

**Days - Matosinhos**

## February The First

We will arrive at Porto Airport on time, it's 1:10 p.m. local time now, and sunshine in Porto today. The pilot had announced it, so we could see a lot of the landscape around Porto during the approach, even the ocean - I sat on the right side of the plane at the window. The landscape appeared somewhat bleak, smaller villages with small houses - a lot of red. But I was not on vacation, or better to say, it had a special reason to travel to Portugal, with the city of Braga as my real aim.

It had to do with Stuttgart, a concert in Stuttgart, and how I had behaved there - better, what I hadn't done there. Now I was on my way to Braga, to make up for it, a second chance, the same concert. And I had noticed that the easiest way to reach Braga would be to fly from Frankfurt to Porto. It was easy to travel by train from Porto to Braga. And then I had realized that Porto also meant the ocean - I had a very special relationship to water. Well, not the large ocean, the Pacific Ocean, but nonetheless an ocean, the Atlantic Ocean.

Then I had searched for a place to stay. Maybe not too far away from the airport, and from the metro, so that I would be able easily to reach the train station in Porto. Well, there was the city, the mouth of a river, and very nice-looking beaches. Especially one beach looked nice, Matosinhos Beach, not far from the airport, and I started to search for a hotel. Okay, later I realized that Matosinhos would be a city by its own, no part of Porto or so, even if forming one city area with Porto. And Matosinhos seemed not to be so small. Porto seemed much smaller than expected and not really located at the ocean, but along the river. But okay, it would be of no importance for me, Matosinhos or Porto. And I had started to search for a hotel, in Matosinhos as well as in Porto, and then I found a very special one. In Matosinhos, not far from the beach, a street served by the metro, called D'el Rei! Okay, maybe it sounded not very thrilling, but for me - it was a bit silly. And even if it weren't Mrs. Grant's concert in Braga, but Amanda Palmer's, I had to book this hotel.

We were very near the ground now. I had seen oil tanks, if I wasn't mistaken, and a lighthouse, and then we landed. Undoubtedly, the airport in Porto was much smaller than in Frankfurt, but this could have its good aspects. And such it was. From the airplane to the hall where you could fetch your luggage was a short way, very different in Frankfurt. And it also needed no long time and the baggage claim started. As always, I became a bit nervous, especially because I had to wait somewhat longer - others already had their luggage. But there was no reason to despair, and my suitcase also appeared and I could fetch it. While waiting, I had already orientated where I had to go next, the exit. I had nothing to declare, so I used the respective part of the exit and passed by two customs officers, standing there. Should I look at them, or better not? But it seemed as that they were not interested in to stop anybody, all passengers passed by one by one, also I - and I entered the hall of the airport, the hall for the arriving passengers.

It was one hall - Frankfurt was much larger. But the hall appeared nice and bright, with nice places to drink coffee. Although, I needed a taxi. A group of four stewardesses and a steward walked by - well, the Portuguese uniforms for stewardesses looked very fine as well, as well as the stewardesses. And I reached the exit of the hall, the airport, and stepped on the street.

The sun shone, but there was a certain wind, and it was not so warm. I always wore a hoody for travel. On board the plane or just at the airport, the hoody was easy to store in my backpack. But now I was lucky that I had my winter jacket in my suitcase, I would need it. The taxi was easy to find, enough were there, it was not peak season. As the taxi driver had stored my luggage in the trunk, I showed him the address on my booking confirmation, and we started the ride. What to say? All that I had read about the Portuguese people and driving got confirmed.

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I had tried, still in Germany, to get some general information about Portugal. Not touristic, but to get some general impressions about the nation. France and Italy were, for not only one reason, very near to Germany - Spain, already a bit further away. Okay, the tourist hotspots, but nevertheless.

But Portugal, especially the north? The Algarve, in the south, was very popular among German tourists, with the inevitable consequences. As well as Madeira. But in the end, Portugal was this small strip of land at the end of Europe, behind Spain. So I tried to get a bit of a feel for Portuguese peculiarities. And one piece of information I got was, in a forum, by a Portuguese himself, that the Portuguese people were, as a rule, very polite people. At least as long as they were not sitting behind a steering wheel in a car. Then they would change completely. And I had thought - well, as a German? We, as a rule, freaked out while driving our beloved cars. All our BMWs, Daimlers, Audis, and Porsches. And we were not so well known as the most friendly people in Europe anyway. Thus, could it be harsher on the streets in Portugal than in Germany? Well, maybe not harsher, but harsh anyway, at least while driving in a taxi on a freeway. Interestingly, this changed somewhat as we reached the city limits of Matosinhos.

On the other side, it was in the afternoon, and it seemed not to have so much traffic. This would most likely change later, during rush hour, and maybe also the driving style. And what I also became aware of was how narrow all the side streets were. Well, often cars parked on both sides of the already narrow side streets, and really narrow alleys remained for the cars. But okay, we could use the largest street in Matosinhos, towards the beach - the Avenida da República, the direct extension of the freeway. But were there rules related to parking? Well, this would have been a marathon for a German police officer. I think he would have established a record of inflicting parking violations. However, maybe they, the Portuguese, had simply a more uncomplicated way of dealing with the problem related to parking in a city? Would not have had to be the worst.

We came near the beach, and I could see the ocean very well as we turned right. The tracks of the metro had been on my left so far, in the middle of the street, while driving along the Avenida da República. We now entered the Rua de Brito Capelo, where my hotel was located, only a few yards away. The two tracks were the street now, Rua de Brito Capelo, with broad sidewalks. It seemed as though the street was only for pedestrians and the metro, but a taxi was also part of the public transport. And I could see a few cars and vans parked on the sidewalks. Maybe residents or shop owners could use the street as well. Whatever, the taxi stopped near the entrance of the hotel, the taxi driver handed me my luggage, and I paid him - a good tip and he seemed to be surprised and satisfied. The entrance of the hotel D'el Rei was not immediately visible as the entrance of a hotel.

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What I wanted to say was, that the hotel had its entrance not on the street. You had to use a passageway between the building of the hotel and the neighboring house to reach the entrance of the hotel at its side. Whereby, the hotel seemed to be a normal two-story house, very similar to the neighboring houses at left and right, most likely a former residential house converted into a hotel. I entered it.

Right after the entrance to the right was a small reception with a young woman behind - and an easy check-in. My room was on the second floor, and I had to carry my suitcase by myself. But this was okay. The room? Well, not large, but obviously very clean. A nice restroom and shower - all appeared very nice. Well, it was my place to sleep. I did not need this room for more. Therefore, I was satisfied.

I started to unpack my suitcase, but then I decided to take a shower and to walk to the beach. I could unpack the rest later, or tomorrow, and I should eat something. Thus, I left the hotel.

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The way would be easy. Back to the large street, the Avenida da República, and down the rest to the beach. The first thing that I saw was, as I reached the crossroads, Rua de Brito Capelo and Avenida da República, a building on the other side. I knew it and had seen it while searching for a hotel. But it was even more beautiful in reality - the hotel São Francisco. A beautiful building with green tiles all over the exterior walls. But not all. Under the roof were nice images of birds, also tiles,

Portuguese tiles. But the most spectacular was the tower - yet this hotel was more interesting for families or groups than for a single person like me. So I continued my way towards the ocean and reached very soon a traffic circle with a statue in the middle. A new street, traversing, the Rua Roberto Ivens, and I saw something that shocked me in a way. Two buildings side by side, a LIDL supermarket and a McDonald's fast-food. A German discounter supermarket and the worst US fast food shit - should this be the Portuguese reality? What about fantastic seafood, fish, wine, and so on? I was somewhat disorientated as I moved on.

The street, Avenida da República, now with trees in the middle and a path for pedestrians. It seemed nicer again as I reached, after a short way, the next crossing, Rua Heróis de França, and I discovered something. Rua Heróis de França, to my left, the backside of the LIDL and McDonald's on one side of the road, and a part of an obvious larger arrangement of housing blocks on the other side of the road. Another part of the housing blocks was now also along the Avenida da República, on the left side of the road. But on the right side of the Avenida da República, as well as the traversing streets - the right side where I walked, there were many shops, cafés, a freaky barber shop for men, and interesting-looking restaurants. It seemed as though this part on the left side was of recent date - maybe I could find out later.

I walked the rest of the way and reached a further smaller traffic circle and a street along the ocean, the Avenida General Norton de Matos. A promenade and a broad beach - and, of course, the ocean until the horizon. I had tears in my eyes.

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It was not the first time that I had seen the ocean. In fact, I had already seen the large ocean, the Pacific Ocean. Nevertheless, this view, water until the horizon, and knowing that even after the horizon for a long time, nothing but water would follow - I got goose bumps. I had always this vision: walking to the edge of the ocean, where the water meets the sand, to undress and to swim out, until I was no longer able to. I started to look around.

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Right at the harbor wall were a large crane, a large ship, and a futuristic-looking building. The beach began shortly afterward, vast and long. The tourist's information, also somewhat futuristic, two restaurants or bars, Praia do Titan I and Titan II, on both sides of the traffic circle. A children's playground, and the housing blocks showed their form. Four parts, forming a c-like shape, open towards the ocean. Inside the "C" a park with some trees and benches to sit on. Looked not that bad, 70s maybe? I started to walk along the boardwalk.

It was late afternoon now. The sun would set, would drown in the ocean in a few hours. No bad weather, mostly sunshine, but at the horizon, over the water, clouds. Thus, it would not be possible to see the sunset. The sunsets sitting at the beach in front of the large ocean? But this was just my first day - I reached the other end of the "C".

A nice-looking ice cream parlor there, Cremosi was its name. This place I had to visit some day in any case, but I should have dinner now. A restaurant at the beach, Lais de Guia - I wasn't sure and wanted to walk until the end of the beach. A place for surfers to take a shower, change clothes - suchlike. And, on the other side, a Burger King! The next moment of questioning the Portuguese culture - we had already passed a Burger King while driving down the Avenida da República. But I walked on.

Again, a place for surfers, even larger than the last one, this seemed to be a good beach for surfers. And the Rua Roberto Ivens hit the Avenida General Norton de Matos at a sharp angle - a nice little triangular park. I looked ahead. A larger traffic circle would come. The Rua de Brito Capelo would hit it, as would the Avenida General Norton de Matos. Again, a nearly triangular-shaped park and plaza with at least one ice cream parlor and a café. Again, a restaurant at the beach, Vagas, as well as more than one more at the Rua de Brito Capelo before, and as the street merged with the traffic

circle. This seemed like a hot spot for beach life. But most interesting was the art piece over the traffic circle, which was larger than the traffic circle. It seemed to be a large fishing net, held by three massive pillars. Well, this fitted this place in any case. I looked ahead again.

I saw a large building, an ugly gray concrete building, lower than the point where I was now, directly at the beach at this point. Further afar, in front of a larger street, there was an interesting-looking, much smaller, building. Could it be something for concerts or so? Behind the larger street was a building with letters - SEA LIFE, an aquarium? But most captivating seemed to be a further "building". No longer a sandy beach, rocky now, on a somewhat higher point, a tiny-looking fort. At least I thought that it would be a fort made of stone with many angles, sharp corners. It seemed to be pretty old - 17th century or even older? Well, Portugal had been the very early maritime power, if I weren't wrong - then the Spanish, then the British. But okay, maybe this is all would be too much for today? I decided just to walk the distance to the ugly building. This would be enough for the first day. Then I should search for a place to have dinner.

But first, I decided to stay at this place for a moment. The traffic circle and the net behind me, and the beach in front of me. One had to use stairs to reach the beach from here, and it seemed that this would be the end of one part of the beach and the beginning of another. In a way because a kind of creek appeared from under the street and the boardwalk to find its way over the beach to the ocean. But also because "after" the creek, the beach became more rocky, becoming pure rock towards the fort.

It was interesting to see how the water ran towards the ocean until the next wave arrived. Then the water was pushed back, more or less, depending on the force of the actual wave. It was an appealing sight, and I could have watched it for much longer. But then I decided to walk the rest of the way to the ugly building.

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The promenade ended in a way near the end of the of the large traffic circle with the fishernet - the way divided now. You could follow the traffic circle and enter a larger street, or walking towards the ugly building. At the beginning of the promenade, at the smaller traffic circle, Avenida da República, the promenade and the beach were nearly on the same level. Later, the beach was lower than the promenade, and now the way led downward to the beach again. Some trees, a fantastic view of the ocean - and the building?

I did not understand the logic of the building. Four floors, nearly all glass, but everything seemed to be dead, expect the restaurants and cafés on the ground floor, facing the beach. Tables outside, but no guests. Okay, sitting there, over the summer, this would be in any case a hot spot then. A park nearby. But the buildings as such? Ugly, simply ugly, looked like 70s architecture. I could spot a fitness studio - still open? Then I reached the building.

I wasn't even sure if I could enter the building as such. All the restaurants and cafés with their tables and chairs outside - I entered one and understood. Directly behind the glass front of the building was a hallway spanning the full length of the building. So, you could enter a seperated part for every restaurant and café with tables outside, then the building, then cross the hallway, and then you could enter the restaurant or café as such - seemed a bit strange. And the hallway was not over the full length, as I first thought. At the beginning of the building, the direction I had come, the restaurants ended, and there was a larger hall, with an entrance. I was curious and walked thereto - empty, an empty hall, but larger restrooms for men and women on one side, the backside of the building. Obviously, this was meant for the people at the beach over the summer. This was most likely a very crowded place in the summer. Well, I could not say that I felt the restroom was very nice. Back to the restaurants?

I had become hungry, but then I saw an elevator. I had to do it. First floor - ugly, cold, no one there! The second floor was the same, and the third as well. A shop for bikes - okay, good-looking. Two more shops - still open? The fitness club, not open, at least not currently. Back to the ground floor. Okay, at the first restaurant, two people were watching TV. The next was empty, but I was hungry

now. The following was empty as well, I had to eat something. The last seemed to be more for ice cream and coffee. At the end, I decide for Sunse7 Caffé, written like this - and it was nevertheless a restaurant.

Well, I was the only guest, and the sun was very low over the horizon now. But there were still clouds on the horizon - I could see them through the glass front. I asked if they would close soon - the whole scenery seemed a bit weird. And in fact, I got told that they would close earlier because there was no holiday season. But they would be happy to cook something for me - I got the menu. Well, no guests. Would seafood be a good choice? Would it be fresh? Whatever, I decided on a seafood dish with fries. A small salad as a starter, and a glass of white wine. Well, the salad was not very inspired, but it had good olive oil. The main dish? A large plate with many fries around and a pile of seafood in the middle, with a lot of octopus. Well, it looked not bad, it smelled good, and I tried a bit of the seafood - it seemed to be okay. Nothing from the fridge, I would say. Definitely not old. With every bite, I liked it more, but it was a lot. I concentrated on the seafood in the end and could not eat all the fries, especially since there was a lot of oil on the plate. But it was absolutely okay. A dessert? A proposal? I said yes, not sure what it would be, and a coffee. The waiter asked if I wanted a small one and made a gesture with his fingers - yes, I expected an espresso. And, I got a nice pastry filled with vanilla pudding and an espresso. Well, still a bit strange, I was the only guest in this restaurant and one of the very few in this massive building as such. It was dark outside now. No sun set, no drowning sun, but I was satisfied, and I decided to walk back to the hotel.

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I walked the way back to the hotel, and the now-illuminated crane looked very nice even from afar. Well, my first evening in Matosinhos, Portugal? Mixed impressions. It was charming that they all spoke English. Well, there would be enough English and, most likely, German tourists here over the summer. Cremosi was closed, but the ocean looked impressive at night with the sound of the waves. The beach was indeed wide. It was still a good distance from the promenade to the water. I reached the small traffic circle again. Titan was still open, but no one was in. Titan II was also nearly empty - a few sat at two tables. At least as far as I could see. The LIDL was still open, but I wasn't hungry or thirsty. I reached the crossing with the tracks of the metro. São Francisco looked still nice - one window shined bright. Most of the cafés and restaurants had closed now. The one below the São Francisco, the one on my side of the Avenida da República - the following place was still open. But I was tired and walked the remaining few yards to the hotel.

Well, a few days in Matosinhos, had no distinct plans. A day in Porto at least, of course, this park. The harbor, the other side of the harbor, I had to travel to Braga. The concert. Would I do better this time? Back to Matosinhos for a few more days. Again, no distinct plans. I had no real connection to Portugal.

The USA in a way, but some doubts. The president, gun laws, and a devastating health care system - all about money. And yet, it was also a place of longing. The whole USA? Well, the East Coast, not necessarily. New York in no case. The origin of this fucking president - and Hillary made it even worse. Okay, one had not to talk about Miami, about Florida, but the New England States? And yet, Gainesville? New Orleans, this South? The red states? The West Coast, in any case - too hot in the south and too cold in the north, but maybe in between? I sometimes had the feeling that I would like it most in a small village, deep in the heartland. Or far away up in a mountain state - Longmire? What a difference, Portugal.

A few million inhabitants, living on a narrow strip of land, could be a description. New York had nearly as many citizens as Portugal had inhabitants, not to talk about the extent. On the other hand, there were several US states, and not the smallest of them, with under one million inhabitants. But what was striking was that everything was smaller in Portugal - simply human-sized. It seemed to be more cozy. There was, at every corner, a café, tables, and chairs on the sidewalk - a place to sit down. Only on the way from the hotel to the ugly building. There was a place one could sit down to

drink coffee, literally every few yards. And everywhere people sat, drinking a small coffee, eating something.

But it had been enough for today, as I laid down. In the morning, still in Germany, now in Portugal, the ocean was not far away. Tomorrow? Well, breakfast in the hotel, then again to the ugly building? The park and the fort? The nice little building? We would see.

## **February The Second**

For the first time that I woke up in Matosinhos - I looked at the alarm clock. It was my alarm clock, the alarm clock that I had brought along from Germany. It was maybe strange to take your alarm clock with you when traveling from Germany to Matosinhos. But I wasn't sure if there will be one in my room. Okay, normally in every hotel room there was a kind of clock radio or so - in a motel? Learning how to set the alarm? How would the alarm tone sound? In any case, it was better to have your alarm clock with you, the one you were used to. But.....could this cause a problem at the airport, security check?

Could I have an alarm clock with me and batteries? In no case in the luggage, carry-on luggage in any case - batteries and clock separated. At the customs, in Germany, at the x-ray, when you have to put out your laptop and electronic devices, I also laid the alarm clock and the batteries in the plastic tray so that everybody could see them, and it functioned! I looked at the clock.

The alarm would start in six minutes, six minutes until 6:30 a.m., local time - of course, local time! German time would make no sense. It also functioned abroad. When I was working, I rarely heard the alarm. I woke up always somewhat earlier. And, very often, when I intended to stand up at a certain time, then I also woke up somewhat earlier. And it also functioned in Matosinhos.

6:30 a.m., I thought that this would be a good time to start the day. Breakfast would be from 7:00 a.m. on - would give me the time to stand up slowly, take a shower, dress up, pack my backpack, and ponder what to do with the day. Whereby, I had not to ponder about what to do today. Not much after seven o'clock, I entered the breakfast room, and it was weird in a way. Breakfast? I always ate no breakfast at all in Germany, if working, or at home on my days off. But here, in Matosinhos, on vacation? And it was included in the price of the hotel room, and it was also a good basis to explore the city. An idea was maybe to skip lunch therefor or to have a late lunch, whatever would fit best. It would give me some flexibility.

The breakfast room was a not large, somewhat elongated, room. Opposit the entrance was the breakfast buffet, along the two walls tables for four, with an aisle in between. One could arrange them if a larger table would needed. All was a bit confined. I was the first and walked to the buffet. Well, a hotel, a continental breakfast, I would say. Cheese and ham - the ham looked somewhat cheap, but I had no idea how such food was manufactured in Portugal. Yogurt and cereals, rolls, and different-looking croissants, not like the French ones. Tea bags, coffee, milk, honey, marmalade, and fruit - it would be by far enough for me. I took a plate and a bowl, a coffee as well, and started with my breakfast.

The rolls of white flour were a bit soft, but okay. Well, the cheese and ham were nothing special. The croissants were nice. Well, all seemed to be okay so far. As I said, I had no breakfast at all in Germany. And in the end, I did not eat much. The coffee was fine and strong, but I liked to drink my coffee with a lot of milk, so this fitted very well. I was absolutely satisfied as I left the breakfast room again, with two more tables now occupied. A couple and a family of three.

As I was back in the room, I switched on the TV, as expected Portuguese programs - CNN Portugal? So it seemed like TV would be no alternative, but there were more programs, and I was not here to watch TV. I had decided to walk to the ugly building again, to the smaller and nicer one, the fort, the park, and maybe also the aquarium.

Okay, the way was known, but as I saw the LIDL again, I had to enter it. Well, I had realized that it would most likely be no bad idea to have some cookies or such in my hotel room for the night. Sure, I could do this on my way back, but most likely I would use another way back to the hotel this time. Well, a LIDL market in Germany meant that everything was cheap - we had a kind of war between these discounter supermarkets. And this meant something because Germans weren't, as such, willing to spend much money on food. Thus, I did not expect much - but hey, some cookies? The first thing that irritated me was the smell. I would have been shocked in Germany, but I knew this smell but could not relate it to something normally found in a supermarket. But I had only to look ahead.

Right at the beginning, bread, rolls, and sweet pastry, all baked in the supermarket, just like in Germany. Various freezer cabinets thereafter – fish and a large selection of prawns in various sizes, also the really big ones. Unpacked, sold by weight. Did somebody buy such food in a LIDL in Portugal? But the source of the smell was thereafter. A smaller, separate, place with a kind of bandsaw and piles of bacalhau! Wow, such in a LIDL supermarket, that smell was unthinkable in Germany! I started to like this LIDL supermarket, which was very different from its German sisters. Also, the rest of the assortment. Sure, some were the same as in Germany. But, for instance, there was fine salami and ham in various kinds - and everything was cheap, at least compared to Germany. I had the feeling that this would not be my last time here, as I left the supermarket again with some salted crackers in my backpack.

Bacalhau - my first time was when I worked in a Southern French restaurant. We had made brandade out of it - would I find a restaurant here serving bacalhau? Well, why not? As far as I knew, bacalhau was known in France and Spain, obviously in Portugal, and maybe also in Italy. There were some dishes one could find in various nations in various variations with various names. The basis and the idea were the same, but the (final) preparation differed. I reached the small traffic circle, the boardwalk, the beach, the ocean - and Praia do Titan, Titan I. They had a nice patio directly at the beach. But well, it was still early in the morning and I just had had breakfast. Two others, a couple, most likely tourists, sat there and drank coffee, or better yet, espresso. It seemed as though the place would just open - why not another coffee while watching the ocean?

