

The Book of Miracles

by Stefan Beuse

sample translated by Jen Calleja

(1)

Something is going on, and you are not quite sure what it is. A gust of wind out on the street seems to freeze people in their tracks. It is as if someone has paused their story, like a film snagging for the duration of a blink of an eye. Fleeting enough for the illusion, long enough to divine the mechanics behind it.

You see them, every morning. How they stream out of their houses at the same time every day. How they congregate at the traffic lights and flood the streets, eyes down, as if they have been wiped and had a completely new programme installed – an operating system with a lie at its core. The lie that it is all about money, about power. That it is about constantly striving to fulfil yourself through education, work, property.

Your worth, they believe, is measured by how much you accumulate. You have to have more than all the others. More assets, more holidays, more sex. The more you have of everything the happier you will be. So you dig and dig but it is never enough because there is always something more, you could be better looking, richer, smarter, and the constant sense of inadequacy is the opposite of what you were promised.

So you have to try harder. You become quicker, your gaze becomes more focused, you concentrate ever more determinedly on something beyond your reach because it is outside of the system: that is the punchline. It is not about accumulation. You already have everything you need within you. You just forgot.

Instead of negotiating the singular path worthwhile to you, you abase yourself day in and day out from the fear of losing a system that only further destroys you. While the longing gorges holes in you, you ruin your life, until you wake up and tell everyone in the offices and around the campfires of this world the true story of where you came from.

Do you remember?

In the beginning was the word, the word was thought, and the thought was with you.

(2)

'Penny?'

Tom jammed his fingers between the slatted bed frame and the mattress above him.

'Do you sometimes wonder if everything is completely different?'

He clamped his hands tightly around one of the slats. 'People. Animals. Everything.'

Tom waited, but he didn't hear a sound from above.

'We just did it in biology.' He cleared his throat. 'Bees for instance. They see totally different colours to us. Or lizards. Fish. Bats. They perceive the world in a completely different way. It's a matter of how energy vibrates. It's a question of frequencies. You hear and see and smell only the part that your range of frequency allows. The rest is there, but you don't realise it.'

'And how do we know that our way is the right one?'

'We don't,' he said, 'that's the thing.'

'And if we could adapt to them? These other...'

'Frequencies?'

Tom felt his fingers become numb.

'We'd be in a completely different world.'

Penny didn't say anything for a long time. Then she rolled onto her side.

'Let's try it.'

Tom looked up around her bed frame. 'What?'

Penny's head appeared next to the bed. Tom looked up into her face from below.

'The other world.' Her eyes twinkled. 'Let's go.'

Tom laid his head back onto the pillow and smoothed down the hillocks in the bedspread with his hand. 'How do you imagine we'd do that?'

'Didn't you learn how to do it in biology?'

'You can't just change the world's frequencies, Penny.'

His sister laid back down in silence again. Tom couldn't even hear her breathing.

'No,' she said. 'But we can change ours.'

(3)

'A spoonful of light', their mother said after dinner. Penny eagerly opened her mouth, and Tom fought back his nausea. He tried concentrating on something else. He steered his attention away from the yellow goo on the spoon to the gurgling of the coffee machine, the gorse swaying down in the garden. And suddenly he knew what Penny had meant about changing frequencies.

The spoon in front of him. The cod liver oil on it. The revolting smell. These all existed, just like the noise coming from the coffee machine, or what could be seen out of the window. It was all simultaneous, Tom could tune his perception into whatever he wanted. He could concentrate on the smell of the coffee and could no longer smell the cod liver oil. Even though it was still there, along with the rest of the world.

'It's like...' his mother said.

Don't say it. Please.

'...if an angel...'

His mother didn't exist. Her words didn't exist. Only what you want exists.

The splutter of the machine. The gorse motioning outside in the garden.

Every person is a planet encased within a thin atmosphere of beliefs and thoughts, Tom thought to himself. And just like the canopy of the sky, not everything that exists appears, only what is let through.

Think about it, he thought.

You live with three other people in the same apartment.

You sit with the same three people every day at the same table.

You all do the same thing at the same time at different points in the day. You eat the same food. In the same apartment. At the same time. Does the apartment look the same for you as it does for them? Does the food taste the same for them as it does for you? Do they like the pictures on the wall? Do they even notice them anymore? Or do they only see the dust on the frame? Isn't it all always there? Always? Everything? Simultaneously? The same circumstances. And yet life in the same apartment is completely different for each of you. Whatever attracts your attention creates the reality most significant to you.

Do you know what this means? There are no fantasies. There are no dreams. Everything that can be thought or dreamt exists. Only on a different frequency. You alone can determine what surfaces from the fog of possibilities.

It's physics, he thought. Nothing more than physics.

There are no limits. The blue sky is an illusion, a deception preventing you from losing your mind. The darkness beyond it is not an empty expanse – it is infinite possibility.

Open your mouth, he thought to himself. Close your eyes. There is no taste of cod liver oil.

'...took a tinkle on your tongue,' his mother said, but he could no longer hear her. Tom swallowed without even noticing. He had tasted nothing. He had conquered the world. For a moment at least.

(4)

And then you find the notebook. You go into her room and see the treasure chest under her bed. You open it, and underneath all of the glass shards she had mistaken for gemstones you find a schoolbook. *The Book of Miracles* is written on the front, and under that: *For Tom*.

You wrench it open and find everything inside. Instructions on how to find the forest again. How you reach the other world across the lake.

You find a sketch of a landscape. Directions through the jungle. A map with a mountain plotted right smack in the middle, and just like on a treasure map, a spot is marked with an X.

You wonder when your sister started writing in this book.

And then you start reading.

Dear Tom, you read.

If you've found this I'm somewhere else. On a different frequency, you would say, and you'd been right: there are worlds laid out on invisible layers over the normal world, but on the true frequency you can see everything. Everything that can be thought of. Even you. I know it sounds crazy, but the true frequency is more real than the one they think is real on the estate. More real than houses, more real than hedges, washing machines, churches.

Everything surrounds you, always, just on a different level. Take a look, I've written everything in this

book. Everything you have to know. But be careful. Trust no one but yourself, and pay attention to what you come across.

Wish me luck. A hundred kisses and hugs. Signed: Penny, Queen of the Jungle, dictated but not read, etc.

(5)

There was once a girl who believed in miracles. Her name was Penny. She had a brother called Tom. Tom believed in science. He considered it his responsibility to tell Penny the truth: that there are no miracles. That you can dismantle everything and then put it back together again. Like a puzzle, like clockwork, like a model airplane. Tom dissected things before Penny's eyes and said, you see, no mysteries. These are the parts that comprise our world. We know exactly how they work. We have everything under control.

But one day something happened that Tom couldn't explain. Together with his sister he discovered a place where the rules he had trusted no longer applied. A lake where all frequencies united, where thoughts, fears, dreams, hopes and wishes took on form in its reflection. Beyond the mirroring lay one's true self. But just before it was revealed to him, Tom became afraid. He fled from his destiny and woke up back in the housing estate.

There was once a boy who believed that he could achieve something that no-one had before. But when the time came, the boy stopped believing in the greatness within him. But his daemon lived on, undetected by him, on a frequency he couldn't see.

While the boy grew up and became more and more a part of the housing estate, the being was preparing to take on a form in his world... and overcome the mirroring.