-

riei Way, waving those fists big as a sailor’s knot and yelling at us for the last time, *wait and see, you legionaries, because we gave it hot to those like you at Gherla till taking the shit out of their heads!*

We came back to the instruments we had left next to the arch at Kretzulescu. Two or three kids who were worshipping us had kept an eye on them. They lived next to Sala Palatului and they dropped by to listen to us every day. They used to do it for hours. They were starring at our faces, at the instruments and after that we used to invite them in for a football match with that cloth ball. I saw one of them again after years. He is working in Musica shop. Selling blank CDs. He is a grown-up. It wouldn’t be a bad idea to get what he still remembers of those times on a tape...

Yes... So, those kids were waiting for us next to our instruments. We were quiet. There was not much to say after such a scandal. We were still shivering. They suspected that that was the last day when they had the chance to listen to us playing. I felt a deep pain when thinking that the whole story was over. But it was also obvious that we couldn’t sing anymore. We went back to our homes in high dudgeon and on that road of defeat, Merișică, one of the Gavroches who were joining us in our pain, made us a gift: a small clasp knife with green hilts. I think Jean still has it. We got home late and the only soothing thought was that early in the morning we were going to go touring to the seaside. To Costinești. It took me quite some time to fall asleep, tormented-as always- by the fear of what the respective scandal could have triggered. Of the fear of the follow-ups.

**Perseverance.** It must have been around 1996 when a very early phone call woke me of my sleep. I was thinking *who the hell is taking the mickey at me so early in the morning?* It didn’t sound like Jean’s voice, even less like Adi’s. These were the boys in my band and we used to pull each other’s leg in such a way.

Hear this, with Mister Călin Torsan, please... Mister... Yes... That's me... Who am I talking to? This last question of mine triggered an unimaginably long verbal triad. I was silent, listening, scratching with my right hand, deeply stuck in my sport trousers, cursing. The gentleman on the phone, because he was really a gentleman, kept on explaining to me something about the Pitești phenomenon. Yet, I had only heard about the Mudava phenomenon. I used to read about him in Păunescu's *Flacăra* magazine. He was one of those healers...

The voice I was hearing in the receiver kept on saying that if you also want to take part, because I don't know who directs the show, that I don't know what senior citizens will come, there will be knot-shaped bread and wine, that everything is being sheltered by Ion Creangă Theatre in Amzei Marketplace. I hadn't heard about that in my life either. Anyway, I hadn't been to the theatre since I was a child, since they used to take us from school to Țândărică. *There is only one problem. We have no money because nobody backed us up. We are doing it out of a human drive, for these people who have suffered so much. Who do you think that takes up such actions for the Romanians? That's why we thought that your band would be the most appropriate to...*

I kept on hearing that no-money thing all the years I spent playing the whistle. As if you can tell one who comes to your house to make a chair or fix a pipe, *you know, pal, we don't really have money, but we'll sort something out.* And to make matters worse there is enough money in this show business. Only for artists there isn't. There is so much money laundered- you learn who does it and why- that not even the babies' arses haven't been so well washed in this world. *Anyway, the event will also echo in the press and I think it would be good for your band to...*

*To what, mate? To what?* This is another thing which drives me nuts. I go crazy when I hear about something echoing in the press. I foam at the mouth when I hear the word *event*.

Or *project*. I puke my eyes out when I hear project. I puke over this entire cesspool full of impotent creepers who stick to an idea like glue, an idea that they squeeze out like a lemon into all types of *projects*- a word uttered in full mouth, as if during the Logopedics class: *prOjects. Fuller. As if you had an egg in your mouth. That's it... Well done! PrOOjects.*

This word, always accompanied by the stemmed plastic folio, kept on popping up during the nineties. Of course, I know that it existed before. Ceaușescu also used to utter it. *Pro-jegts*, as he used to say. But it seemed that during those days it was devoid of meaning. While, within the new Romanian society, it was going to find its place, once with the assimilation of its position as finance tap. They say that with a project- which should be well organised, but I personally don't believe in this type of things- one can get funds. Funds to support the Project. The funds are from various associations, foundations, societies, private individuals or corporate bodies, corporations, agencies, institutes and institutions, governmental or non-governmental organizations, trusts and other similar shit, which makes you wonder where they come from and where they go. Always obscure, represented by spokespersons with thin glasses and academic language, these strange human conglomerates feed the clumsy and fetid financial flow. They make money move. As if it were a baby you have to walk in the park in order not to yell in your ears.

One will always be able to pay some kind of jerk walking in front of God knows what Parliament residence in the world, naked and with a newspaper in his hand- making thus fun of the entire world of the press- but nobody will be able to solve the problem of the drinking-water in an African little town. And do you know why? Because there is no money. Well, if money moves, how the hell are you supposed to find it? It is a traveller. It travels. It quickly gets out of side, worming its way down the paths of the human lack of common sense.

