HE: When people ask me what the hardest part was, back during those days on the Maidan—and it's usually foreigners who ask (Gustav is not the first), usually just to be polite, just to be asking something, because the only thing they remember from their press and cable news is that more than a million people (no one knew exactly how many, anyway, and I bet no one'll ever find out) came out into the streets of Kyiv and stood there. In the freezing cold and under snow, and you know they picture the Ukrainian winter as something out of the vast Asiatic steppes: birds frozen dead in mid-flight, tongues stuck to metal spoons—so when they ask about the hardest thing they're hoping to hear Hollywood-worthy horror tales of frostbitten cheeks and amputated limbs, a la Jack London's go West, my son, go West, my country, since a conquest of the West (and they're certain that's what we fought for—a piece of the West!) must need, in their mythology, be accompanied by purely masculine sacrifices; they ask in full anticipation of having you tell them what they have already imagined so that they can nod sympathetically and say, Wow—when people ask me this question and I try to answer, every time I feel like I come up against a solid wall inside myself, a profound lack of desire to explain anything, muddling in my inadequate English, to mutter that "hard" is not quite the right word, and it doesn't really fit what we experienced during those three weeks. That, actually, it was later that things got "hard," after everything was over, the rush was over, and we all had to go home, and become again anonymous strangers passing each other in the street, so that no matter how many times you clicked your busted lighter in the middle of the sidewalk in a hopeless attempt to light your cigarette, there would be no solicitous onslaught of helpful hands with ready flames offered you from every direction. I remember how utterly lost I felt the first time this did not happen: after those three weeks I had forgotten completely what it was like to be alone in a mass of people, and this was only a few days later, and Khreshchatyk looked like the same street, and the people looked like the same people, only now they hurried along on their holiday errands and no one gave a damn if some loser could use a light—that was the moment when I, stunned for an instant by the chill of the sudden emptiness in the space that was only recently, days before, bubbling with thick familial, intimate warmth, a void not unlike the one left by the death of a loved one, understood finally and undeniably that it was all really over: we had begun to fall apart again, to segregate into the composite elements of a pedestrian mass, no different from a crowd in any city in the world, and one had to learn to live as before, as if one had never known a different life. That was really hard—it was like coming home from war, albeit victorious (for some reason, this particular metaphor strikes me as especially apt), like coming back from the front, Gustav, you see? Gustav nods and grunts a low, respectful Ja, he's alright, only, of course, he doesn't have a clue, this guy who looks in every way like a storybook Dutch skipper: with his red side-burns straight out of a cartoon, all he needs is a pipe; Sweetie, when she first saw him, cracked, "The Flying Dutchman!"—he's really a walking stereotype, but I'm sure there are tons of stereotypical-looking people in any nation, it's just our deeply inculcated distrust of national stereotypes that makes them seem like a rarity. Gustav has come for one thing and one thing only: pictures—and pictures is what he really understands, no arguing about that.
He's got a good eye, instantly grabbing onto the shots he wants me to pull up to full screen, and really, I could very well shut up and not try to explain anything at all, because he has a way of speaking for himself. The kids would tell the pilot that they are telling him something different from what they say to me. He wasn't in Kyiv back then and all he's seeing now is untold numbers of people in the city streets, under the snow. A few angles are really nice (especially when I managed to climb a tree and took shots of Grushevsky street—a bright orange human sea as far as the horizon, seen through the latticework of snow-covered tree limbs), and so are the wide angles, of course—the people's faces are beautiful, smiling, with happy tears in their eyes, opening up in joyful cries (Gustav skips over a grinning gap-toothed boy in a black stocking cap—that's from further up the hill, next to the building of the Supreme Council, I got a few good shots there too; while I was hoisting myself into the tree, and my buddy Vovchik held my camera, the boy volunteered to guard my coat; the women standing around fussed over me, tutting that I'll freeze, that I can't stay out in the cold all night—but she leaves me to suffer alone, with Gustav who says ja and doesn't get it). The expression one gets standing on the top of a mountain or riding