

# WHAT IS A HOME?

by

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Part II.

About being **in transit** - to leave a home & and to settle down in another home in another country.

**INTEGRATION**  
**JE SUIS**  
**INSEL WIR**  
**SIND** **ILLUMINIERT**



## WHAT IS A HOME?

What is a home? When is a home a home to you? And how does it feel not to have a home?

In “**What is a home, part 1**”, I shortly introduced different aspects of the term “Home”. This part 2 issue is about being in transit – to be in between. To leave a home and to settle down in another home in another country. Although I have moved many times in my life – this particular zine is mostly based on my own experience of moving from Copenhagen, Denmark to Berlin, Germany.

# Ich habe noch einen Koffer in Berlin...



Affordable housing was hard to come by in the 1980s. Exactly like the situation nowadays...

*"Bereits zu Beginn der achtziger Jahre kam es bei der Räumung besetzter Häuser im damaligen West-Berlin immer wieder zu Ausschreitungen."*

(From: "Wie Berlin zur Hochburg der Hausbesetzer wurde" by Charlotte Sophie Meyn 2016) <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/krawalle-wie-berlin-zur-hochburg-der-hausbesetzer-wurde-14335437.html>



A.

Gemeinsam gegen #Verdrängung und #Mietenwahnsinn!

# Berlin -



plays a persistent role in my life.

I first visited Berlin somewhere in the 1970's with my parents. I remember the wall and how the adults were so interested in this wall. I was a teenager and, well, it was just a wall, right?!

In the 1980's I lived several years in Berlin only interrupted now and then to go back to Copenhagen for a couple of months to earn a lot of money by doing cleaning jobs in the evening = the life of an artist :-D

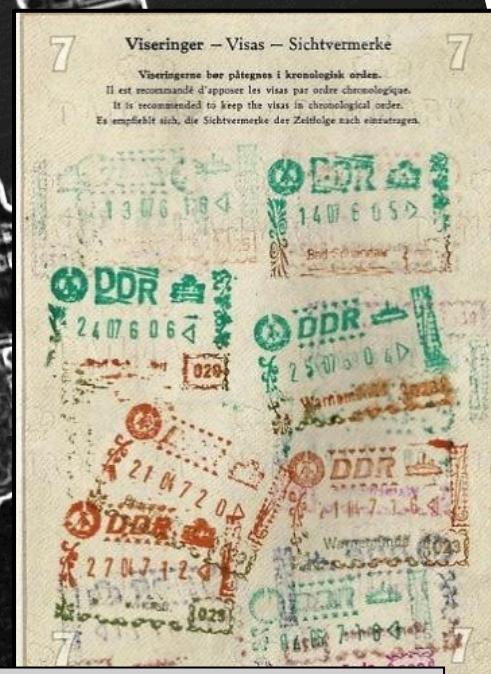
"The atom bomb was going to wipe out everything" "No future"

The weather was gray,  
ALWAYS!

Train: Copenhagen - Berlin  
Barbed wire - machine guns

Third train: to Bahnhof Zoo

DOGS - POLICE - PASSKONTROLLE = NOT NICE!



Next train:  
Friedrichstr. S-Bahn  
The circus began

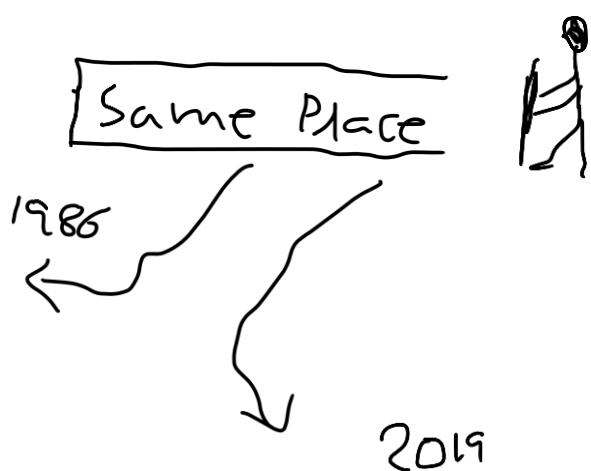
Small ladder to  
check the roof  
of the train.



When the wall came down two of my friends have died and some close friends left Berlin for a while. I went back to Copenhagen and sort of lost contact with friends. Remember, there were no internet, no Facebook, no cellphone etc. In the 1990's I seldom visited the "new" Berlin. New York City and other parts of Germany were in focus for me then.