Eventually- and I will explain to you why I did it- I accepted the challenge. We accepted taking part in the show on the Pite?ti phenomenon. I was saying that I was going to explain why... Well, we all did the singing bit because we really took great pleasure in doing it. At the time, I didn't even imagine the possibility of earning money from singing. On the other hand, if it were for these guys, you would give up everything which is not connected to business or arrangements. It would be enough for you to sing inside the house, yet, you know, there is that joy or pleasure of showing the others what you can do. What comes out of you. Mainly to friends. Then, to your friends' friends. And this is how you create your public. Moreover, when you create a new song you end up thinking about these people. That, *how would they like it? Or this other one?*

The respective evening, we arrived at the theatre two hours before the beginning of the show, as we had been asked to. A great fluster had taken over all those involved in creating the show. And that was simply because nothing had been settled. Not even the props were complete! Anyway, I don't think that there was any idea able to guide the show and I realized that only when the director went outside, around the theatre looking through trash for various objects which could have appeared on stage. To complete the atmosphere...

This is how the props were in the last moment enriched with a barrow and a porcelain lavatory, abandoned God knows in what garbage bins. They had been given a quick wash, thus cleaning off the rust and the shit and afterwards they popped up on stage in order to plenary emphasise the self-centred atmosphere. 'The guys from *Little Green Sleeves!*'- 'Here we are... '- 'Come to the stage for a moment... Quickly!'

We stepped on the stage, we were questioned about the songs we intended to play, we were told that *yes, this one goes, we would like you not to sing the other one because it doesn't fit the overall atmosphere, but, yet, get ready to play it*

*if necessary, if we have to make the show last a bit longer.* 'I think it would be better for you to play without the glasses' says the director, leaving me speechless. That was because my dioptries are quite severe and I had no chance to get around in the semidarkness on the stage. 'Do I really have to... That is, couldn't we solve it some other way, I mean, there is no problem but I can't see anything... '- 'It is better my way, Călin. Please. Is it impossible?' 'No... ', I stammered, 'I'll try to get the job done without the glasses.' 'We'll draw the way you have to move around in chalk.' - 'Well, what do you mean move along? Aren't we playing seated?' - 'No, no... the director gets worked up again, 'this show is a bit more complex than a concert. That is, you don't simply enter the stage, play and then, good-bye, you leave the stage. No. You shall see, there is a bit of staging, you will have pre-established paths you will have to follow, then you play and you will keep on staying on the stage till the actors finish reciting the last lines.'

We started getting nervous. All of us. The way that guy spoke to us, as if the destiny of the entire human kind depended on the way we were going to move on the stage- gave way to insecurity and to a state of excitement we had never felt before. Obviously, we had to let all that out. The chance, bad luck for the director, made it that the moment of our liberation occurred during the show. One which was meant to be sombre by all means. We were going to face again that type of sobriety in years, during some pathetic shows, organized by the Army's Culture House and where, together with a few actors, we used to rattle our instruments in order to pay homage to Eminescu.

A few minutes before the beginning of the 'Pite?ti Phenomenon' they once again specified our tasks. I was supposed to do the opening of the show. I was a kind of trumpeting angel who, with a whistle on the corner of the mouth, had to cross the dark stage and afterwards, with a few musical notes, had to sit in the background between Tibi and Adi. These two were hidden for

the moment. One was crouched in the improvised barrow and the other was solemnly counting the seconds, with his feet stuck up to his knees in the porcelain lavatory. Two projectors made them visible precisely when I was supposed to get up on my ear. After the lights were on, Jean, the last of us, was going to enter the stage, with the guitar in his shoulder belt, and he was supposed to give Adi a ride across stage in the barrow. That was what the director had in mind. From then on we had green light to do our musical bit.

Things took place almost the way I told you. Almost. The crust of the fluster we had accumulated because of being caught in a show which seemed posh to us and which we had no idea how to deal with, cracked two or three minutes before the beginning of the show. And, as one always has to have a pretext, in this case ours was represented by some cloaks we had to put on. 'And do we really have to put these on? They are very thick and they doesn't leave our hands free so we can't play because of them...' - 'Come on guys, please, do this too because there is only one minute till we begin. I am asking you, please, help me... I have had enough trouble with this show already.' - 'OK... We'll put them on.'

That was easy to say. And easy to do. But, when seeing each other, wrapped in those moth nests, gathered from God knows what closed down theatre storehouse, we all burst into laughter. It was not a normal, but a nervous, sometimes hysterical laughter, which made the director crack. From then on, till the show was over, nobody could talk some sense into us. We took over that tepid cultural hall and its success or defamation depended entirely on us. We paid no attention to any indication hurled at us by the director from the back of the curtain, all the more, we even indifferently forgot everything we had been told a few hours before.

