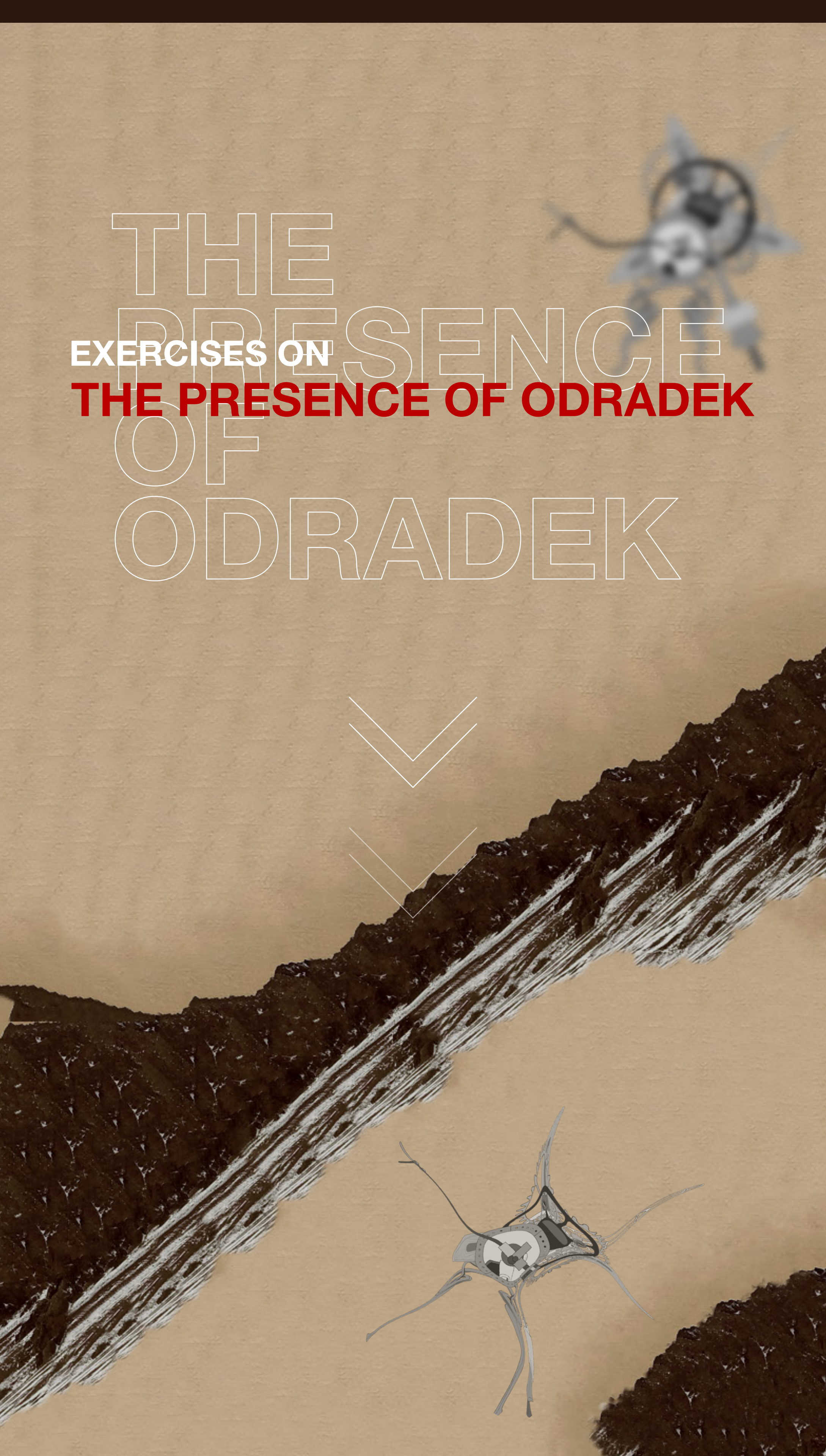

EXERCISES ON THE PRESENCE OF ODRADEK

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Read by Lotte Lenya, from The Stories of Franz Kafka LP (Caedmon, 1958).
Artwork by Donghwi Han, Sangmin Chae

