

Tuna,  
Anchovies,  
Onions  
And Garlic

Christian Motz







BY CHRISTIAN MOTZ

*Tuna, Anchovies, Onions And Garlic* (1993)

*Instant Poetry (Just Add Water)* (1994)





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### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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a reality.

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*To all my friends,  
for putting up with my shit.*

*To Mimi,  
for her love and support  
and for getting me started  
in the first place.*

*To Tammy,  
for protecting my sanity  
when times got rough.*



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tuna, anchovies, onions and garlic



## airports

once in a while  
i find myself  
at the airport.

i don't like airports.

the people there  
acting so perfect,  
pretending to  
actually be someone.

i don't like them.

and yet,  
when i sit there,  
waiting for  
my flight  
to be announced,

it somehow gets to me.

i stare  
out the cafeteria window,  
watching the plane  
taxi to the  
runway.

i finish off my beer.

that plane, i know  
from the announcements,  
it could have taken me  
to you.

i wish i was on board.

and a tiny part of me  
goes with that plane,  
leaving me forever.

it will never reach you.

## close call

it's strange how people  
who don't know each other  
suddenly get to talk.

i remember listening to  
your voice – it sounded so soothing  
and made me forget my troubles for a while;

i wanted to touch you, hold you,  
run my fingers through your magic hair,  
numb my pain by tasting the sweetness  
of your luscious body.

yet i concealed my longing and my lust,  
knowing full well it would be unfair to you  
to use your body and soul to drug myself  
solely for my own sanity.

and so we parted as we met,  
not quite strangers anymore,  
yet not at all familiar  
with each other

and i keep wondering about  
the smell of your hair  
and the taste of your skin.

who knows, maybe i'll find out one day  
but until then i'll never be able  
to look at you the way i did before.

## moet

it was the night before they sent me off to fight  
my private war. so i decided “why not say goodbye to her?”  
and picked up a good bottle of champagne.

she showed me in; we sat and had a good long talk  
like we never had before. soon darkness fell, yet  
we never touched that bottle – it was our only witness.

life fell apart soon after that, but for all i know  
that bottle is still standing there, untouched, waiting  
silently for what she would call “the right moment.”

it never came.

## sad but true

i was stunned  
when she walked  
into the room

i couldn't help  
but be reminded  
of you

she was dressed  
almost exactly  
like you were

back in that  
hotel room  
arguing with me

the way you stood  
just a few feet  
from me

a vision in black

and even though  
i was feeling bad  
you excited me

i wanted to  
take you  
right there and then

rip the fabric  
clinging to your body  
off your skin

but you weren't  
mine to have

not then

not ever

so now i sit  
and wonder  
if maybe i should have

if maybe  
you wanted me to

but

i'll never know

i'll never know

## insomnia

3 o'clock in the morning  
i listen through the open window  
to the city's night symphony.

sleep keeps evading my grasp  
i do not know what i should do  
about it.

then suddenly a familiar sound  
rips through my silent blues:

the phone is ringing.

i don't want to answer, yet i do  
a familiar voice is on the other end  
"hi" i hear her say, "i feel down."

now i know i'm not the only one . . .

## naked lunch

104 degrees  
walking south  
on Reseda,

taking a left  
onto Ventura,  
moving east

just for the  
hell of it.

through Encino, down  
to Sherman Oaks  
and back,

slowing down  
occasionally  
to make it last

as if it would  
stop time if only  
i took it slow.

but the traffic  
takes away that  
illusion

sooner or later.

almost lunchtime –

i can tell by my  
sudden craving  
for junk food.

well, no problem:  
Carl's Jr. is just  
a few blocks away.

ever tried to have  
a leisurely lunch  
at a fast food joint?

it's then i  
realize that i am  
killing time,

killing it  
instead of  
making it last.

but i don't care;  
the important part  
is savoring it,

every fleeting  
moment of it,  
for this is

the place that  
makes me feel  
like i *belong*;

so i distract myself  
from the truth –

that all of this  
is only temporary  
and will be over soon,

much too soon,

and i will be  
back home  
where once again

i will be even more  
of a stranger  
than i am here.

so stripped  
of my illusions  
i munch away

at my fries,  
onion rings  
and burger.

well, at least  
the food's decent;

that's worth something.