up a rushing wave on a surfboard—the awe inspired by the magnificence of a force greater than what can be accommodated by human imagination. That boy had come to me from below, his face glowing with that spell-bound grin that seemed glued to his motherland will keep me warm, and the boy, with his head tossed back, watched me from below, his face glowing with that spell-bound grin that seemed glued to so many people's faces in those days: the mouth beatifically stretched from ear to ear, the expression one gets standing on the top of a mountain or riding up a rushing wave on a surfboard—the awe inspired by the magnificence of a force greater than what can be accommodated by human imagination. That boy had come to me from below, his face glowing with that spell-bound grin that seemed glued to so many people's faces in those days: the mouth beatifically stretched from ear to ear, the expression one gets standing on the top of a mountain or riding up a rushing wave on a surfboard—the awe inspired by the magnificence of a force greater than what can be accommodated by human imagination. That boy had come to me from below, his face glowing with that spell-bound grin that seemed glued to so many people's faces in those days: the mouth beatifically stretched from ear to ear, the expression one gets standing on the top of a mountain or riding up a rushing wave on a surfboard—the awe inspired by the magnificence of a force greater than what can be accommodated by human imagination. That boy had come to me from below, his face glowing with that spell-bound grin that seemed glued to so many people's faces in those days: the mouth beatifically stretched from ear to ear, the expression one gets standing on the top of a mountain or riding up a rushing wave on a surfboard—the awe inspired by the magnificence of a force greater than what can be accommodated by human imagination. That boy had come to me from below, his face glowing with that spell-bound grin that seemed glued to so many people's faces in those days: the mouth beatifically stretched from ear to ear, the expression one gets standing on the top of a mountain or riding up a rushing wave on a surfboard—the awe inspired by the magnificence of a force greater than what can be accommodated by human imagination. That boy had come to me from below, his face glowing with that spell-bound grin that seemed glued to so many people's faces in those days: the mouth beatifically stretched from ear to ear, the expression one gets standing on the top of a mountain or riding up a rushing wave on a surfboard—the awe inspired by the magnificence of a force greater than what can be accommodated by human imagination. That boy had come to me from below, his face glowing with that spell-bound grin that seemed glued to so many people's faces in those days: the mouth beatifically stretched from ear to ear, the expression one gets standing on the top of a mountain or riding up a rushing wave on a surfboard—the awe inspired by the magnificence of a force greater than what can be accommodated by human imagination.
Looking at those old ladies, at their stubborn, taciturn tenacity (I’ll never forget that woman who kept bringing tea in a tiny, 18-oz thermos; it took no more than three seconds to pour out the three cups of tea it contained, and the grandma would turn and crawl back home up the steep, iced-over Mykhailivska street to brew another thermos-full, and I wondered, how many trips did she make every day?) I was truly touched, for the first time, by their frightening, primordial almost, elemental life force that could not be cowed by starvation, wars, or labour camps—by any of the horrors, including the ones that befell them, as of the days of their deathbeds. The world and all through it all was a mere nightmare of history, a scam, a foolish bet, as folks would say, Devil wagering Job against the Lord—and the Devil lost it all, because these little old ladies, who certainly could teach Job a thing or two, on their deathbeds, when they had no more hope of being themselves rewarded with the brooks of honey and butter, gathered their last strength and raised fee-ble hands to salute freedom through their windows. It occurred to me then that I have my own book of visions, but no one would ever want it. The world has deter-mined to live exclusively in the present—for however long whatever is on TV stays on. Time has not sped up—it has simply disintegrated. The only reality is what is real—and to recognise it, incredulously. For the longest time, I simply could not even once, while one could still image of the young beauty with the orange carnation facing the shields of the riot police would not do no matter how awesome she looked on posters—it would have to be that hunch-ered, inconceivably old, indestructible and uncowed old lady from the Maidan, with her three cups of hot tea—Here, children, warm yourselves, God bless you—now, that would be the real truth about us, but who’d ever want that old flesh to be their revolution’s allegory?