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Chanan Ben Simon and David Rosenmeyer

3- Memories are a house #2
(inspired by Alvin Lucier's I am sitting in a room)
Artwork by Guadalupe Marin

4- Sometimes (Etti Ankri/arr. David Rosenmeyer)
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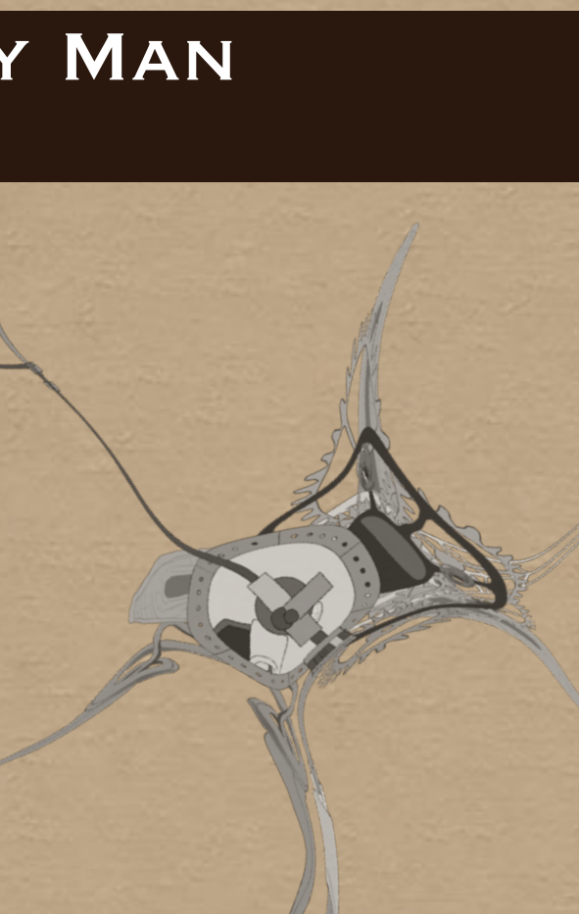
6- How can it be? (Avot Yeshurun/David Rosenmeyer)
Malena Dayen and improvisations by Alejandro Meerapfel, PB, Guillermo Rozenthuler, Noa Haran and Maia Lopez

1,5 - The Cares of a Family Man



The Cares of a Family Man by Franz Kafka

(translated by Willa and Edwin Muir)

Some say the word Odradek is of Slavonic origin, and try to account for it on that basis. Others again believe it to be of German origin, only influenced by Slavonic. The uncertainty of both interpretations allows one to assume with justice that neither is accurate, especially as neither of them provides an intelligent meaning of the word. No one, of course, would occupy himself with such studies if there were not a creature called Odradek. At first glance it looks like a flat starshaped spool for thread, and indeed it does seem to have thread wound upon it; to be sure, they are only old, broken-off bits of thread, knotted and tangled together, of the most varied sorts and colors. But it is not only a spool, for a small wooden crossbar sticks out of the middle of the star, and another small rod is joined to that at a right angle. By means of this latter rod on one side and one of the points of the star on the other, the whole thing can stand upright as if on two legs. One is tempted to believe that the creature once had some sort of intelligible shape and is now only a broken-down remnant. Yet this does not seem to be the case; at least there is no sign of it; nowhere is there an unfinished or unbroken surface to suggest anything of the kind; the whole thing looks senseless enough, but in its own way perfectly finished. In any case, closer scrutiny is impossible, since Odradek is extraordinarily nimble and can never be laid hold of. He lurks by turns in the garret, the stairway, the lobbies, the entrance hall. Often for months on end he is not to be seen; then he has presumably moved into other houses; but he always comes faithfully back to our house again. Many a time when you go out of the door and he happens just to be leaning directly beneath you against the banisters you feel inclined to speak to him. Of course, you put no difficult questions to him, you treat him--he is so diminutive that you cannot help it--rather like a child. "Well, what's your name?" you ask him. "Odradek," he says. "And where do you live?" "No fixed abode," he says and laughs; but it is only the kind of laughter that has no lungs behind it. It sounds rather like the rustling of fallen leaves. And that is usually the end of the conversation. Even these answers are not always forthcoming; often he stays mute for a long time, as wooden as his appearance. I ask myself, to no purpose, what is likely to happen to him? Can he possibly die? Anything that dies has had some kind of aim in life, some kind of activity, which has worn out; but that does not apply to Odradek. Am I to suppose, then, that he will always be rolling down the stairs, with ends of thread trailing after him, right before the feet of my children, and my children's children? He does no harm to anyone that one can see; but the idea that he is likely to survive me I find almost painful.

