

The Eternal Smile by
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Anders:

Once upon a time there were a few of the dead sitting together somewhere in the darkness. They didn't know where – perhaps nowhere. They were sitting and talking to pass eternity away.

”No” said one of them, continuing a conversation that had been going on for ages on end. ”The living are so self-righteous. They busy themselves with their things and imagine they're alive. When they come out of their houses in the morning and hurry off in the sharp air, pleased with a new day, they shoot secret glances at each other as much as to say ”You and I, we live”. And they hurry off to their works, good and bad, heap them on top of each other, one above the other, till the whole thing collapses and they can start all over again. They are self-righteous contented little insects, nothing more. They build up and pull down, build up and pull down, and then they wink secretly to each other and say ”we live, we live, we live. They build and build and point at everything they've got half finished or near enough, ”Look, We've got all this done all this, every bit of it” They are self-righteous little insects, nothing more”

”Up to the present, life has a few million millions dead”. It is we who live. We exist in those below. We exist quietly. We go about in our stockinged feet, no one hears us. It is not we who make all the fuss, we are silent. It is not we who mind steam engines, who start trains, who call up on the phone, but it is we who live”

It is not we who build up and pull down, build up and pull down. It is not we who feel that this is morning, that this is evening. But it is we who live”

It is we who think of everything, who arrange everything, it is we who cannot forget anything. It is we who long for everything, day after day, year after year, for thousand and thousands of years.

”Whenever there is a little quiet, it is us. When anyone weeps, it is us. Whenever anything really happens, it is us.

”The living is simply what is dead”

I wonder whether, said another, if one looks deeper, the living, too, haven't some significance. They make use of us, they exploit us unscrupulously, and brag about themselves. But they do really contribute something of their own. And such as it is it has great value at the moment, even though later on it has hardly any. I can't agree that they haven't a certain importance of their own. I even want to go so far as to say that it is they who live and we who are dead.

The conversation passed on upward in the darkness to other groups of the dead, farther and farther removed; it went on in a loop which rose higher and higher. Then it twisted downwards again. After nearly a hundred years it once more reached the group where it had started. It came in now from the opposite side. And it was changed. This time one said ”I am thinking about myself and my life”.

Håkon:

It is long since I was alive, but I remember that I lived by the sea. I was born there and stayed there all my life. But possibly I only came there once by chance and left again. I no longer remember, and anyhow it makes no difference.

In any case, I remember that I lived by the sea. I remember the small rattling stones by the shore. But above all the storm, drowning the other noises, the roaring storm, and the dark clouds drifting across the skies. And I remember the quietness, the unmoving quietness, the complete silence around me.

The sea, that is the only great thing down there. Down there it is eternity. I lived by the sea. I had a house close to the shore with a view over the unfathomable depths. In one of the windows stood a little dried pot plant which I always forgot to water. I don't know why I remember it; it played no part in my life. I lived by the sea. Yet I remember it very well. I remember that it was still there when I was going to die, and how I thought to myself, if I were not dying, I would have gotten up and given it a little water. I also remember, as I laid there and looked at it, I thought how strange that it would outlive me. The little shit. However, it played no part in my life. I lived by the sea.

I was a man of great importance. As far as I know there was no one in my time like me and no one so important. At least I never noticed it. I didn't meet other people very much either. I lived alone by myself. I listened to the wind and to the quietness.

I was already in my lifetime a living, struggling man. I felt within myself everything that really is. I was greater and more than anybody else. As a matter of fact, there was no one besides myself, as far as I know.

I was simply made to die. That is not true of everyone, of course. But I had the proper dignity and the proper value. Living really consisted in me. And I think that in order to be dead, that is, in order to belong to eternity, one needs to be something really important. One needs to have been outside and above life in the ordinary sense, not only a part of it. And I was, as I have already said, a very important man.

I could die securely.
I only had to die.

Saila:

And another said: I was simply made to live. To my mind anyone is fit for sitting here and being dead. But for living, really living and taking pleasure in it, only the great and impressive man, is fit for that.

I was such a man. In my own and many others' view it was not intended that he should ever die. And, in fact it happened through a trivial accident.