SH: I can tell Sweetie’s miffed at me for leaving him alone with that Dutch dude, but what can I do if I can’t stand to talk about the same stuff for the millionth time! I just can’t do it. The more you talk, the more you repe-at yourself, and the next thing you know, you have lost any trace of your real experience of those days—you just have words, units of meaning, and they come out pre-recorded, and then the entire conversation degrades back to pol-itics, the talking heads on TV, oil prices, the government crisis, the fight against corruption, all that bullshit. Thank you, but no thank you. Mr. Gusz-tav can shape his Eastern European album with its chapter on “Revolutionary Kyiv” however he sees fit. Without my help. I’m glad to see Sweetie’s pictures put to use, else he wouldn’t get around to doing anything with them for anoth-er year, but that doesn’t mean I have to participate. You boys are on your own. I have my own book of visions, but no one would ever want it. The world has deter-mined to live exclusively in the present—for however long whatever is on TV stays there. Time has not sped up—it has simply disintegrated. The only reality is what can be touched. A problem of attention span, I think they call it. We have the attention span of a puppy, at best. Today there’s a revolution in one country, tomorrow in another, on a different continent. And if it’s not a revolution, it’s a terrorist attack, or a hurricane, or another calamity which we will forget as soon as they switch to the next story on the newscast. We just want to make sure there’s something new being beamed at us every minute, and we’re not being asked to hold anything in our minds for any length of time at all. We don’t want to go into the trouble of making connections between the past and the present, because, you know, that requires effort. And we are not being encouraged to exert ourselves in any way; we are being taught to relax. Leaf through a photography book or the internet: snippets, tweets, Round of elections, groups of shaved-headed men went from bar to bar and made everyone drink to the health of the ruling government’s candidate and beat up whomever refused to do so with such violence that a friend of this man’s ended up in intensive care. I interpreted, the excited German scribbled furiously in his notebook, and then later he said to me, delighted as a boy, Isn’t it amazing, just think about it, your people never knew democracy. I think, they’d been ruled by despots the whole time, the Russian tsars, with terror, persecutions, violence—and here the people are, risen to defend their rights, It’s a miracle! I remember all but choked with surprise: what do you mean, never knew democracy? Do you people not read? Andreas Kappeler, Kurzgeschichte der Ukraine—doesn’t ring a bell? Here you are not aware that the Ukrainian head of state, the Hetman, was always an elected position since time imemorial. The was was no legitimacy? Or that we lived for three hundred years according to the Statutes of Lithuania, the most democratic code of law, if you’d care to remember, of its time? The Russian Tsar cancelled it, of course, but not before 1840, and village courts continued to use it all until the beginning of the 20th century, there’s even a special genre of charms in Ukrainian folk magic—judicial magic, spells to affect the out-come in court. Kyiv obtained the Magdeburg rights in 1494, and other Ukrainian cities had them too—so how do you figure, your parents never knew the rule of laws? I blurted all that out in one gasping fit of patriotic outrage. The German was a little surprised. He thought about it for a mo-ment, and then said, Oh, was that when you were a part of Poland? “The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,” I corrected sternly, as if he were a C-student in one of my classes. And we also had our own army—nothing to sneeze at, I assure you. And a mercantile middle class, we always had a strong middle class. A nation of small bourgeoisie, you know. Which is
secured themselves in the Cabinet building—and everyone understood this, without a
And just as back then, these were the drums of war: war declared on those who'd
stand by a post and begin sending their signal, with tympani and tambourines.
and that's exactly what those drummers would've done: they'd climb a hill,
the fact that this was exactly how the Kozak army used to be called together in
weeks and never once stopped drumming can be counted on to have been ignorant of
the Circus college, from all over, who found the discarded oil-drums near the Dy
menacing—thump-thump-thump! Thump-thump-thump!—those clueless undergrads, from
of quick, sharp bangs that get under your skin, and then shifts again, guttural,
Thump-thump-thump! A signal, and the apocalyptic drumbeat scatters into a hail
and stood there, day in and day out, beating on steel drums—thump-thump-thump!
right. And those kids who lined up in front of the Cabinet building on the hill
this was it: this ability to step into the current that flows beyond common time,
the man knew he was doing the right thing. If you must have a miracle, then
a boat setting out to sea. Except back in those days, they would've thrown the
exactly the same thing as his Kozak great-great-grandfather would have done on
alcohol?" then opened it and poured the stuff into the nearest trash can, was doing
bag with a trained motion, said, peaceably, "Didn't we ask you not to bring al
who, checking through the donated food, pulled out a bottle of vodka from a plaid
century-old norms that had guided their ancestors. The warden at the tent city
by some incomprehensible means, proves to be greater than the sum of its con
history: when a nation acts as a single collective soul, its collective memory,
which they had never thought themselves capable. Perhaps, that was the law of
horizons fell back, and in one instant millions of people discovered themselves to be
in possession of knowledge and instincts they never suspected existed, of
which they had never thought themselves capable. Perhaps, that was the law of
year—my German just sort of stopped mid-smile. And I don't think he belongs to
be copied to his discs, although, to my mind, they are not that interesting.