In the beginning of 2000, I shared a flat in Berlin with some friends and I slowly began my relationship with the city again. It didn't last long, though.

Some years later I was studying at the University of Copenhagen and it turned out that my professor was from Freie Universität (Berlin) and soon I was giving papers at Freie. Berlin again! From about 2016 I began going to Berlin quite often. I sort of discovered the city again and slowly began to remove my various art projects from Copenhagen to Berlin. Then in November 2018 I moved to Berlin for the third time in my life.



c.33 years later  
somebody turned the  
trash can!



## IN TRANSIT

It took me about one year to go through all my material things as well as mental things. When I say all, I mean **EVERYTHING** from the smallest paper note to my furniture. But first, I had to ask myself a few questions:

How did I want to live the next 10 Years?  
How is the new me in my new

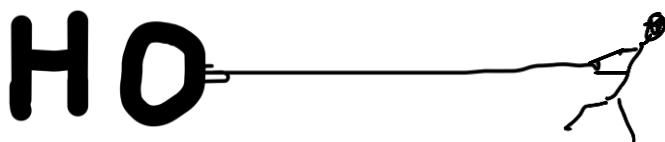


life?

When everything was most complicated

What was coming with me  
in my new life & what would have to go?

These are heavy questions, but I have some experience in dealing with a process like this. **It is a huge logistical project** – but hey, I am also an archaeologist! I made a flee marked in my flat in Copenhagen and then I sold the flat.

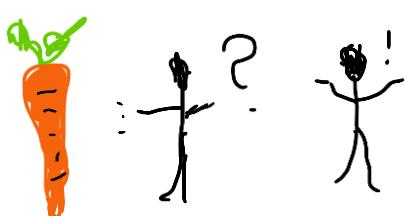


My new life



This  
is  
all  
I  
need!

in transit



ME

# IN TRANSIT

To walk around in the city looking at homes  
from outside

all the windows, all the homes, all the life

To imagine, to hope, to wait

The city silhouette in the twilight

to be alone, to be free

To walk into the complete unknown

to embrace your new life with joy and fear

To be in between – in transit, without a home



# WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH

When you thought that former Soviet Union was THE nightmare of bureaucracy and you realize it is **Berlin** and has been all the time!

When you realize just how many codes and how many letters with pages after pages with tight written German instructions and "Regeln" you are going to get. And there is **always** more to come.

When you are overwhelmed because you somehow need to start all over with everything.

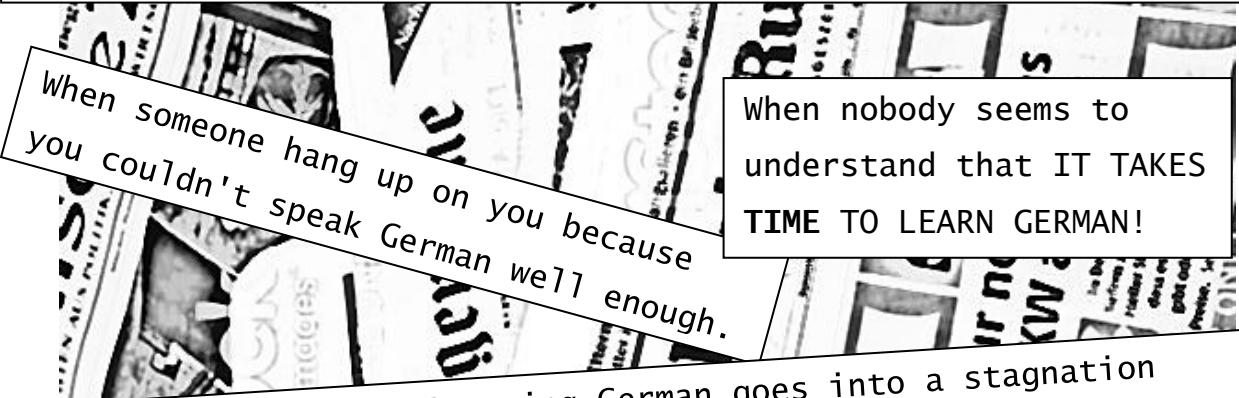
When you are trapped in the deep mud of anxiety in your new life and you are too much in between - in transit of your old life and your new life, and you don't know **where** to place yourself.