As I already mentioned I was a very exceptional man. However, I am not remarkable now. He thought life is something incomprehensibly great and rich. I think death is nothing. I love everything living.

Nevertheless, I would say that very few people have really lived. Even though I don't like to speak about myself. I should like to mention that, so far as I know, I alone have lived.

However, I am dead now.

Solveig:

There was sitting a man with his hands in his knees, like this. His short legs hung dangling in what looked like darkness. He said, "How good it is to be alive. How great life was, and how lovely. When I stood behind my counter with all my goods around me, with the smell of cheese and coffee, of soft soap and margarine, how good life was.

"My shop was the biggest in the town. As far as I know there was no other so important as mine. It was in the best street; everybody came to me. I had choicer goods than any other. Yes, so far as I know there was no other.

I am not saying it to appear important. I was quite an ordinary person after all. I was like everybody else. I was Mr Pettersson, the grocer. But I thank God that I have lived.

It was hard when I had to die. I turned to the wall and said to myself, this is the end Pettersson. I couldn't believe that it wasn't the end of everything. There had been no time for me to think about higher matters; I had had enough to do with my own. I was no remarkable person, either. I was Mr Pettersson, the grocer. I was like everybody else. And when I lay and thought back over my life, when I thought how year in and year out I had stood and weighed out groceries and wrapped up salt herring, then I thought it was too strange if on that account I should exist through all eternity. I said to myself, damned if I know whether there's any life after death; I don't think there is. Then I died.

And yet there was, after all! Here I sit, after all. And it's as though nothing had happened; it's as though I still stood and weighed out groceries and wrapped up herring. I am still Mr Pettersson, the grocer.

Although I don't know understand anything, I am thankful for everything. I have lived. I am dead. All the same I live. I am thankful for it all.

Anders:

In a lavatory underground I had sat in the box and taken the money. For a penny I had given out a little paper: that was all. My whole existence had gone by down there. I had taken the job as a young man, not intending to stay; only so as to have something to do while I waited for my real calling. As time went on I had begun to see that this too was a calling, and that it was mine. Why should I not be content? I filled a place that had to be filled; if I didn't do it, then someone else must. Then I can do it just as well. It was an insignificant place, but I was of no significance either. I was an ordinary man, and this was a place for an ordinary man. So he thought, and he stayed, and he was happy.

Although he sat down there from morning till night and seldom saw daylight, yet he came to understand life, and love it above everything. He understood that it was nothing ugly in it; everything was beautiful and good. Some parts were greater, some were less; but everything had its significance, nothing was indifferent and without value, nothing ought to be denied. Not everything could reach greatness. Some of it had to be strangely small, so that something else could be the more remarkable big, reach so much higher. For life was rich, but not so rich as all that.

So he sat thinking down there, and as the years went by he understood a lot.

He learned to know humanity only as it came down there to him. And yet he learned both to know it and to understand it. They came down to him, not to carry out any great deeds, not to live, not to be human in the highest sense; they came down to him to carry out a common act which was shared by all that lived. But there was nothing low, nothing degrading to them in the act; they were something great and noble, and he loved them.

He particularly loved one kind of men, those who were strong, collected, those whom you felt life had taken hold of in order to use. There was such a calm about them, and even down

there, such a simple dignity, that they filled him with assurance and confidence. He could sit and hear their sounds from the cabinet; yet when they came out all memory of the act inside was blotted out for them. They were nothing but passion, nothing but struggle to reach the one, the greatest. He sat for a long while afterwards and felt glad about them, remember their faces, think how they were now going about up there in the sun and doing life's great deeds with a clear confidence. Such were his thoughts about humanity; that's how he saw it. But humanity paid no attention to him. He handed them their paper; after that he ment nothing to them. There were a few whom he recognised from a long time back. They came year after year, they grew bent and gray, the aged with him. But they didn't know him.

Saila:

I was a joy collector. I collected joy. I stole it from others in order to have it myself. I wanted to be the happiest person there was. I never had enough. Things went well for me, I collected and collected, I was greedy for joy, I never got enough. I grabbed so much for myself that there was nothing left all around me and it was a big country.