LINK TO PAGE

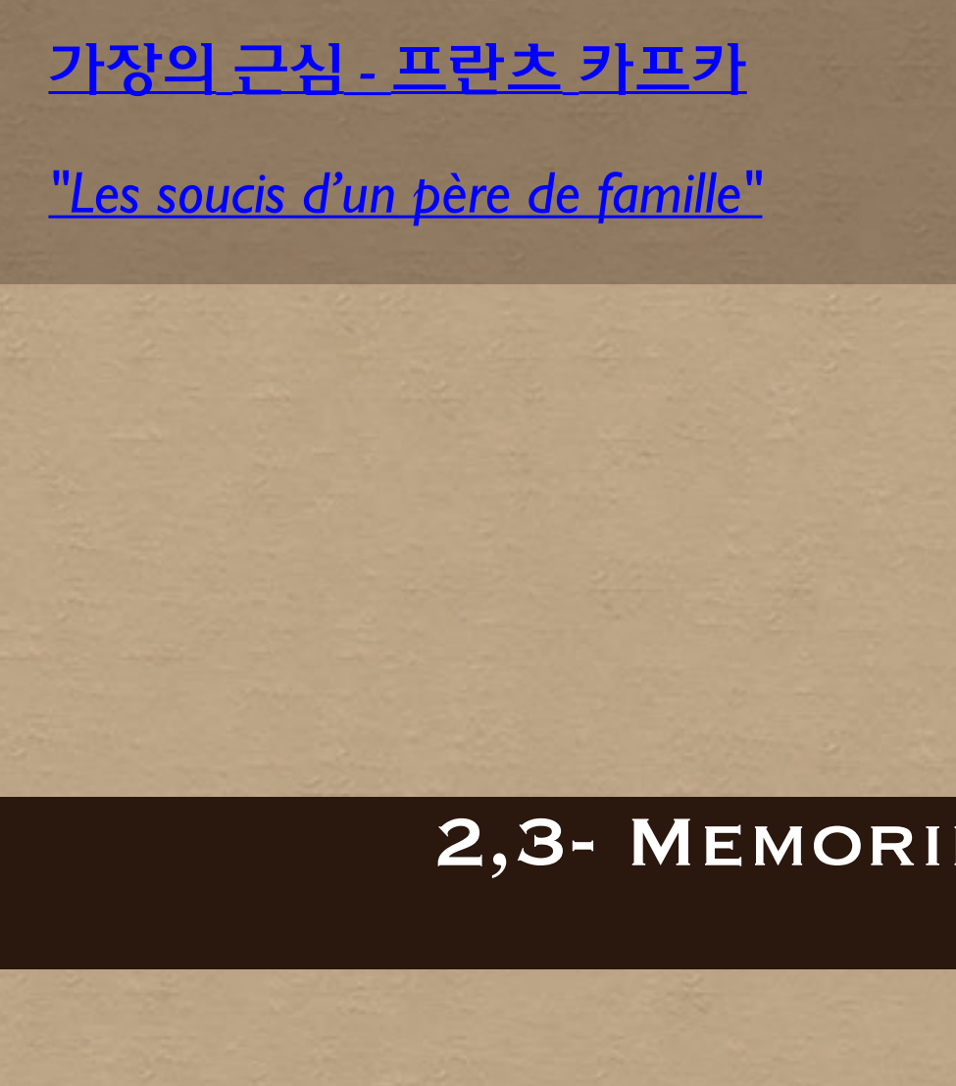
"Die Sorge des Hausvaters"

"Las preocupaciones de un padre de familia"

가장의 근심 - 프란츠 카프카

"Les soucis d'un père de famille"

2,3- Memories are a house



זכרונות הם בית

כוכבים שבכוח הסובב שלהם,
הם הכוכבים במערכת השמש.
אבל אם אינם ברי סבב,
הם אינם בשמש.

