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# Little girl my little girl

de  
Amaranta Osorio e Itziar Pascual

traducción de  
Phyllis Zatlin

*(fragmento en inglés)*

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Suddenly the life of fireflies seemed strange and disquieting, as if made of a surviving material: luminescent but weak and pale, sometimes greenish—like that of ghosts.

.Georges-Didi Huberman

*Survival of Fireflies*

Love is not consolation; it is light.

Simone Weil

The firefly:

living emerald;

light in the grass.

Ángela Figuera Aymerich

*Songs for the Whole Year*

Vava Schoenova (Nava Schaan) was a famous actress in Prague before the war. In July 1942 she was deported to the Terezin Concentration Camp where she continued acting, directing and creating theatre for children and young people. One survivor of Terezin told Schaan years later: “I owe you my childhood. Being a firefly became my best memory of childhood: running across the stage singing: ‘Spring is coming!’ was more for me than you can imagine. In those difficult circumstances you created grand moments for children!”

To the Magdalena Project, community of fireflies.

To José Sanchis Sinisterra, firefly of Spanish theatre.

To José Monleón, always.

## CHARACTERS

Two women:

HF, Historic Figure. Freely based on Holocaust survivor Vava Schoenova, known as Nava Schaan (Prague, 1919-2001). Jewish actress deported to the Terezin Concentration Camp (Theresienstadt), 61 kilometers from Prague. She staged works with children from the camp.

Portrayed at two stages of life: young (early twenties for scenes from the past), elderly (in her eighties or nineties for scenes from the present) . White skin. Immaculate.

YC, Young Contemporary (Yvette Céline). Entomologist, she studies insects and lives in Paris. (She is in early twenties in her first scenes and in her thirties when she discovers her mother's letter.) Soft spoken, sensitive soul who reveals timidity, introversion, evasion.

## SETTINGS

Exterior:

Snow-covered.

Spring.

Interior:

Room from the past.

Living room:

    Teresin Concentration Camp

    Events room

    HF's home

    YC's home

Kitchen:

    YC's home

    HF's home

Hotel room (YC)

## TIME

Past: 1942-1945

Present: 2000-2016

## 1. A Woman and a Trip

*Room from the past.*

HF

They've told us we have to go.

I follow their orders.

It makes sense to obey.

*Raus! Raus!*

Where are we going?

They don't answer.

For how long?

They say nothing.

When will we be back?

They point at me and shout.

*Raus!. Raus!*

I pack my suitcase, like for a vacation.

The small suitcase for short trips,

this time with all the important things.

Two skirts,

A black dress because you never know.

Two sweaters,

three blouses,

pajamas,

underwear,

high-heeled shoes.

In the pink cosmetics bag: perfume, toothbrush, toothpaste, nail clippers, soap,

cocoa butter, eyebrow pencil.

And my coty rouge.

I choose my favorite photos.

One from last Passover, with all my family. My father is smiling.

The photo from the first time I went out on a stage.

Documents, passport.

These days without documents you don't have an identity.

I take my grandmother's book of recipes, the Torah, and a candle.

There's still space.

Some matzohs and raisins.

I look from side to side.

I take a foulard from a drawer.

Inside is my pearl necklace,  
the emerald ring.  
ruby earrings.  
Better hide them in the secret pocket of my black overcoat.

I ought to put on the Star of David.  
I've never liked yellow.  
My heart is pounding  
like a canary entering the mine,  
I leave my room without looking back.

*Exterior. (Sound of damp, shuffling, hollow footsteps,}*

It's cold,  
too cold.  
Everything is drowned in fog.

They make me follow them,  
the wind pushes me backwards,  
tugging at my suitcase,  
every step a struggle.  
Is it beginning to snow?  
No, it's hail.  
The ice hits my face.  
My skin is burning.  
My right hand can't hold the weight of the suitcase.  
I switch it to my left hand.

I want to stop for a moment, but I can't.  
They follow me like shepherds with a flock of sheep,  
Striking me with force.

A gust of wind tips me over.  
My watch breaks.  
The one my mother gave me.  
I try to pick up the little broken hands.  
An officer kicks me twice in the stomach.  
I get up.  
I don't know how I find the strength, but I get up.  
I hug the suitcase, carrying it as if it were a child.  
My eyes are burning.  
I don't know if it's because of the hail,  
or the wind,  
or my anger.

I can see nothing.  
I try to hide my face in my coat collar.

I keep walking.  
Don't think, don't ask.  
Just keep walking.  
My gloves are soaked,  
my steps are bits of rubble.  
I open my eyes, but fog restricts my vision.  
I can't see them, but I sense them.  
I only sense the turbulence of our group.  
I walk for hours.  
My legs hurt,  
my shoulders,  
my arms.  
I don't feel my hands but I still carry my suitcase.

Where are we going?  
I had a rehearsal this afternoon.  
They'll be worried about me.  
The opening of *El Dybbuk* is next week.  
Only one more week until we do *The Evil Spirit*. (*Pause*.)  
Will we open?  
I haven't been on stage for six months.  
They barred us from doing theatre.  
Why?

It's the first time I'll be acting in Yiddish.  
I love *El Dybbuk* by Shalom Anski.  
I have to let them know. (*Pause*.)  
Will I act again?  
Where are we going?  
*Raus! Raus!*  
It's no longer light.  
An officer shoves me into a stable.  
Nobody is talking.  
Some children are crying.  
The soldiers jab us.  
Horses are whinnying.  
It could all be over right now.

In the darkness of the stable, a spark, a familiar voice.  
Auntie Vava! Auntie!  
Aviva, little Aviva, runs toward me.  
Aviva! Vendula, my sister!  
In these times, to be able to say sister, isn't that something?  
There are Vendula and Aviva.  
Vendula, my sweet little sister,  
and Aviva, her only daughter.  
Aviva is an only grandchild, an only daughter, my only niece.

I have a whirlwind of thoughts.  
They hug me and we cling together in my overcoat.  
A hug is a hug, sweat, kisses, kisses, kisses.  
*Raus! Raus!*  
Fear.

We stoop, we lay down on the floor.  
The hay on the floor is frozen.  
It doesn't matter. We're together.  
Together.

I use my suitcase like a pillow.  
I open it slowly.  
I take out a sweater and some raisins.  
What time is it?  
My watch...  
Why do they have us here?  
Where are they taking us?  
Raisins, yes, the raisins.  
We haven't eaten anything since we left.  
How long has it been since we left?  
I give some raisins to Aviva and some to Vendula.  
What will we do, Aunt Vava? Where are they taking us, Auntie?  
Auntie, why are they shouting at us?  
I want to get out of here, she says.  
Aviva doesn't stop crying.  
I can't stand it.  
She has to calm down.  
I hold her in my arms.  
Aviva devours all the raisins like a little mouse.

I close my eyes.  
Fatigue overcomes me.  
My feet are burning,  
my throat is dry,  
there between the smell of bodies and animals.

In the morning we start the trip again.  
We three are one in the silence.  
A pale sun accompanies us.  
I still don't know what time it is.  
I don't know where they are taking us.  
We have climbed a tall mountain,  
too tall.  
Had I seen it, I wouldn't have had strength to climb,  
but there was fog.