## stronghold of my solitude

imaginary ringing of  
the telephone haunts me  
as i try to sleep.

an airplane going overhead  
i can hear the engines,  
see lights blinking  
in the dark void of the night.

television keeps me company;  
i keep flipping channels:  
20 up . . .  
20 down . . .

the only thing it does  
is bring more emptiness  
into this room:

the stronghold of my solitude.

must be a good 4 days of music  
looking at me from the wall;

yet i cannot listen to any of it.

lots of books to keep me busy  
for at least a week;

yet none can soothe the pain i feel.

all of the toys that i have here  
fail to occupy my mind  
even for a second.

i watched some movies:

funny ones – i couldn't laugh.

serious ones – i couldn't think.

sad ones – i couldn't cry.

what can i say: there's nothing else to do

i get up, go over to the refrigerator  
to crack the last can of good british beer:  
i saved it for a special occasion.

well, i guess this is it.

## dead end

close to eight  
it's dark already  
i am waiting  
for the bus  
to take me home.

somehow the cold  
refreshes me;  
i guess it must  
be somewhere  
around 30 degrees.

the thick fog  
is comforting;  
it numbs my  
perception  
considerably.

visibility is down  
to less than 50 yards  
and i am glad it is;  
that way, i don't  
have to deal with  
my surroundings.

it was a night  
like this one  
that i lost my  
innocence  
many years ago,

back when i  
still believed  
that love exists  
and is not just  
an ideal.

but i kept looking  
all over the world,  
literally,  
until i found out  
it cannot be achieved.

thus robbed of my  
dreams i try to  
stay alive,  
dwelling on  
old memories of  
happier times,

waiting once again  
for the wounds  
to heal, knowing  
full well the scars  
will be indelible.

## happy birthday

just weeks ago  
you talked  
about the space  
that i should  
give you.

so we decided not  
to see each other  
for a while to  
give you time  
to think.

now it's the night  
before your birthday,  
close to midnight;  
i stand outside  
your home.

a solitary streetlight  
in the fog illuminates  
my loneliness  
as i watch  
your window.

even with your  
curtains drawn  
i know that you  
aren't celebrating  
by yourself.

i can see that  
someone's taking  
pictures, shadows  
moving in the  
square of light.

it came as a  
complete surprise  
i was unprepared  
for the bomb you  
dropped on me.

your letter –  
it said you  
weren't ready  
to make that kind  
of a commitment.

now there is nothing  
left for me to do,  
so i start walking  
back into the kindness  
of the dark.

## tuna, anchovies, onions and garlic

sometimes i wonder how i can go on  
when my life is slowly falling apart.

and when i look around me all i see  
is perfection – it seems that all  
of them have cracked the secret of happiness,  
found someone caring and loving,  
something to look forward to, come home to.

at times it makes me want to puke  
and i think about ending it once and for all,  
for physical pleasure is not what i crave.

yet this is exactly what holds me back  
because if this is the only thing  
i can be sure to lose,  
it might not be an improvement after all

the loneliness might not go away  
and i don't think i wanna take  
that risk of being stuck with it forever;  
at least not yet while i can still go on  
however hard it may just be.

nevertheless it's like a bomb  
ticking away inside of me  
and even i myself have no idea  
if and when it might go off.

and as always when i ponder this  
the pain is coming back to me  
because i realize  
i'm right where i was 10 years ago:

no money, no love. nothing achieved.

well, i guess i haven't lost  
anything important yet  
except maybe my innocence,  
belief in life and trust in people.

last time when i was asked  
what was on my mind  
i could no longer talk about it  
for the words i needed to  
express my feelings had deserted me.

but i caught up with them as you can see  
i hope you will forgive me  
for not telling you before.

that is, if you ever cared for it at all.

## kafka, we hardly knew you

just how much  
pain  
can the soul  
endure

mankind's last  
valuable commodity:

dignity

they want to  
suck it out of you  
until there's  
nothing left

see you crawl  
before them  
in the dirt

this is the  
post-warhol  
era:

people are  
no longer  
satisfied  
with 15 minutes  
of fame

because they  
realize  
how futile  
all of it is

instead they crave  
for just a few minutes  
of absolute power  
over another human  
being

not their body,  
mind you

it's worse than that:  
they want to break  
your soul

and they derive some  
cruel pleasure from  
seeing you suffer

it happens everywhere  
between relatives  
between friends  
between lovers

believe me  
if there was  
a way out  
i would take it

right here

right now

who am i  
trying to kid?

there actually  
is  
a way out

and i really  
am  
inclined to take it.