כך גם אני: בכוח געגועים שלי,
אני במשפחה.
ואם לא אתגעגע,
אינני במשפחה.

זכרונות הם בית.
הזמן הוא גג. כל הזמן גג. כל הזמן זמן.
הייתי רוצה פעם למות
אליהם ולראות אותם.

בנו רותנברג סיפר
כי כאשר ראה משהֶ
בארכיאולוגיה, הייתה לו תחושת
מולדת. כאילֶ היה בבית.

אינני מכחיש, שאדם המגיע לגיל,
אינו יכול לקוות
שאלה שמהם יצא ישרדֶ
עוד חיים עמו, כפי שכתבה לי

אמי פעם באחד ממכתבי
הדמדומים שלה. מדמדומיי מכתביה
בגורלית אנוש: וכי מתיהֶ
יכולים הן. הלא אין סיכוי לראות אותך.

:ופעם במכתב נידח ונשכח
״לילה טוב לך, יחיאל אלטער לעיבן. נפלה עלי תרדמה.
אחזֶ בי חבליי שינה. כ׳בין
שלעיפעריק געווארן״. נאמר במכתב שלא קוראים. שלא קראֶ

(אבות ישורון)

Memories Are a House by Avot Yeshurun

(Translated by Leon Wieseltier)

Stars by the power of their orbit
are stars in the order of the sun.
But if they are not figures of orbit,
they are not in the sun.

Exactly like me: by the power of my yearnings
I am in the family.
And if I will not yearn,
I am not in the family.

Memories are a house.
Time is a roof. All the time a roof. All the time time.
I would like sometime to die
unto them and see them.

Benno Rothenberg related
that when he saw some archaeology,
he had a feeling of
homeland. As if he were in his house.

I do not deny that a man who reaches a certain age
can no longer hope
that those from whom he came will remain
still alive with him, as my mother once

wrote to me in one of the letters
of her twilight. From the fadings of her letters
into the fatedness of man: But when can they.
After all there's no chance of seeing you.

And once, in a discarded and forgotten letter:
"Good night, Yehiel alter lebn. Slumber has descended upon me.
I am caught in the throes of sleep. Khbin
shlayferig gevorn." Said in a letter that nobody reads, that nobody read.

Los recuerdos son una casa

(translated by Malena Dayen)

Las estrellas por el poder de su órbita
son estrellas en el el orden del sol.
Pero si no son figuras de órbita
no están en el sol.

Exactamente como yo: por el poder de mis anhelos
estoy en la familia.
Y si no anhelo,
no estoy en la familia.

Los recuerdos son una casa.
El tiempo es un techo. Todo el tiempo un techo. Todo el tiempo tiempo.
Me gustaría en algún momento morirme
en ellos y verlos.

Benno Rothenberg decía
Que cuando veía arqueología
tenia una sensación de
patria. Como si estuviera en su casa.