When I grew old I began to doubt wheter I had been right in what I had done, wheter with all that I possessed I could really call myself happy ? I regreat what I've done and I felt doubts about myself and I got really bad consciousness. But one day I met someone I had robbed. He stumbled along, he was ill and he looked unhappy. Then I realized that I was right. I was not like him. Then I realized my happiness, which I had stolen for myself. I was rich. He had nothing.

A few days later he died. It was said that the last words he said were that he was better dead. I died too , not long after. In the country where we lived I had enormous areas of land where I went hunting in the autumns. One morning I went out to shoot alone although I was almost eighty. It was raining and the woods smelled as they do in autumn. I happened to trip and the gun went off. The last I remember is that I wiped my mouth with the back of my hand. It was wet. I remember that smell of rain. That was the last. I remember it still and I am filled with all the happiness that comes from having lived.

Anders:

Once upon a time there were a few af the dead sitting together somewhere in the darkness. They didn't know where – perhaps nowhere. They were sitting and talking to pass eternity away.

Håkon:

My workshop, where I worked from morning till night, lay on the outskirts of a big city. I was a locksmith, I did nothing else; what I am going to tell you is about that. My workshop lay hidden away in an orchard where there were many trees and a lot of fruit and flowers, which someone whom I didn't know had planted sometime long ago. But everything was unkempt and ran wild; I had my ownjob, I did nothing else. I always worked by myself, for I wouldn't have any help or have anyone around, I stood in the half-dark smithy from morning till late into the night and made my locks for all the houses that people lived in, away in the town.

I didn't make them in the ordinary way; I made every one different. I made them so that each one was different from every other, that there was, and could only be opened by somebody who had the one key and knew the way to turn it in the lock; for I made them so that the key

had first to be turned in one direction, then pushed farther in and turned in the other; or I would devise other secret methods. I thought out hidden subtleties which only one person could master. I hated people, I wanted to lock them up.

My locks became famous. They were sold in a shop, but I don't know where it was. I didn't know the town, I never left my house, I worked at my own job. Everyone wanted my locks for their houses, so that no one should be able to break in. I worked day and night, I stood bent over my work year in and year out, alone, worried only of myself, I made locks, the money piled up. They were expensive locks; people bought them all the same. I was rich, I didn't know what I owned, I was poor. I grew old and grey, my fingers began to shake, I was alone, no one saw it; Then it happened one morning when I raised my head and looked out of the dusty workshop window that through a gap in the orchard I saw a young girl pass by on the road. She was seventeen perhaps, perhaps eighteen, she was walking bareheaded, she had blond hair that shone in the sun, she was happy and looked about her as she walked. It was only for a minute that I had a sight of her; then she was gone, hidden by the trees.

"I stood gripped by something. I dropped my work and stared out, but she was no longer there. The picture remained, her happy face, which was so young and firm. I thought I knew her. I had never seen her before; I never saw people. I felt as if she had been my child, I don't know why. I had never lived with any woman. I, miserable old man, bent and shaking, I felt as if she were my child. I didn't know who she was, I only knew I loved her. I stood staring out, but she was no longer there.

Slowly I turned back again to my work. My hands shook more than before. No one saw it, only I. I found it hard to hold the parts; I tightened my grip, I turned back again; I drew my rough hand across my mouth, I got ready to go on with my own job. I said to myself, there is nothing to love, nothing is worth our love, nothing.

I shut it out. I worked hard, I got more done that day than usual. But my eyes had grown so dim; I went and wiped the dust from the window, so that I could see to work. I waited for her to go the same way back again, stupid idiot. And of course she didn't. And the whole day went by. Not before evening when the light began to fail, she came back.

I saw her again. She went along smiling. What was left of the sun shone in her hair alone. I stood mute at the window and gazed.

When she had vanished I crept out. I went through the orchard. It was summer, there was a smell of flowers; everything was growing wildly. I came out onto the road. It was all strange. I crept after her. I came into the town, I followed her at a distance, the streets opened out one after the other, I saw nothing but her. She went into a house. I stood outside, but a long way off. The children had gathered and began to laugh at me, I still had my apron on, I was old, gray, bent and dirty. Slowly I went back to my own place.