wall behind their gray shields, and chooses many, lots, almost all of them, to
per-coloured eye-lashes at me, excited as a kid, Is that so? For him it must feel
in front of the Presidential administration (in the Soviet times, the building
ed and whose name they are chanting. But that's not it, that's just a phan
easiest thing in the world to think it's all about the president they elect
out them, your readers can't understand what all those millions of people in
two maps, Gustav. Just two maps—one from 1657, the other from 2004. With
redrawn—just as a person doesn't vanish just because his picture is destroyed.
Ucraina terra Cossacorum—suddenly came to the surface. It hadn't disappeared
need for explanation, without the knowledge of historical facts, without textbooks,
know it from the sound itself that that hill was, and I think he really wanted to see a miracle and my academic prissiness was getting
in the way. "Today's generations don't remember it anyway," he said.
We were having this conversation while walking down the Institutska street,
sucked into the massive, unanimous whirlpool of people around the Maidan: as
we were descending towards the square in one current, another ascended to wards us: the sidewalks were filled with people, the street studded with the
privilege to take a step back, to regard, to refuse to respond to the demands and expectations of our time, to dismiss
I was shaky with lack of sleep, with exhaustion, tension, cold, and noise,
and the answer slipped from my lips before I even realised what I was saying:
"As you can see," I said, "we very much do." It came out very dramatic, like in a movie. My German just sort of stopped mid
smile. And I don't think he belongs to
-
against its own people— it gives one pause. By virtue of physical presence, Scout was at home in English that was strange to me, but with chips and nuts— she knew, my good girl, that I will chew anything when I’m nervous, like a demented rat, so I can’t pout at her any longer). That’s well said, I wouldn’t have come up with that, only things weren’t as dire as Gustav must be thinking looking at the pictures now: turned out, my pal Vovchik went to school with a guy who was now one of the special forces officers; my fourth-floor neighbour’s beloved nephew was also among those soldiers, and the woman went looking for him on Bankova, with sandwiches, because her sister had called and cried that the boys weren’t getting any food, and didn’t get to come off their shift, as they were supposed to, every hour, and stood there in the cold for four hours straight, and had to piss into their own boots. Gustav goes after a picture of an infantry colonel grabbing at the shields from the protesters’ side: the colonel is square-shouldered in a precise, disciplined way, you can see he’s un¬ accustomed to bowing his fierce head as he had to do at the moment, to peer at the glass-shielded faces— it’s a good group photograph!— someone quickly as¬ tinged to be snapping pictures of that colonel, as he spoke to the soldiers, “Sons,” he pleaded in an utterly non-commanding voice that made all of our throats catch, “Sons, boys, don’t shoot, listen to me, don’t shoot... I’ll beg you on my knees.” I know I wouldn’t want to be one of those boys who sniffled wordlessly behind their visors, while the human sea in front of them chanted, “I’m brother to you, your brother to me— lower your shield!” and the girls sang love songs and put sandwiches between them— therefore they were “mother’s son, father’s son, and sister’s gal— we have the courage, tradition and the right to defend our country!”