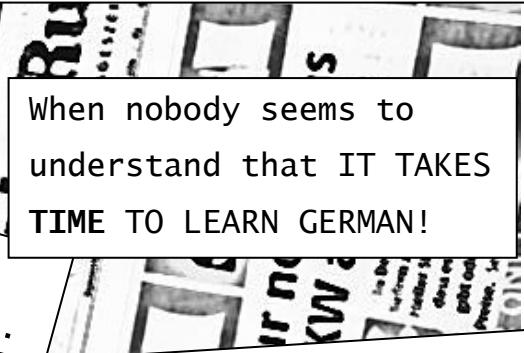
When your memory of your former home seems like a very strange and distant memory from another time period, but you have no memory of a new home and you sit on a bench in a park somewhere and think of this.



When they promise to speak English but don't and when the official homepage is in English **ONLY on the first page** – the more important details further on are NOT in English.



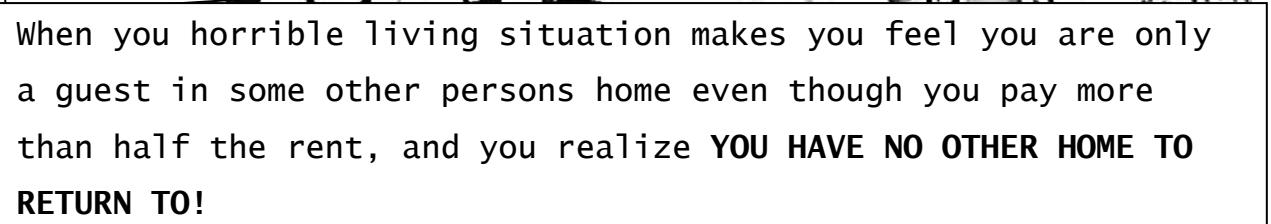
When someone hangs up on you because you couldn't speak German well enough.



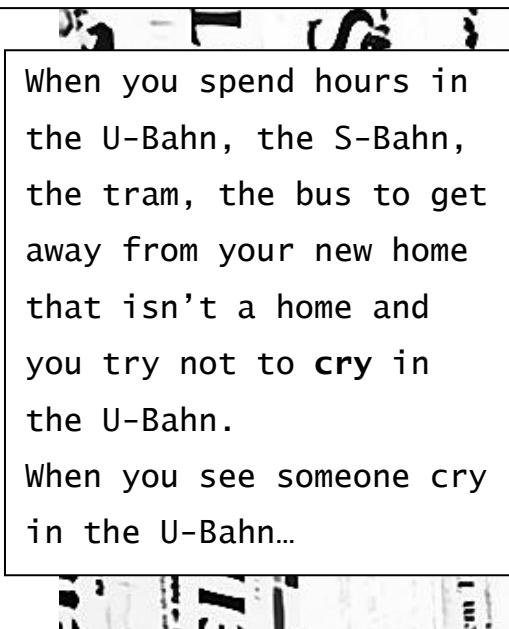
When nobody seems to understand that IT TAKES TIME TO LEARN GERMAN!



When your progress in learning German goes into a stagnation period and seems to **stay there** for a long time because you are so exhausted and then your English starts to get worse!



When you horrible living situation makes you feel you are only a guest in some other persons home even though you pay more than half the rent, and you realize **YOU HAVE NO OTHER HOME TO RETURN TO!**



When you spend hours in the U-Bahn, the S-Bahn, the tram, the bus to get away from your new home that isn't a home and you try not to cry in the U-Bahn.

When you see someone cry in the U-Bahn...



When you look for the light in the end of the tunnel and you realize that someone forgot to turn the light on. And then you realize **THERE IS NO TUNNEL!!**

(Continue the list if you are an immigrant)



But then you remember



it is only a phase &  
**you'll need to climb that hill to enjoy  
the view!**



## And then suddenly –

the bank assistant tells you that your German is fine and you understood everything in the new letter you just got from some German institution

you got the joke – the German joke! (They exist)

you know exactly where to go to get certain things and don't have to walk around for hours in vain and you explain a tourist how to get somewhere

your new friends want to see you again and you realize you have new **friends**!

You meet all the right people in the right place and time!