## it's a wonderful life

not that anybody cares,  
but i will do it  
just the same:

i will tell you  
what an amazing life  
i lead.

i usually start out  
by sleeping late;  
not intentionally,  
mind you.

i just sleep  
until i wake.

nice trick  
if you can do it.

then i panic,  
hurry off to work  
to satisfy the weird  
desires my customers  
seem to have.

most of them  
demand miracles –  
and the sick thing is:  
i usually provide them.

abusing the tools  
of my trade, knowingly,  
just so i can show them  
the results they crave.

i feel like MacGyver sometimes.

and after that  
i don't go home,  
for a very simple reason:  
it's not mine.

i go to places  
where my name is known  
to meet the people  
that i call friends.

i don't know  
how many of them  
really are.

and believe me,  
i don't really  
want to find out.

and after several hours,  
i finally do decide to go home,  
my mind numb from nicotine,  
caffeine and alcohol.

that way i won't feel  
the walls closing in on me  
while i lie in my bed  
craving for the sweet oblivion  
most of us call sleep.

and though it usually  
comes fast, the night is short.  
way too short.

and in the morning,  
the cycle is complete:  
it's the same thing over.

i can feel your envy  
even as i write this.

yeah right.

## dear john

i should have known  
it wouldn't work out  
wasn't meant to be.

then why does it  
hurt  
i ask myself?

tossing and turning  
lying awake  
unable to sleep.

so i get up at 3 a.m.  
start walking  
through the night;

my only ally now.

## **pas de problème, madame**

he looked at the plastic cards in his wallet,  
smiled and said to himself  
“membership has its privileges”  
and got himself a large cash advance.

took a cab to the airport,  
bought a ticket for the next flight  
that would take him near  
his favorite place to be.

he smiled as he shook his head  
when they asked him about  
his luggage as he checked in;  
“just carry-on” he said.

and while he sat at the gate waiting  
he looked at the little plastic cards again  
and as he did he laughed;  
“i’m packed” he thought.

the stewardesses liked him:  
he was so cheery, such a happy fellow;  
they loved the twinkle  
in his eyes when he laughed.

ten hours later  
they wished him a pleasant stay  
and he winked at them  
and said “i’m positive.”

it took a while to explain to the cab-driver  
where he wanted to go, but he finally managed  
although it was hard to convince the poor guy  
to drop him off in the middle of nowhere.

it was cold,  
night was falling as he looked down,  
drinking in the beauty  
of the city lights below.

this was the place he had been happy once  
a long long time ago and now he was

here again;

happy again.

he smiled once more as he closed his eyes  
shivering, feeling the warmth  
slowly leaving his body.

## fear

you suddenly  
appeared  
out of the  
dark,

demanding  
nothing,  
yet you gave  
everything.

at first  
i didn't know  
what treasure  
i had found.

now i ask myself,  
what have i done  
to deserve  
someone like you?

is it fate?  
i wouldn't know  
anything  
about that.

i feel the bond  
between us  
growing stronger  
every day.

but i can't help it;  
i feel scared  
with all the scars  
reminding me.

the fear starts  
crawling  
back into  
my mind,

visions of  
those healed  
old wounds,  
freshly bleeding,

brutally  
ripped open  
by none other  
than myself,

even hurting you  
in the process,  
although i  
didn't want to.

it's a dangerous  
game for me,  
i never learned  
when i should stop,

so once i start  
i usually go  
all the way  
into the abyss.

## truth or dare

even in this  
most familiar of surroundings  
i feel a million miles  
away from home.

no matter what i do  
that day is coming back to me  
and i keep reliving it  
in my mind

over and over again.

i remember our picnic  
down at the beach  
as we sat and watched  
the sun as it was setting slowly,

holding you as we sat  
wrapped in our blanket  
to protect us from the cold  
while the moon was rising,

its light playing on the  
water, making it look  
like liquid silver.

no doubt about it –  
it was the happiest moment  
in my entire life;  
i never wanted for it to end.

reveling in the sensations,  
i thought that i had finally found  
salvation, not knowing at  
the time that i was far from it.

i hardly dared to make a move  
in fear of ruining this precious moment  
that joined our souls

if only for a little while.

## eventually

weariness beyond fatigue  
unprecedented apathy  
is all that's left  
of what once was  
a life.

i sit back  
somewhere in my own mind  
and look at it as if  
it wasn't mine at all;

i merely watch  
much like it were  
a bad soap opera,  
wondering what will  
happen next:

no longer trying  
to influence the course  
this person's life  
is taking.

no, that's a lie –  
sometimes i make  
some minor corrections  
to prolong the time  
until i reach ground zero.

but my destination  
always stays the same;  
maybe i do it to distract myself  
from the oncoming disaster.

and with an almost  
scientific curiosity  
i wonder if there is life  
on the other side of the black hole  
that i am heading for.

well, i'll find out.

eventually.