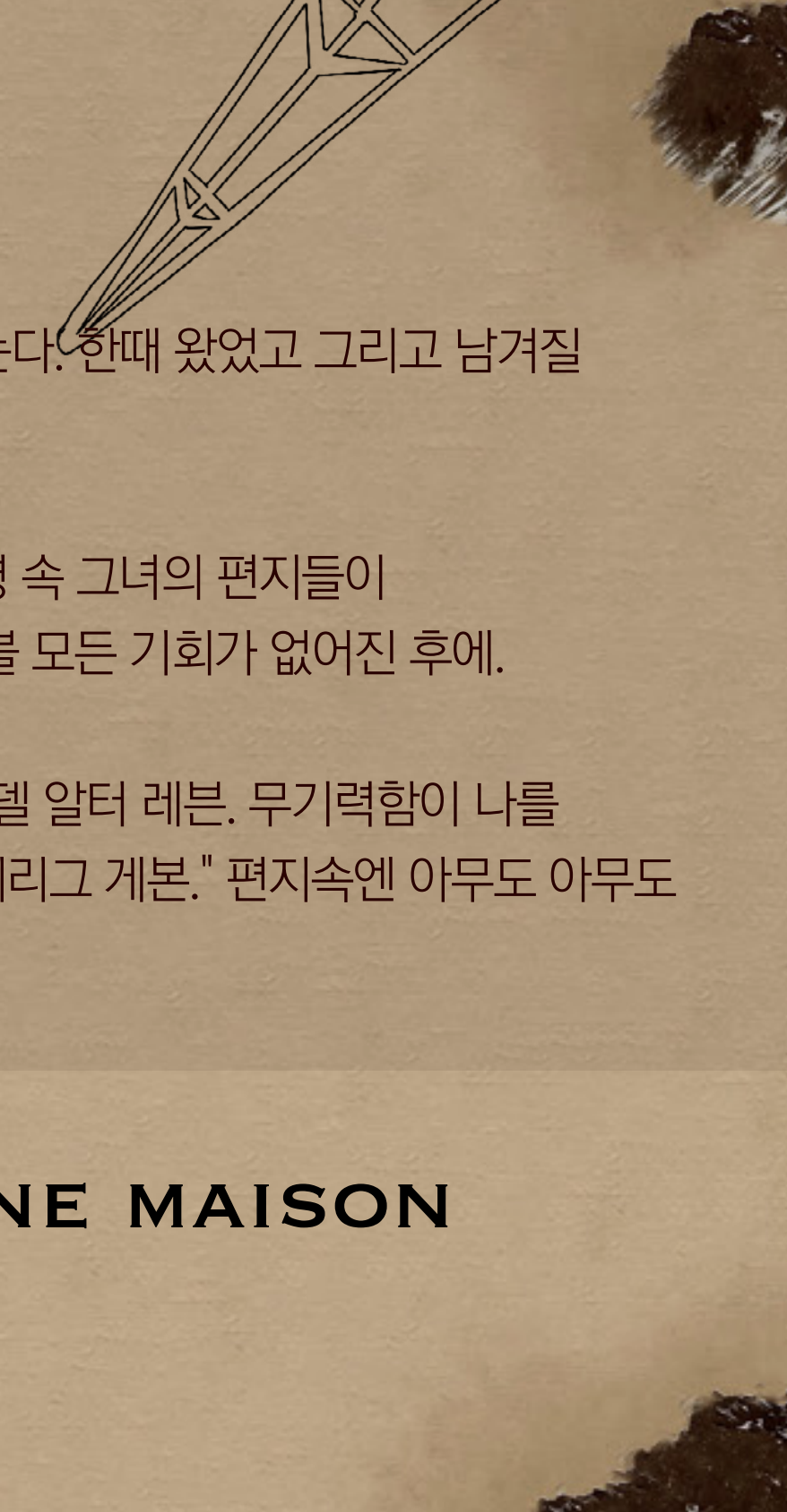
Yo no niego que un hombre que alcanza cierta edad
no puede tener esperanzas
de que de los que él vino todavía permanezcan
vivos con él, como mi madre una vez

me escribió en una de las cartas
de su ocaso. Del descolorimiento de sus cartas
al destino del hombre: pero cuando podrían.
Después de todo no hay posibilidad de verte.

Y una vez, en una carta descartada y olvidada:
"Buenas noches, Yehiel alter lebn. El sopor
descendió sobre mí..
Me atrapó el peso del sueño. Khbin
shlayferig gevorn." Dijo en una carta que nadie lee, que nadie leyó.

추억들은 하나의 집이다 – 아보트 예슈룬

(translated by Suchan Kim)



별들은 궤도의 힘에 의해
태양의 질서 속에 존재한다.
그러나 만약 그들이 궤도를 찾지 못한다면
태양속에 존재하지 않는다.