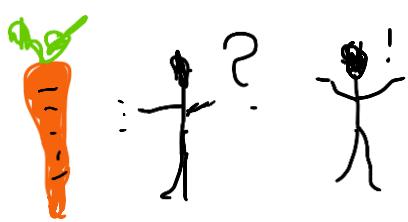
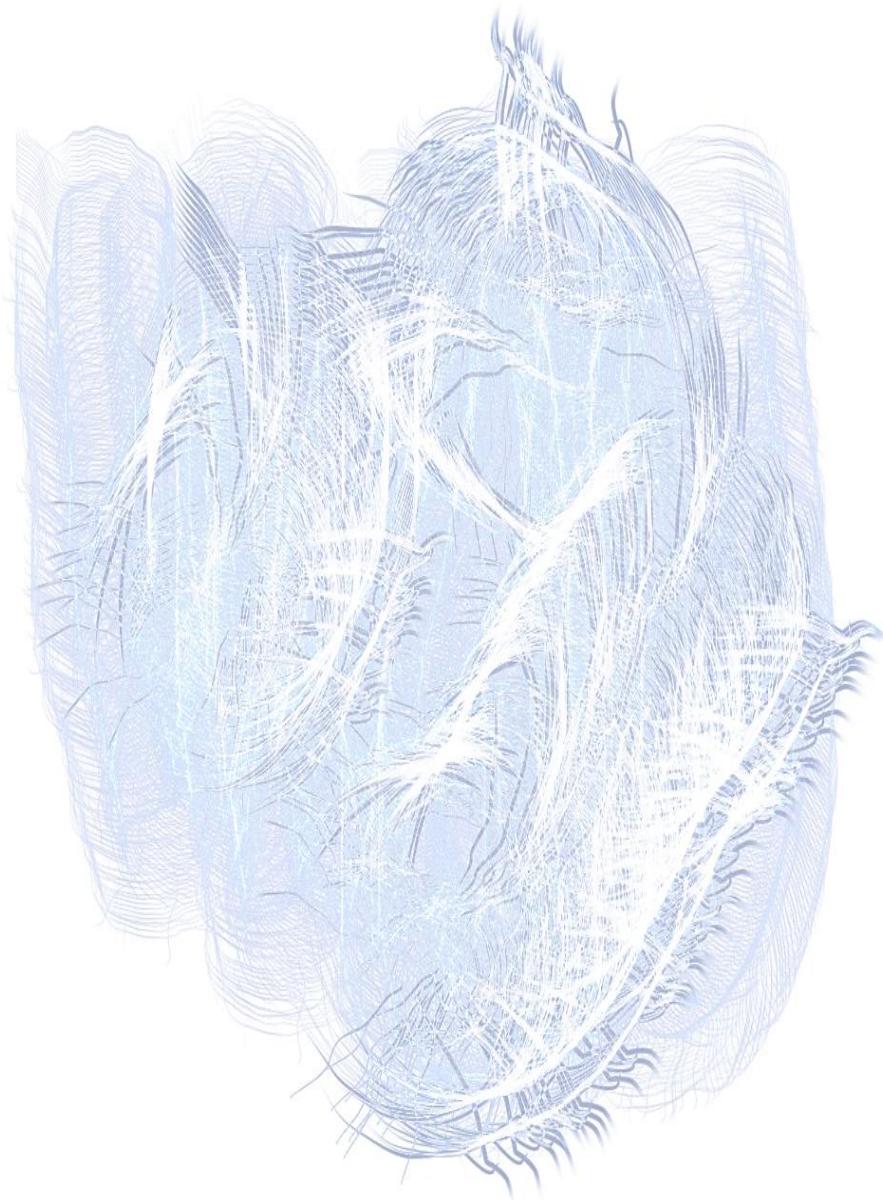
Your new life and place give you new inspiration and **lots of energy**, yeah!

the real estate agent tells you "**Sie haben die Wohnung bekommen**"! (you got the apartment!)

you are going home to your new home – **YOUR HOME!**

you realize your transit period is nearly over and you are where you wanted to be, and you wake up with a **smile** because you live a **new life** in a new country, and it is cool!

(Continue the list if you are an immigrant).



## SOME STATEMENTS

Art historians of all fields (visual, music, literature etc.) write the art history and they are forced to use acknowledged theories and -isms that fit with the discourses of present time within the academic world. I know, because I am also an academic 😊 (archaeology, not art), and “trends” and few powerful people of various art institutions in societies are controlling what is going to “fit in” and what is not. Also, it is a very male dominated world.

I am not saying this out of bitterness – you can play along with the so-called established art world sometimes (which I do with great pleasure) and other times you can stay as independent as possible.

This zine is an independent artwork!

I work within principles of DIY for many reasons. First of all because it is great fun and because I prefer to make my own artistic rules and to define the possibilities and limitations for each project.

But also, because I believe any artwork needs a vast amount of anarchy that is not very likely to fit in within conventional art institutions and their controlling power discourses.