

*The Childhood  
of an Encounter*

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## **The Childhood of an Encounter**

*The following text is inspired by the encounters, speculations and verifications that the author has maintained with R.F. Morley during the winter and the summer of 2010.*

*All the pictures that go along the narration are found footage frames from the internet, depicting places of mid-eastern Europe where some of those "encounters" took place.*

*These found videos are mostly static postcards set on motion. The author has captured the very moment of transition between one slide to the next one, showing two visions of a same picture, as in the "two sides of the same coin".*

## **Birth ~ The conception**

*A young artist and a millionaire meet by chance  
at dinner in a penthouse.*

*The older man poses a question:*

***“What would happen if you were hanging from the edge  
of a cliff by a rope – and the rope is cut?”***

*The artist needed to know  
and the millionaire suggests a method:*

***“Go to a remote location in a foreign land  
with no understanding of the language,  
no friends or contacts, no papers or passport,  
no money or other means of support,  
only the clothes you stand up in  
– and make your own way back!”***

*It was like landing on Mars but without the mother ship.*

*The artist accepted the challenge  
and the millionaire offered to fund the project.*

## *Infancy ~ The approach*

*Should the encounter be documented or simply experienced?  
And where exactly was Mars anyway?*

*There were questions.*

*Searching for another world within a world.  
Beyond the great Danube in the delta of the Dneister lies  
a forgotten 3000 square kilometre territory of that few people  
have ever heard of and even fewer ever talk about.*

*A tiny remnant of the old Soviet Union that survived  
the Glasnost and fought a war to win its independence  
from the capitalist world around it.*

*An unrecognised private republic  
where Comrade Stalin is still revered.*

*Transnistria: a land that doesn't legally exist.*

*But what was the greater challenge,  
getting in without papers or getting out?*

**‘NEVER GO CLIMBING ALONE’**

*The millionaire goes further than just sponsorship,  
he agrees to share the experience with the artist.*

*Both of them were now hanging from a cliff.*

## *Puberty ~ The impact*

*Mile after mile on a long dusty road*

*No one stopping and no one helping*

*Blisters from shoes too old to cope*

*A glint of retreat to buy a plaster*

*Hour after hour without food or water*

*No one giving and no one caring*

*Exhaustion and hunger in a body too old to cope*

*A hint of surrender to buy a sandwich*

*Two little puppies abandoned by the roadside*

*No one thinking and no one compassionate*

*Two little puppies left by a farm house*

*And starving hounds move in for a feast*

*The dark clouds gather  
Nature roars its awesome answer  
The rain comes like tears  
There is no shelter and even less concern  
The cold comes like ice  
An easterly wind brings the scent of defeat  
And darkness brings the gloom  
Survival is victorious and the credit card is drawn*

*The rope had snapped  
and the climbers plunged deep into themselves.*



## *Youth ~ The Consequence*

*Searching for reality in the midst of frustration,  
the young find sympathy but the old need cash.*

*So now the bonds of safety became the shackles of misfortune.*

*Neither could escape themselves  
and their struggle turned upon each other.*

***“The purity of the encounter is everything  
– this is not about ourselves!”***

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***“A pure encounter cannot be premeditated  
– the real experience is between ourselves!”***

*Heated arguments in city parks. Separate meals and lonely coffees.*

*And Transnistria played on,  
students toasting Stalin with home made vodka  
an everlasting flame in a concrete square.*

*Soviet heroes set in granite  
Central Committee members paraded in posters  
workers consumed in prefabricated housing.  
Long lines of weary soldiers dozing in rusty tanks  
and even longer lines of excited children  
marching happily in rigid uniforms.*

*Another world  
where only the gangsters in their black limousines and the desperate  
young drug takers in city parks came remotely from Earth.*

*The rope was cut and the victims fell upon the world outside.*

## *Adulthood ~ Consolidation*

*Weary resignation in tourist restaurants. Separate minds  
and lonely conversation.*

*Odessa – two hours by bus but fifty years by history,  
students toasting glamour with imported whiskey  
a crowded McDonalds in a concrete square.*

*Wealthy businessmen set in fancy suits  
political parties posting their hackneyed slogans  
homeless children lying under cardboard blankets.  
Long lines of robots posing on the Potemkin Steps  
and even longer lines of traffic jammed tightly in the streets.*

*Another world  
where only the gangsters in their black limousines and the desperate  
young drug takers in city parks came remotely from Earth.*

*“Before coming here I had an encounter in my mind  
a meeting with the police  
while crossing the border without papers or money.*

*I imagined myself trying to explain  
an art project to a concrete wall.*

*I thought the encounter was not about ourselves  
but about the world in which we live.  
But we never found it!”*

*The bulldozers were destroying an ancient Russian fortress  
in an elegant park by the shores of the Black Sea  
to make way for a super sized football stadium.*

*“To me an “encounter”  
is something which can't be defined before it happens.  
We don't know what will happen  
it could be an encounter with anything.*

*Its a fluid concept, without any firm parameters.*

*I thought the whole point of the exercise was  
to understand the nature of an encounter.  
- But we never recorded it!”*

*The rope was discarded and the partners were free.*