Now I thought no more about her. I went on working, as before. In a little while I grew very old. Summer came to an end and autumn set in. The leaves began to fall in the orchard. Then one night it happened that while I stood as usual bent over my work my heart went empty and cold, I was so cold that I shivered; my whole body was like ice. I dropped what I was working on. I was shaking. My legs wouldn't carry me; I felt as if I couldn't live much longer. Such an anguish came upon me that I looked around me, wildly in the half-dark room where only a lantern spread its flickering light. It was windy and raining outside; the overgrown trees beat against the panes with their bare branches. I didn't want to die, not alone, not here where

everything was mine. I staggered out into the passage. I pushed open the door, went out. The wind tried to knock me down; the rain beat against my face. I gathered all the strength I had left. I staggered out onto the road, into the town.

There was no one in the bleak wind-swept streets, only me. I groped my way in the rain and darkness. I went groping my way to her house; I wanted to die near her, near my child. I couldn't find it, I went wrong. At last I got there. I knocked on the door but no one answered. I knocked, no one answered. I groped over the lock with my old fingers. I wanted to die near my child, near her whom I loved. No one came.

I rushed back home. I set the bellows going, melted and moulded. I filed out keys, as many as I remembered- it was many thousand; the night went on. I filed and filed; I had worked all my life, it was many thousand. I hung them all on a string. I staggered out sinking under the burden.

Now I remembered that she could not love me. I, an old man dirty and smelly, who only had to die. I went back and got what I had saved up. It was more than I thought. If I gave her that, all I possessed, then perhaps she would let me die near her. Sinking under the burden, I staggered out.

The wind caught hold of me; I rushed on. Exhausted, wet, cold, I arrived at her house. I groped for the lock, my own making, I tried the keys. One after the other, no one fitted. No one fitted. And I know, it takes so little, a tiny part that wouldn't fit in or missing; I knew it needed so little. I knew it. My heart stood still. I was shaking with the rain and the wind. I wanted to sink down. My life was ended, I wanted to sink down. Dazed, I staggered out into the street again, drifted about. It was empty and desolate; there was only me. I tried the keys in all the houses. I no longer asked for so much. I didn't ask to die near my child, near her whom I loved. I only asked for a human being, anyone, only someone that I could be with when I had to die. I tried and tried. I could get in nowhere. I sank down on the steps of a house I didn't know, and my heart struggled no more.

They found me there in the morning with all my keys in my arms. The gold was gone. I hadn't been able to give it to anybody, they had only taken it from me. But the keys were still there, they left me with the keys.

Anders:

Not so very far from the others sat another all alone. It was a woman who had lived long ago. She sat on her haunches, she had hair over her body, her nose was flat, her mouth huge and half open. No one knew who she was, not even herself. She didn't remember having lived. She only remembered a smell, a smell of a great forest, and a smell of another being, of something witch was warm as her, something witch was like her. She didn't remember that it was a human being. She only remembered the smell. She sat there in the same darkness as the other, but she wasn't one of them.

Saila:

One morning, I went to put up fences for the animals who were to be let loose from the barn. It was early. I went thru the birch alle`where I had played as a child. They smelled of fresh leaves, and the secret places for wild strawberries, I knew them all. I went along thinking about nothing. I went thinking about the trees and the openings between them. I recognized them. I went along thinking of her whom I loved, who sat at home in the farm waiting for me and for our first child, whom she was soon to bring into the world. The birds were singing everywhere. The cuckoo was calling up on the hills where there were oaks. I thought about everything. I thought I'll gather a few strawberries for the to eat at home tonight. Just as I was going along I heard something murmuring and muttering. It was the stream. I knew it well. I'd a water wheel there when I was a boy. I went and walked a little way by the side of it. There was a lot of water this year. Then from farther down the in the meadow I heard some youngsters playing and went along to them for a bit. They looked up sweating. I said: " The stream used to be stronger further up" They said: " It is stronger here now" I watched them for a while. Then I went across the swap up onto the path again. The sun warmed already. I came to our piece of land where my work was. The leaves smelled strong. I worked at my job while the sun kept rising. I am thankful for a morning long ago.

