

SILENT NIGHT

Some time ago I began to prefer sleeping on the balcony to the warm and safe interior of the flat. For as long as I can remember, I have always liked taking naps in the open air, wrapped in a blanket, feeling a slight chill from the cold and the sound of wind and rain. In recent years, this melancholic practice has evolved into sleeping outside through the night. I think of it as being between the human and animal worlds – consciously giving up security and comfort for the sake of approaching fantasies of life outside of culture. At such times I feel like a huddled animal, at the mercy of its surroundings, trying to make it to the next morning.

At this point, I remember a story when, one summer when I was eleven, I spontaneously decided to go into the forest and spend a few days there by myself. I was staying alone with my sister in my father's cabin. When I went into the forest, I only had a knife with me, so I slept on the litter without any preparation. After I woke up on the second or third night, I noticed a hare watching me. That's when I realised that I wasn't alone and had somehow become part of the forest community. I smelled of the forest and was at its mercy.

I still long to return to such a state of being. Aware of the absurdity and impossibility of achieving it, I choose to fantasise during the long hours I spend on the balcony. I've had a similar experience recently, when a tit watched me as I slept, wrapped in blankets. When I awoke, its silhouette, illuminated by the morning rays, became clear and I was overcome by an unusually strong feeling of tenderness. Some time later, my slumber was interrupted by the attempted consumption of my forehead by the same or another tit. Then it occurred to me that my body was involved in the interests of the local ecosystem.

From my balcony I regularly record the sounds of my surroundings, which change according to the weather, the season, the day of the week and many other factors. The acoustic specificity of the block of flats is important here because it refers to the division of space by the architecture of the city. It is a stage on which different actors interact with each other, forever intertwined in an endless score of the rhythm of life. Sometimes I made these recordings even when I was still present on the balcony. I would then emerge from the silence like an animal, lost in sleep, snoring rhythmically, completely unaware of the spectacle taking place around me.