I ordered in English, of course. I could not speak Portuguese, and I did not try if the waiter understood German. Always, when abroad, I enjoyed it to speak English - I was not really perfect at it. But I was not interested in revealing that I was from Germany. Many years ago, I stayed in Sweden, for a somewhat longer time in a family-run hotel. They could speak German, but I preferred to speak English with them. Well, one day they invited me to a birthday, the son if I was not wrong now. Typical Swedish, Skaninavian, but of course, I did not join the celebration. The question alone, if I would have to buy a gift, or maybe not? And if, most likely, something small, nothing too big? Well, not going to the party was an easy solution.

And again, I got asked if I wanted a small coffee or a large one. Well, the two others drank a small one, and so did I. A small, strong coffee in the morning, an espresso, not very common to me, especially as a tea drinker at home. But it was nice sitting there with the winter jacket on. The sun shone, but there was a cold wind from the ocean. Nevertheless, after a while, it started to get hot in the sun. Sitting in the sun was not necessarily mine. I favored the shade. So I paid seventy cents, without tip. In a restaurant in Germany it would be up to the triple, and started to walk along the boardwalk. Now I had my winter jacket doffed, which was better, but the cold wind was a problem. The sun was intense in a way, and I had no hat or cap - clothing could become an issue.

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On the other side of the road now, Cremosi - one more small coffee? I started to like them, and so I crossed the street. No one seemed to sit inside, and no staff I could see through the glass front. Well, Cremosi would not open before the afternoon. The opening hours at the door, no further small coffee. So I continued my way and reached the larger traffic circle. Next? Well, I could drink a



coffee at one of the restaurants or cafés in the ugly building. Or, I could walk the rest of the way to the park. I decided to visit the park first.

The rest of the way, from the ugly building to the park, was relatively weird. Along or more or less under a larger street on pillars, then it all started to appear as not finally finished, as still under construction. There was no real further way, but something that seemed to be a temporary solution. Whatever, I reached the park - really the park?

Well, I looked at the "scenery". In front of me was the beginning of what would obviously become a nice park. Behind me was the smaller, more pleasant building. Well, it appeared somewhat abandoned, so I walked to it. It was really charming in a way, but I had no idea what its purpose was. It looked to me like a place for concerts and such, very nicely located at the beach. But in reality, it seemed to be closed, and not only since yesterday. I started to walk around it.

Behind of it, it was even nicer. A plaza with a basketball court - three guys played there. Two ways to different parts of the beach. This was, in fact, the end of the beach - the rocks dominate now. Should I ask them, who played basketball, about the building? Of course, I did not dare, but maybe I could find information on the Internet - the park? Well, I was very near the citadel now. Thus, this would be my next aim now.

In fact, as I stood on the way to its door, it looked petite - how many men had been stationed there? On the other hand, it seemed very cleverly placed, and with some canons, one could guard this part of the beach easily. Most likely, the harbor was also old - maybe also a fort on the other side of the harbor? But the door was closed - could one visit the citadel? But not today anyway - the park?

I saw that it was possible to walk around the citadel, and thus I did - and this was spectacular! Sure, a sandy beach was something nice, but as I climbed down the rocks to the water, the ocean was something arousing. The waves, it was sunny, I had started to sweat with the winter jacket in my hand, but windy, hit with force against the rocks - I was excited.

I sat on one of the rocks and watched the waves - I sometimes got a bit wet. Yes, these sandy beaches were enjoyable, but this was exciting. I could remember a night at the Baltic Sea. A heavy storm, and I walked along a path at the beach. There was a mouth of a flow made of concrete, and the forceful waves hit against it. One could walk on the concrete toward the water, but the wind was strong and the sea spray heavy. I walked towards the stormy sea for so long that I was nearly no longer able to stand on my feet. Such a feeling I had yet again.

Well, I sat for a while, but the sun became more and more hot - the park? The park could mean shade. I thus stood up again and started to walk to the park. As I stood under the street - this was no park. Well, this part of the park, yet green and with a kind of lake, also looked like it would not finally be ready. Okay, maybe this whole part of the beach was still a matter of development. And, looking ahead, it was obvious that further on, this would become a charming park, a park with shade.

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Okay, I stood on this unfinished looking part of the way, the smaller nice building in my back, this stranger first part of the park in front of me. I had to underpass the larger street, in any case - a way along the first strange-looking part of the park on the left and right of me. On the left, with pleasant trees aside, but I couldn't exactly see the continuation of the way. To my right, a second way, also trees and some shade. But more, it was obvious that this way would continue up the park, with partial shade in any way. It seemed like there would be many trees later. I thus started to follow the wider right way.

First I passed, behind the street, public restrooms - was always good to know some. A staircase there would lead to the aquarium. The way was uphill, but not steep. I passed the strange part of the park and reached a crossing of ways. Yes, from here on, the park as such would begin. I could follow my way up the hill, steepening, or I could traverse to the other side of the park, with nice trees and shade. Or I could - obviously - leave the park again. I saw some houses, small houses, and I followed this way, turning right.

Yes, this was obviously an alternative way to get to the park. Up the hill, along my original way, would be Porto, which I knew. The beach here should be still Matosinhos. Following the street that I had underpassed one would reach Porto along the beach as well. But I had no idea where Porto would begin and Matosinhos would end. Left of the park was Matosinhos in any case. But maybe this all would be not so important to me. Strange only that Porto, or at least most of Porto, was up a hill, not at the beach, the ocean. So I looked at the houses along the way, this still seemed to be Matosinhos.

I would say that I saw the back part of the houses - they appeared to be old, small, and somewhat decayed. Although they seemed, at least partially, inhabited - this seemed not to be the most prominent place to live in Matosinhos, but this could be misleading. Should I follow the way to see more of the houses, maybe their fronts? Where would the way lead? But I wanted to be in the park. Thus, I turned and walked to the crossing again.

It was obvious that the park began here. The grass was well-kept now, and a nice-looking lake was also there - no puddle like under the street. I started my way up the hill, trees to my left and right, mostly shade. Nevertheless, with my backpack and the winter coat on my arm? It had become a sunny day, no wind in the park, the way was nice, and the views over the park and lake were beautiful, but I increasingly sweated. In no way would I walk the entire way up the hill, through the park, as I reached a charming place. The way bent, but one could also use a narrow path to shorten the way - whereby the shorter path was, in fact, not much shorter. But this path was nearly a bit like one from a fantasy movie or so. Trees to the left and right formed a kind of tunnel, a high wall to the right as well, and a lot of shade. Being in it was delightful. It seemed colder there than outside, but I continued my way.

I had noticed that I could traverse the park very soon again, so I did. Not so much shade there now, but still, very nice views of the park and the lake, down onto the lake. Benches, also in the shade, offered an enjoyable view of strange-looking clusters of trees, but I could not sit down. I had really started to sweat - even the shade did not help much anymore. But even more, I always felt this inner unrest. Sitting down, maybe for a minute or two? Already five minutes felt like an eternity. I could not simply sit down, enjoying the sight for a while, coming to rest again. It was like this story about the sharks that always had to swim. I felt very often like one of these sharks. I reached a small, round place. Downhill from now on, I reached the unfinished part again.

Well, of course, the park would be much larger, but I felt partially exhausted. I should sit down, take a rest, should drink something, possibly a snack. The best place I could do this would be a café. Cafés were places where even I could find a moment of rest. So I decided to walk back - the ugly building? Well, the plaza in front was sunlit now, even too hot with the sun umbrellas. Inside? Not so nice. It wouldn't be such a long way back to Matosinhos, to a café there. And maybe I could try to get down a bit on my way?

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I walked back to the larger traffic circle, and decided no longer to follow the promenade. I could enter the Rua de Brito Capelo there. This street would lead me straight away back to the crossing, with the nice hotel, the metro tracks, just where my hotel was. I started to get some idea about Matosinhos, at least of this part of the city, the area of the beach north to my hotel. Well, there would be still the part toward the harbor, and the other side of the harbor. And of course all further away from the beach - and Porto of course. Obviously too much for the days I would stay here in Matosinhos. I entered the Rua de Brito Capelo, the small park and the small plaza to my left, and the first two or three café there, also ice cream would be available. But this area was also very sunny, and soon I would reach the shade. A restaurant to my right, I passed it, on my side of the road, more there behind.

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The first impressions? Yes, this was in fact a larger supermarket, and the light smell of bacalhau in the air. I could enter the salesroom right here - several checkouts followed until a second door on the other side. I passed a place for fresh made sushi, a man and a woman made sushi there - not very Portuguese. An area for fresh fruit followed, but something else obtained my attention. At the side, one could buy bread and rolls in numerous variations, packed, an area with tables and chairs as well. But you could buy much more. Small pies, nearly like in England, bottles with beverages, a part with a waterbath for hot meals, a part with sandwiches followed, finally the counter for buying coffee, with a display for sweet stuff, but croissants for instance as well. Wow, and all looked interesting, but something else had captured me. Behind, at the wall, over the whole part, were many large convection ovens - they obviously produced this all right here. And more, behind the coffee brewers was a large open area - a bakery! They worked with dough there!

I was really astonished. You could obviously have lunch here, as well as any kind of snack. And all looked nice. I was positively surprised. And something else puzzled me. There was one of this "dispensers" where you could get a number. I knew them from visiting a public authority. You had to take a number and wait until it was your turn. But at a shop? And, as far as I could see, some had a number, but some not - did I need a number? Not many were there at the moment - it had already become afternoon. So I waited until only one customer was there. Then I took a number. In fact, at the wall was a display, and my number appeared. And one of the women behind the counter said something in an interrogative way, most likely my number in Portuguese. But hey, I was the only waiting customer at the moment? Well, I had to do some investigation on the Internet.

Whatever, I ordered my coffee - yes, a small one - and two croissants. Those that looked French and were made of flaky pastry. I took a seat at a table and started to feel better. It was absolutely okay here - it was a supermarket and not a café or restaurant. It was seemingly very uncomplicated here - it was good to know such a place. I came down a bit. It was colder here than outside, and the ovens on the wall were all switched off - at least those I could see. I enjoyed my coffee and my croissants, then I started to explore the supermarket.

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The fresh fruit looked very delicious - half melons and papayas. But all the sweet stuff behind it - arousing. All were packed, in small or larger packages, in transparent plastic boxes. It was challenging to see all these nice cookies, cakes, and pastries. Losing weight would be no easy endeavor in this nation.

At the wall, behind glass, cooled, a massive assortment of ham, cheese, sausages, salads, and much more. Some was the same as in the LIDL, but much more of it was here. All interesting, but then I looked around the corner - wow! Over nearly the whole length of the supermarket, first a counter with meat, then, around twice the length, fish and seafood - and piles of bacalhau!

I started with the meat, all in large pieces - and a lot of poultry! It looks like France, I thought. Why do I have no kitchen! But even harder to bear was the other counter. It started with cooked prawns in different sizes - such I could buy and eat with one of the packed salads. Next was an extraordinary collage of fresh fish. Some I knew, like gilthead or turbot - wow, in Germany I would

have to pay at least twice the price! Others were new to me, like a kind of conger - wonderful scorpion fish. I would be on cloud nine living here! After the fresh fish, different piles of bacalhau - different prices. The smaller ones were cheaper, the larger ones pricier, and the smell was extreme - a wonderful smell. In Germany, the customers would freak out.

Okay, one could find good fish in Germany as well, more expensive of course. But this was a supermarket, with many shelves of tea and coffee, marmalade and honey, shampoo and toothpaste. Wow, a nation that provided such an offer of meat, poultry, fish, and seafood in a supermarket - I had to have lunch in a restaurant later. But now?

I no longer sweated so much, and had bought me some orange juice for the hotel. I had decided that it would be best to walk back to the hotel now. This would allow me some time to take a shower, a rest, new clothes.

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I had used the other entrance to leave the supermarket again - restrooms there. And, next to the supermarket, a larger parking area - shops, and restaurants on the other side of the street, Rua de Brito Capelo. Then I reached the next crossing - Rua Sousa Aroso. Not only one aspect was interesting there.

There was a narrower way for pedestrians that crossed the crossroad diagonally - it looked like one would have created a notch. The way even split a housing block! And it seemed that this artificial-looking traverse would be very extended in both directions. The way also marked one boundary of the parking lot at Pingo Doce. On the other side of the way, there was a larger triangular shaped construction site. And thereafter, a large-looking plaza, seemed to be pretty new. This was an interesting crossroad - I could see the beach and the ocean. A nice café was also there at one of the corners, but I moved on.

More shops, mostly for women's clothes, and restaurants - Indian, tapas, bowls, and several more. But this hadn't been the most interesting, until I reached the Avenida da República again. As I reached the Avenida da República again, I had learned much about Matosinhos and about the history of Matosinhos. Information panels had been along the street, Rua de Brito Capelo. And, of course, I had read them.

Two panels had been especially informative. One had shown a historic picture of the area of the C-shaped housing blocks and given further information. A large factory had been there, even larger than the C-shape today, a factory for canned sardines. They had produced at this place, in former times, the famous Portuguese canned sardines. This also explained why this part of the city appeared much younger than other parts of the city. And this passage for pedestrians that I had seen, straight through a housing block and not fitting to the rest of the streets, had been a rail line in former times, a small train in the times of the factory. They had later decided to use this former rail line as a way for pedestrians. I started to become interested in the history of this area.

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It had become evening, and I was hungry, so I left the hotel to search for a restaurant. Well, Rua de Brito Capelo offered not much. Different places, but mostly closed, mostly cafés that obviously had not opened in the evenings. At the end of Rua de Brito Capelo, a bend and not so nice-looking houses - I did no longer follow the street. I instead decided to use a smaller side street towards the beach, Rua Conde São Salvador. Okay, the first traversing street, Rua Roberto Ivens looked not very interesting. As well as the second traversing street, Avenida Serpa Pinto. This street would bring me to the traffic circle where the LIDL market would be - if I weren't wrong. There also seemed not so many restaurants. I thus continued my way towards the beach, the next traversing street was Rua Heróis de França. Okay, this street should lead to the small traffic circle at the beach, where the restaurants and bars, Titan I and Titan II, would be - if I weren't wrong. But of course, there was no beach, but the area of the harbor. Yeah, the promenade started at the smaller traffic circle, and the beach at the wall and entrance to the harbor. But this was not so relevant because in

this street there was one restaurant after the other. This seemed to be the street of the restaurants. I started to walk along and looked at the restaurants, through the windows, at the menus outside - it was always more or less the same at every place. It was close to six o'clock, the restaurants were empty, maybe one table with guests. They all had, under a tent, an area to eat outside, on the sidewalk. All had a grill on the street, attached to the tent, all tents empty. Mostly a waiter or possibly the owner stood in the door and hoped that I would enter. Not that I thought that they would not provide good food, but I did not enter one of it.

First, I hated to sit in an empty or nearly empty restaurant. This would mean that all the focus would be on me. But also, I imagined the summer season. It was obvious that this was the street for the tourists, and these were the restaurants for the tourists. I could see them in summer, all filled with tourists, but I would like to eat in a Portuguese restaurant. I liked smaller restaurants more. And as I reached a larger side street, nearly at the end of Rua Heróis de França, I had passed a green area, I entered this side street, Rua Godinho. This street would lead me back to Avenida Serpa Pinto, Rua Roberto Ivens, and finally Rua de Brito Capelo. Should be near to my hotel then, as I looked along Avenida Serpa Pinto. It seemed as there would also be restaurants, at least one or two, and if I found none fitting, I could still walk back to Rua Heróis de França and decide on one of the tourist's restaurants. But I had not to walk for long, to see some interesting restaurants.

Three interesting restaurants nearly next to each other. The first was the Mar na Brasa, the O Manel, and finally the O Clássico. The first was small, the second not much larger, the third was seemingly somewhat more sophisticated. The first was empty, the second as well, the third a couple at a small table. Okay, not what I liked, but better than the tourist restaurants, I thought, especially the first two. I finally decided on Mar na Brasa, for no special reason. I did not like that it was empty, and this stressed me somewhat, but all the restaurants were more or less empty. They displayed some fresh fish on ice, as many restaurants did, and the fish looked fresh – as also at the other restaurants. Well, it was off season, and the seafood had to be fresh, and I was very hungry now. So I entered the Mar na Brasa, I did not felt comfortable, as an older man approached me. He started to speak Portuguese, I said in English that I would not understand Portuguese. Okay, it was no problem, he spoke English, at least so much that it was easy to have a conversation – he brought me the menu, and I looked around in the restaurant.

It was a rectangular room, a larger living room. The room was longer than wide, a window, and the entrance in front of me. The counter and the entrance to the kitchen in my back. Two rows of tables, around thirty or so seats, mostly tables for four. The man made the service, most likely a woman in the kitchen. I knew this from Italy. The man made the service, the wife cooked, not like in Germany. In family run restaurants in Germany, the man cooked, and the wife made the service. A female classmate wanted to learn to cook as I, but she found no place for an apprentice, simply because she was a woman! Funnily, the most women I cooked together were in the best restaurants I had cooked. It seemed as women were able to cook in high-class restaurants, but not in simple ones – had we to ponder on it? And okay, this was decades ago, some had changed since then – I was not sure what I should order. The menu was written in Portuguese as well as in English, but I had to confess, that I did not know all the English names for the fish. The French names I would have known, most likely all, but not the English ones. The man saw my insecurity, and I started to sweat somewhat, as he came to my table and asked whether he should recommend me something.

Well, seafood and fish, off season, no guests, several fish on ice displayed, a recommendation? Would he recommend me something that was old, that had to be sold? Well, the displayed fish looked fresh – I looked at the basin with the dungeness crabs, also a lobster was in it? Then I said yes. Well, he recommended me monk fish, asked if I wanted potatoes and vegetables as side dishes – a wine? Well, I said yes to all, and ordered a fish soup to start with. I had no idea if it was clever to do so, but okay, this looked like a restaurant for the locals, not directly at the beach, the street with the tourist's restaurants. It could be a flop, but there would be alternatives. But it could also be something nice, as my wine arrived, and I watched the dungeness crabs in their basin.

An hour later, and much had started to be different. The fish soup had been very delightful, the fish dish as well. Nice small potatoes roasted, the vegetables a bit too long cooked for my taste. A mix of cabbage and some other vegetables. The fish had been very fresh, and I knew now what monk fish was, lotte in French. Well, the wine, I did not drink often alcohol. Thus, one glass was enough for me. A dessert? Well, of course! Behind the counter, on a board, different kinds of cake. I decided for a lemon cake with a coffee, and I did not get asked whether I wanted a small or a large one, I simply got a small one. My first dinner in Portugal, absolutely satisfying.

And I wasn't longer alone. Three more tables were occupied now, and I had the feeling that later in the evening it would become even more. I remembered what my head chef from France once had told me. When we opened, a restaurant in the south of France, at six o'clock, the restaurant filled very fast with tourists during the summer. We then feed the tourists, until later, after the tourists, from eight o'clock on, we started to cook for the locals, and the real cooking began. But, and this was the fine aspect, I had not the feeling that they would have treated me like a tourist. Okay, it was off season, maybe it would be different in summer. It would be most likely different in the south of Portugal, the touristic Portugal, the Algarve, a dreamland for German tourists and retired people. There it would be most likely different, but here all the other guests were Portuguese. At least they all spoke Portuguese.

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Later I walked back to the hotel, the short way, it had become cold. This had been, in a way, a nice day. The pleasant park, the wonderful dinner. The nice café in the supermarket, what all they offered there, in the café as well as in the supermarket. I started to sweat all the time so fast, in the sun, or when feeling uncomfot – and I often felt uncomfot. I was often insecure, not sure how to act. But now I started to get tired, as I reached the hotel. Would I follow Rua de Brito Capelo longer than this evening, than I should reach the harbor. I thought that this would be an impressive aim for tomorrow, the rest we would see. I liked being here.

### **February The Third**

It was my second waking up in Matosinhos, in my hotel room, D'el Rei, and it nearly felt like a very common matter. Well, I stood up, took a shower, Portuguese TV, and dressed, while I looked around in my room – it was a hotel room. I always thought that hotel rooms had something in common, something that made them to hotel rooms. The same fitted to this room, the same with the breakfast, this had not to be Portugal. This could be elsewhere, it had not even to have in Europe. It was this international hotel style. It was not bad as such, the room was clean and absolutely okay, not huge maybe, at least it would be for a couple, but this seemed to be the standard here, and it was no five-star hotel anyway. And yet, it seemed that there would be an inside and an outside, just after one day. This here, this room, could be anywhere. But outside, this was Portugal. Not England or France, in no way the USA. And of course, not Germany, Germany was very differently. Okay, cars and soccer, this could be a common link between Portugal and Germany. A TV in the restaurant yesterday – a soccer game. The many cafés seemed so nice, so many along Rua de Brito Capelo, and not only there. And always people sat there, drinking their small coffees. At the end of Rua de Brito Capelo, as I had turned into the side street, Rua Conde São Salvador, had been a larger butchery. In my youth, in my town, we had two bakers, two butchers, and many small shops. Nothing was anymore. No baker, no butcher, no small shops. This was Germany today, very American. Matosinhos felt a bit like my hometown in my youth. Whereby, we had never had this small cafés, especially not so many. We did not simply sit down to have a coffee in Germany. It seemed a bit like something that I had heard from Italy. On the way to work, or after work, or while

shopping, or later, before dinner, it was always the right time and the possibility to have a small coffee, an espresso, on the way. Sitting down for a moment or a bit longer, and enjoying a small and strong coffee. It seemed relatively similar here in Portugal. I started to ponder about the place I was, then I walked to the breakfast room downstairs.

I was again the first person there, not so many guests obviously at this time of the year. It was Sunday today, but the cafés and the restaurants would be open, and I started to have a kind of breakfast routine. Cereals, a roll for cheese and ham, another for marmalade - maybe honey tomorrow? One of the Portuguese croissants - well, two. Coffee and orange juice - really a lot for me, normally without breakfast. A couple joined me, as I walked back to my room, to pack my backpack.