정확히 나처럼, 나는 나의 갈망의 힘에 의해
가족 속에 존재한다.
그리고 내가 갈망하지 않는다면
나는 가족 속에 존재하지 않는다.

추억들은 하나의 집이다.
시간은 지붕이다. 언제나 그렇다. 항상 언제나
그 위에서 가끔 죽길 원하고 또한 보길 원한다.

베노 루텐버그는 고고학을 접할때 관련됨을 느낀다.
그리고 고향을 느낀다. 집에 있었을 때처럼.

나는 희망이 없을 만큼 나이를 먹은 남자를 외면하지 않는다. 한때 왔었고 그리고 남겨질
그들은 그와 함께 살아있다. 한때 나의 어머니처럼.

그녀의 여명의 편지중 하나를 나에게 썼다. 한사람의 운명 속 그녀의 편지들이
사라짐으로부터, 그러나 그들이 사라질 수 있을때. 너를 볼 모든 기회가 없어진 후에.

그리고 어느날, 버려지고 잊혀진 편지속엔, "잘자요, 예히델 알터 레븐. 무기력함이 나를
엄습했어요. 나는 잠의 진통에 붙잡혔어요. 크빈 쉴레이페리그 게본." 편지속엔 아무도 아무도
편지를 읽지 않는다라고 써있다.

Les souvenirs sont une maison

(translated by Laetitia Ruccolo)

Les étoiles, par le pouvoir de leur orbite,
sont étoiles dans l'ordre du soleil.
Mais si elles ne sont pas des figures d'orbite,
elles ne sont pas dans le soleil.

Exactement comme moi : par le pouvoir de mes désirs
Je suis dans la famille
Et si je ne désire pas
Je ne suis pas dans la famille

Les souvenirs sont une maison
Le temps est un toit. Tout le temps un toit. Tout le temps du temps
Parfois je voudrais mourir
en eux et les voir.

Benno Rothenberg a raconté
que quand il a vu des ruines archéologiques
il a eu une sensation de
patrie. Comme s'il était dans sa maison.

Je ne dénie pas qu'un homme qui atteint un certain âge
ne peut jamais espérer
que tous ceux dont il est venu restent
toujours vivants avec lui, comme ma mère un jour

me l'écrivit dans une des lettres
de son crépuscule. Des décolorations de ses lettres
au destin de l'homme : mais quand ils peuvent.
Après tout il n'y a pas de chance de te voir.

Et une fois, sur une lettre rejetée et oubliée :
« Bonne nuit, Yehiel alter lebn. Le sommeil est descendu sur moi.
Je suis pris dans les affres du sommeil. Khbin
Shlayferig gevorn. » Dit-elle dans une lettre que personne ne lit, que personne n'a
lue.

4- SOMETIMES

לפעמים

לפעמים אני נזכרת באיזה רחש של תפילה
והיא שקטה והיא עוצרת רגע לפני הנעילה
כשכף רגלי בחול דורכת והמגע צורב וחם
מה שרציתי זה ללכת ככה ללכת כל הזמן

והקולות באים ממני הם מנגנים שזה נגמר
מה שהייתי שוב אינני מה שהנני שוב לא נשמר

ולפעמים אני נזכרת ואש חמה עולה ממך
קרוב יותר מבחייך ככה אתה לי במותך
והדמעות רגעי החסד הן מלטפות את שתיקתך
מה שרציתי זה ללכת ככה ללכת אל סודך

והקולות באים ממני והניגון מלא חידה
ואחר כך הוא שב לנוח ועם הרוח גם אתה

(מילים ולחן: אתי אנקרי)

LIFAMIM BY ETTI ANKRI

(translated by David Rosenmeyer)

(and) Sometimes I remember of a sort of a whisper of a prayer
and it is quiet and it stops just a moment before the closing.
When the palm of my foot in the sand steps and the touch is burning and hot
what I wanted was to go, just to walk all the time.

And the voices come from within me, they play that it is finished.
What I was I am not any more, what I am is not anymore protected.

And sometimes I remember and a hot fire comes up from you.
Closer than in your life, that's how you are for me in your death.
And the tears, the moments of grace, they caress your silence
what I wanted was to go, just to walk towards your secret.