The show can begin. *The show must go on!* Silence took over the place. It is the sign of the level of hopes of the public. Darkness... I enter

the stage, trembling with laughter, focusing both on the white chalk stripe meant to guide me and on my friends' off-censured laughter. Because of the laughter, I cannot play the whistle at all. All I can do is to walk slowly and crookbacked, in order to find my way. Close to the centre of the stage I stumble over the cloak. It is only God who still keeps me standing. Yet, the sound of the thud cannot stop the roars of laughter coming from the boys backstage. With my heart turned to ice, I can feel the public's bewilderment. I know they are all serious, Christian people who had suffered a lot. People who had lost families. Even though, I can hardly prevent myself from laughing. I can hear the director's lashes spitted through the teeth full of cavities.

The light from the two projectors uncovers me sitting, with the whistle in my hands, at full sight, and with a smile hidden by the cloak's hood. I had barely attained a doubtful normality when the devil tempted me to watch those recently starting their parts. Adi was lying in the barrow, resembling an odalisque immersed in the pool full of rose water and Tibi, with his shinbones stuck in the loo- God knows what symbol in the director's artistic view- was trying to hold his equilibrium. Perceiving the majesty of the absurd I again burst into laughter. This time, an unconcealed, assumed laughter, so that the spectators were completely still. Taking into account the fact that we were laughing without any restraint - all three of us on the stage - it looked like that was the way the show was supposed to go on.

After Jean assumed his role, walking Adi in that barrow, everything turned into a little party. We were all laughing when we felt like and we cared for nobody else's opinion. We tried to carry on our little musical bit. That was singing. But completely shaken by laughter, we didn't make much of our songs. Especially I, who was supposed to blow the whistle, focused more on the theatrical side of the business. Jean was shouting his lungs out when reciting Gyr's lines, all resembling a magazine pamphlet. Yet, *Rise*

*you, George, Rise You John!* literally made the public rise. We were more or less off the hook. Nobody was actually interested in that show to have fluency or an inner logic. The stake was for all those involved to get out of that filthy cesspool. And the applause represented the endorsement granted to the organizers.

By the end of the entire thing, while listening to some famous actors yelling God knows what religious prose, the Bread-Man arrives, an appliance containing a hundred and something fresh loaves of bread, bought from Amzei marketplace a little time before the beginning of the show. The director was dragging it down the stage, with the despair granted by the obligation of carrying out a burdening task all by himself and during a limited time. He was playing his own card. When seeing the signal he shared with us during the rehearsal, we were supposed to break the thick paper, which was covering the loaves, and after that break them and share them with those in the public. Adi was the only one who was supposed to do something. He was supposed to pour white wine from a five-litre bottle into some small plastic glasses and then to share it with those in the public.

During that sacred moment we were going to give the exact measure of our interest for the show. I don't know how we did it, but we didn't manage to properly unwrap the Bread-Man so that, out of his groins, the fresh loaves spread mostly down the floor. The director was dead nervous. He started yelling at us as if he had paid us. Saying that we were good for nothing that we hadn't even been able to share the loaves properly...

Meanwhile, Adi was taking in glass after glass of wine, in full shortsighted and extremely confused view of the former political prisoners.

It is useless to say that the success was huge, worthy of a big stage. We had been given endless rounds of applause. That was going to make the director chill out. He had managed to come out of it with flying colours.

Late in the night, we all headed towards our

homes, all drunk both because of the success and because of the wine we had taken in from a second five-litre bottle. It had been our payment for having taken part in that shit. The director had bought it especially for us, thinking we would be glad.

And I can't say we weren't...

**Acknowledgment.** The fact that I had blown the whistle for a decade, with my eyes popping out, willy-nilly got me close to some, let's say, artistic personalities. That was the proof of my existence in that tormented and tormenting world of culture.

Nicu Alifantis was the first V.I.P. I bumped into in my loose career as a Romanian artist. More or less chronologically, Grigore Vieru the poet was the next personality I met. Then, after a year, music made it possible for me to meet some other famous characters. I caught fleas for Marian Munteanu, got drunk together with the Archbishop of Târgoviște, had Sorin Dumitrescu as a spectator and I made the dust fly during a backstage conflict with Virgil Ogășanu. I received money in the hat, while at Kretzulescu's, from Rudel Obreja's fists and from Mihai Pocorschi's charity, in order to be defied in the same place – another type of contiguity – by Costi Ioniță's blue eyes. I took part in TV shows together with Dan Iordăchescu, the tenor and with Bianca Ionescu, the soprano.

I slowly started to take into account only the human side of these people. Their flaws, complexes, insecurities and grouch. I finally understood that social victory is only a surface thing. That it is based on circumstances. And on the efforts and shoulders of God knows how many people.

*Translated by Raluca Vîjia*