I planned to walk towards the harbor, starting with the way along Rua de Brito Capelo like yesterday. The winter coat? It had been difficult yesterday. Sometimes, especially at the beach, it had been windy - cloudy and not hot. But if the sun shone, it became warm very fast, like at the park. In the evening it was cold again. Mixed weather also today, that I had understood watching the Portuguese weather forecast on TV. So, I had to have the winter coat with me, but if there were also a sunny time like yesterday, then I most likely would sweat fast again. It nearly seemed to be a kind of English weather, but it was the weather at the ocean. It always could change fast, especially during fall and spring. So I left the hotel with mixed emotions what the weather concerned.

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Again the way along Rua de Brito Capelo, in the direction of the harbor, but this time at daytime, in the morning. It all appeared somewhat different, as I reached the first crossroads, Rua de Tomaz Ribeiro. I had passed some shops, on the other side of the road, and in fact one, for women's clothes had been open despite the fact that it was Sunday. At the crossroads, there was an Italian restaurant on my side of the street and a school on the other side. I had no real idea what they would teach. Kitty-corner was a larger building with a curved facade, because Rua de Brito Capelo made a bend. At the corner of the building was a typical small café. Some sat in front of it, with their small coffees. It was Sunday, and Portugal was a very Catholic nation - no church service? A bank was also there, which I had seen already yesterday. Apartments were on the upper floors, and the back part of the building seemed to be a parking block. The building ended where the bend of the street ended, the next crossroads, Rua Godinho. And the next restaurant on my side of the street, a Portuguese one.

I continued my way and reached the crossing, where Rua de Brito Capelo bent again, where I entered Rua Conde São Salvador yesterday evening. And I had learned various things. Several cafés had been on my way. Some seemed to also offer meals - or all? All were visited, and mostly they drank their coffees. Many shops were on this street, various kinds of shops, some closed but some also opened. A hotel here, near the crossroads, Hotel Porto Mar. And also smaller Pingo Doce on this street, and it was open every day from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m., even on Sundays. Well, nice for customers, hard for the staff. This would most likely mean that the larger Pingo Duce would also be opened every day, as well as the LIDL. So, it would be possible for me to buy something every day until late in the evening - as said, nice for the customers, but....

And something else was striking - I had also noticed it yesterday. Some of the houses - one house touched the other as a rule - were obviously vacant and not in good shape. But it could be that just the next house looked very nice and newly renovated. It seemed as though it would be no problem to live in a nice house just next to an empty house or a house in much worse condition. And, not only once or twice, it was only my second whole day in Matosinhos, I had seen some houses that were just under renovation. It seemed as though for some time this area had been forgotten, and now it has been discovered again. Nevertheless, this next-to-next from very nice to decayed seemed a bit confusing for me as a German. Especially as I continued my way.

Still at the crossroads, the very good-looking butchery on one side of the street and, on the other side, an abandoned house. But yet, it was still to see what a beauty this house once had been. Green

Portuguese tiles in the upper part, a small balcony. Letters still to see: Farmacia Lopes. But instead of shop windows with goods, ugly white-painted wooden planks. It looked sad. And also the rest of the street, Rua de Brito Capelo, chaotic in a way - another parking block? And like a metaphor, a large photograph on the upper facade, Rua de Brito Capelo, an old yellowed picture. This picture was on one side of the entrance. On the other side, another large photo showed an interesting looking hall - had no idea where that hall should be, a market hall obviously. Well, of course, again, a café, O Elétrico, a bit rundown looking - or was it only the facade? A nightclub or so thereafter. And the next house was totally decayed in any case. But then the scenery opened up.

The harbor in front of me, at least as much as I could see. To my left was a hall, a large hall - the hall from the photo? I walked toward it, and all was suddenly so open and bright. The end of Rua de Brito Capelo had been narrow, dark, and somewhat repelling. Now all appeared to be totally different. As I approached the hall, now I saw how huge it was, all along an upward road. At the corner of the hall was a café, of course. But looking up the street, the next café was already on the other side of the street. What should I do? Entering the hall - a market hall? But I had the impulse, the wish, to see more of the city first, and so I started to walk along the long hall, up the street.

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It was Rua França Júnior that I walked up, along the large hall. I passed an entrance - not that much I could see. But it was, in fact, the market hall from the picture at the parking block. There were more cafés and even places to eat along the market hall. One could enter them from the street, but most likely also from inside the market hall. At one place, I could see through a small café to see the inside of the market hall a bit - stalls with vegetables and fruits. I was nearly up the street now, at the upcoming crossroads - it was Rua Conde São Salvador again.

So, if I turned right, I would walk down Rua Conde São Salvador and would reach Rua de Brito Capelo again. I would have walked around this block. If I turned right, then I would walk along the shorter side of the market hall - I could see a large entrance there. I could walk around the market hall to see what would be on the other sides - or enter it through this larger entrance? Two more cafés I saw - and I could follow Rua França Júnior, walking straight on.

Rua França Júnior, it seemed as though this would be the least interesting option. Not much was to see - it was a narrow, one-way street. First up, then, after a short way, down - it was not to see what would follow. The way up two shops or so, no café was to be seen or even a restaurant. It seemed to be a street with mostly residential buildings - a street where Portuguese people lived. And it thus interested me. I knew so far only a few streets near the beach area, and the street with the tourist's restaurants. And Rua de Brito Capelo, of course. So I decided to follow Rua França Júnior, to see where this street would lead me. One was not so nice, sunny now, the same problem as in the park. Unfortunately, the street was so oriented that right now there was not much shade. But okay, more or less, this street would bring me back to the hotel. In the end, Rua França Júnior was the next street over Rua de Brito Capelo.

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I realized, as I entered the street, that there were in fact shops, but also several small companies. This was a plumper, if I wasn't wrong - and almost a restaurant. Okay, what was missing was a café. But this was, in fact, a narrow street.

An official building, it seemed, and places under renovation. Also in this street was new and old side by side. What was interesting at this street was, that to my right the houses were larger, newer, they appeared to me like 70s architecture. On my left this typical houses with narrow facades, they looked tiny. But they weren't, not broad, but long, often with inner yards, that I knew. And the facade did not show you how the building looked inside. I assumed that at least some of the houses could be indeed very luxurious inside, as there was a side street to my left. Travessa França Júnior, only a very narrow street, no pavements anymore - the pavements on Rua França Júnior were



already small. Nevertheless, many parked cars on one side. The rest of the street was still exactly such broad, that a car could just use the street. Well, Portuguese people obviously had no real problem with very narrow roads, I wouldn't have liked it. Some not nice-looking buildings here.

Some larger housing blocks now, a closed café, shops like a flower shop, furniture and small stuff, appeared to be vintage, and the street bent to the left. Just here again, a nice small old building with old but still beautiful white tiles. And attaching was an ugly rectangular higher concrete building. There was no structure, no urban planning. Buildings in a certain area had to look relatively alike in Germany to create a closed, consistent, townscape. Here it seemed that everybody could just do what he wanted - and more closed shops.

I started to walk faster - not that I did not like it here. It looked like I would expect from Italy - I had never been to Italy. Chaotic, but lovable. I was not sure if I would like it to live here - driving through these narrow streets in no way. And I reached a crossroad - Rua Godinho again. A café at one corner. One table, three chairs and a parasol on the pavement. But really interesting was that on the other side of the crossroad, not simply Rua França Júnior continued. Two streets were there, on the other side - which should I follow? Should I follow Rua Godinho? Turning right would bring me back to Rua de Brito Capelo, most likely not far from the hotel. Turning left? Looked not interesting. No, I should continue my way. At the end, walking parallel to Rua de Brito Capelo, I should reach the Avenida da República again - at least in theory.

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Rua França Júnior would diverge from Rua de Brito Capelo, and I had no idea where the street would lead in the end. I could not see it. The new street would be from now on the street parallel to Rua de Brito Capelo - Rua Brito e Cunha. I thus followed this street from now on.

It was a cobblestone road, and not so narrow as such. But with cars parked to its left and right - parked nearly cross to the street? Like they did it in San Francisco on some steep streets? Well, the remaining part for the cars to drive was thus very narrow again - it seemed to be Portuguese specialty. Well, a restaurant, but not much more. A small garage, a shop for cars, or so - Comércio de Automóveis. This street was not very interesting. Another restaurant was just before the next crossroad - Rua de Tomaz Ribeiro. I looked up and down this street.

Well, I could walk back to Rua de Brito Capelo in any case. I could see the yellow building where this school was. There would also be the building with the curved front and the café. The Portuguese restaurant would be there, the Italian not far, as well as my hotel. On the other hand, this meant that if I followed this street, Rua Brito e Cunha, then I would hit the Avenida da República very soon. And even if the street did not look very interesting, I followed Rua Brito e Cunha.

The next garage - at least what seemed to be a garage here. A roller door, the size of the normal Portuguese house. And in the end, it was a normal Portuguese house, with apartments on the first until the fourth floor. But the roller door was open this time, and it was puzzling. From outside, with the door closed, I would have expected a small workshop. But all expanded to a real hall - the apartments above? - large, not small, like the Tardis. There was already a pretty nice car in front, but there were two more special cars inside. Especially the E-Type looked nice to me. Yeah, even more the impression, and I had learned it again. In Portugal, do not judge a restaurant, a café, a house, or a garage from outside. Wasn't there this phrase with the book and its cover?

But what also appeared in this street again was this disorder and chaos regarding buildings. Higher apartment blocks were between much lower, normal Portuguese houses. The problem were the fronts on the sides. They were constructed so that the next high building would directly attach, but there was none. Thus, with only gray concrete facades - no windows or such. They were simply ugly. And on this street, one could find such examples on both sides of the road. But then there were restaurants and cafés again, and I reached the Avenida da República.

I was somewhat hungry now, but thirsty as well. How many cafés and restaurants had I passed? Well, up the road, I could not see much, but down the road, I saw Portuguese people sitting at tables on the pavement, drinking their coffee or even eating something. This should be my direction.

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It had become evening - near eight o'clock. I had been in the hotel for a rest after lunch and visiting the beach, the ocean. I had slept for a while. Now I had to realize that I was relatively late. Not late for dinner as such, but to get a table. Yesterday I had already finished my dinner at this time and had realized that the locals started their dinner late - this had been on Saturday. Today was Sunday, and the restaurants were filled with guests, and I had a problem.

Not that it wouldn't be possible to get a table, a seat somewhere. But as I did not like sitting in an empty restaurant, in a well-filled restaurant I felt even more uncomfortable. Not alone, but not together with too many, this was what I liked most. So I stood at the crossing of Rua de Brito Capelo and Avenida da República, near my hotel. The place, just around the corner, where I had eaten lunch was closed, even if it was no café as such. We had a very clear separation between a café and a restaurant in Germany, here it all seemed not to be that separated. Or better, here I saw many "interstages". In any case, one could not buy rolls in a café in Germany - you could drink coffee in a bakery, but not the other way around. And now?

I started to walk in the direction of the beach - the LIDL supermarket? It would be the nearest option. The two Pingo Doce that I knew were further away. I thus entered the LIDL, some impressions I still had from my first visit. The first thing that I looked for was a salad, and they had the same packaged salads as Pingo Doce. I decided on a Caesar salad. Then I walked back, towards the entrance, and decided on some packaged rolls - dark flour. Ham would be nice, but I discovered cooked prawns. Packaged, 500 grams or 1 kilo, in two different sizes. I decided on 500 grams of the larger ones. But also dry-cured ham, 200 grams, and the cheese looked delightful - I had to stop. Gosh, this was a LIDL market! No cheese, but I bought the rest, as well as some water and a bottle of orange juice - salted crackers. I paid, and it was difficult to believe that I had to pay such little money. But well, the coffee was much cheaper than in Germany, food and beverage as such. The income was lower in Portugal, but not to such an extent, I would say. However, I had also passed a gas station where the prices for gas were as high as in Germany. This meant, by a lower income, an even higher price for a Portuguese, as in Germany. Like in Scandinavia? The basic needs for living, like food, were relatively cheap. But others, luxury goods as an example, were costly in return. Whatever, as I walked back to the hotel and to my hotel room with no fridge, I would have a lot to eat this evening. And it became hard to eat it all, but it was a very nice dinner. Wow, if this were your dinner from LIDL? A salad, for a packaged salad absolutely okay, very enjoyable prawns, delicious ham, and fine rolls? This seemed like a good place to live.

### **February The Fourth**

As always, a few minutes before the alarm tone, I looked at the clock and stood up. A shower, Portuguese TV, I dressed up in trousers and a shirt - it seemed to become a sunny day. But the weather could always change fast, and I planned a longer day out today to have a longer walk. But first, the usual breakfast.

Again, the first in the breakfast room, the same for breakfast as yesterday, but it seemed again not to be very Portuguese. However, okay, I was here to travel to Braga, for a concert, not for a vacation as such. So it was okay, even if it seemed not to be the best option. Back in the room, I packed my backpack, took my jacket, and started to walk to the beach.

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I walked along the promenade, towards the ugly building, and reached the traffic circle with the artwork, the fisher net. Then I passed the ugly building as well as the nice building - I still had no

idea what this building was. But this should not be my interest today. My interest was to pass the whole park this time to reach Porto. Or was this still Porto, the park? Whatever, I would be in Porto in any case if I had walked through the park. Under the bridge, I decided to start on the right path again, to walk this path up to its end this time. I could walk the other side of the park back to Matosinhos, I thought.

So, the beginning of today's walk was nothing new. First to the crossing with the nice lake - a really nice place to sit on one of the benches. Two joggers overtook me as I continued my way, as the way was steeper, and I started again to sweat. Well, I was not in such good shape, and it was, at least presently, very sunny. I reached the nice "tunnel" again and the traversing path that I had used the last time to walk back. So, from now on, it would all be new to me.

A bend, and it seemed as if the open, sunny path, would enter the woods - would mean shade. And in fact, "woods" was a bit exaggerated, but the trees now, in a narrower way, formed a closed shelter from the sun over my head - it was relieving. But the path was still steep, even somewhat steeper. Nevertheless, it was nice to walk there - a colorful bird, a squirrel, and only from time to time another person. It all opened up again - a kind of plaza, some benches with a nice view of a second lake, or third, if the one under the bridge counted. Should I sit down, at least for a moment? There were a few clouds, and ducks at the lake. Some benches made of stone in the shade, but I continued my way. I was not sure how much I had already finished.

I reached, not long after, the next traversing path through the park. I still walked under the trees in the shade. Was this the idea of the park? Lakes and traversing paths? But I continued my way - now it nearly felt like being in the woods. It was still a steep path, but I had started to slow down - I would have all day. There was no need to hurry. I had no appointment, had not to be at a certain time at a certain place - I had even no idea where my aim today should be. Walking in the park was the idea, to walk through the whole park this time - not more.

The landscape had opened up again, no longer in the woods, nice soft waves of green with trees - and all the time benches to sit down and enjoy the presented. But not for me. The way was still wonderfully shaded but steep. And was it, apart from the plaza, always a natural path, now it started to be cobbled - I reached the end of the park. I had to walk leftward now to reach the other side of the park, and I immediately reached an entrance to the park - I looked to the outside. This would be Porto. Should I visit Porto first before walking back along the other side of the park? So I left the park, and the street in front of me was the Avenida do Parque. But this was not the street along the side of the park I had walked along. This was the traversing street. I thus walked to the corner of the park, outside the park, the corner of the Avenida do Parque and the Avenida do Boavista. And I looked up the Avenida do Boavista, and down the Avenida do Boavista - this was Porto, assumable.

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Looking down the street - wow, it has been a pretty long way, all the way up. Looking up the street - I could see no end of the street, all the way up. I looked around - all seemed modern, modern buildings, larger than in Matosinhos. This could be in Heilbronn, I thought. Not much seemed to differ. Especially not the cars on the street - many from Germany, mostly from the premium class. Mercedes and BMW, but no Volkswagen - not stylish enough? And French cars, and some Italian, a few Ford, but no American cars. No exaggerated large pick-ups, no RAM or so. But in the end, at least this part of Porto seemed not very interesting. Okay, this was in no case the old Porto, a suburban most likely. The problem was, should I follow the street up to see what I would find there, or should I walk back through the park to Matosinhos? There it would be more Portuguese again in any case - the street seemed to be very long, no shade, no trees anymore, no park. What about continuing the way until the next café? There I could decide whether I should walk back or not, after a snack and something to drink. So I decided to walk up the street. It should not be that long to the next café, at least in Matosinhos.

And in fact, I had missed it while looking around. Just on the other side of the Avenida do Parque was the first café. Okay, this would be a bit fast - or. I was sweaty, but this would not become better,

walking up a street in the sun with no shade. But most of all, I wanted to see more from this area first and where this street would lead. Housing blocks, but also nice single houses - this seemed not to be the cheapest place to live. Well, not a long way to the beach, just down the road. Most likely not a long way to downtown Porto, up the street. Sure, this would be a pleasant place to live, as I passed some very interesting houses. Especially some, all at the right angle. They looked in a way like the famous Bauhaus buildings in Stuttgart. And in the background were large housing blocks, much larger than in Matosinhos. This was obviously a housing area, and I saw still no end of the street. Would it be reasonable to follow it further? On the other side of the road, a car dealer, Mercedes, the sedans in front fitted to the area.

I reached the next crossroad, Avenida do Doutor Antunes Guimarães, it seemed as though I could have reached the top of the street soon. I'd sweated a lot now. But I looked left and saw parasols on the left and right side of Avenida do Doutor Antunes Guimarães - it would be time for a break. Even if I were to be in true soon at the end of the street upwards, but what would be next? I had no idea and entered Avenida do Doutor Antunes Guimarães to decide on a café - Concha Douro was my decision. The one on the other side was a restaurant. "Pasteleria" and "Cafetaria" were written there, and a second time again, with "Charcutaria" and "Confeitaria" added. Okay, charcutaria I had already seen on the butchery in Matosinhos. Cafetaria was obvious, confeitaria as well, confect, and pasteleria seemed to lead to pastry. Well, all at once? But as I entered the place, I understood. A large room was divided into separate parts, one of which was for drinking coffee. From outside, I had thought that this would be a simple café, but inside it appeared to be very different. Again, not judging something in Portugal from outside. My problem?

I had sweated a lot. I still sweated, and now even more, I would smell. Okay, not so many were in. A coffee - why something warm when already sweating? - and there was a counter like in the supermarket, only with much more displayed. I chose something with dough and ham, something savory, and a nice looking cake. A coffee and a water, I was happy as all was done and I could sit on my table - I felt uncomfortable. But it was good to sit in the shade, inside - the water was good. Nevertheless, I could not really come down, I ate and drank fast. I wanted to leave since I had the feeling that the others in the room would always look at me. I paid to leave.

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As I stood on the street again, Avenida do Doutor Antunes Guimarães, and walked to the crossroad again - yes, it seemed as though I would have soon reached the top of the road. So I continued my way - it could not get worse, the sweating could not get worse. A large business building on the other side of the road, a bank in any case, most likely an insurance company, suchlike. A larger restaurant with a large parking lot on my side - with its sign and the drive-in it looked nearly a bit "Los Angeles". A cattle with the head of a rooster - Tourigalo / Restaurante / Grelhados.

Nearly as next was an obviously large property with a large house on it, a wall around it. It looked like a villa or a mansion, and there was a very futuristic-looking building on the other side of the road. It was interesting. Already in Matosinhos, you were repeatedly surprised by this side by side of old, even decayed, and modern, even futuristic. It had its charm, I thought. It was the building of a communication company. A school on my side, a small plaza with a modern sculpture on the other side of Avenida da Boavista. And the street seemed to find no end, no shade.

A Burger King, it was nice how rare such fast food shit could be found in Portugal. It was no problem in Germany to see the next Burger King, MacDonald's, or even a KFC or Pizza Hut. More pleasant restaurants and charming houses, but also more housing blocks now, as I overpassed a freeway and walked still up the street, even if the street was less steep now. But now again, the street seemed to be endless, even more so now than before - walking back? But the whole way back, would that make sense? Would I have luck then this street would lead me to Porto, the city center, or at least to a metro station. The rest would be easy then, driving back to Matosinhos. Although I had no idea what would be more promising.

Yeah, I liked it to just walk around a city or a place, that I did not know. No map, no planning, just

walking around. You could very often discover interesting things, but it sometimes escalated out of control. And I had the feeling that this was exactly such a moment. But I continued my way. This seemed to be the better choice, mostly housing blocks now. But then there were again also nice properties with really impressive-looking houses. Old, with impressive stairs and porticoes. It was easy to imagine that this area was a hundred years ago, or so, an area for the very rich. And also today, this was obviously no area to find a cheap place to live. Crowne Plaza, a clinic and a hotel, more apartment buildings and a Pingo Doce - I entered it to buy me some water and have some shade. And when I looked down the street, now nearly flat, I could see a large column in the middle of the street, trees around. I would have reached the end of the street, and most likely there would be a plaza or a park. I would have managed it, I thought.

And in fact, it was not long, and everything changed. Suddenly, there was a nice row of Portuguese-looking houses, some with nice tiles and cast iron balconies, on the other side of the road. In front of me was the column with a sculpture on top and a park. But what was most interesting was my side of the road. A large plaza opened up - again, a futuristic-looking building. It was not difficult to understand that this would most likely be a concert hall. I walked around it. It was a really exciting building that looked a bit like a spaceship on its landing site to me. But then I decided to enter the park, where I should find a bench with some shade.

The column was about war, this was not difficult to understand. 1808 was written on it, in Roman numbers. Well, Portugal and 1808? I had no idea - Napoleon? It would fit at the time, and I had learned in school about Napoleon and Germany, Italy, and Russia - but Portugal? Whatever, the top was interesting. An eagle - it seemed to be an eagle - defeated, maybe even dead, with a roaring lion standing on it. The meaning? No idea!

I sat down on a bench in the shade - it helped somewhat. Well, if this was a concert hall, possibly the concert hall of Porto, then there should be a metro station nearby. Not many people were in the park or passed it, but some in any case. What about asking where I could find the next metro station? What about asking what 1808 meant for Portugal? What about asking what the eagle symbolized and what the lion represented? But hey, this would have meant that I would have to address somebody - I still sweated. And the idea to address somebody not made it better. But walking back the whole way would be idiotic. It was a dilemma, and I tried to find a solution as I also tried to enjoy the beauty of this place.