And the voices come from within me and the 'nigún' is full of riddle.
And afterwords he returns to rest, and with the wind so do you.

(and) Sometimes I remember of a sort of a whisper of a prayer
and she is quiet and she stops just a moment before the falling.

A VECES

(translated by Malena Dayen)

(y) A veces recuerdo una suerte de suspiro de un rezo
que se calla y se detiene justo antes del final.
Cuando la planta de mi pie pisa en la arena y el contacto es ardiente y cálido
lo que quería era ir, seguir caminando todo el tiempo.

Y las voces vienen de dentro de mí, cantan que ya terminó.
Lo que era ya no soy más, lo que soy ya no está protegido.

Y a veces recuerdo y un fuego intenso viene desde ti.
Más cercano que en tu vida, así eres para mí en tu muerte.
Y las lágrimas, los momentos de gracia, acarician tu silencio.
Lo que quería era ir, solo caminar hacia tu secreto.

Y las voces vienen de dentro de mí, y el nigun está lleno de misterio
Y luego regresa a descansar, y con el viento también regresas tú.

(y) A veces recuerdo una suerte de suspiro de un rezo
que se calla y se detiene justo antes de caer.

가끔 – 에티 앙크리

(translated by Suchan Kim)

가끔 나는 기도의 속삭임 같은 것을 기억한다. 그것은 조용하고 끝나기전 잠시 멈춘다. 발다닥이 타는 듯한 뜨거움을 느끼는 모래 계단을 오를때 나는 그저 가고 싶었고, 그저 계속 걷길 원했다.

그리고 내속에서 들리는 목소리들, 그들은 연주가 끝난것을 연주한다. 아무것도 아니었던 나, 더이상 보호받지 못하는 나.

그리고 나는 가끔 너에게서 나오는 뜨거운 불을 기억한다. 너의 삶보다 더 친밀하게, 그것이 나에겐 너의 죽음속에서의 너의 모습이다. 그리고 눈물들, 은혜의 시간들, 그들은 내가 가고 싶었고, 그저 너의 비밀로 걸어가는 너의 침묵을 어루만진다.

그리고 내속에서 들리는 목소리들, 그 선율은 수수께끼로 가득차있다. 그리고 그는 나중에 쉼을 위해 돌아온다 그리고 너도 그렇듯 바람과 함께.

가끔 나는 기도의 속삭임 같은 것을 기억한다. 그녀는 조용하고 쓰러지기전 잠시 멈춘다.

PARFOIS

(translated by Laetitia Ruccolo)

(et) Parfois je me souviens d'une sorte de murmure d'une prière
qui est calme et qui s'arrête juste un moment avant la fin.
Quand la plante de mes pieds s'enfonce dans le sable et que le contact est brûlant et chaud
ce que je voulais était aller, juste marcher tout le temps.

Et les voix qui me viennent de l'intérieur, chantent que c'est fini.
Ce que j'étais je ne suis plus, ce que je suis n'est plus protégé.

Et parfois je me souviens et un feu ardent provient de toi.
Plus proche que dans ta vie, c'est ce que tu es pour moi dans ta mort.
Et les larmes, les moments de grâce, ils caressent ton silence
ce que je voulais c'était juste partir, juste marcher jusqu'à ton secret.

Et les voix qui me viennent de l'intérieur et le « aucun » est plein d'énigme.
Et ensuite il revient se reposer et avec le temps tu reviens aussi.

(et) Parfois je me souviens d'une sorte de murmure d'une prière
qui est calme et qui s'arrête juste un moment avant de tomber.

6- HOW CAN IT BE?

איך נקרא

אין נקרא שאני מקבל מכתבים מהבית,
והבית איננֶ?
אין נקרא שאני מקבל מכתבים מהבית,
ואיש לא חי

איך נקרא שמהבית כותבים לי,
והמכתב לא נכתב?
והמכתב לא נשלח?
איך זה נקרא?

(אבות ישורון)

HOW CAN IT BE?