Solveig:

Another one said, On the slope of a hill lies a very ancient village; it lies in the sun. The streets climb upward, upward. Their walls are whitewashed; the houses shine, just shine. I and my brothers lived there. They were happy and good, I was wicked and bad; there hadn't been enough for me. They worked out in the fields. In the evenings they came home. I had a cramped forehead, I was without peace, I lay quiet in a corner and didn't speak. They sat and ate. I had such a grudge against them, I don't know why; afterwards they went out into the street and talked and sang. One played the zither. It sounded so lovely. I lay and wept. It was not a human being, it was a zither; its singing was so wonderful lovely. They didn't say anything to me, they detested me. Why?

I pined away. For me there was nothing. I put something in there food, so that they died. It was all I could do. It was all I had in life. It made no difference. All the houses still lay in the sun as before; everybody smiled and was happy. I pined away. I'm only saying this to ask why.

Saila:

Are you sure that you would want to know whether mankind survives after you and all your friends are dead.

How old do you wish to become ?

What are you lacking in order to be happy ?

Which hope have you forsaken ?

Do you sometimes feel dislike towards animals who appear to manage without hope, such as fishes in an aquarium for example ?

What fills you with hope ?

a-Nature

b-Art

c-Science

d-The history of mankind

What do you expect from journeys ?

Is a humorous remark always an expression of resignation ?
Have you ever lived without cash ?

Anders:

Once upon a time there were a few of the dead sitting together somewhere in the darkness. They didn't know where – perhaps nowhere. They were sitting and talking to pass eternity away. And one spoke with a clear, warm and strong voice.

Saila:

I was the Saviour of mankind. I was a stranger on earth. Everything was for me so strangely distant. The trees never came near me, the mountains were distant. When I stood by the sea its smell was as faint as a flower. When I walked on the ground it didn't feel my steps. No wind touched me. My clothes were motionless, silent.

All is appearance, all is waiting for what is. All is a longing for what is, all is pain at living. I called God my father. I knew he was my father and the heaven was my home, where he waited for me.

I called distress my brother and I called death my best friend, who was to reunite me with him who for a few years of his eternity had allowed me to live.

And mankind nailed me on my cross where I had to suffer and die.

Then I spoke to my father. To him I cried out all my humble faith and love. To him I cried out the anguish of living in all that lives, the yearning of all that lives home to what is.

Then mankind bowed the knee around the cross. Then all mankind on the whole earth went down on their knees and hailed me as their saviour him who liberated them from life and all that is not. It was empty and desolate the whole world over. I gave up my soul on the tree of the cross.

When I came here, then I had no father. I was a man like you.

Håkon:

I was the Saviour of mankind. My whole life was sheer happiness, it smelled of earth. I did not come in order to save them; I saved them by coming. I taught them all the glory of life simply by living.

I was born to rule over the whole earth. When I grew to youth I rode through my country. It was in the summer, the day was luminous. All was close to me, all men, all trees and flowers, all things on the ground, all was at one with me. Then I understood that life is all, outside there is nothing. I took a woman, she bore me a child. He was like me; he was made for a grand life.

I gathered my people; I led them out to fight against others; I taught them all to live and die. We all fought in the sun, we the conquerors, we the conquered. We all saw the loveliness of life and how it had a beginning, a middle, and an end. Heroes bled to death. The dead were forgotten for all the living.

One morning, the war trumpets blew. I charged on my horse far in front of my people, without armour, but with shining weapons. A man thrust his sword into my breast. I drew it out and knew that I was going to die. Bloody, I went on fighting in order not to lose the last

lovely hour of my life. I fought more mightily than ever in the brilliant sun. A youth came against me, arrogant as I. I struck him down. As he lay dying on the ground he turned and gazed at me with a long, strange look. It was not hatred in his gloomy eyes, but he gazed with envy after one who was going towards life while he had to leave it all and die. I bared my breast and showed him my great open wound. He understood and died with a smile. But now when I felt death approaching I rode alone out of the battle and the clamour. With my bleeding wound I rode along over the lovely ground. I saw the flowers and the trees, I saw the hills and all the roads, I saw all the bright villages in the valleys, and the birds circling above them. All was so near me; all was at one with me. I understood that life was all, that there was nothing else. I died upright, gazing around me.