## **February The Fifth**

I followed the same morning routine as the last few days, then I walked to the breakfast room. Well, I was also the first today, and only a couple joined me later - I assumed that others would most likely come later. The usual breakfast, and I started again to become unsatisfied with this breakfast. It was okay, no doubt, but I started to like these many cafés. All these opportunities to eat something all the time. And the servings were smaller than in Germany and much cheaper, and this gave you the opportunity to eat more often without eating a lot - okay, I ate a lot. But everywhere one could always see nice pastry, nice toasts, offers at midday, wonderful restaurants - it was nice here, a much more pleasant offer in catering than in Germany. And I sat here in this room, eating a continental breakfast.

I finished my preparations as I was back in the room again with no distinct aim. Well, the day yesterday? It had been charming and interesting in a way. I had seen a lot, and I had been in Porto. But otherwise, the day had been a disaster. So, whatever I would do today, I would not walk again for hours in the sun. Maybe also because it was a cloudy day today, it seemed that rain would be most likely. A day at the beach might be? Sitting there, drinking coffee, eating ice cream, or waffles. I decided to walk to the beach. The rest we would see.

As I reached the beach and the promenade, I had the impulse to continue walking. To walk along the promenade and the beach. Just to stroll somewhat, every few yards was an opportunity to stop by a café or a restaurant for a coffee or more. As said, it was cloudy today, and at the beach, it was also windy. Thus, it was cold. Therefore, the jacket was a nice piece of clothing this time, not like yesterday. I reached the traffic circle and the net and decided to continue my way to the ugly building.

It was windy, and the waves were high. Not at the first half of the beach, but here at the second half, there were many surfers in the water - well, the waves were nice for them. But for me also - I liked seeing the white foam on the waves. At the fortification, where the beach and sand ended and the rocks were, the waves hammered against the rocks. It looked spectacular - maybe I should walk up there? Then I reached the ugly building.

Well, there was this fitness club inside, one of the few places on the upper floors that seemed still alive. Okay, today, on this not so-nice day, they were outside. They had arranged several of these training bikes in front of the ugly building. One of the bikes stood opposite the others in the front, obviously the trainer. He pushed the others to give their best and everything they were able to – he spoke Portuguese. Of course, I could not understand him, but the scenery was self-explanatory. I had to confess to myself, even if it sounded arrogant now, that I considered the image ridiculous.

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I pondered on what to do now. Walking to the rocks behind the fort again, this time with a rough ocean? The park again? I wasn't at the harbor so far - the ice cream parlor at the "U"? They would most likely also serve waffles or crêpes during the colder season. I was unsure what I should do, and the wind freshened more and more - the surfers would like it. It started to freeze

Funny, yesterday, I sweated while walking up the hill toward Porto, and today I started to freeze. I had severe problems with my back several years ago. And until today, there were some things I shouldn't do. Carrying too much weight, for example. Up to around forty pounds, it was okay - a single bag of sugar or flour with fifty-five pounds as well. But very problematic could be cold, cold wind, wet and cold. I needed to protect my back then. Well, I wore enough, but I was a bit concerned. The bed was okay so far - not too soft. Too soft was bad for my back. This would not be the first trip where I would have some issues with my back. Sleeping on the floor, the hard floor, was always a good alternative then - I had spent some nights on the floor of motels not so long ago, for instance. But it became better with every year. Every year, over the cold and wet half of the year, I had fewer problems. Nevertheless, it would be bad to have some issues now. Yesterday, the long walk and sweating. Today, the cold, the wet, and the windy weather - and an unfamiliar bed.

One of the cafés in the ugly building? They weren't that inviting on the inside, and it was too cold to sit on the outside. Walking back to the ice cream parlor? I wasn't there before. I did not know what they would offer, in fact. The supermarket was not far away? There I could get in any case something - coffee and croissants. Maybe a pie - they offered also hot dishes and sandwiches? I could walk back to the Avenida da República, nice cafés there. There was this café at the corner, opposite the parking lot of the supermarket. I could not decide what would be the best.

I had no idea what I should do with the rest of the day - eating in a restaurant in the evening? Then I should not eat too much during the day. This was my fourth day after my arrival in Matosinhos. I could use the metro to ride to Porto? The aquarium was near - but a cup of hot coffee would be nice. I could not decide.

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Well, I was only here because of the music, her concert in Braga. The same concert that I already had seen in Stuttgart not that long ago. I was only here to see whether I would be able this time to do what I hadn't been able to do in Stuttgart - to address her. I had thought that she should possibly

be a person who could understand a person like me - but of course, I did not dare to address her while spending some time together with her as one of her Patreons. And now, as I had flown to Portugal, to Porto. And now, as I stayed in Matosinhos, to travel to Braga, to meet her again and, most likely once more, would not dare to address her. But at least, I tried it again and gave it another chance.

And hey, in a way, it was nice here. The food was fantastic - Portugal. Not that much I knew from Portugal - France and Spain in between. The Carnation Revolution was a term I knew, but I did not know the circumstances. I had some vague images in mind - soldiers with carnations in their rifle barrels. It had been after WWII - they had overcome a dictatorship. The Germans needed a total defeat in a world war that they had started to "overcome" their dictatorship. Portugal was far away from Germany. One of the poorer European countries, maybe like Italy. In no case was it such an economic powerhouse as Germany. The Deutsche Wirtschaftswunder after murdering millions of Jews in the gas chambers. The Portuguese had been a naval power before the English - Columbus and Vasco da Gama. Did the Portuguese have colonies? Not in Africa - I was not aware of. Perhaps I should do some research? Perhaps I should decide where to go and what to do with the rest of the day? Nevertheless, even with this day yesterday, I had the feeling that this place, Portugal and Matosinhos, exuded something that was pleasing to me - but I could not take hold of it.

## **February The Sixth**

I stood up, and the first thing I did after switching on the TV was to take a shower, as every morning so far, and it would not be my last today. I already felt nervous - a hot shower to refresh after a sweaty night. But it helped only slightly, as in the days before. I dressed, felt uncomfortable, and walked downstairs to reach the breakfast room, more of a breakfast hall.

I was the first there, as always, and sat down at the usual table, with the windows in my back and the whole room in front of me. And I had not to wait long, and the landlady started to bring me the usual breakfast. Right after the few days I stayed here, she already knew what I wanted for breakfast. Okay, not many guests she had presently, off season, and still the limitations due to the pandemic. At least, after exactly two years, it had been again possible for me to travel to Matosinhos. It had been two years, and it was the first time at all that I traveled again after the last time I had been here. The last time was only due to the concert in Braga, but this time it was to be again in Matosinhos, in Portugal.

I had liked being in Portugal, in Matosinhos, in Porto, or in Braga. It had been a nice time - in some ways. Overall, it had been a total defeat, and I had made a complete fool of myself. But this had not been the fault of the this nation or its people, quite to the contrary. I was my problem - my perpetual unrest and my inability to open up to other people, simply to speak with them or to get in close contact with them. To embrace someone else. It was only my fault. But the place as such, the people, I had liked it, and I had the interest to come back to get more impressions about Matosinhos and Portugal - my dream to spend the time of my retirement on the ocean. I first had thought of the large ocean, the Pacific Ocean. But after being here two years ago at the small ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, I started to doubt about that.

Well, the Pacific Ocean - I had only a connection to the USA, the West Coast. Australia or New Zealand seemed uninteresting to me. However, the USA? A fucking health care system, everything was costly, and money was the golden calf that the whole nation worshiped. You could be the worst and most ruthless swine, but as long as you were rich, everything was okay. And yet, I had also found a USA that I had fallen in love with, but this did not change the circumstances of reality.

Portugal, instead, still in Europe, had a good health care system and cheap costs of living. With all the small cafés and butcheries everywhere, it reminded me of Germany in my youth. In fact, it was even more charming. My plans had been, two years ago, to be in the States again, to see the rest of the West Coast, exactly three years after my last stay there, but this had not been possible because

of COVID-19. Furthermore, to be in Matosinhos again had also never been possible, not before now, exactly two years after my first and last stay there. What had changed in those years was that I was no longer affixed to the USA. Portugal, the North of Portugal, had turned into an alternative to living at the ocean. Only that it had been impossible for two years now to travel neither to the States nor Portugal. Now, still with restrictions, it was possible to travel again. But why Portugal and not the States?

Well, it was much cheaper, faster, and easier to travel to Portugal than to the States. And the pandemic, and looking at the States? This total swine and asshole of a president? How they had screwed up the pandemic? More deaths than during the Civil War? This had not motivated me much to travel to the States again - even if it was heartbreaking in a way. Well, Portugal had made a mistake during the first winter, but then they had consequently learned to deal with the pandemic. There were no worthless discussions, like in Germany. They accepted wearing masks to protect themselves and others. What a difference compared to the USA! So I thought it would be best to be in Matosinhos again to see if this could be, in fact, an alternative to living in the USA.

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The landlady had served everything. I had gotten always some different rolls or croissants over the days so far, also fruit, but especially some of the home-made marmalade, also today. But I had always seen the same woman so far - she was also there for my check-in. This was insofar interesting as that the information I had about this hotel, Casa do Godinho, was that it was run by two sisters. They normally offered a buffet for breakfast with home-made marmalade and more. But this was not possible now due to the pandemic, and they thus severed your breakfast. Yes, I had again chosen a hotel with breakfast. This place had seemed to be a good choice to me. And in fact, it was clean, the room good, a lounge in the basement. However, the stay there was restricted due to the pandemic. A couple joined me. They picked a table with a good distance from me - all the tables had a larger gap from each other. Time for me to end my breakfast - I had the feeling that I would need another shower when back in my room. I walked upstairs.

I took another shower and tried to come down, pondering why I was always so nervous. All the days now, especially in the mornings, I had been dominated by this unrest. It was nice here. The people were friendly, but it did not help. I put new clothes on, took my backpack, and decided to walk the way up to the small park that I had found on the second day, Jardim Basilio Teles. A charming park with benches under trees and a children's playground. There were many cafés and restaurants in this area, but I had problems enjoying the pleasant area. I left the hotel.

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After walking up the street, I reached the park, a nice park with benches and trees. An interesting building and a pleasant plaza were also there, and I already sweated again. Not because of endeavor, but because of being insecure. I was an insecure person my whole life, about everything, but why here? In this city, near the beach and near the ocean, sitting on a bench and enjoying shade-giving trees. And it was early in the morning, not so sunny, with clouds and a blue sky, right in the early morning. I nearly walked back to the hotel again for a third shower and new clothes. I had problems dealing with this situation.

And it was not because you still had to use a mask or because of the other still-valid rules and restrictions. I had had no issues wearing the mask on the train in Germany to the airport. At the airport in Frankfurt, not even on the plane flying to Porto. And by no means in Portugal, in Matosinhos, where everything was relaxed and everybody accepted the necessary limitations - contrary to Germany. No, it was me. I was unable to find peace in my mind. I did not sit long, but I looked at two old men sitting on other benches, enjoying the morning. I was unable to. I had to stand up, walk again, and be on my feet, as I would search for an imaginary aim. I decided to walk towards the harbor.



Well, I had some knowledge about Matosinhos right now, from my last stay, so I entered Rua Conde Alto Maerim. This street would not bring me directly to my aim - the harbor, the market hall. But it was a good street to start my way. I therefore altered at Rua 1º de Dezembro to Rua Álvaro Castelões, this street would lead me to the market hall. I passed nice cafés, butcheries, and small groceries, and I asked myself how they could survive. It was not so that there were no supermarkets - especially these small groceries? I was on my way to a market hall, not far away. But someone would also have to buy its fruits in these small shops. They otherwise would be not able to survive. Well, it all reminded me of my youth, entering a small shop with a small coin to buy something - a pretty long time ago, as I reached the market hall, the right corner of the market hall.

The market hall, an information sign at the entrance - the Mercado Municipal de Matosinhos. Cafés were already on the streets around, and just from outside, it was easy to see that inside the market hall there would be other cafés and even restaurants. Well, of course, it was not the first time that I saw the market hall. Already at the last time, I had seen the market hall but I had never entered it, and I also did not enter the market hall this time. I could walk along the market hall, down the street, to nice places to sit down. But I decided to walk the rest of the way to the bridge, a bascule bridge like Tower Bridge in London. Whereby, this bridge was by far more modern, the Ponte móvel de Leça. And to my point of view, much more interesting. I had seen it once or twice opened so far to allow a large ship to enter the harbor. But I had never walked over the bridge so far and had not visited the other side of the harbor, the beach there - maybe today?

\*

<< I stand in the middle of the bridge, look at the direction of the ocean, the harbor as well, look at the not so small ships

<< some got their cargo uploaded, some get loaded, a lot of steel, sand, containers, many containers on the other side

<< a large ship comes from the ocean, heads to the harbor, it will be far too high

<< subsequently the alarm rings, the bridge will move soon, will enfold, I have to decide

<< moving back, or to the other side, to the known, or the new, but I have to decide

<< no longer on the bridge, walking along the harbor, the known side, Avenida Eng. Duarte Pacheco, more sun now, I'm sweating, have my jacket out, but it's not the sun as such

<< I follow the street, the plaza, up the hill, I still know it; I still saw it while driving from or to the airport with the taxi, I walk up that street, Av. Dom Afonso Henriques

<< the plaza, Praça Guilhermina Suggia, a monument, Monumento ao Pescador, looks fine

<< not so sunny currently, there would be benches, but none under the trees around, but I have no time

<< I walk on, following the street, will bring me to the direction where I came from

## February The Seventh

<< it's November the 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, waking up at O Sardinhas

Standing up, taking a shower, looking at the turquoise room (description). Pack my backpack and search for a place to have breakfast.

A room without breakfast this time, so many small cafés and pastelerias all around. Nearly three years of pandemic now, again in Matosinhos, exactly one year after the last time (therefore it's 2022 now).

But as always, I have my problems, the last days, especially at the pasteleria by the hotel. Speaking no Portuguese, I feel foreign, but much better than last year anyway. No real restrictions anymore, I

do not sweat that much, feel more confident.

<< I walk to the small park where I tried to come down last year, Jardim Basílio Teles, sit down  
<< better than last year, but not good  
<< feel still in turmoil, sweat  
<< walk to the café, down there, Café Lua, at the crossing, at the green, with this small statue, you can sit outside  
<< it's somewhat sunny today, all places in the shade are occupied, I sit down  
<< I order a coffee and a croissant, look at the roasted bread others eat  
<< more sun now, I start to sweat, even more, drink my coffee fast, the croissant, and look to pay  
<< I start to walk around, with no distinct aim  
<< towards the ocean, maybe that could give me rest, the thought  
<< but most likely not  
<< and I do not understand, I like it that much here, it's so nice here, but I'm unable to come down  
<< I do not understand

<< it has become evening, sitting Pérola do Atlântico, R. Roberto Ivens, on the other side of the street is the LIDL and McDonald's  
<< it's one of this interesting places  
<< an incredible amount of everything that's sweet, a place for breakfast, coffee and cake in the afternoon, daily menu of course, but also dinner – it closes at 8 PM, so no real restaurant in that meaning because Portuguese start with a real dinner often not before 8 PM or even 9 PM  
<< I feel somewhat comfortable, I start to understand Matosinhos, I start to understand Portugal – somewhat at least  
<< I try not to be so nervous, it functions relatively well. I order a tea, a black tea, a soup of the day, as I know now, a vegetable soup, and a steak  
<< the steak is thin, not much weight, but good fried, and enough! - dessert still waits  
<< the dishes in Portugal are not so large, but this is nice – everytime at every place you can eat something, a snack, a toast, a cake  
<< often the combination of rice and French fries, but this time only fries  
<< a coffee thereafter, and I choose a pastry at the counter, outlay  
<< I have the feeling that I handled it not so badly, pay, a walk along the beach?  
<< maybe a stout at Titan I? Cremosi would be closed now. I started to feel comfortable here

## February The Eighth

<< My Stay Matosinhos, March 12th, 2023 - this timeline will be exactly defined by the concerts

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room (description, site, away from the beach, R. Silva Pinheiro). Walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street, Veiga, as nearly every day for the days, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. I feel a little Portuguese, still have my problems, but much better than nearly exactly four months ago. Happy to be able to return so quickly. The pandemic seems to be over now.

<< reflecting on the last stays, this is the fourth, about the first time at the ocean, L.A., and this place at the ocean  
<< reflecting about, that this place could be so much better a place to stay, retirement, than the USA, West Coast, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, but all the USA  
<< no gun violence, no political extremism, no endangered democracy, better health care  
<< yeah, the small ocean, not the big, but nevertheless, water until the horizon, big ships

<< this time, it feels so different from the last three times  
<< but still insecure, still in uncomfortable situations, still sweating, but here I feel adopted  
  
<< in the first year, 2019, this has been only a place to reach Braga, but I understood that it's not Porto, Matosinhos instead, but I liked it, thought about it  
<< but then came COVID, and no traveling was possible anymore (March 2020; del Rey; Agnes Obel, waiting until 07/2022)  
<< but at the end of 2021 in Matosinhos again, and it was nice, even if I had all these problems  
<< could this be an alternative to the West Coast?  
<< a third time at the end of 2022, more comfort now, feel cozy and safe, even with the still existing problems  
<< it's the beginning of 2023 now, only a few months later  
<< I have started to learn some Portuguese  
<< I feel more stable this time, unless, not absolutely  
<< but I see, it could be a place for me  
<< have started to eat menu / prato do dia, regularly  
<< I feel more comfort here, in a foreign land, than in my homeland  
  
<< sitting Cremosi, outside, with my jacket in the sun, drinking a white tea

## **February The Ninth**

<< November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 D'el Rei

I stood up, switched on the TV, took a shower, dressed, a pair of trousers, a shirt. Then I walked to the breakfast lounge. Always the breakfast buffet. Back to room, packing the backpack, stepping out.

<< I walk to the beach, the usual way, but it's raining today  
<< I want to see the ocean, I have to see the ocean, I will die in it one day  
<< Bar Praia Do Titan my first stop, more precisely, Bar Praia Do Titan I, II is kitty corner to it, not directly at the beach, at the end of Av. da República, looks more like a restaurant  
<< this time I sit inside, but nice, an open fire, it's comfortably warm – I do not sweat?  
<< I order a black tea, no, not more, what more could I order?  
<< I like sitting here, even if it rains, looking through the glass, watching the stormy ocean, the rough, white waves, I like it sitting here  
<< but after a while, I decide that I have to move on

<< not a long way, and I reach the next interesting place, Cremosi, ice cream, waffles, crêpes, and a very interesting selection of teas  
<< I order a white tea and a crêpe with two spoons of ice that I select at the counter  
<< it takes a bit of time, then I get my tea, and thereafter the crepe  
<< wow, they serve the tea in a Japanese cast-iron tea pot, like I own a larger one  
<< mine is black, these have this typical greenish color  
<< the tea is wonderful, the ice cream is tasty, and I start to get nervous again  
<< but why, the tea is fine, the crêpe and the ice cream are wonderful, and the place is nice  
<< but it doesn't help, I start to sweat, increasingly, I hurry to drink the hot tea, eat the cold ice cream, it starts to become a disaster  
<< I have to pay at the counter at the entrance, a young woman with glasses is looking nice, obviously, the register is her part  
<< outside, in the pouring rain, I decide, the supermarket, only a few corners away

<< I'm in the supermarket, I walk around, and I come down somewhat  
<< what a pity that I have no kitchen, so many fantastic foods one could buy  
<< so far I have only bought some salad, Caesar Salad, packaged, and thereto, ham or cooked king prawns, as well packed, bread, to eat it in the evening at the hotel  
<< but what maybe did not sound that interesting was a very nice dish, the salad fresh, with croutons and so on, good dressing  
<< ham in a considerable variation, the king prawns super, not used to it to be able to buy such good food, packed, in a supermarket  
<< I decide to have coffee and something to eat  
<< the hot dishes look fine, but I do not know how to order, and I get nervous again  
<< more people here today, most likely more will come for lunch  
<< I order a coffee with milk, still not knowing the right name, and two different pastries, not knowing what's in it  
<< I sit down

<< one is filled with chicken, one with ham, both are delicious, and I like this small café au lait more and more  
<< I decide to have another coffee, this time, two croissants  
<< more people now there, some pick a number, it's like in a government agency at home, but in a supermarket?  
<< I'm the next, but I have no number, but this appears to be okay, I'm very nervous again, I'm sweating, I order and pay  
<< I look for a place apart, but not much is left, was it a mistake not leaving, ordering more?  
<< I do not understand, the last time? But too many people are here today, not enough space I have.  
<< I eat and drink fat, there's a restroom at the entrance, I'm in, I'm alone  
<< I try to cool down, the cold water, but it definitely does not helps  
<< back to the hotel, I walk, I have only to follow the street  
<< I need a shower and new clothes

<< in the evening, it no longer rains, it's cold  
<< I walk down to the beach again, no salad today, I have decided to try Titan II  
<< a good idea, I feel better, I'm early, I have learned that the Portuguese eat later, it's 6 PM  
<< as expected, the place is empty as I enter  
<< I'm insecure, can I simply sit down, or do I have to wait, I sit down at a small table  
<< a waiter comes, I ask for the menu, get it, most Portuguese understand English  
<< I decide on a black tea – why something hot – and a dish called Pica Pau, should be something with meat  
<< it's a kind of stew with meat and sausages, cheese, roasted bread, a lot of sauce, all very hot and heavy  
<< I eat it and start to sweat, extremely, while others come in, the hot tea does not help, I walk to the restroom, but it really does not help  
<< I finish the meal, the waiter asks for a dessert, do I look ridiculous, sweating like that  
<< I have been at the restroom again, and therefore, I do not sweat so much currently, I say yes  
<< a dessert I can choose at the counter, everybody can see me now  
<< he recommends something that he calls „rhamandes“ or so  
<< I agree and add a glass of Port  
<< the dessert is fantastic, a kind of French toast, but much more tasty  
<< the Port as well  
<< I try to come down a bit, which functions somewhat, but more and more guests are coming  
<< I decide to pay, to leave, and to walk to the beach

<< at the beach, windy, nearly a storm, drizzle, I like it, I'm nearly alone, I come down

## February The Tenth

<< November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 D'el Rei

I stood up, switched on the TV, took a shower, dressed, a pair of trousers, a shirt. Then I walked to the breakfast lounge. Always the breakfast buffet. Back to room, packing the backpack, stepping out.

<< I used public transport this time, the Metro, to visit Porto

<< the Metro station right at the hotel, no half hour, no change needed, my station was Casa da Musica, underground

<< description of the ride??????

