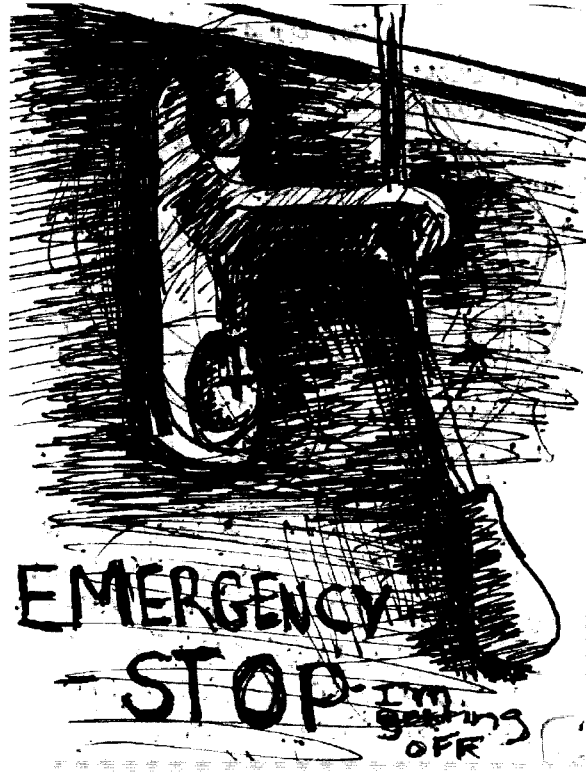


PARABLES 1-13

1. Lines grew outside the ATM-machine by the east entrance of the new mall. One day it had started to ask people different questions than before. What is your date of birth? Please enter your phone number. Fascinated, people complied until the machine started to demand answers that did not fit the numerical keyboard. Who are you doing all this for? Why are you here? Please enter firstborn son.
2. The train stopped at a deserted subway station somewhere underneath the financial district. 23 people walked onto the dark platform, marveling at the age-old adverts. The doors closed behind them and the train rode off. They were alone. They ripped the posters off the wall and made little huts and blankets. Other trains passed by, but never stopped. The people grew hungry and wrote messages on the tiled walls.
3. After a long maternity leave, the talk show host returned to her show and was welcomed with wild applause. She bowed and smiled but the audience did not stop clapping. The host tried to calm them down, put her finger to her lips, waved her hands up and down in front of her swollen breasts and still they would not stop. Crying, she called her husband. He drove over with the triplets and she showed the babies to the crowd. After a short stunned silence the applause started up again, now more vehement than before. Palms started to bleed, and the cameras were turned off.
4. The pilots formed a union to demand tighter uniforms. Their mission proved a success and they decided to form a political party. Their new main interest was the creation of beautiful floating airports so that they would never have to touch the earth again.
5. A boy was sitting on one of the wooden benches at the museum when he noticed that one painting was slowly losing its color. It started in the eighteenth century portraits

collection, but soon spread to the landscapes room. The museum closed its doors for the day, but the visitors were shocked to learn everything outside had also turned grey. The sky, the asphalt, but also the trees, the billboards, and the stray plastic bags. The boy opened his backpack to check his pencils. Red, blue, green, and purple; still intact. Smiling, he walked back to the grey school bus and took his seat.



6. The day it started to rain bullets was the day the father told his children it was not safe for them to go outside. The children wore their ponchos and filled balloons with water. They walked into the bathroom, threw the balloons at the ceiling, and complained about the weather.
7. A cinema in a closing shopping mall had no more films to show. Before he too left, the operator spliced all the leftover bits of film he found in the storeroom into a loop and turned on the projector. A man walking his dog was the first to discover the calming effects the images had. Soon it was in the local press and a stray edition ended up in a train to the city.

A fashion editor read the story on her way into town and soon the hipsters flocked to the deserted mall. The record stores and coffee shops re-opened their doors. A year later the film loop broke, but the theater was empty. They had all gone back to the city where the cool kids now stood in line for an exhibit at a recently excavated subway station found filled with primitive drawings and contorted skeletons.

8. When the ecological activist broke into the oil tanker's engine room, she did not expect to find it filled with such beautiful machines. The coordinated movements and repetitive sounds lulled her to sleep and she only woke up when the tanker hit a forgotten mine. She tried to get the ship working again but the water had risen too high. She sat in the inflatable lifeboat clutching a wrench, crying for the loss of such a miraculous and vulnerable floating machine.
9. The prince rode into the city to learn more about his fairytale heritage. Passersby directed him towards the enormous bookstore on the town square. He tied his horse to a lamppost, found his way to the children's section inside, and sat down with a paperback edition of Andersen's stories. He read about the little mermaid and cried so loudly that security was called in to remove him from the sodden premises.
10. A band of soldiers was sent into the jungle to conquer the mythic lands beyond. They happened on a colossal structure hidden underneath masses of vines. Underground passages led them to an oval shaped well-maintained lawn with white lines crisscrossing at odd intervals. A brave soldier climbed the decaying steps to examine the line drawing, only to be stopped in his tracks by ghostly cries of "foul!"
11. When the interior designer arrived at the model home that morning, he found the walls were painted maroon instead of bordeaux. He scolded the workmen and decided to repaint the entire house himself over the weekend.

He arrived late Friday night after work, suitcase and brushes in hand. Seeing the unfurnished house at night, he felt inspired to paint the entire house bluish black, sparking a trend that would immerse the country's nouveaux riches in total darkness.

12. A tenured biologist discovered that homing pigeons find their way back home by following manmade landmarks like highways and canals. He grew so discouraged with nature that he gave up science and went into real estate development.
13. After a tsunami washed away part of the continent, the father explained to his son what a tidal wave is. He asked the boy how he felt about this. The boy answered: good. Confused, the father asked again and the child said: bad. The father told the boy to draw a picture of the tsunami. When the father came to take a look, the boy was gone and the drawing completely erased. He called for the boy and found him on his father's bed, standing on his head, his feet cycling in the air. The father thought, this would be a good time to take a picture of my son. I could print it out and hang it upside down; the boy would be walking on air.