And yet, nevertheless it was not all. And the happiness of life was not my happiness. The happiness of life was obscure and incomprehensible, not like mine. I was a man like all others. I had perceived nothing.

Solveig:

I was the Saviour of mankind.

I was born to tell them all, to reveal to them the innermost meaning of everything. Within me I carried the hidden nature of life, as others carry faith and doubt. When I thought about anything around me, I understood not only what I saw, but also all that I did not see. I came in to a great room where everything was gathered together and where it was always light and still.

Because it was light I stayed there a little while. I was just a child.

I didn't think much about what I possessed. I only carried it with me. But I felt my secret growing within me. Each morning it was with me and there was sun upon the whole earth when I came out to play in the dewy grass under the trees. And I knew how everything stood waiting for me, how everything living stood waiting for me, everything happy and everything dejected, until some day I should utter what was mine, what, smiling, I possessed.

I was only fourteen; then I had to die. I carried the hidden nature of life within me; therefore I had to die.

Anders:

As for me, I was head waiter at one of the biggest restaurants, known and frequented by all. It is a difficult and important position. It's a matter of understanding everybody's wishes and just what they want in order to have a pleasant time. I had an attractive personality and everyone regarded me as well fitted for my job. I knew how to arrange things so as to make it pleasant.

It's such small things that count, but they take a lot of finding out. A few flowers in a bowl, tables tastefully set, that may make all difference. And a service without a hitch, that's almost more important than anything. It's not easy. You must learn to understand people's wants and adapt yourself to them. I knew all that, and they had confidence in me. When they left everyone declared that it had been very pleasant.

I was indispensable. But I, too had to go my way sometime, like everyone else. Then of course they had to find a new head waiter, for they can't get on without a head waiter. I hope he had an attractive personality so that they still have a pleasant time.

Saila

Are you friends with yourself ?

Are you convinced by your own self criticism ?

Do you as a rule, know what you hope for ?

Are you able to imagine not having a homeland ?

Can you think without hope ?

Apart from when one laughs at others expenses, do you often consider yourself to be humorous?

Do you have a sense of humor when you are alone ?

Do you know animals that have humour ?

Have you ever considered emigrating ?

Why do revolutionaries fear humour ?

Does humor change with age ?

How many friends do you currently have ?

Do you wish to to manage without friends ?

Saila:

We fight all the time at the theatre. To be authentic, to be a live, to become gigants.

But how can we know what we are, when that we should be doesn't exist.

Anders:

I was a murderer. I had murdered a man, it had taken fifty years, i had to learn. First there had been a long, long brilliant unending day. I worked in the sunshine, my work was to lay foundations, the day had no end. I loved a woman, she loved me. We had many children. I took them out in the woods, I taught them about all the threes, about the sea and the clouds. They all grew bigger and bigger. I got a big beard. Everything increased, multiplied. There was more and more of everything. The sun shone and shone, it could never set. There was one I wanted to murder but it was to light. I worked and worked, I was always happy. The day never came to an end. I got bald; I bought myself a hat. There was one I wanted to murder. Then it got dark at last.

I walked out onto the road. Clouds were blowing across the sky. I run across the fields. The other was in front of me the whole time. I stopped and listened, jumped over a ditch, slipped into the wood. The branches crackled under me. I went on tiptoe. I crouched forward. I didn't breathe. The other was only a little ahead.

The ground took a plunge downwards. It became narrow, a narrow ravine. The darkness felt good; I unbuttoned my chest. The ravin got narrower and narrower. There was slippery stones and wet leaves in between. I dropped down and crawled. I crawled so as not to be heard. The other was almost within touch. He was crawling to. I could hear him panting. I didn't breathe. I took a leap forward and got hold of him, hurled myself onto him. Then I stabbed myself.

Solveig:

I am home sick for my country. I am homesick for the great desert where I was alone. I am homesick for my country which no foot has trodden, which no people has burdened with its roads. I am homesick for my country which has no bounds, for the burning sun which has no shade. For my sky which is waste and empty, which is red from the burning sand.

I am homesick for my country where I wasted away and had to die. I am homesick for the great desert where I was alone.