<< it would be only a short walk down a street, Av. da França, then I would reach the park again, Praça de Mouzinho de Albuquerque, and of course, the music hall, Casa da Musica

<< I had no distinct plans, but I thought that it would be nice to reach the river, the Douro

<< a park should be between me and the river

<< I arrived at the station, underground, walked down the street, and stood in the park again

<< well, how easy it had been this time, compared to the last time, a sunny day, I felt relatively good, at least so far

<< I walked around the monument in the middle, Monument to the Heroes of the Peninsular War, not really knowing what it was

<< and I managed, in fact, to sit down for a moment

<< I decided then to stand up, knowing the rough direction, I left the park

<< I could choose between two wider streets, wide for Portugal, and decided on the right one, R. de Gonçalo Sampaio

<< the street was uphill - well, my aim was a river, uphill seemed no bad idea

<< right at the beginning, on both sides of the zebra crossing, a café, one of these small cafés that were everywhere, but I had breakfast, but they invented to simply sit down, as obviously the locals did

<< but I had an aim, so I decided to start my way

<< not long, and on the other side of the road a supermarket, Mercado Bom Sucesso, huge, shall I enter?

<< but I had just started my way, and there were also places to sit down and have a coffee, so I had to decide again

<< this time I decided for the right, steep uphill, that should lead me to the river and park, R. do Bom Sucesso

<< I followed the road, a longer time, was this the right way?, as I reached a crossing of several streets with some high housing buildings, high for Porto at least – how to continue?

<< I decided to turn right, a street not so wide, but steeply uphill, in any case, so I should reach the river at least

<< sunny now, the backpack, the jacket, did this turn to the same as the last time, walking to Porto?

<< I was sweaty again, had no real idea where I was, should I plan my trips better?

<< uphill, I had to walk uphill again, this could not be right!  
<< the sun, I started to sweat more, had nothing to drink, a bend, cobblestones, R. de Dom Manuel II, a low wall, and trees behind?  
<< a short way and I reach a larger crossing and the entrance of a park, is this my first aim, the park I searched, but where's the river?  
<< well, a small plaza, the entrance, a cast-iron door, a nice area to be seen, symmetrical, and a building behind  
<< I enter the park, Jardins do Palácio de Cristal

<< a smaller, symmetrically arranged park after the entrance, some stairs, then a plaza with a hall, an arena, Super Bock Arena in large letters, beer everywhere, and in much smaller letters, Pavilhão Rosa Mota  
<< I understand, it's a place for concerts, most likely sports, I start to round it and now I understand, a small lake, and now the park as such begins!  
<< I walk further, and I reach the end of the park, and now I understand!  
<< I see the river, but it's way under me, had no idea how hilly this place is!  
<< on the other side, I had seen it on TV, the cellars for the Port  
<< British families, one Portuguese, green tea, two-star restaurant  
<< to my left, this should be Porto Center; at the horizon are high housing blocks  
<< but down the river, what a wonderful sight  
<< I sweat and have tears in my eyes, this was worth all the endeavor!

<< but I want to reach the river, way down under me  
<< I turn right, to another part of the park and find a wonderful small square, like a little part of Versailles, I walk down to it  
<< there I stand now, on the stairs, the small square in front, the river, the famous bridge in some distance, Ponte da Arrábida, a glimpse of the ocean behind it, I cry  
<< but I see now a way to reach the river, the river where I wish to be, so I continue my way  
<< and I think that I have found a way, steep staircases between walls, this way should bring me down, passages to another garden from time to time  
<< But then, suddenly, a dead-end way, I enter the garden, walk around, but there's no way out! - I'm trapped, I have to walk back!  
<< hot now, and I walked downhill!, now I have to walk the whole way back?, uphill! I'm desperate in a way, upset in a way, I return!

<< I walk back to the entrance, pass some interesting buildings (description?), at the entrance again, I decide to walk back to the crossing with the large buildings, but I decide to take the other road this time  
<< the street appears to be straight, would have the right direction, uphill, trees on both sides, R. de Dom Pedro  
<< and very soon it's obvious, at the end I can see the river, down the hill  
<< I start to relax somewhat, only a matter of time, downhill in the shade  
<< I pass interesting fountains, Fonte da Rua de D. Pedro V, D. Pedro V Fontaine, can see the park now from the other side  
<< and then I have reached my aim, have reached the street along the river, Alameda de Basílio Teles, the bridge is much nearer now

<< and now? Rails along the river, small, know that there's a historic line, and it's not long before a historic streetcar passes by – reminds me very much on San Francisco memories of San Francisco?????  
<< it has become afternoon, I need to drink, and eat, but to drink would be important  
<< I walk along the river, towards the bridge, and to my luck, after the museum, Museu do Carro

Eléctrico, which I, of course, do not enter, there is a supermarket, Continente Bom Dia  
 << I enter it, my clothes are wet, and, what I had hoped for, is a café  
 << I order a café, by me two bottles of water, various foods to eat, and have no idea how to return,  
 now at R. do Ouro  
 << I could take a bus, most likely, buses are everywhere  
 << I knew, would I continue I would be at the ocean, could I walk back to Matosinhos, but it would  
 be a long way along the beach  
 << I bought more water  
  
 << it has become evening. Sitting in O Classico, I'm tired, exhausted. Why have I done I all this  
 today?  
 << the place different things on my table, ham, olives, and more  
 << I know, if eat I have to pay, but I have to eat, and it's tasty, and it will not cost that much  
 << after the supermarket, I walked to the ocean, under the bridge, the wonderful bridge, one would  
 have been able to enter the bridge from the street, but I had been much too tired  
 << the harbor had been nice, the old houses, the way back to Matosinhos, at least another mile,  
 most likely more  
 << no longer trees, no longer shade, sweat, exhaustion, had to sit down again, Restaurante Praia da  
 Luz  
 << not felt comfortable, but it was a nice place, felt like the first time in Los Angeles, sunburn in  
 February, the coldest month in California!  
  
 << I ordered a fish dish, with king prawns and got a hanging skewer, why always so difficult, I do  
 feel uncomfortable, but I have the feeling that I have to do it  
 << I would be here for a few days, no longer, where would be the problem if I blamed myself, even  
 more than just the whole day? The dish tasted fantastic!  
 << just before I reached Matosinhos again, the traffic circle where the forte was, I reached a  
 wonderful little garden, park, Jardins da Avenida de Montevideu  
 << a bit of shade, I sat on a wall, looked at the ocean  
 << why I do this? But I had done it. Was I a fool? Or had I done something beautiful?  
 << I decided to reach the supermarket at the beach, Pingo Doce, still some way, but there I would  
 feel somewhat comfortable, and I started to get used to the place  
 << I would drink my favorite coffee, two croissants, and maybe one or two pies  
 << after the dinner, I ordered something sweet, he accompanied me to the counter where I could  
 choose one, everybody could see me now, Putim Molotof was my choice. The place was crowded  
 now, the locals started to eat, a glass of old port at the end, 20 years old  
 << not really a pudding, egg white, but delicious, fantastic, as well as the Port  
 << at the end, I had not to pay fifty euros for all that!, had wine with the starters and fish, and the  
 Port was nearly the most expensive!  
 << after the supermarket I had walked back to the hotel, my legs hurt  
 << a long hot shower, I sweated much, laid down for a while, decided that I have to have dinner in a  
 restaurant now  
 << I tried to come down somewhat, a second shower, new clothes, not much, it had become dark,  
 much colder now  
 << I would walk to the street again, R. Heróis de França, but this time not O Manel, but O Classico  
 << I was back in the hotel, what a crazy day that had been! How many miles have I walked today?  
 How much had I sweated? And the restaurant at the end?  
 << I would be there never again, I would be never once more be in this city, I could blame me, one  
 of these weird tourists, it was my insecurity

## February The Fifteenth

<< D'el Rei, it's November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

I stood up, switched on the TV, took a shower, dressed, a pair of trousers, a shirt. Then I walked to the breakfast lounge. Always the breakfast buffet. Back to room, packing the backpack, stepping out.

<< sitting in the Metro, this time the ride would be somewhat longer, until the station Campanhã, at the Porto train station, Estação de Campanhã

<< I arrived underground, had to use a staircase, and had to enter the train station, which wasn't huge

<< it was easy to find my way to the counters, I planned to buy a ticket to Braga for tomorrow, both ways, preferably

<< well, buying tickets in Germany is not necessarily easy, in England, there are even more regulations, how would it be?

<< I was next in line, and I said that I wanted a ticket to Braga for the next day, preferably a return ticket, if there were regulations I had to consider

<< I had the feeling that she did not understand me totally, the woman behind the counter, as she gave me the ticket and demanded a surprisingly low price for it

<< I asked, to be sure, if I could use every train, at any time, or if there would be connections that I couldn't use with this ticket

<< she still seemed somewhat puzzled, told me, you can use every train you want

<< well, that had been easy, and cheap, public transport in Portugal, much better than in Germany

<< I stood in front of the train station, had planned to walk around this area of Porto today, I started to orientate

<< in any case, I would head left, this would bring me to the part of Porto that I had seen in the park to my right

<< a traffic circle, I could walk a straight, wider street uphill, or a somewhat smaller street to my left, not uphill, I decided on the street on my left, Rua da Estação

<< a place a coffee right there, should I become somewhat Portuguese?, a coffee before I start

<< on the other side would be another one, the next would not be far, I decided to start, to see the river again

<< around a bend, uphill, a crossing, which way should I choose?

<< downhill, but most likely towards the rails?, the other street uphill?, I decide to stay with my street

<< the next bend, the street narrow now, uphill, but obviously with many shops and cafés, I continue my way, now R. do Freixo

<< the street is straight, some shade, but I again start to sweat something, it's uphill all the way

<< small houses, not looking new, old, some even shabby, decayed, and some even no longer inhabited

<< is this Porto, the old Porto, not looking modern, like an old place?

<< like in Matosinhos in some streets, but nice shops, nice cafés?

<< after a while, it starts to get exhausting, I reach a small park, a green area, where the street, now Rua do Heroísmo, splits up into four streets, which I should follow?

<< I decide to head on, more or less straight on, no idea where I'm, Av. de Rodrigues de Freitas, still uphill

<< at the crossing, I turn left, would not lead me to the river, but maybe I can walk back?

<< not the same way, it starts again, to become a disaster, I sweat, I follow the street, R. do Duque de Saldanha, uphill



<< then the scenery opens up, a street with a middle green could bring me back, Av. de Camilo, but I choose the one at the crossing, Rua do Bonfim  
 << why still uphill, I do not understand this city, but again many small shops and cafés  
 << sitting down, having a café, should I buy me a coffee, a water?, but I wanted to know where I'm  
 << then it flattens, a crossing, a nice church in front of me, Alminhas de Santo Antoninho da Estrada  
 << I walk towards the church, a wider street uphill with a green median strip I see, could it be?  
 << I walk it down, I stay again, at the traffic circle I started!  
 << I'm exhausted, wet clothes, much sun now, does this make sense, have I seen Porto now?  
 << I enter the restaurant I had seen at the beginning, O Astro Cervejaria Petisqueira (had another name, nearby?)  
 << I order water and something to eat, do not feel comfortable, and I should drive back, back to Matosinhos, which I start to understand, or at least I think so  
  
 << in the hotel, after a shower, after I had walked for a while, in the dark, a coffee and two croissants at the supermarket  
 << have bought me a packed salad, bread, some ham, cooked packed king prawns, also unpacked at the fish counter, but then I had to speak with the women behind  
 << again a shower, I do not feel good, my legs hurt, but the food is fantastic, simply bought at the supermarket  
 << tomorrow I will be in Braga, will it be better there?, why should it?  
 << then the concert, will I dare this time, I fear  
 << I cannot be a different person, I cannot

## February The Sixteenth

<< D'el Rei; Travel to Braga; it's November 23<sup>th</sup>

I stood up, switched on the TV, took a shower, dressed, a pair of trousers, a shirt. Then I walked to the breakfast lounge. Always the breakfast buffet. Back to room, packing the backpack, stepping out.

<< I stood at the platform, my luggage with me, I would return to the hotel again, for the rest of the days, waiting for the train  
 << the train would depart at 10 AM, if no delay, but this wasn't Germany, so one could be hopeful?  
 << I would need a bit longer than half an hour to reach Braga, not a really long ride  
 << we came closer to 10 AM, as an announcement said something, I could not understand, but most likely about my train, that started to arrive just now  
 << it seemed, not like in Germany, that we would depart regularly, in Germany, one could be happy if a train arrived only „some“ minutes after departure time, arrived after departure time!  
 << a yellow train, not very different looking to a German commuter train  
 << I entered the train, not many were on it, could change, I sat down, stored the suitcase, and my backpack was by my side  
 << the ride began, and I looked out of the window

<< the first time we drove through Porto, or the outskirts, I could not decide, with some nice sights (description?)  
 << but then we left the city and hit the countryside, in a way, one could call it „bleak“, but I liked it  
 << we crossed small villages, wondering how these people made their living?, but it all looked fine  
 << wouldn't it be nice to live here? What a difference compared to a place like L.A.!

<< then more urban again, a stop in Trofa, half the ride roughly  
<< not so much landscape now, the train stations are larger again, Famalicao p.ex.  
<< again more landscape, not so urban, I liked that landscape more and more, even if I thought, it wasn't easy to live there, especially in former times, we reached Nine  
<< this not change much, until we reached Aveleda, and urban again  
<< the clock said, soon we would reach Braga, and so it was, we reached Braga, the train station, a terminal station and I left the train  
<< distance Porto Braga by train?, 42 km – distance Westlake to Santa Monica Beach by Metro?, not sure I was for the moment, but the ride lasted much longer!

<< as always, I had roughly in mind, the way I had to go, my hotel directly in the city center, by the large church  
<< uphill, but not a long way, 200 yards maybe  
<< in front of the train station, at the crossing, the traffic circle, I had to choose the wide straight street uphill, R. Andrade Corvo, to turn right then, after the first block, to enter this street, Rua Dom Frei Caetano Brandão  
<< but only for one block, turning left, then I should be there, then I should see the church  
<< and it functioned, better than thought, but with the luggage, it was nevertheless somewhat exhausting – why not take a taxi?  
<< but I was there, R. Dom Paio Mendes, Sé de Braga in front of me, had passed a nice-looking restaurant in the street before, aTípica, had read the menu, closed, would open in the evening, but many others here  
<< but first I had to check in

<< well, I stood in a front of narrow but long houses, as I know now is typical for Portugal, several were guesthouses, like the one I searched, but I found mine, Braga Bells Guesthouse?  
<< how I entered??? key card??? code???  
<< well, my room was upstairs, on the top floor, a narrow staircase, it was not easy to reach the room  
<< as I had managed it, the first thing that I needed was a shower and new clothes, I should drink and eat something  
<< I stepped out, decided to sit down on the other side, a coffee and a water, a snack, was not so hungry in fact  
<< the concert tomorrow in the evening, would have time to explore the city, later dinner?, back to the hotel, to lay down a bit  
<< in a way, it had been easy, the travel, in a way, I always made it more complicated than it had to be, I needed a rest

<< in the restaurant, right after it had opened, early for a local  
<< obviously a fine restaurant, interesting menu as far as I could understand, I felt insecure  
<< aTípica, with a glass floor where one could see old cobblestones through it  
<< I ordered a fish dish, was always no risk, not really sure what I had ordered  
<< as always, very fine, a wine, soup?, dessert and a Port, I felt insecure, more and more people inside, now I had to pay, to leave fast  
<< outside I stood, it hadn't been good, but at least no disaster, I started to walk around

<< I walked to the church, stood in front, turned right, a small plaza alongside the church, I crossed it to reach a street, R. Do Forno, a bar on the other side, but I do not enter, Tosga  
<< I turn right, follow the street the short way until it ends, hitting a somewhat larger street, R. Dom Afonso Henriques  
<< I turn left, a short way, a small plaza, a small park, Praça do Artesão, Largo do Santa Cruz  
<< I decide to walk around the block, I enter the street that would bring me back, I should be at the

church again, Rua de São João

<< I always see the church, the corner, around it, I should be at the bar again, I see another bar, Pelle

<< seems to be larger, shall I enter, would not be the first time in a bar (talking about Old Fashioned?), but the day has been stressful enough so far, but finally, I enter it

<< there's a room, a bar, but to my left is another room, not many chairs, I do not really understand

<< I start to feel insecure, do not know how to behave, like in San Francisco (details? L.A.?)

<< I walk to the bar, would be something natural, get asked, and order a Whiskey Sour, I know and like

<< I drink it at the bar, not bad, nothing special, but I order nothing more, pay and leave, to go back to the hotel (the other people in the bar?)

<< as I walk around the corner, I see the other bar again, a second drink?

<< I feel as I should, I should do it, nevertheless, I felt insecure, what should happen, apart from being a weird tourist?

<< this time it looks like a bar, a room, a counter, a side room, dimmed light, everything makes sense

<< I walk to the bar, I get asked, and I ask if I could get an Old Fashioned

<< the young man behind the bar seems surprised, but says yes, and disappears through an open door behind the counter, a side room for storage, or so, most likely

<< he comes back, starts, it looks good, he seems confident, did he do some research?

<< he presents me the drink, I take it and walk to one of the bar tables near the entrance, an empty one, of course

<< the drink is good as such, but not enough steered, it gets very sweet at the end, the sugar is not totally dissolved

<< I feel better now, nearly relaxed, why not always?

<< I pay, say tat it has tasted fine, walk back to the hotel, go to bed after a shower, has been a long day, tomorrow will be the concert, tomorrow will be the essential day, the matter, why I have come to Braga

## **February The Seventeenth**

Concert Braga: Sunday; November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019; 7:30 PM; Theatro Cirico

I stood up, planned to spend the morning and day in Braga, in the evening, at the concert. Because this was a guest house, there was no breakfast like in the hotel in Matosinhos, but it should be easy to have breakfast in one of the small cafés. I left the hotel.

<< I started with the way I still knew, the plaza alongside the church, R. Do Forno, R. Dom Afonso Henriques, the small park, Praça do Artesão, Largo do Santa Cruz

<< but I decide to walk further on, the street bends, the next small plaza, a small green area with a fountain, Fonte do Largo Carlos Amarante

<< many restaurants and cafés here, I decide for Pastelria A Favorita, a typical place for Portugal, as I know now, a mix of bakery and pastry shop, but with daily menus as well

<< I order a coffee and a croissant, a brioche-type one, not made of puff pastry, like the ones I normally choose in the supermarket in Matosinhos

<< as always, very nice, that was breakfast, not much but enough, and the next place to sit down was mostly only yards away, I continued my way

<< I cross the small plaza, the fountain, two large buildings to my left, the street with cobblestones,

two colors, no cars, many restaurants in the short street, I enter it, walk through it, Rua Doutor Gonalo Sampaio

<< the street I hit was brought, brought for a Portuguese street, a pedestrian area, trees, and beds of flowers, Av. da Liberdade, and hey, the large house is the theater where the concert will be, Teatro Cirico

<< so, I know the way for the evening now, but it's still morning, the concert is at 7:30 PM

<< I walk up the beautiful street, uphill, and reach a large plaza, a plaza with a monument of course, but also several green areas, what a nice place, Jardim da Avenida Central

<< I walk around for a while, many caf  s and restaurants around here, seems to be the center of Braga – I walk further on

<< I decide not to go too far away from my hotel, and therefore I decide to enter a smaller street, straight, that brings me back towards the hotel, R. Do Souto

<< but very fast, the next pedestrian area, the crossing street, R. Francisco Sanches, I turn right and see after a short way a very nice plaza, Jardim da Santa Barbara

<< very baroque, beautiful, beds of flowers, fountains, not large, but beautiful

<< Braga seems to be a city of many parks and plazas

<< and at the next corner is the next park, this time with trees around and a fountain therein – I simply like it, and I start to relax

<< today not so hot, not much sun, and it starts to feel good

<< but it has become noon, lunch?

<< enough places available, so I decide on Taberna da Fonte, I enter it

<< wow, I enter it, and she's nearly the first I see, choose a table, can still see her

<< a woman, senhora, lady, difficult to say

<< no idea to guess how old, not so young I would say, corpulent, not badly meant

<< but what was striking? Never in my whole life, I had seen a woman wearing more jewelry

<< but not only the amount, to call the stones large was definitely no overstatement

<< to say it so, this had to be an incredible amount of carats, and gold and whatever

<< if only half were genuine, it would have been a fortune

<< I try not to look too often at her, and I think, why not?

<< okay, in a way it looks strange, weird, but in a way it seems to fit

<< I think, maybe it's people like her who make life better, people who seem not to fit

<< and the longer I sit here, the more I think that it was nice and good to see her, that you would have to thank her

<< one question remained unanswered: please tell me, that all these not very small emeralds, rubies and diamonds.....weren't all real

<< I paid and left

<< I started to walk around again, one could say, around my hotel

<< many interesting restaurants, Portuguese, but more than one Italian as well, I should eat something before the concert

<< I planned to be in the hotel before 6 PM again, shower, new clothes, I wouldn't have a long way, and I knew the way even now

<< I walked down a street, R. Dom Digo de Sousa, the Church I could see, it was close to 5 PM, and I decided to have lunch before the concert

<< I reached a crossing, and I knew the street from my arrival, Rua Dom Frei Caetano Brand  o, the next corner would lead me to my Hotel, a good place to eat something, I entered the restaurant, Porta Nova

<< Inside it was small, well, restaurant could mean much in Portugal, tables put very near to each other, not much room, despite the time, not empty – tourists, I knew that Braga was for tourists

<< I wanted to go, but then I decided on a tiny table for two

<< at the entrance, there was a board with the menu, in Portuguese and English, for tourists

<< Bacalao a la Moda Braga, Codfish the Braga, had caught my interest, so I ordered it

<< describing the dish?

<< and it tasted excellent, as always in Portugal, do not judge a place from the outside, by its furniture, or as it appears at the first moment

<< sit down, order, and enjoy, the fish was tasty

<< but then I decided that I should walk the short way back to the hotel

<< I sweated somewhat, but I had eaten something just now, drank hot coffee, and the sun shined

<< the concert would soon begin

<< after a shower and with new clothes, I stood in front of the theater, a nice building, I was nervous

<< I found the entrance, entered it, showed my tickets, but was too soon

<< I had to wait in a small hall with the counters for buying tickets, not so impressive

<< I woman came, obviously from the staff, to talk with one of the women behind the counter

<< she looked beautiful in her outfit – a burgundy pleated skirt, black opaque tights, black flats (a white blouse and a burgundy little jacket????), it looked very nice

<< she walked through a glass door that led to an impressive looking lobby, which I was not allowed to enter

<< with the time, more and more came, we were roughly twenty as we could enter the lobby

<< the lobby was impressive – description of the lobby

<< some more from the staff there, women in their nice skirts, and one or two men, but we had to wait somewhat longer until we could finally enter the concert hall

<< and what to say, it was most likely the most beautiful theater hall in which I stayed, it was simply impressive!