## guilt

it was her  
no doubt about it  
her long red hair  
more beautiful  
than ever.

hard to believe  
how 10 years  
can change  
a person.

why didn't i  
go up to her  
just to say 'hi'  
for old time's sake?  
i do not know.

instead i sat  
and thought  
of days  
long gone.

i loved her once  
or so i think  
might have been  
puppy love  
but still –

it's sad  
the way we lost  
our love  
for one another.

## nightsong

yet another  
cold and lonely  
night,

the loneliness  
so bad it actually  
turned into pain,

denying me  
the sleep i so  
desperately need.

but there is  
nothing and noone  
to reassure me;

i might well be  
the last person  
alive on earth.

tiny flashes  
of old memories  
keep haunting me –

remnants of  
all those loves  
long gone by,

teasing me  
by making me  
remember

how it feels  
to spend the night  
cuddled up close

to someone you love,  
feeling the heat  
radiating from their body,

listening to their  
slow and regular  
breathing,

their arm across  
your body that makes you  
a prisoner of sorts;

the way they beg you  
“please don’t go”  
in their sleep

just because you  
gently break away  
to take a quick piss.

but you don’t mind  
for you wouldn’t have it  
any other way ...

## to whom it may concern

it's strange  
how i got used to  
seeing you around;  
then one night  
without a warning  
you suddenly were gone.

although we  
never talked much,  
i missed you:  
your smile  
your eyes  
your hair – all gone.

then yesterday,  
as usual,  
i went to see some friends;  
walked in the room –  
i didn't even know  
that you were back.

when you came up to me  
and just said 'hi'  
i didn't ask where  
you had been  
because your eyes were  
telling me the story.

the worst thing possible  
has happened to you now:  
you lost your dream  
and there's no way  
for anyone  
to give it back.

you tried to fly  
but never made it  
off the ground –  
you sure as hell  
did not deserve  
to have your spirit broken.

i'd like to help you  
but i can't –  
we never were that close.  
yet still it's sad  
to see another victim  
of our strange society.

## license to thrill

if only you knew  
how beautiful you look  
tied immobile to that chair

your pretty face distorted  
by the scold's bridle  
and the leather blindfold

holding your head  
high and proud,  
not because you want to,

but because of the 3" collar  
that i put around your neck.

breathless and trembling  
you sit and wait  
for me to make a move

but

not yet, my dear —

you can't even hear  
the compliments i'm making  
for i made you plug your ears

first thing when you said  
you wanted to try  
complete sensory deprivation

now you got more than you  
probably bargained for  
sitting here deaf and blind,  
unable to move or talk.

i promised you i wouldn't  
violate your limits  
but can you really be sure?

right now you are mine,  
all mine, and you couldn't  
do a thing to stop me

in a while, when i will  
finally start touching you  
all you will do is moan

and slowly your frustration  
will melt away and be replaced  
with desire and lust

until you forget yourself,  
just living for the moment  
and the sensations that i give you

but

not yet, my dear,

not yet . . .

## it's toasted

"it's about time you wrote something, you bum"  
was her reaction when she read a couple  
of new poems i had just finished.

i couldn't help but smile at that comment,  
remembering it was her that got me started  
writing in the first place.

and now i can't stop, not even if i wanted to.

therapy for a battered soul, an outlet for all  
those couped up emotions for which there is  
no other way of expression.

bukowski once claimed that writing was a form of insanity.

damned right, i think as i sit and look at my beer,  
take another hit, flip out my deck of luckies  
and light yet another cigarette.

damned right . . .

## the cage

i keep on staring at  
the bare white walls;  
they stare back at me  
with a thousand  
ice-cold eyes.

the concrete bars  
outside the window  
somehow remind me  
of the jail i built  
around me.

how much i long  
to see your smile,  
to feel your touch,  
your arms around me;  
but you're not here.

instead i feel  
the cold wind blowing  
through the empty space  
where my heart should be,

and something tells me  
things will never be  
the same again.

so i sit and smoke  
another cigarette  
to pass the time  
and keep myself  
from thinking.