(translated by David Rosenmeyer)

How can it be that I receive letters from the house And the house doesn't exist?
How can it be that I receive letters from the house And nobody lives there?
How can it be that they write me from the house. And the letter was not written?
And the letter was not sent?
How can it be?

¿CÓMO PUEDE SER?

(translated by Malena Dayen)

¿Cómo puede ser que reciba cartas de la casa
y la casa no existe?
¿Cómo puede ser que reciba cartas de la casa
y nadie vive ahí?
¿Cómo puede ser que me escriban cartas de la casa
y la carta no fue escrita,
y la carta no fue enviada?
¿Cómo puede ser?

어떻게 그럴수 있단 말인가?

(translated by Suchan Kim)

어떻게 존재하지 않는 집으로부터 편지를 받을 수 있단 말인가?
어떻게 아무도 살지않는 집으로부터 편지를 받을 수 있단 말인가?

어떻게 그 집에서 그들은 쓰여지지 않은 편지를 쓸 수 있단 말인가?
보내지지도 않은 편지?
어떻게 그럴 수 있단 말인가?

COMMENT EST-CE POSSIBLE ?

(translated by Laetitia Ruccolo)

Comment est-ce possible que je reçoive des lettres de la maison et que la maison n'existe pas ?
Comment est-ce possible que je reçoive des lettres de la maison et que personne ne vive là ?
Comment est-ce possible qu'ils m'écrivent de la maison et que la lettre se soit pas écrite ?
Et que la lettre ne soit pas envoyée ?
Comment est-ce possible ?

Exercises of The Presence of Odradek

An opera based of texts by **Etti Ankri**, **Franz Kafka** and **Avot Yeshurun**

with **Chanan Ben Simon**, **Malena Dayen**, **Ariadne Greif**, and **Georgia Usborne**

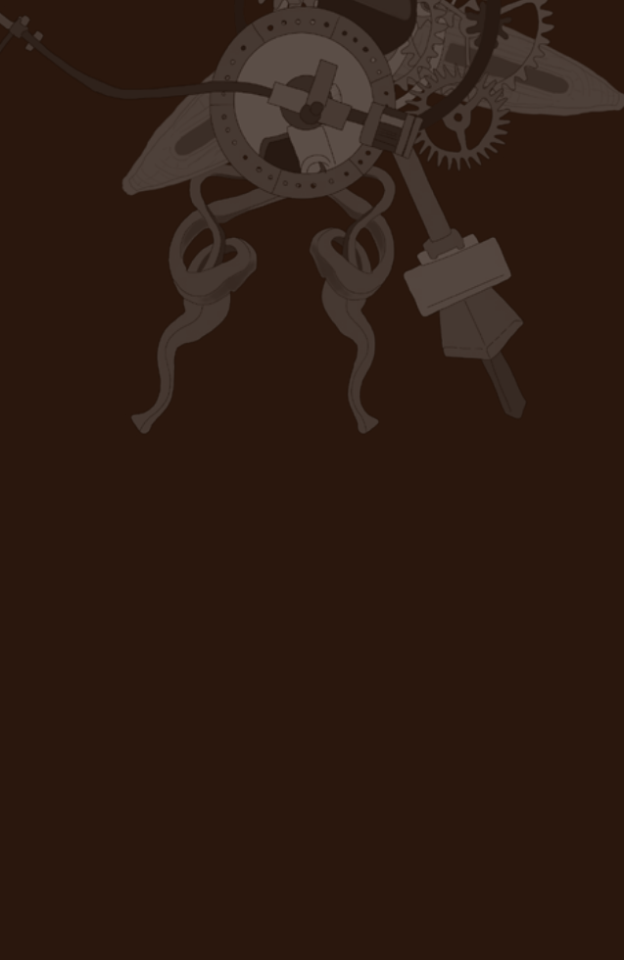
Music by **David Rosenmeyer**

Directed by **Malena Dayen**

Choreographed by **Troy Ogilvie**

Video and Tech Design by **Sangmin Chae**

Artwork by **Guadalupe Marin** and **Donghwi Han**



EXERCISES ON
THE PRESENCE OF ODRADEK