<< description of the theater hall

<< I looked at my ticket, it was somewhat confusing, but I found my place in one of the first rows, just like in Stuttgart

<< I sat down, and my thoughts were back in Stuttgart

<< only two months ago, I sat in Stuttgart, Theaterhaus Stuttgart, 18.09.2019, in one of the first rows

<< the same artist, the same concert, There Will Be No Intermission – A Night Of Piano, Pain and Laughter, Amanda Palmer

<< well, I was there to.....I had an idea, thought that I would be able to do something, but in the end, as always, I did not dare, my insecurity

<< what happend?

<< well, I had started to write, to become a writer, over four years ago

<< sure, I dreamt about that my writing would be read

<< had started a Patreon page, Amanda Palmer was very successful on Patreon

<< I knew the Dresden Dolls, liked their music, now she performs solo

<< I had a Patreon page as well now, but no Patreons, had tried to do the one or other, but it did not function

<< Amanda Palmer, I was one of her Patreons now, she met with her Patreons before the concert

<< would it be okay if I addressed her in such a moment?

<< the game was, that she would announce somewhat before, where she would meet with her Patreons

<< I was very early in Stuttgart, at the venue, drove by car, had my laptop with me

<< I started to walk around, would need a place with WiFi, not so easy in Germany as maybe thought

<< I started to walk along the larger street, Siemensstraße, found a café, ordered a coffee, but no WiFi

<< well, should not be the problem, was so early in Stuttgart

<< I continued walking along the street, found no place, and had to decide

<< I was at the place, the large street led uphill, I stood above the tunnel, looked down on the tracks

<< the other possibility would be, not to follow the larger street, but to turn left, to follow a smaller street down, which would lead to the train station, Tunnelstraße

<< train station would mean most likely WiFi, I thought, I followed down Tunnelstraße, reached the train station, Feuerbach, but also there no WiFi, I started to become desperate; I had already walked a longer way, I needed WiFi, what if I missed the message where to meet?

<< not far away, I saw a small restaurant, an inn, I walked thereto, sat down, and as the waitress came, I asked for WiFi, they had!

<< Wiener Straße, Brezel und Bier, I ordered a water and something to eat, started the laptop, Amanda Palmer Facebook, no message so far, no meeting point, okay, I sweated, but it still could be

<< I tried to come down, not very successful, and then the message, the meeting point - Killesbergturm, Killesberg Park

<< wow, had no idea where it was, but Google Earth – fuck, I had to walk the whole way back, even more, it would be a long way to the park, then I had to find the tower, I started to sweat, to get nervous, what a fucking idea it had been to meet her, to address her?

<< but, if I did not try now, what a lousy guy I would be?, potentially the one that I was, but at least I had to try

<< I paid and started my way back

<< I was at Siemensstraße again - theoretically, the park should not be that difficult to find, and a tower?

<< I had not to walk to the venue again, I turned right and entered a street, I had looked at Google Earth

<< this street, Alarichstraße, would end in another street, Maybachstraße, I had to turn right where this street would hit the next street, Stressemanstraße, at this corner, there should be the park

<< but to the tower, it would be some additional way

<< but at least, as I was at the corner, yeah, there was the entrance to the park, I had reached my first aim, the watch said that I would still have enough time, but I was somewhat exhausted, sweating, the sun shining, and still not at my aim

<< I had to walk uphill, and, I would still have to walk uphill

<< at least, soon I could see a structure, it should be the tower, the highest point of the park, and it was the tower, a very interesting structure – description

<< as I reached it I saw some people sitting there, they looked like they could wait for Amanda Palmer as well, but I dared not address them

<< I walked around a bit, tried to come down a bit, but was not very successful, the others became aware of me

<< I walked to them, one young woman addressed me, you're here for Amanda?, I said yes, she told me that Amanda would still need some time to reach the place, she obviously knew more than me

<< but then it was time, we would meet Amanda Palmer

<< I remembered that we walked around for a while, I was near her, said nothing, then we reached a little amusement park or so – had no idea that this place existed, and I had lived in Stuttgart!, Elisis Jahrmarktstheater und TangoZelt

<< there was a merry-go-round, and Amanda decided that we should make pictures there altogether,

and we did, I would have been able to touch her

<< thereafter I thought, I should address her now, now I had to finally give her one of my cards, I would have to address her, and of course, I did not!

<< I had business cards, with the URL of my webpage, my email address, the URL of my Patreon page, and a sentence: Writing, what else should I do!

<< I had planned to give her one of my cards, to ask her whether she would be interested in taking a look at my writing, but I did not dare

<< she said goodbye to us, and we walked to the venue together, and I hated me, I was such a lousy coward!

<< but, would it have been adequate, to ask her?, maybe it was better that way?, I had no idea

<< and the concert?

<< the concert, she talked about how she once was tied naked on a table, as a gift for his older brother

<< she talked about abortion, abortion in the USA, the terror attack in Boston (right?), the birth of her child, and about a miscarriage

<< three hours, of course, with many songs, but a lot of Amanda Palmer

<< and I was not even able to address her, feared that I would make a fool of myself, most likely I would have made a fool of myself, but.....

<< I felt like a piece of shit as I drove home

<< I saw later, that she would perform in Portugal, Braga, in two months

<< I decided to try it again, was able to have some days of vacation, booked a hotel, booked a flight, and now I am sitting in this wonderful theater hall, to try it again

<< would it function? - well, no meeting this time before the concert, she would address her Patreons in the hall, maybe it was better, maybe it was better not to try it again

<< a woman, in that stunning skirt, with two people behind her, addressed me: Sorry, you're sitting in the wrong seat.

<< I took a deep breath, I had ordered the tickets weeks ago, but.....

<< she told me that this happened not for the first time, the system was easy to misunderstand

<< but of course, it happened to me, I aroused attention again, and I hated it

<< I followed the woman, we walked a longer way, nearly to the entrance

<< thus far from the stage?, obviously, I could not remember

<< but, it would be no problem, I knew the "show" already, no meeting with the Patreons, I felt like an asshole

<< at least, the ocean was beautiful, at the ocean again

<< well, not Los Angeles or San Francisco, not the large ocean, but it was very nice here

<< all was human sized, the people had time, not always rushing like in the States, no gun violence, a socialist government, good health care, and fantastic food!

<< so, in that sense, the travel would have at least one nice aspect

<< Tori Amos, Cornflake Girl, that I knew now, the concert would begin

<< the concert began, and of course, it was the same as in Stuttgart, more or less

<< she asked the audience for songs she should play at a certain moment, and people shouted song titles

<< Shores of California was my first Dresden Doll song, and I love it until today, and she did not sing it in Stuttgart

<< I wanted to ask for this title, but it was a long way to the stage

<< I would have to shout out loud, which would create attention

<< and, was the title really Shores of California, or The Shores, would it matter, most likely not, but as always, I did not dare, no one wished Shores of California, not even I

<< no meeting with her Patreons before the concert, but she had announced that, after the concert (it was after?), she would make a picture together with her Patreons  
<< and she did, all together in a bunch, before and on the stage, I was, again, very near to her, but I was I  
<< I did not address her, and it was uncomfortable for me  
<< on the merry-go-round, in Stuttgart, there was a kind of certain distance left, but not here  
<< one big bunch of people, I among them, I did not feel comfortable, I sweated, and I was happy as it was over, the picture done  
<< now I could leave the place, as a fool, like in Stuttgart – or  
<< but.....

<< hugging, hugging each other had been a topic, and after the concert, something strange happened, in the lobby  
<< Amanda Palmer started to hug her audience, the people who had come, and suddenly there was a long queue of people, waiting to get hugged by her, to hug her  
<< I stood aside, not knowing what to do  
<< then I lined up at the very end, which would give me time to ponder  
<< the queue became shorter and shorter, and I became more and more nervous, sweated, should I leave?  
<< as I often had done, to run away from such moments  
<< I had traveled to Portugal, to Braga, to get a second chance  
<< I would be the next, had one of my cards in hand, but I was unable to embrace her!  
<< she was surprised, I asked her if I could give her my card, gave it to her, and left the place  
<< I would say, I was the only one who didn't hug her, I wasn't able to, had tears in my eyes  
<< acted like an asshole, what would I expect?  
<< and yet, I had done it, had addressed her, had given her the card, this was all that counted  
<< I had done it, had done something, in Braga, Portugal

<< I walked back to the guesthouse, I had looked like a fool, acted like a fool, I was a fool  
<< but on the other hand, not even dared to enter a shop in my youth?  
<< fuck! I had traveled to Portugal, Porto and Braga, had addressed a famous singer, had given her my card  
<< so embarrassing and ridiculous, but for me, it meant so much  
<< and what did I expect now?  
<< that she would become a Patreon of me? That she would visit my webpage? I, the asshole who had refused to hug her?  
<< on the other hand, she was Amanda Fucking Palmer, shouldn't be someone like her be able to understand a person like me?  
<< the ad in the L.A. Times, or my dark blue letter, nothing had happened thereafter  
<< most likely, it would be the same now  
<< and maybe it wouldn't be the worst if  
<< but I, I had done it, while walking back to the guesthouse

## **February The Eighteenth**

<< I was on my way back to Matosinhos, on the train again, had walked around in Braga for a while, before I had to walk to the train station  
<< had seen a billboard, There Will Be No Intermission – A Night Of Piano, Pain and Laughter, Amanda Palmer, (date?), the same as in Stuttgart



<< A Night Of Making A Total Fool Out Of You, I thought, but was I a fool or a hero?  
<< I had done something I wasn't able to do a few months ago  
<< okay, in a way, I had screwed it up totally, but at least, I had tried it this time  
<< a step forward, and Amanda Palmer?  
<< I did not expect to get any response, had not dared to address the sister Unthank in Bristol at the beginning of the year, not Amanda Palmer two months ago, but this time I had done it!  
< but in what a fucking manner?  
<< I leant back, looked at the landscape outside  
<< yeah, I like this landscape, I liked it to be in Portugal, at the ocean in Matosinhos, it was a nice place to stay  
  
<< at the evening, I saw a post from Amanda Palmer, not about me!  
<< she talked about how she had spent some time in the morning in Braga, walking around, just like me  
<< that she had met some from the audience last night, that they had a nice conversation  
<< I had not met her, while walking around in Braga in the morning, what would I have done?  
<< would I have been able then to hug her and explain to her why I couldn't do so  
<< I feared that it would have been only another disaster, I wasn't the guy for hugging  
<< a few more days I would stay in Matosinhos, should I return?  
<< it was nice here, and the people were polite  
<< could this be an alternative, not L.A.?  
<< well, a few more days, let's see

## 2021

### February The Thirteenth

<< November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Casa do Godinho

Standing up, taking a shower, knowing it will not be the last one, as every day, nervous, still sweating, not knowing why. Walking to the breakfast room as every day, the large room with some tables, with a good distance between them, no buffet as normally at this place because of the pandemic. The pandemic, nearly two years now. As before, only one sister, if she is one of the sisters. Breakfast items on the table, the self-made marmalade, alone, perfect, later, one more table occupied. Back to the room, still sweating, the next shower, new clothes, walking to the small park, trying to come down. The small park, not so far away, found it on the second day, Jardim Basilio Teles.

<< I walk to the beach, I start to get used to Matosinhos  
<< R. Godinho, I would have several choices, but I decided to follow it this time until its very end  
<< the Jardim Senhor do Padrão with the nice and interesting monument, with its interesting history, to my left, I turn right, enter the Av. Gen. Norton de Matos  
<< but only a short way to the traffic circle, Titan II to my left, Titan I to my right, and of course, the interesting building of the tourist's information, the information panels in the sand, telling you some about the history of this place, the monument Tragédia do Mar, so many died that day  
<< it's sunny, but windy at the beach, I start to like it, to get used to it  
<< I decide to enter Titan I, order a black tea, look out at the windy ocean, a fire, it feels comfortable

<< I continue my way, along the promenade, looking at the housing blocks there, they are forming an “U”, open to the ocean, a nice green area inside  
<< I still knew from two years ago, information panels in the city, that at this place once a large facility for processing sardines had stood  
<< until, wasn't sure, the 30s or 40s or so, a hard life at that time, everywhere you still could find remains of it in Matosinhos  
<< not a long walk, Cremosi was located at the end of the „U“  
<< I crossed the promenade, the Av. Gen. Norton de Matos, entered Cremiso, the woman with the glasses still there  
<< I order a white tea, a waffle, and chose two spoons of ice cream at the counter  
<< again, looking at the ocean, even more windy now, the white waves, but some surfers obviously liked the weather much

<< what next? I could walk down the promenade to its end, the next traffic circle, the Rotunda da Anémon, with the fisher net, She Changes, Janet Echelman  
<< entering Rua de Brito Capelo, a short way back, I would reach Pingo Douce, the supermarket, to have the usual, the Portuguese espresso with milk and two croissants  
<< and so I did  
<< and as always, the place was wonderful, walked around, the smell of the fish, the bacalhau, all extremely fresh, what a variety, to what prices, I would like to have a kitchen!  
<< but now I decide to return to the hotel, how many small cafés I would have to pass?  
<< I was somewhat exhausted, sweaty, a rest, a shower, new clothes would be good, to prepare for dinner

<< it has become evening, dark, not so late like a Portuguese, but later as a typical German tourist would be out for dinner  
<< still windy, cold, no time to sit outside  
<< I enter Titan II, two years ago, such a disaster  
<< but I feel confident, take a seat, the menu, I order fish, the dish I already knew from Braga  
<< the specialty from Braga in Matosinhos, would be interesting to see if it would be as good as in Braga  
<< a starter, a glass of wine, the place started to crowd  
<< the fish is very fine, more and more people inside, I have to visit the restroom  
<< I start to get nervous, unconfident, but why?  
<< it has been a nice day so far, there was nothing I had to fear  
<< I tried to cool down, cold water in my face, but on the table again, I sweated more and more  
<< I ate the fish, fast, emptied the wine, no, no dessert, nothing else, the bill  
<< I pay, leave, why could I not stay calm?  
<< looking at the ocean, the wind, the white waves, tears in my eyes  
<< it would be icy to swim, to swim as long as possible  
<< therefore, L.A. would be better, a suicide every day, at least, like murders  
<< I feel like an asshole

## **February The Twentieth**

<< November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Casa do Godinho

Standing up, taking a shower, knowing it will not be the last one, as every day, nervous, still sweating, not knowing why. Walking to the breakfast room as every day, the large room with some tables, with a good distance between them, no buffet as normally at this place because of the

pandemic. The pandemic, nearly two years now. As before, only one sister, if she is one of the sisters. Breakfast items on the table, the self-made marmalade, alone, perfect, later, one more table occupied. Back to the room, still sweating, the next shower, new clothes, walking to the small park, trying to come down. The small park, not so far away, found it on the second day, Jardim Basilio Teles.

<< I stand on the bridge again, Ponte móvel de Leça, but this time I cross it  
<< a park, a green area at the other side, Praça de Oliveira, all around the city parks, and green areas, places to sit down, to take a rest  
<< what a contrast to Los Angeles and San Francisco – I enter the larger street to my right, it should lead me to the ocean, R. Hintze Ribeiro  
<< it's nice to follow it, I can use the shady side, everywhere there is a café, but I want to reach the ocean first  
<< and soon the street leads uphill, I can already see the ocean, a nice sight  
<< at the end, a large playground, Parque Infantil Florbela Espanca, I have to cross a street, Av. Liberdade, to reach the promenade again  
<< but, is this still Matosinhos, most likely not, Leça da Palmeira - this promenade is wider and longer than the one in Matosinhos (Matosinhos e Leça da Palmeira form a municipal, one of four of the County of Matosinhos)  
<< I decide to walk along the promenade

<< the beach is sometimes very rocky, but it looks gorgeous to me  
<< not long, and I reach a special place, pools in the rock?, some information  
<< Piscinas de Marés is the name, two pools, tide pools, there would be an entrance, in summer, obviously, a public pool  
<< I get the information that this place was built between 1961 and 1966, Álvaro Siza Vieira  
<< and there should be a second important building from the same architect not far away, the Casa de Chá da Boa Nova  
<< I continued my way

<< the next interesting place is on the other side  
<< four green areas, a straight street, R. Carvalho Araujo, would lead to several buildings  
<< but the area is surrounded by walls, and signs tell you that you're not allowed to enter the place, it's a military area, more I did not find out  
<< I continued my way

<< a longer way now, looking back to the harbor  
<< in front of me a lighthouse, impressing, not so far away  
<< and behind a building, this had to be the tea house, but I was somewhat tired, and across the street, there were several places to sit down  
<< I crossed the street, not the restaurant, I decided on a small café, Café Inpaço, I sat inside  
<< it was shady, um café e uma aqua, the sight through the door on the ocean spectacular  
<< it has become sunny, I started to sweat, but the sun reflecting in the ocean?  
<< like the water would be metallic, I liked this, often could be seen during sunset, I loved it, this metallic water  
<< a young boy inside, and a woman, her boy, helping her in the café, after school?  
<< I continued my way, the lighthouse, the tea house, and then the whole way back!

<< I reached the lighthouse, again information was provided, Farol de Leça, the second highest in Portugal  
<< but the tea house now very near, I headed on, to stop again, the next monument, Monumento A António Nobre

<< a quote, António Nobre, but I could not understand the monument as such – the tea house on the other side

<< Casa de Chá da Boa Nova, one could walk around here, and a man got interview, nicely placed between the house and a chapel

<< and then I understood, I had seen this place before!

<< in Germany, TV, about Porto, the families producing Port wine

<< funnily, all British, with British habits, met every Wednesday to lunch in their club, the children attended British elite schools, but there was a rebel!

<< a Portuguese, and he also planted green tea – in Portugal!

<< and he met with a famous cook, two stars, to discuss the green tea, and they met on the patio of this house, the tea house

<< so, this man was obviously the head chef, the famous cook, should I address him?, Rui Paula

<< hey, I'm also a cook, okay, not on this level, of course not

<< would I ever eat there? most likely not, even Titan II always ended in a disaster, such a place?

<< I should walk back, it will be a long way home

<< the same way back?, the playground on the other side

<< two buildings on the beach, not far away, where I should get something to eat

<< I reach the point where the promenade ends, Bar do Oscar or A Cascata Praia de Leça, not a bar, I decide for the building on my right – or

<< on the other side of the street, a very strange sight, a place to eat obviously, but a round structure, with a long window on one side, my first idea?

<< the spaceship from 2001, really crazy!

<< but I would not see the ocean, so I enter the chosen place

<< I can sit on a patio, the sun already deep to the horizon, not so hot anymore

<< the classics of course, like Francesinha, but I decide for a club sandwich, something differently

<< and they have cocktails

<< so sit in the end, watching the sun go down, with a Dry Martini at my side, and wonder

<< what a wonderful place this is, this city, this nation, so rich in culture

<< and I, I'm unable to enjoy it

<< and as always here, clouds at the horizon, you cannot see the sun drowning in the ocean, like at Santa Monica Beach nearly every evening

<< and yet, how beautiful is it to sit here, I still would have some days more

## **February The Twenty-Third**

<< November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Casa do Godinho - Dover

Standing up, taking a shower, knowing it will not be the last one, as every day, nervous, still sweating, not knowing why. Walking to the breakfast room as every day, the large room with some tables, with a good distance between them, no buffet as normally at this place because of the pandemic. The pandemic, nearly two years now. As before, only one sister, if she is one of the sisters. Breakfast items on the table, the self-made marmalade, alone, perfect, later, one more table occupied. Back to the room, still sweating, the next shower, new clothes, walking to the small park, trying to come down. The small park, not so far away, found it on the second day, Jardim Basilio Teles.

<< I walked to the market hall, never was in it

<< I enter it, it's fantastic from the very first moment on  
<< I have to orientate first, a center aisle, left and right stalls with fruits and vegetables  
<< I could walk along the isles, until I would head a banister, but obviously, this would not be the end of the hall, it would be the end of the upper part, there would be a lower part, but first the upper part, enough there, I looked at the architecture  
<< I never would have expected something like this, the struts, the ceiling, it looks like science fiction from the 70s!

<< still standing at the entrance, there has been a plate, information about the market hall - 1959 and 1932, I do not understand it totally, but this seems to be incredible  
<< around the wall, to my left, I see restaurants, to my right, a butchery, and other small shops, olives, I start to walk along the center aisles, and it's wonderful for me as a cook  
<< wonderful fruits and vegetables, nuts, mushrooms, most I know, but by far not all, and at the end, near the banister?  
<< living animals one could buy, chickens, rabbits, even doves – okay, as a cook, I have worked with all of them, but buying one here, taking it home, to kill and eat it?  
<< yeah, if you want to eat a chicken, someone has to kill the chicken – I reach the banister, and it's unbelievable  
<< the hall from floor to bottom is very high now, under me is the fish market, with larger restaurants around  
<< a large window with a fish, nearly like a rosette in a medieval church  
<< one could walk, on my level, around the fish market, like an ambulatory, with....shops....not sure, offices?, but I have to walk down

<< two rows with stalls left and right, an incredible number of fish and seafood in a thrilling variation  
<< some I know, the French names, like rascasse or turbot, have eaten it, some not – of course, sardines!  
<< I'm most attracted to conger, have never worked with it, and have never eaten it  
<< well, could buy me some, and one of the restaurants here would cook me a dish with it, but I would have to address one of the women behind the displayed fish, I wasn't sure if I could buy only a part, and I would have to go to the restaurant and ask about preparing the fish  
<< conger?, would this function, better a “normal” fish?, I started to feel uncomfortable and started to sweat, unless it was not hot in a hall of fish on ice  
<< I walked upstairs again

<< I was at the entrance again, still inside  
<< there would be these restaurants, in the corner, I walked by  
<< one offered fish, the other ham and cheese, but also hot dishes, daily menu is most likely  
<< the one, the fish restaurant, was small, with tables near each other  
<< the other, ham and cheese, larger, more space, and not much in it, I sat down, Tapas & Wine - Quinta Da Santa by Chef Queijeiro  
<< I ordered a glass of wine, Portuguese drink wine with every meal, and a platter with ham and cheese  
<< it tasted fantastic, I tried to come down again, at least, I sat in this outstanding market hall and ate something  
<< not fish, the fish I would be so curious about, but at least something, something cold

<< this was my second time here, again, I liked it to be here, my last travel before the pandemic, now my first, still in the pandemic it, but maybe the worst behind  
<< why I could not come down, it was nice here, the people nice  
<< I would still have some days, would I be able to handle them better?