Anders:

At that a man got up among them.

It had never before happened in eternity that anyone had got up, that anyone had changed and become something different. They gazed at him marvelling. His face was passionat as if it was burned with fire. He didn't speak like the others. He spoke fiercely, his words coming quickly one after the other.

"What is the truth? Tell us , what is truth?"

"This life that we live, it is only confusion, only riches without end. It is to much. It is to much, we cannot grasp it

"I can't endure life being so great. I cannot endure it's having no bounds. I cannot endure my loneliness in a space wich has no end.

"I will seek God; seek what is always true.

"We will seek God to call him to account for this bewildering life. We will seek God to gain certainty at last.

They listened to him . He had touched something in them all. They had not felt the misfortune of life so deeply before; some had not felt it at all. Now at last they became coincious of everything. Now they all understood what helpless confusion life meant, how it was so much and so great it gave peace to non of them. Now they understood how degrading it was for them to live as they did, without knowing, without really being able to belive Now they understood to what desperate loneliness they were each of they doomed. And they understood that it must come to an end.

But some thought " Is there really a God?"

An other said " Is there really a God? I feel as if there isn't one for me"

And a nother one said " I too feel as if there isn't any God for me"

Then the first one spoke again " One man cannot expect to have a God, but for us billions there must be one. When he had said this, they belived it and got up to find God and put him in account for the incomprehensible life.

They found it hard to get up. They had made themselves comfortable each in his own way for all eternity; it had never ocured to them to make a change. They get up with great effort and at first staggerd a little in the darkness, fell down on their knees, got up again.

They felt this new unity as some kind of force in them. The happy could not understand how they could have been happy. The unhappy regretted not having been more unhappy.

And they set of to call God to account for everything.

In the beginning they where just a few . But on their way they gathered more and more. All these unnumbered who sat in the dark. They come upon clumps of people.

They went on and on, hundreds of years, thousands of years. They did not arrived.

Then at last they saw far off a feble light. It shone steadily. They made for it. They thought it is a sea of light, but far away from us. In the end after many many years they began to approach it.

It was a little latern with dusty glasses, casting a quiet light around it. Under it stood an old man sawing wood. They could see that it was God.

He was bent and short, but strongly built. His hands were rough like those of a man who has worked all his life with one and the same thing without resting. He face was serious. He didn't notice them.

They cam to an halt.

They stoped struck with amazement befor him. They stared and stared at him and could take nothing in

In the front stood the noblest of them. And said " You are God? It is you who are God?

The old man looked up at them, confused. He made no reply. He wiped his mouth with the back of his rough hand, looking around.

"We are the living. We are the life wich you have brought forth. We are all the living who have struggled and struggled, who have suffered and suffered, who have doubted and belived, who have sought and sought, who have reasch out searching to the fareset point of our nature's limits, who have torn the heart out of our breast and cast it beyond the limit, to bleed to death in the namnless pain of our loneliness.

"what have you meant by us?

The old man stod perplex and troubled. It was as if he had only now fully understood what it was about and who they were. He looked at them, there was no end to them. It was millions of them, millions and millions , ther was no end. He returned to himself. His clouth were old and worn; it was more noticeble now. He passed his hand through his gray hair, let his arm sink again. When he didn't have his work it was as if he didn't know what to do with his hands.

" I am a simple man, he began.

We can see that, they said. Yes we can see that.

" I didn't intend life as anything remarkable"

"Nothing remarkable!! Nothing remarakable. It's horrible!!! Nothing remarkable. Listen, listen to that. Nothing remarkable. It's horrible, Horrible.

The old man seemed overwhelmed by them. He fumbled with his large hands

"I have done the best i could"

"I have done the best i could"

"I have done the best i could"

"why, why? You have not belived in the one , nor in the other, why,why? What did you meen by it all? You must have meant something, what did you intend by this that you set going, by all this uninmaginable life? We must demand a complete understanding of everything. We must demand everything

" I am a simple man, I have worked untiringly, I have stood by my work day after day for as long as i know. I have demanded nothing. Neither joy nor sorrow, neither faith, nor doubt, nothing.

I only intended that you need never be content with nothing.

The End