The lieutenant called Vovchik again in the small hours of the night and told him, “There are Russians standing behind us,” inside the Administration building, he said, like NKVD’s anti-retreat forces at Stalingrad. Others had spotted caravans— those Russian special forces, caravans without licence plates parked in an alley, and the very sight of them aroused unease; that’s not something you can capture in a picture— the different feel you get from an empty van and a muffled van, full of people silently waiting for some¬ thing. As we pointed our lenses, gaping like mouths opened in surprise, at the vans, it really felt like they pointed something back at us; they were watching us back, only they were doing it through the optics of guns— I could feel it on my looking glass, I knew it so well, because I’ve always been sort of, as Sweetie puts it, knuckle-headed, but I was never really scared throughout that entire autumn— the glum, hard, half war-like autumn of my country when we all lived in a thickening fog of rumours, threats, raids, and demonstrations; I was not scared even though I photographed the blood on the pavement next to the Central Electoral Commission on the night of the 24th of October (and that was the first time I’d ever seen puddles of human blood on the people), but with a human look, like oil, and I’d seen plenty of similarly menacing caravans without licence plates, brought to the city and tucked away on small streets— there were so many before the first, and the second round of elections, I must’ve gotten five Gigs worth of pictures: sand-loaded dump-trucks manned by immobile shadows and inter¬ city buses with curtains drawn on their windows. The men who sat hidden in these Buses sometimes came out to the stores to stock up on vodka and beer, and carried away several 75s, snatching one child out of the way. But where the rest of this gang, they ventured out into the light of the Maidan— tentatively, in small groups, instantly recognisable by the way they bristled all over like a hunting animal that wandered into someone else’s territory— they were somehow instantly annihilated, disarmed like old warheads, dissolved without a trace like drops in an ocean. When people called out to them from the fires: “Hey, boys, come over, we’ll get you something warm to eat!” when people asked, “Where are you from, boys, do you have a place to sleep?” they retreated, squatting with their camera, and showing teeth, these nocturnal animals, used to people throwing rocks at them, not offering food, used to traps waiting for them behind kind words—and vanished back into the darkness, breathing their heavy breath, not finding any spoils at someone else’s banquet. And unexpectedly a few peaceful souls emerged from their midst as well— those, who, instead of showing teeth, cracked open in the warmth, whose souls unburdened such depths of old injustices and rightless¬ ness that I didn’t have it in me to photograph them and lowered my camera.
have only this one picture of an old man, skinny as a bug, in a blue-and-white scarf around his neck, like some old folks, like some old ladies do on camera—when they poured him a cup of tea and got him a sandwich, the man broke down crying; he just stood there and wept, shaking all over and unable to stop, and kept showing up, like some kind of exonerating evidence, his hands—a pair of black, gnarled wooden things, palms up. “All my life...” he sobbed, in Russian, “all my life I worked in a mine— with these hands... and what for— for a piece of bread...” the director promised a hundred hryvna... they brought us here, keep us in the basement, they feed for the entire night, and every day they take us out, like a bunch of dogs, and hand us to people, with their unbending stubs of fingers, like proof of his clear conscience. The only thing he wanted was to identify himself. No, no, not once did I get scared of anything, even when the city was full of troops, armed to the teeth (who started to take our side pretty much right away, battalion after battalion)—I only felt indignation boiling up in me, blood hammering angrily in my temples—fuckers! They think they can do anything—but there, in the side alley next to the Marienbad, for the first time in my life, I felt real, or rather I was real. I couldn’t even tell Sweetie about this, or anyone else: I’d much rather not have learned this about myself at all: that there’s something in me, deeper and larger than your basic physiological instinct of fear in the face of danger, something beyond the natural human fright that makes your mouth go dry and your muscles cramp—something else, much more oppressive, a long, twisting, spasmodic spasm of memory. It was sickening, literally, gut-wrenching; it felt like I was recognising something I had never experienced before. My body began to transform from a child, from someone a hundred miles away, to get her old padded coat and a pair of valenki). Seventy years ago this was, almost forty years before I was born, and yet somehow I knew it, I recognised this apprehension that was deeper than fear: like you’re strapped to an operating table watching a mad surgeon raise his knife above you (I recognise this “operating table” look in a young kid from the Donetsk branch of the pro-opposition Pora group: he’d been kidnapped before the first round of the elections and thugs who did it promised him they’d rape his sister if he doesn’t quit—I remembered his face), and this version of myself—an adult man who knows this—needed