<< would I come back, could this be my place at the ocean?  
<< I paid, stepped out of the market hall, there would be one of these small cafés to my right  
<< why I was unable to, simply sit down there, ordering a coffee, one of these fantastic sweets, and having a good time?

## 2022

### February The Twelfth

<< November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 O Sardinhas

Standing up, taking a shower, looking at the turquoise room (description). Pack my backpack and search for a place to have breakfast.

A room without breakfast this time, so many small cafés and pastelerias all around. Nearly three years of pandemic now, again in Matosinhos, exactly one year after the last time (therefore it's 2022 now).

But as always, I have my problems, the last days, especially at the pasteleria by the hotel. Speaking no Portuguese, I feel foreign, but much better than last year anyway. No real restrictions anymore, I do not sweat that much, feel more confident.

<< had breakfast at Café Lua today, the small green area with the small monument, not far from Jardim Basilo Teles, where I sat now

<< I had a book with me this year, about cosmology, and I had read for a while in it, had stood up late, lunch?

<< I could walk back towards Café Lua, the other place I had been before, I entered Rua Ló Ferreira, Muro das Tentações

<< I felt better this year, knew to act better, sat down, the daily menu and an orange juice, and a water and tried to speak Portuguese: Prato do dia, um sumo de laranja, uma água, por favor.

<< well, sounded not very Portuguese, and was by far not elegant, but it was a try

<< and, Portuguese people were polite, liked it if you tried, even if you failed

<< well, the usual soup, three rolls, olives, a nice dish, roasted chicken with rice and french fries, a small salad aside

<< well, salad, not so much Portuguese, but it all tasted fine

<< of course, a coffee thereafter, um café, and a sweet pastry I had to choose

<< as I paid, the man addressed me, as did the woman from the kitchen, she had helped me at the beginning, spoke English better than the man

<< typical Portugal, men behind the counter, drinks and serving, the women in the kitchen, in Germany, the other way around was the rule

<< well, he was not Portuguese, from France, and since some years in Portugal, I learned

<< that was funny, and of course, it would not be my last time in this place

<< but now I had to move on, to walk to the beach – which way?

<< what about a rest at the supermarket, another try?

<< well, um café was not so difficult, but the one I liked, that with milk, was more complicated: uma meia-de-leite, was difficult to pronounce

<< would be good to learn some Portuguese for the next time?

<< I arrived at the beach, the traffic circle with the fisher net, an event?

<< yeah, a surfer event, the Matosinhos Surf School Cup, in real life on November 11th, but not

much action now

<< I walk to Cremosi, a common place now, a green tea, a chá verde, but I pronounced “chá” very wrongly, I order the rest in English, the woman with the glasses as always at the checkout

<< I sit outside, my jacket on, in the sun, the waiter: Hello, my friend!

<< I look through the glass at the ocean, a good weather for surfing, I think

<< but then, the sun comes out, it gets hot behind the glass, and I pay and leave

<< it's better outside, others sit outside now, walk to Titan I, to take a place on the patio, order a stout beer, and nearly I can enjoy the sun

<< it's better than the two times before, but I'm still unable to relax completely

<< I walk back to the hotel, Avenida Da República, but only to the next crossing street

<< not up to the upper traffic circle, the barber shop, Ned Barbearias Matosinhos, Ned for Ned Kelly

<< I walk around the hamburger restaurant, Munchi, and enter Rua Heróis de França

<< the first fish restaurant would be 5 Oceanos, several others would follow later, in the tourist's street

<< its a sophisticated looking restaurant, with fish displayed, as very common, nice fish, you could sit outside, sheltered, as is common for the tourist places, some even roast outside

<< but not for me, not today, I continue my way as I pass, the next house!, an interesting place

<< looks modern, hip, neon lights, the interior, you can see everything from outside, Perto da Praia

<< the menu, Brazilian, in Portuguese, do not understand much, bowls, salads, I enter

<< the place is empty, a young woman is behind the counter, a young man appears for a moment, most likely from the kitchen

<< a young couple?, opened not long before?, she speaks English very well

<< yes, Brazilian, she recommends me a bowl, which I choose, and it tastes very fine

<< a coffee thereafter, of course, and something sweet

<< I like the place, have even a conversation, short, but at least

<< I'm long there, at least for me, I should come back again, during the remaining days

<< but now, back to the hotel

<< but not for long, right after the next crossing, I pass the HopTrip Craft Beer Shop

<< looks like a place for young people, small, crowded, I'm no beer drinker, I mostly drink tee

<< if I drink beer, I prefer a dark one – okay, it's a craft beer shop!

<< I do not know why, but I enter it, crowded, the bar, but in the back part, a few tables, I can sit down there

<< but first I look at the offered beers, written down above the bar, self-sevice, of course, you have to pay after ordering

<< a stout in any case, would be my third today, Russian Imperial Stout from Norway sounds not bad – wow, €7.90 half a liter!

<< not for Germany, but for Portugal, this is expensive, but okay, I order it and get a glass of really dark, black, beer, I sit down on one of the tables

<< the beer is extreme, nearly like syrup, very sweet, I need something to eat

<< the menu, I order something, drink and eat, the place is very crowded now, mostly around the bar, but also the tables, and I start to like it

<< these two places, Cremosi and Titan I, the supermarket, could this be my Portugal?

<< it's not easy to drink all the beer, very extreme, I need a second snack, walk back

<< a shower, I need a shower, but I sleep well

## **February The Twenty-Second**

<< November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022 O Sardinhas

Standing up, taking a shower, looking at the turquoise room (description). Pack my backpack and search for a place to have breakfast.

A room without breakfast this time, so many small caf  s and pastelerias all around. Nearly three years of pandemic now, again in Matosinhos, exactly one year after the last time (therefore it's 2022 now).

But as always, I have my problems, the last days, especially at the pasteleria by the hotel. Speaking no Portuguese, I feel foreign, but much better than last year anyway. No real restrictions anymore, I do not sweat that much, feel more confident.

<< again, the market hall, again, like last year, I look at the fantastic fish, again the conger attracts me the most

<< but again, addressing one of the women?, walking with the fish to one of the restaurants, asking for preparation?

<< this would cause much attention, so I hesitated, and again, I did not do it!

<< I walk back to the upper level, again ham and cheese like last year?

<< I look at the smaller fish restaurant, Diga Maria, take a deep breath, and enter it

<< sitting down at a small table, I get the menu, English, very interesting dishes

<< I have to become more brave, I order a menu

<< fish soup, the small quantity, two oysters next, then the platter with dungeness crab

<< the fish soup is very fine, a larger group enters, French people obviously, they sit down at the table next to mine, had to put together two tables

<< the oysters next, the French group gets a platter with seafood, cold, and one with cheese and ham from the restaurant I was last year, they are working together, all looks very fine, and the French are very happy

<< then I get my dungeness crab on a large plate, it looks incredible, cold

<< the French are very impressed by my dish, and I start to eat

<< it has to be more than one crab because I have the pincers and the legs, the shell, large, is filled with a crab cocktail

<< okay, could be the small parts from inside, but it's too much, and some pieces are simply too large, I start with the legs and the pincers

<< sure, I have to use crab tongs, but it's not the first time

<< in the French restaurant I once worked, Les Trois Sardines, we made crab ravioli with the meat from inside

<< and San Francisco, of course, looking at the bridge, pondering on suicide

<< but not here, not now, and I managed very elegantly to crack the legs and pincers, the French noticed it, and I had the feeling that they were even somewhat jealous of my dish

<< a dessert, I followed the waitress to the counter, another woman behind – was one of them Maria?

<< I could choose from various self-made cakes, I chose a chocolate cake

<< what a wonderful lunch, it would be enough for the rest of the day

<< I was relieved in a way, but had it been perfect?

<< of course not!

<< at the counter, they had displayed various seafood, oysters, for instance, but also sea snails

<< on the menu there had also been a platter with sea snails

<< I had never eaten sea snails so far, but I liked everything out of the sea, and of course, I had eaten snails as such

<< I had pondered about whether I should ask if I could try one, but, yeah, I did not dare

<< I feared that maybe, I would not like them, what then?

<< so I decided for the easy way, the San Francisco menu

<< clam chowder, (this time fish soup), oysters, and dungeness crab, at Fisherman's Wharf, the bay



and the bridge

<< but next year, I would come back, next year, I would eat the sea snails, try them

<< still some days left, better than last year, but not okay

<< would I be able to do better in a year?

## 2023

### February The Eleventh

<< My Stay Matosinhos Centro, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Walking, like every morning, to the pastelaria up the street, as nearly every day, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. Feel a little Portuguese, still I have my problems, but much better than four months ago.

<< I walk a round, yeah, this could be my place, but much has changed, in only four months

<< I thought to have sea snails this time, but the restaurant, Diga Maria, is under reconstruction, closed?

<< I thought to continue my conversation, with the French man and the woman from the kitchen, Muro das Tentações, but new people (owners?) there

<< I thought to visit Perto da Praia again, eating Brazilian, had been such a nice last evening, four months ago

<< paper in the windows, like Diga Maria, reconstruction?, closed?

<< my last evening, four months ago, I spent here, it was my third time there

<< the young couple (?), I started to have a real conversation with the woman about Brazilian food, not telling her that I'm a cook

<< she recommended me a dessert with a special Brazilian fruit, delicious, not very sweet, but rich in flavor

<< thought, that would be an interesting berry to create desserts with in Germany

<< I had looked forward to intensifying this first steps, but the place was no longer as well

<< significant changes over the years now, some were no longer, others newly appeared

<< every year, more and more of the old houses got renovated, or a new one got built for an older one

<< some large empty sites got filled with apartment blocks, but also cafés and shops, it seemed that the city would improve from time to time

<< and yet, after those years, when I knew this place now, it was easy to find a sight, a tourist would call ugly, decayed, maybe even rotten,

<< I saw picturesque sights in them, it was this possibility that old and new, inhabited and empty for a very long time, were possible side by side

<< not possible in Germany, no one would renovate an old house, if the house attached to yours was decayed

<< but here it was possible – the theater, a so nice building, no far one had to go, the next in badly shape

<< it seemed as though this would be a fine illustration for life as such, for reality, not a fucking corrupt Hollywood farce and lie, an American illusion

<< I felt good in this place

< and yet, I was still the person I was, still had not eaten a fish bought at the market hall, prepared in one of the restaurants there, I still had not dared to buy the conger, had no idea about the taste

<< and yet, I often try a new pastelaria for daily menu, it was good to be at a different place this

time

<< have found new restaurants and cafés, a new large supermarket, Continente, even one more between this and my old one, Pingo Doce

<< was no longer ate in restaurants in the evening, which often enough ended in a disaster, I tried different places, tried more being a “normal” Portuguese

<< it had become evening, I stit in a small café for dinner - new Wave / Boutique De Pão / Pasteleria, the sign over the entrance told you

<< the next place, very similar to that, would be, by the way, next door, Café Onda, but I had decided for this

<< some tables, very close to each other outside, I had decided to sit inside (description)

<< two TVs, as normally in Portugal, football of course

<< a woman, the menu, English, but she asks where I'm from

<< German – really, she speaks some German, shows me a German book, too much attention, but nice in a way

<< I decided for the signature dish, and got a steak with fries, a typical small salad aside, a fried egg, sunny side up, of course, gravy, and, it's Portugal, a slice of cheese and ham

<< would be a somewhat strange combination in Germany, and the steak is not very large, but I like it, it's absolutely enough, the fucking stupid large servings in the USA, I'm no longer hungry and look forward to something sweet, and a café, um café, of course

<< after the meal, I decide to sit out, most of the guests sit outside, but a table for me is left

<< I sit there, jacket on, it's somewhat cold, a stout on my table

<< I feel a little Portuguese

## **February The Fouteenth**

<< My Stay Matosinhos Centro, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street, as nearly every day, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. Feel a little Portuguese, still I have my problems, but much better than four months a year ago.

<< at the beach, after a fine menu do dia, at the supermarket, Pingo Douce, lamb knuckle with beans and rice

<< the beans not pretty green anymore, but this hapens always if keeping them hot

<< it all tasted very fine, of course, uma meia-de-leite e dois croissants thereafter – well, still not very perfect, but I tried

<< and now at the beach, looking at the ocean, the sun shines, I walked in the sand, like at Santa Monica Beach, I stit in the sand, even laid down for a while, tried to forget time

<< to see light cloud, hear the sea gulls and the waves, smelling and tasting the salty water, I laid there for a while

<< later I walked to Cremosi, the woman with the glasses still there, I sit outside, but no longer the waiter from the last year

<< I drink tea, a nice chá preto this time, eat ice cream and look at the harbor, the part you can see from here

<< the large ship is there again, it comes regularly, it needs two or three days, huge trucks get loaded all the time, they look like toys compared to the ship, then it leaves, to come back after a certain time

<< also regularly cruise ships at this place, tourist for Porto, visiting the wine vaults, the futuristic arcitecture of the terminal, Porto Leixões Cruise Terminal, a lot of interesting arcithechure in this

place, Igreja Paroquial do Senhor Bom Jesus de Matosinhos

<< and the crane of course, this monument of a bygone time, ugly and impressive even from afar, especially at dusk and night

<< I take my book and start to read, start to forget the time (cosmology in the second year!!)

## **February The Nineteenth**

<< My Stay Matosinhos Centro, March 23<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street, as nearly every day, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. Feel a little Portuguese, still I have my problems, but much better than four months a year ago.

<< Sea Life Center, no longer Matosinhos, right at the beginning of Porto, near the beach, had seen it the first time, the first day, as I was for the first time in Matosinhos

<< I had walked to the beach, along the promenade, had found the „ugly house“, Edificio Transpartente, had dinner in one of the empty restaurants

<< and „right behind“ a large building with huge letters on the wall, SEA\*LIFE

<< not much imagination one would need, an aquarium to visit

<< but I didn't, what a surprise, and I did not until today, years later!

<< okay, the second time, the pandemic, but the Portuguese handled it much better than we in Germany

<< it was no problem for them to wear a mask, or wait outside a shop, to enter when in line

<< but also the third time I did not, the fourth time in town I had said, I have to do at least some certain things, like visiting Sea Life

<< and so, after a nice time, I sat in the restaurant, drank a coffee and ate a toast, relatively expensive, but for such a place?

<< yeah, all the fish, the sharks, some of whom I knew no name, the turtle, the big turtle, the highlight

<< or the penguins outside? rays and octopuses, missed the feeding, the touching, and the seahorses in any case!

<< might be not the largest place, but very nice, the last time in Los Angeles, at Santa Monica Pier, touching the little shark and the ray

<< like in a zoo, a place to feel like a child, forgetting all what's outside, like being in a different world, an unburdened world, the zoos in Stuttgart, Augsburg, Munich, London, Los Angeles and San Francisco

<< it was a rainy day, no children playing outside, but in summer most likely a crowded place, as I looked through the glass, the white waves, the citadel, how nice it would be to live here

<< for a longer time in the other zoos? L.A. at the end of the month?

<< a day of contemplation

## **February The Twenty-First**

<< March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 My Stay Matosinhos Centro

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street, as nearly every day, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. Feel a little Portuguese, still I have my problems, but much better than four months a year ago.

<< the usual breakfast, prato do dia, but the rest of the day would be different  
<< driving to Porto, a concert, jazz, a jazz club in Porto, Porta Jazz, The Rite Of Trio  
<< but some were a bit strange

<< the three guys on the picture, the webpage of Porta Jazz, looked not like jazz musicians  
<< beards, long hair, naked as far as visible, shouting – looked more like three metal musicians or so  
<< but, it was a jazz club, so.....why not  
<< but two times were given, 7 PM and 9:30 PM, two times?  
<< so, I should be there at 7 PM, the rest we would see  
<< Porta Jazz – of course, I had an address, Praça da República, but it was not really to find using Google Earth  
<< Street View, three normal doors, but none with the given number, 156  
<< where was the jazz club?  
<< no doubt, it should be the middle door, the door without a number, a jazz club in a normal house?  
<< well, would it become one of my disasters?  
<< I decided to drive to Porto early, to see whether I would find the jazz club, the time until the concert?  
<< well, what about walking to the nice park, above the river?  
<< I should not be so difficult to find it, the rough direction easy, I decided to drive to Porto after a shower, right now, at 2 PM, would give me a lot of time

<< using the Metro, nothing new, every Metro would bring me to my aim, very easy, Lapa, would be the station I would have to leave  
<< then it should not be very difficult  
<< to the street, along the street to the park, there it should be, the jazz club  
<< I stood on the platform, well, housing blocks, a ramp to walk town, would be the bet to follow others  
<< „we“ walked down the ramp, along a housing block, looked somewhat somber, though a narrow passage, a street, obviously the street I had searched, R. da Boavista  
<< okay, I simply would have to follow the street, “follow”  
<< well, the street was straight, narrow, and steep, I would be a long and hard way, I started  
<< I passed an interesting bookshop, a music shop, an escape room.....was an interesting street, but I was happy as I had reached its top

<< the park to my right, Jardim de Teófilo Braga, a large building to my left, looked military, Army Personnel Command  
<< the jazz club would be on the other side of the park, I crossed it, the common monument, Monumento à República, I stood in front of the three doors  
<< okay, a door, a window, behind a desk, and one could see a curtain in the back  
<< the curtain was somewhat open, a staircase was to see, upstairs, the jazz club as such downstairs, in the cellar?, obviously – and now  
<< well, I had plenty of time to walk to the park

<< okay, the general direction was easy, in any case I should be able to find the river, the Douro, I crossed the park, the next monument, Monumento ao Deus Baco, to enter a street that seemed the best to start, Rua Mártires da Liberdade  
<< as I walked along the street, the houses looked old and somewhat decayed, some definitely inhabited  
<< the old Porto, like in Matosinhos, I followed the narrow street until I turned right, Tv. de São

Carlos

<< this should bring me nearer to the park, my aim, I passed a small park, Praça Coronel Pacheco, and now?

<< a small passage I could enter, R. Do Mirante, what I did, most likely because I saw a large picture at a wall

<< wow, such a graffiti I would not have expected to see here, Alien, apocalyptic, Giger....?

<< steep uphill now, a sharp bend, the narrow way hit a pedestrian area, R. De Cedofeita, I had to turn left or right

<< well, left would make no sense, so I turned right, this was now the tourists Porto

<< the next park, a kind of large traffic circle, Praça de Carlos Alberto, with a market, picture

<< I continued to follow the street, Praça de Carlos Alberto, a short while, until I hit a large plaza, a large crossing, obviously a major place in Porto

<< two beautiful churches side by side, a wall with wonderful Portuguese tiles, of course a Christian motive, the Catholic Portugal

<< rails, I discovered that one would be the line over the river, the Douro, over the bridge, but it was under construction

<< but I walked along the barrier of the construction, Praça de Parada Leitaó because I saw the next park, Jardim da Cordoaria

<< very nice, many trees, a place to sit down, still time, but maybe I should return?

<< many pastelerias here? rails through the park? I felt exhausted and sweaty, and then?

<< one of the historic streetcars came, this was the historic line!

<< this would mean that if I followed it, at least, I would be at the river, but it would be a long way back uphill again

<< using the historic line, I hesitated, did not know how, I decided to follow the line, at least for a certain time

<< and that I did, Rua da Restauração, downhill, for a longer time, until I was a wall on the other side – could this be the park?

<< I crossed the street, a zebra crossing, to enter a smaller street, R. Jorge de Viterbo Ferreira, uphill, along the wall, where there would be shade, I hurried to cross the small, and fall

<< I laid on the street, the knee, and one hand, some looked at me, I gave them a sign, stood up, the trousers a bit dirty, but apart from that.....

<< up the street, along the wall, in the shade, yes, this was the place, I had reached the park, Jardins do Palácio de Cristal, stood at the entrance, as the last time, and I asked myself why always such stupid activities?

<< I walked to the place to look down to the river, then I searched for a place to sit down, to try to come down a bit, I would have to walk back, maybe no jazz concert today, maybe a stupid idea

<< I found a wonderful place, a strange three with trunks, strangely formed – was it by design?

<< one looked like a large rabbit, one like an elephant's head?, or was it only my imagination, running wild? I had to walk back

<< the same way? would be a very long way, should I try to find a shorter one?

<< okay, let's try, the worst would be, no jazz concert

<< I decided to hurry a bit, not to look so much left and right, I should eat something, wouldn't be bad, how long would I need back?

<< in front of the park, I headed right, R. Jorge de Viterbo Ferreira, towards the way I had come the last time, the first year

<< I still knew that I would reach the large crossing, when turning right, R. De Dom Manuel II, which road now three roads in front of me

<< the one was those from the first year, it would not help

<< the large one either, I decided for the small one, this should have the best direction, R. Da Boa Nova

<< I followed the street, the next crossing, staying in this direction, a small bend, R. Da

Maternidade, and then?

<< well, in Portugal, all houses are side by side, no front garden, not aside, but patios, inner yards, and now

<< a huge open space, an old huge building on it, a mansion, a manor house, something like that, a wall a gate, looks very strange!, Palace Pinto Leite, Casa do Campo Pequeno - I head on, downhill

<< I reach a crossing, have no idea where I'm

<< I decide for the street to my right, uphill again, I have to walk uphill, the park, the jazz club has been very high, I enter the narrow street, all streets here narrow, Rua da Torrinhã

<< I hit the next street, have to decide, left or right, left I could enter another street, continue my way uphill, I enter it, somewhat desperate, my clothes wet, Rua dos Bragas

<< I hit the next street, and I realize, I knew this place

<< the café at the corner, the shop with flowers, the pictures in the window - I would have to turn left, a few yards uphill, I would be at the park again, I had managed it!