## natural disaster

never before  
in my life  
had i opened up  
my heart as much –

that is  
until i met you.

i was ready  
to give myself  
to you completely;

you were the one  
i had been looking for.

i told you so  
almost pleading  
not to reject me;

and yet,  
when i asked you  
if there was  
a chance for us,

i got my face slapped  
since all you said was

“hell no.”

looking back  
i cannot help  
but wonder  
where i went wrong.

never before  
in my life  
have two words  
hurt me as much;

i was devastated  
by these simple words.

all my dreams  
were null and void  
in that split second –  
but no matter what:

i will always love you.

## bus stop

walked home  
'round 1 AM  
when suddenly  
a sound got my  
attention.

i look across  
the street and  
see her sitting  
at the bus stop.

one thing's for sure:  
no bus will pick  
her up at this time  
of the night –

i doubt she cares:  
she's crying

i could have asked her  
what was wrong,  
comfort her,  
maybe even made a friend ...

what kind of asshole  
must i be  
to let her sit there  
all alone?

yet that's exactly  
what i did –  
i cannot tell you why.

## on every street

there is something  
to be said  
about lucid dreaming

for it allows you  
to be the director  
of your own movies

movies in which  
you and the people  
you care about  
play all the parts

sometimes i manage  
to do just that  
and i imagine things  
i want to do with you

at least once  
in my life

traveling together  
with you to those  
places that are  
special

to either one of us –  
who says that romance  
is just for lovers?

guiding you through  
europe, from london  
to paris, zurich,  
vienna and milano

your head on my shoulder  
as we watch  
the world outside  
pass by

i'll take you shopping  
for some really  
indecent clothes  
in munich

just for fun;  
i always wanted to know  
what you look like

in 5" heels and a  
black dress made  
from nothing but lace

sharing each other's  
company and dreams  
fooling everyone  
because they think

we are on a honeymoon  
of some kind,  
and in a way, we are:

we're celebrating our  
love and friendship,  
one that cannot be easily  
taken away from us

no matter what.

## call of fate

one day, none in particular,  
i heard the call of fate.  
faint at first, then growing stronger  
– it wanted me to join it.

at first i did not trust fate or myself,  
but it kept begging me, showing me  
beautiful pictures of what it claimed  
to have in store for me.

so finally i gave in,  
started following its path,  
and step by step the things it  
had promised me came true,

and fate became one of my best friends.

then one day, none in particular  
fate came up to me and said:

“it’s time!”

“for what?” i asked.

“to pay – you didn’t really think  
you’d get all this for nothing?”

so now i sit and i pay dearly  
for the good times fate has brought me  
– no need to mention that fate and i  
no longer are good friends.

and should one day, none in particular  
fate come to your door, resist its call.  
no matter what it promises,  
the price to pay is much to high . . .

## at the movies

let's compare scars  
just the way they did  
in *Lethal Weapon 3*

or have sex with clay  
as we have seen  
in *Naked Gun 2 1/2*;

i can't help it if i  
want to bite you  
as if i were Dracula –

and if i do,  
will you strip for me,  
pretending to be Kim Basinger  
in *9 1/2 weeks?*

how about letting me be  
your Robin Hood, my sweet  
Maid Marian,

or better yet, Tom Cody –

since I am not the kind  
of guy who carries around  
your guitar,

not to mention the fact  
that i have always been  
a tequila man.

it's nice to watch movies  
with you, my dear,  
if only to feel your head  
against my shoulder,

thus knowing that for  
yet another two hours  
i will not be alone.

## traveling salesman

again i sit  
in one of these  
godforsaken trains  
that, as usual,  
take me nowhere,

at least nowhere  
i want to go.

the briefcase beside me  
is nothing but an alibi  
for it contains no wares  
that i can sell –

all i have to sell  
these days  
is myself.

and at times i wonder  
if that makes me  
a whore of some kind –

sold by my pimp  
for a couple of hours  
to people who can  
afford my services.

and the worst of it is:

it's all legal.

## **stirred, not shaken**

we think alike  
in many ways,  
get excited  
over the same things;

a lot has happened  
in the short time  
we have known each other.

even though  
i don't get to see  
much of you,

i know you're there  
whenever i need  
someone

to talk to,  
to comfort me  
whenever life gets crazy,

and rest assured that i  
will do the same for you,  
no questions asked.

i guess the both of us  
are sort of like  
smirnoff and orange:

just good friends.





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Born in Regensburg, Germany in 1965, Christian Motz currently lives in Kornwestheim near Stuttgart, where he also works as a Systems Engineer in the computer industry after a short and colorful career in several odd jobs. He began writing poetry at the age of 25, and *Tuna, Anchovies, Onions and Garlic* is not only his favorite pizza-topping but also his debut in the world of contemporary poetry.