to, to die an honest man, and that’s that. I had no idea how one went about doing that, and none of us did; none of us had ever wielded anything more damaging than a camera, so we just walked from that alley to the “Hunting and Fishing” store, where they kindly told us, you, boys, are a little late, we sold everything we had on the first day—and we marvelled at that, and thought ourselves total losers, shaking our heads, swinging our snow-laden hats from side to side like a bunch of demented snowmen—the snow came down berserk, ran, melted, in rivulets down our faces, and we wandered away from the store arm-in-arm but feeling initiated into an invisible warrior brotherhood whose presence we could feel vibrating all around us in the air, making us giddy, so we kept ribbing each other—Can you believe that? Sold out, you’d never thought of that, you’re such a total nerd, it never occurred to you, did it? You fucking wimp... This triggers another unphotographed moment from my memory. I think it happened in one of our first forays to the Maidan, perhaps on the night of the Maidan, perhaps on the night when Vovchik, our real hero who was by then more a legend than a man, more a myth than a reality, opened fire in his panic. I couldn’t really tell you where and how we slept during that first week, but here it is: we’re in the brightly-lit, crowded fast-food restaurant in the underground mall below the Maidan, where we had staggered in to warm up after, we had run out of tape and film and froze solid; the waitress, also semi-conscious with fatigue but still smiling, said, boys, I’m out of everything, except green tea. I’ll pour you some, on the house, alright?—and that’s when Vovchik’s cell phone started to make noise. The director promised a hundred hryvna... they brought us here, keep us in the basement, they feed for the entire night, and every day they take us out, like a bunch of dogs, and hand us to people, with their unbending stubs of fingers, like proof of his clear conscience. The only thing he wanted was to identify himself. No, no, not once did I get scared of anything, even when the city was full of troops, armed to the teeth (who started to take our side pretty much right away, battalion after battalion)—I only felt indignation boiling up in me, blood hammering angrily in my temples—fuckers! They think they can do anything—but there, in the side alley next to the Marienbad, for the first time in my life, I felt real, or rather I was real. 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I think it happened in one of our first forays to the Maidan, perhaps on the night of the Maidan, perhaps on the night when Vovchik, our real hero who was by then more a legend than a man, more a myth than a reality, opened fire in his panic. I couldn’t really tell you where and how we slept during that first week, but here it is: we’re in the brightly-lit, crowded fast-food restaurant in the underground mall below the Maidan, where we had staggered in to warm up after, we had run out of tape and film and froze solid; the waitress, also semi-conscious with fatigue but still smiling, said, boys, I’m out of everything, except green tea. I’ll pour you some, on the house, alright?—and that’s when Vovchik’s cell phone started to make noise. The director promised a hundred hryvna... they brought us here, keep us in the basement, they feed for the entire night, and every day they take us out, like a bunch of dogs, and hand us to people, with their unbending stubs of fingers, like proof of his clear conscience.
except during wars, of course. Or popular uprisings. Also, revolutions. Then they are different. Evening belongs to them. From them. I could see it: Sweetie would grab his camera and go to the Maidan every day like he was going to the front lines. They all banded together in what seemed like a single instant; they have the instinct of the pack, a boys’ gang. Men’s work. A man jumps off the bed, pulls on his pants, throws on a coat, blows you a kiss, “I’ll call, Sweetie, don’t worry, and is out the door. On the very first day, when Liona’s husband called—not Liona herself, as always—to say that the police had prevented protesters from entering the capital, there were road-blocks and checkpoints on the Odessa highway, and several thousand people were sitting there in their cars, unable to go forward, they sent word on the internet, my man—he, mind you, who commonly needs an hour to achieve consciousness in the mornings, with coffee and a shower, who would not be roused for any tea in China once he’d gone to bed at night—this man was at the door in three minutes, eager as a bird-dog, car-keys in hand: “I’m going, Sweetets, get your loot here.” And every single one of us knew with that much spoken as bitten out of the air, and that’s when I really looked at him. I made their strike, they got their people, they dispersed. Done. There was something of the medieval chronicles in this lightning-fast banding-together, these instantly organised efforts that resembled military manoeuvres, something from Samyilo Velychko’s seventeenth century Tale of the Kozak War,” the driver said, sounding certain and game for it, words not just the sight of a bravely displayed orange ribbon was enough to make your day, ourselves—and this started even before the elections, before the first round, when we put it?