<< and now? I needed something to drink, should eat something, I needed a rest, still time I would have

<< I entered the café, not many in it, Confeitaria Royal

<< I ordered a coffee, a water, a snack with ham and cheese, walked to the restroom, cold water for the face and hands and arms, I tried to cool down

<< one more water, one more coffee, two sweets, I started to feel better, the second time in the restroom, water in the face

<< as I had eaten the sweets and finished the water and the coffee, I felt better, already dark outside, so I decided to walk to the park, to sit down there for a while

<< one could see now, sitting in the park, very well the insight, and I started to cool down, it had become cold

<< somebody walked through the door, bought a ticket at the table, then walked towards the open curtain, downstairs, I felt prepared

stood up, crossed the street, entered the door, stood in front of the table, asked for a ticket

<< I paid and walked towards the staircase, downstairs

<< but there were also two settees, one could sit down to see, on the opposite wall, a video, projected over the staircase, or better to name it a video installation?

<< I hesitated for a moment, to my left were the restrooms, but other visitors were still downstairs, so I walked down

<< maybe call it an anteroom, one could buy a soft drink or a beer, nothing hot, all very improvised, a heavy white steel door, obviously the entrance to the venue, very heavy looking

<< but interesting, on the walls, posters, it seemed as though the jazz club hosted an annual jazz festival

<< the white door opened, someone stepped out, this was, in fact, a real heavy steel door, a fire door?

<< but it closed again, we waited someone longer, then obviously, we could step in – it was a kind of shock!

<< like a shoebox, like a long garage underground, was it a kind of air-raid shelter?

<< okay, the jazz club in Heilbronn, in its early years, a cave in fact, underground, a vaulted cellar

<< in the years thereafter, different locations, not all very nice

<< okay, today, the Altes Theater in Sontheim, especially artists from abroad often mention how beautiful and special this venue was, maybe it was unfair to have this in mind, the jazz club in Porto was very young

<< one third was the stage, one third was chairs, and one third one could stay – roughly

<< I chose a chair in the third row, near the wall

<< I pondered, maybe a hundred guests, all in all, the place started to fill

<< on the stage, a piano, a standing base, guitars, drums, a keyboard, or so  
<< more and more, I liked the place and looked forward to the concert, emptied my soul and put the bottle on the floor, I started to relax really, waited until the concert would begin

<< a door on the back opened, obviously the area for the artists behind, and the three men came – okay, this can't be jazz!

<< the three men, not in fact, dressed like jazz musicians! - one, it was the drummer, dressed like a sprinter in a thin full-body piece of cloth, red to pink colored

<< the second, it was the base player, only a pair of trousers, and a naked upper body, nice for the women?

<< and the guitar player?, well a kind of long shirt or so? same fabric, this would be in no way a jazz concert!

<< and it wasn't!

<< I knew some footage, the early Pink Floyd, the very early Pink Floyd, I was fascinated!

<< it was definitively not exactly their sound, but elements, as well as elements of jazz, sometimes I saw the early Genesis, the good time with Peter Gabriel, King Crimson came me to mind

<< but in fact, there was also jazz! - only a few pieces of music, all very long, it was whatever, progressive rock, psychedelic, space rock, and, always jazz

<< even a performance was included, I did not understand it exactly, was not sure, the drummer

<< not only once did he appear like Nick Mason to me, and he also played, controlled, the synthesizer – or was it a Moog, or a mellotron, or whatever.....he was Richard Wright then

<< Mason and Wright, the heart and soul of Pink Floyd

describing the concert more precisely???

<< but it was also demanding to listen to, but I liked it, and after not ninety minutes it was over, maybe four songs?

<< I needed a moment to stand up, to leave the room, never I would have expected that!

<< but, what was about 9:30 PM?, was it a break now, like common in Heilbronn, two sets with a break, but it does not seem so

<< the same again at 9:30 PM, I was a bit confused

<< well, one could have asked, but.....I did not dare

<< some stayed downstairs with a beer, some upstairs, some outside, but some also leave

<< I waited and walked around, but it was obvious, the concert was over, they would play it again – or did I make a mistake?

<< but some, and more and more left, walked away, I did the same, down the street now, the passage, along the housing block, up the ramp, this time I had to be careful, not every metro would have Matosinhos as aim

<< in the metro I sat down, what a long day it had been, idiotic in a way, so many impressions and emotions, what a final!

<< in three days, the next concert, of course I would be there, jazz this time?

<< wow, it had felt like being back in time, I had never listened to such music live, only on records and TV

<< a concert in my youth, such a concert, I would not have dared, if it had been possible

<< but now, well over fifty, in Porto, I had tears in my eyes, yeah, yeah, this could be my place

## **February The Twenty-Fourth**

<< March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 My Stay Matosinhos Centro

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street, as nearly every day, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. Feel a little Portuguese, still I have my problems, but much better than four months a year ago.

<< this time, I had decided to do better, not being hours before the concert in Porto, and this time there was only one time 9:30 PM

<< breakfast as usual, menu do dia, having spent some time at the beach, I arrived at Lapa, I knew now what the way would be

<< along the housing block, through the passage, standing on R. Da Boavista, looking uphill

<< but it was already near 8 PM, dark, it slightly rained, I would slowly walk uphill, passing the bookshop, most likely an antiquarian bookshop, costly books in the window, looking old, the music shop, the escape room

<< I had planned to have dinner in the nice-looking restaurant near the jazz club, near the shop with interesting clothes, when I reached the park

<< crossing the park, already lights behind the door, a man behind the table, but first dinner

<< I reached the restaurant, and it was closed! - why?

<< it was no pasteleria, they had a large menu, I had seen it, looked like “modern”, many salads, and light food

<< but they closed at 7:30 PM. I had seen this! And now?

<< I knew from two days ago that in this area there were not many places to drink and eat, the pasteleria from last time would have closed in any case

<< I walked down the street, Praça da Republica, the shop with clothes, Casa Negras

<< I needed a moment, then I understood, it was a specialized shop for academic gown

<< yeah, Portugal is often still more traditional than Germany, and I had the feeling that this was not worse, at least not necessarily

<< I looked down the street, there would be a burger shop, I had passed a small, still open café, but I was hungry, and it looked more like a place to drink beer or so, Maria q.b

<< why not a burger, not time to walk around and to search, especially not again such a footslog like last time, I entered the place, Chapa Quente

<< small and simple looking, the menu, burgers, Brazilian?, the waitress asks me if I knew Brazilian burgers, no, thinking, are they different

<< she recommends me X-Tudo, 10,20 €, many are pricier, not really cheap, this is Portugal?

<< a coke, and my burger arrives, looks interesting, a first bite?

<< many flavors, beef, sausages, cheese, ham, egg, salad, tomato.....especially the sausage, taste fine

<< it's like Francesinha, very heavy, but fine from time to time

<< a coffee and a brownie, could this be the beginning of a tradition?

<< a Brazilian burger before the jazz concert?

<< I feel good, much better than last time

<< I pay and walk the short way to the club

<< of course, this time it was easier, unless I was somewhat nervous, as often, I did not know why

<< I entered the place, bought me a ticket, and this time a woman behind the desk, downstairs, a stout, the door still closed

<< I walked upstairs again, sat in one of the black leather settees, and watch the video

<< an a man and a woman came, speaking English, and they seemed to be British, they talked about connections to reach the next venue, the next concert, could this be the bass player with the English name?, I tried to remember the picture from the webpage

<< this time it would be jazz, I knew none of the musicians, but it was a classic jazz arrangement with vocals - Savina Yannatou Vocals, Julius Gabriel Saxophone, Agustí Fernandez Piano, Barry Guy Double Bass, Ramón López Drums

<< seemed to be a very international formation, most likely only for this gig, on the picture, one of



them was much younger than the others

<< the man and the woman had gone, it soon would start, I went upstairs, nearly the same place again

<< the musician appeared, yes, the man from above was the bass player, immediately it was obvious, he and the songstress would be the main musicians on stage, the youngest of them was the drummer, a local musician most likely

<< Savina Yannatou, her name sounded somewhat familiar, had I already heard of her, maybe decades ago? I could not remember, and most likely not

<< could it be that she had performed in Heilbronn? Well, maybe I should, at least sometimes, do some research ahead, not simply letting it happen, even if this had its nice aspects? - the concert?

<< the concert, description to what extend?

<< well, jazz in any case, but what jazz!

<< the bass player, Barry Guy, did not simply play bass

<< he used tools from time to time, for instance, experimental artist, avant-garde, descriptions like that would be appropriate, I thought, and I got the feeling, that he was not simply a bass player, but an exceptional one – and the songstress?

<< well, this very kind of very artistic singing, not only some standards, and also she seemed to be a very well-known musician, not to me!

Improvising could be a key word, this looked like a person with very high skills, and more and more I got the feeling, that this concert, this arrangement was something exceptional, that I should try to enjoy every second

<< the piano player, as well, the man at the sax and the man behind the drums, locals?

<< whatever, after only a few days, I sat for the second time in the “shoebox garage” and experienced something extremely special

<< the jazz club in Heilbronn, also a broad spectrum, Ida Nielsen, Prince, rap vocals

<< and this avant-garde jazz band from New York, could not remember the name, had been too much for some of the audience in Heilbronn

<< but these two concerts? - The Rite Of Trio in no way, the concert of today? I could not imagine it in the end

<< the audience here was much younger, long applause after both of the concerts

<< in Heilbronn, nearly sixty, I was among the younger, here I was the old man

<< the jazz club here young, in Heilbronn much older than I

<< whatever, I looked forward, would I live here, or in Matosinhos of course, what a delight it would be to have the opportunity to attend such concerts, I had tears in my eyes

<< the way down the street, through the passage, along the housing block, up the ramp, I felt light, drunken, and hated myself

<< why was I unable to simply enjoy such moments, why was it always so difficult, why I always so insecure, afraid of causing attention?

<< I stood in the metro, a young couple near to me

<< she, maybe fifteen or so, not to call her cute would be a huge understatement, her dress not sexy as well

<< they reminded me of the couple in Crenshaw, the young African-American girls, with long boots and her short dress

<< as there, I wished them both the best, for their future, their entire life, as I stepped out of the metro, looking at the graffiti on the wall

## February The Twenty-Fifth

<< March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 My Stay Matosinhos Centro

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street, as nearly every day, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. Feel a little Portuguese, still I have my problems, but much better than four months a year ago.

<< my morning routine now, the short walk, breakfast at the pasteleria, Veiga, uma meia-de-leite e uma Torrada

<< looking at the park, Jardim Basilo Teles, the plaza, the city hall, Câmara Municipal de Matosinhos, attaching the Casa Do Design Matosinhos with the dome, the next building, the library, Biblioteca Municipal Florbela Espanca, another interesting building, Alcino Soutinho

<< I start to read

<< the known way to the market hall, Av. Dom Afonso Henriques, passing Casa da Juventude, a thrilling staircase, tiles, a youth center, and a place for contemporary art, and a very interesting park behind, Fonte do Centro de Matosinhos

<< if I followed the street, Av. Dom Afonso Henriques, I would pass the famous church, Igreja Paroquial do Senhor Bom Jesus de Matosinhos, and would end at the Praça Guilhermina Suggia, near the end of the harbor, the end of the Metro line, at Senhor de Matosinhos

<< but I crossed the plaza, passed the monument, Monumento Junção das Freguesias de Matosinhos e Leça da Palmeira to enter R. Godinho, where I once stayed in Matosinhos

<< but not that long, as I was at the corner, Rua Álvaro Castelões, I turned right

<< Rua Álvaro Castelões would lead me to the market hall, the wrong corner, I would have to walk further on, but this would be okay

<< I passed the school, Escola de Música Óscar da Silva, obviously an old school, with two entrances to the left and right, one for girls, one for boys, but it seemed as today, both would use the entrance at the center

<< I reached the market hall, had passed several pastelarias, shops, a butchery, a grocery, and so many other small shops still in this town

<< I walked along the front, the wrong side, later, but my aim was at the other side, down the road, Rua França Júnior, Pão da Terra Matosinhos

<< a bakery, they bake upstairs, and you could watch them at work, but also a café, and you could, of course, eat something, menu do dia, snacks, and of course, many sweet things

<< a second breakfast would be my aim, a chá preto and a croissant, to sit down, read, the harbor and the known bridge I looked at, not open currently

<< I had walked a bit, was in the market hall, no, no fish, still not able to, but a nice place here, would not be for the first time, had already had a coffee and a snack there

<< just the other corner of the market hall, but outside, as Pão da Terra Matosinhos not reachable through the market hall, simply named Internacional

<< a café, a pasteleria, daily menu, but also somewhat separated, a restaurant with some tables

<< last time I sat downstairs, in the larger café, this time I entered the restaurant and sat down

<< only two more there, but it was early for Portugal, half an hour after noon, in an hour or so, much more would be there

<< I had noticed that they offered a special daily meal today, sardinas asadas

<< had no exact idea, but some imagination, and ordered the dish, soup of the day, of course, a glass of wine, a restaurant, dessert later

<< the usual vegetable soup, tasty, bread and olives aside, the sardines

<< complete, as expected, grilled, potatoes with no sauce, many fresh onions....what a dish for a German tourist!

<< but, I was no tourist, I was a cook, and I hoped, one day, to become a Portuguese, as much as possible, at least  
 << I ate all, the complete sardinas, apart from the head of course, but with all inside, and it was fine!  
 << the place crowded now, and I was by far not the only one who ordered the dish  
 << dessert, the waitress recommended a pudim, I did not understand all, but Braga, I agreed, Pudim Abade de Priscos  
 << caramel and cinnamon, what a delight at the end, um café of course!  
 << Braga, the concert several years ago, had let me come to this place

<< I stand at the crossing, Av. da Republica / R. Da Brito Capelo, so much I could do now  
 << Titan I, Cremosi, Pingo Douce.....a new place?  
 << I look at the beautiful green house on the other side, the green tiles, well, Portugal, the pastleria, sorry, confeitaria, the hotel above, and San Francisco in mind  
 << Confeitaria Maurícia, São Francisco Guest House

## **February The Twenty-Sixth**

<< March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 My Stay Matosinhos Centro

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street, as nearly every day, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. Feel a little Portuguese, still I have my problems, but much better than four months a year ago.

<< a nice day, not did that much, walked around, drank coffee, ate, read  
 << had seen, around the corner, Cremosi, R. Carlos de Carvalho, a new restaurant, some days ago  
 << Japanese and Korean food, mostly no people inside, or only a table, well, after the season?  
 << had hesitated, would like, nice place for dinner  
 << this time I have said, I have to do certain things, I try  
 << so I enter it, it's still early, no people insight  
 << I sit down, a few tables, some would be outside, a woman and a younger, very tall, man, obviously the waiters  
 << she seems from Eastern Europe, the accent, we speak English, he does not says much, her partner in life? - the kitchen  
 << then I understand, a table for the service in front of a half-height cabinet with hung up bast pads, this is the hatch, the kitchen behind  
 << I can see two or three cooks in black clothes, at least one woman, they are pretty quiet!  
 << green tea, of course, the menu

<< can find no menu, maybe I can find information?, not in Insights I!  
 << if I wish to describe it, I need more information

<< I decide on a soup and a main dish, the soup is not available, not so many customers currently, I chose the recommended starter  
 << a table more now, a couple, the starter is fantastic  
 << so rich in flavor, the combination of ingredients is perfect, it's wonderful!  
 << my main dish, like tacos, filled with chicken and vegetables, eating with the fingers?, I use the cutlery, which is somewhat difficult, but I manage it  
 << a third table, also a couple, older, I'm a bit nervous, but I think that it's not too obvious  
 << I got a kind of tiramisu recommended, with sencha, I agree, but it's not as outstanding as the

other two courses, especially the starter

<< at the end, I drink a rice wine, pay, more expensive than average, but for this special meal, more than good, and leave, still wondering that you nearly hear nothing from the kitchen, even if aside

<< is it like Perto da Praia, a (young) woman and man, a couple?, opening something new, not Portuguese, will the restaurant still be there, the next time in Matosinhos, hopefully not later than in half a year?

<< I walk to the beach, look at the crane, feel the wind, hear the waves, the seagulls no longer fly, they have congregated on the sand of the beach

<< I wish that this could be my place to get old, to die, the place my big dream could come true

## February The Twenty-Seventh

<< March 31<sup>th</sup>, 2023 My Stay Matosinhos Centro

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street, as nearly every day, uma meia-de-leite e uma torrada. Feel a little Portuguese, still I have my problems, but much better than four months a year ago.

<< I would fly back tomorrow, a nice day, I sat in the park, Parque da Cidade do Porto, I sat!

<< some sun, some clouds, I sat on a bench, near the bridge, in the middle of the three lakes, looked at the geese, the seagulls, and the other birds, I started to read

<< I came down somewhat, but still not really, but I saw progress all the time I was here, had the feeling that it functioned better and better with every stay

<< the first time I ran through the park, until exhaustion, now I strolled and had time for interesting sights, the fountains, and monuments

<< time to enjoy the trees, the lakes, the birds, the sun, even other people crossing my way, often with dogs or jogging

<< somewhat later I sat again, only some yards, above the lake, the traverse, some benches, a very nice few on the lake

<< I closed my eyes for a while, to intensify the sounds and smells, to forget time

<< how long would it take, to come back again

<< would I be able then, not so often get nervous, insecure?

<< most likely not, but maybe again a little better?

<< would this be the place to stay at the ocean for the rest of my days, after retirement, I would still have some years time

<< to learn Portuguese, to calm down, to become a bit of a Portuguese, step by step, I would still have some years time

<< in the evening, I sat at New Wave, outside, a stout, my last evening, I was sad to return to Germany

<< I started to get weary of Germany, the living there, all the time the same fucking endless discussions, the German Angst, like the Americans said, the fear to lose some of our prosperity, the right to drive as fast as possible on our freeways

<< okay, cars / driving and soccer, Portugal very German, but the daily life?

<< sure, I was on vacation, I had not to work, but even then, would I do it, would I be younger?

<< in a few years, this could be my place, not for a few weeks, but forever, and I had the feeling, that this calms me down

<< I walked inside to pay

<< a few words with the man behind the counter

<< the short way to the hotel, I had made a mistake  
<< I had given him most of my coins, but I would need some for the Metro, to drive to the airport  
<< this time, not with a taxi, I would take the Metro, it would be easy, cheap, Portuguese  
<< but I needed coins, could not use a bill – or  
<< would be bad not to be able to pay, tomorrow in the morning, standing at the station  
<< I would have some time, a last breakfast, somewhat earlier than normally would be possible  
<< the supermarket would open early enough  
<< could it be, that I should take it easier?  
<< there would be enough possibilities, had planned to leave at 9 PM, could even do it later, so  
there was no reason to get nervous  
<< I walked to the hotel

## **February The Twenty-Eighth**

<< April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 My Stay Matosinhos Centro

Standing up, taking a shower, my small room. Nearly walking, like every morning, to the pasteleria up the street. Feel a little more Portuguese, still I have my problems, but I handled it relatively good this time, also the way to the airport, using the Metro for the first time, problems with coins.

<< my last morning, a last shower, everything is prepared  
<< my small room, I need coins, walk the short way to the pasteleria, could have breakfast, but I do not enter, I pass by  
<< walk to the supermarket, buy me a bottle of water, and get enough coins  
<< back in the hotel, I still have some time, TV one last time, then I leave  
<< the very short way to the Metro station, Camera de Matosinhos, walk by Burger King

<< at the Metro station, it's easy to buy the ticket, and as I drove to Porto, I can use every Metro  
<< but I have to change the Metro, but it will be easy, Senhora da Hora, will be the station  
<< until this station, it will be the same, as driving to Porto, nothing new  
<< I will have to use the other platform, have to cross the rails, and then I have to wait for the Metro to the airport  
<< I look at the big picture, a last time, the graffiti, Mr. Dheo, Calories, still not sure if this shall be an advertisement for Burger King?, but he has a raw fish in his mouth, not a burger?  
<< a Metro arrives, and I step in

<< Senhora da Hora, this time I cannot simply enter the next Metro, but it's easy anyway  
<< a display, in real time, tells you how long it will take until the next Metros arrive  
<< to the airport in five minutes, and even the next one to the airport, seventeen minutes  
<< and so I wait, four minutes, three minutes, and I know that the Metro will arrive in time because this is not Germany, we do not even have just in time information!  
<< two minutes, one minute, and I just can see the Metro coming, it stops and I enter, to see a new part of the Metro system

<< the next station, Fonte de Cuco, again the rails split, no longer in the city, more countryside  
<< Custodias, this is no longer Matosinhos – or, but it also looks interesting, should I use the Metro more often during my next stay, to see more of the surrounding places?  
<< Esposande, now we have left the city definitely, the landscape is fine, could also be a place for retirement

<< not so near to the ocean, but easily reachable with the Metro, easier than in L.A., it would be darker, good for astronomy  
<< Crestins and shortly after Verdes, we're very near the airport now, say goodbye to the other line  
<< a sharp turn, Botica and finally Aeroprto, I have reached my aim  
<< a short way to reach the terminal, departure, I have to leave  
<< it was easy, and cheap, and I liked it, to do so, to say goodbye, to enjoy the last ride

<< I'm early, as always, but I do the self-check in  
<< easy, no problem, it's by far not for the first time, also the luggage is easy  
<< I walk around for a moment, only the backpack now, in the futuristic hall  
<< already from outside, but inside, again, such an example of futuristic architecture, like Concorde or spaceships, would fly over the sky  
<< pondering on architecture in Matosinhos, Porto  
<< I have time, but the customs area is crowded, so I think, it's best to enter the area of the terminals now

<< after the customs, easy, a short time to wait (situation Frankfurt?), the area with the terminals, not so large as in Frankfurt, but alike  
<< shops and cafés, restaurants, all expensive, and crowded, I start to walk around, reach the one end  
<< it's a fairly open place, you could reach an upper floor – okay the airport is not that small, larger than Stuttgart?, I think so  
<< the piano still there, during the pandemic, this area was closed – I walk to the other end  
<< as I knew, there would be long elevators, would bring me to the separate part, for Ryanair, the cheap flights  
<< and to the café there, as expected, not many customers, low-cost airline passengers not interested in spending such much for a coffee and something sweet

<< again in the hall, the shops, gate A34 would be mine  
<< sit and look at the indicator board, my flight will be delayed  
<< yeah, welcome back in Germany!, but it has not to be the fault of Lufthansa, most likely the situation in Frankfurt  
<< TAP next time?, well, the Internet said that they would be very chaotic and not very reliable  
<< I lean back and closed my eyes

<< I remembered LAX, two times, I always cried  
<< London, no real emotions  
<< OPO?  
<< the fourth time that I sat here, it would not be the last, there I was sure about  
<< and one day, I would sit in an aeroplane, heading towards OPO, but I would not have booked a return