—with a growing sense of brotherhood or something like it (I’m short of explanation. Well, I tell him, we basically lived for three months, how should I feel it? I felt all the folk-song romanticism of Kozak-Gaidamak uprisings evaporating, gathered together with different technologies, something in the air that’s it’s about Kyiv’s motorpool there, and who will be out day’s Velychko to write about them, what Dutchman, flying or otherwise, could fit them into the pages of a coffee-table book. This winged cavalry of our metropolis, Kyiv’s triumphant time of the 17th century, the kind of medieval knights that the Maidan had it, he’s a good soul, this Gustav, and he’s got his head screwed on straight, no thinking fire. I felt all the folk-song romanticism of Kozak-Gaidamak uprisings evaporating, gathered together with different technologies, something in the air that’s it’s about Kyiv’s motorpool there, and who will be out day’s Velychko to write about them, what Dutchman, flying or otherwise, could fit them into the pages of a coffee-table book. This winged cavalry of our metropolis, Kyiv’s triumphant time of the 17th century, the kind of medieval knights that the Maidan had theMS of a coffee-table book, this winged cavalry of our metropolis, Kyiv’s triumphant time of the 17th century, the kind of medieval knights that the Maidan had theMS of a coffee-table book, this winged cavalry of our metropolis, Kyiv’s triumphant time of the 17th century, the kind of medieval knights that the Maidan had theMS of a coffee-table book, this winged cavalry of our metropolis, Kyiv’s triumphant time of the 17th century, the kind of medieval knights that the Maidan had
from these pictures, damn it! The round-the-clock hum of the crowd, the clapping
visible speed, with a thunderous, mighty roar (The sound! That's what's missing
a massive underwater Gulfstream and it grabbed you and carried you with impos
from you, to stay more-or-less clean, and then suddenly you hit this current,
life year after year, working hard to shove the shit that's floating around away
Mustn't it? And it wasn't hard at all—it was as if you've been drifting down your
then again, if we had been able to live like that—for months!—and we weren't a
live like this all the time, why is the world so fucked up that we cannot, and
question inside me since that very day on Khreshchatyk when I stood there lost
it also seems that Gustav somehow understands anyway, he's on the same brain
way). I'm just sorry I don't know how to communicate all of this in English, but
throwing them onto the ground, as soon as their slave-drivers looked the other
horde of shaved-headed slaves under their different banners (which they shed,
for a while it seemed we could fill the entire world with it, never mind that
went down ten-fold, and folks smiled to each other in the streets as if we all
lived in a village where everyone knows everyone and says hello to strangers; it
went down ten-fold, and folks smiled to each other in the streets as if we all
lived in a village where everyone knows everyone and says hello to strangers; it
wasn't hard at all—it was as if you've been drifting down your
life year after year, working hard to shove the shit that's floating around away
from you, to stay more-or-less clean, and then suddenly you hit this current,
a massive underwater Gulfstream and it grabbed you and carried you with impos
from these pictures, damn it! The round-the-clock hum of the crowd, the clapping
thunder of chants that echoed from the buildings' walls and reverberated to the
to a kind of software waiting for an upgrade. "We're more open to manipulation," he explains. "We
Sweetie and I just sort of stare at him, startled by this appar
SHE: "Our culture has no fear," Gustav says. "No memory of fear."
not afraid. We have no antidote. We don’t say anything; what could you say
“That, of course, is a small example,” Gustav says, apologetically.
I feel I’m beginning to understand.

He’s looking for immunity, this dear soul. He’s wandering the world, very much
like the Flying Dutchman, shooting and publishing his Middle-Eastern, Bal-
kan, East-European and who knows what other books—all in his quest for a way
to find reality. He wants to juxtapose real sweat and blood, love and hate to
the avalanche of simulacra. He wants to see for himself and to show others the
world in the gaps and holes in the opaque sticky film of information: where
the true, non-created nature of things shows itself like raw flesh in a wound.
“You know,” Sweetie says suddenly, “our former President, the one who sat
out the revolution at his dacha, he, people say, also couldn’t believe what
he was looking at when he saw Maidan on TV. He was convinced it was CGI.”
We laugh, all three of us, united in a shared impulse of wordless under-
standing and strange relief. It feels like we have accomplished something
here tonight, like we have won some small victory. We’ve defended some-
thing, a patch of reality, we’ve washed a window clean—and are basking in
the sunshine. Boys, I say, isn’t it time we had a drink? “Tya-koo-yoo,” Gus-
tav butchers the only Ukrainian word he’d learned, and we all laugh again.
The boys get up to wash their hands; I glance at the screen before shut-
ting down the computer. The shot there, taken from a low vantage point look-
ing up, shows the line of shields and below them—flowers and burning candles,
and it looks as if they are bursting straight from the earth itself, break-
ing through the asphalt and the tamped down mass of millennial snow—small ag-
glomerations of light surrounded in the picture with uncannily bright halos.

Translated by Nina Murray-Shevchuk