VYRAJ
Written by Paweł Ratajczyk
SCROLL DOWN
THE RITE OF FIRST GREYING
"You have been children so far. Today is the day of the ordeal on which you are crawling out of the ground, like fat maggots ready to metamorphose."
"The journey you are beginning is like a chrysalis' dream. You shall not be misled—your sleep shall not be undisturbed. The Tree shall put you to the test. It shall show you things to entice and deceive."
We're walking along a path marked by black and golden sunsets.
When covered with snow, they look dead but I know that warmth is kept within their metal interior. We can see our destination—the sacred tree—in the distance.
'Walk steadily straight ahead. By no means shall you stop and look back.'
I'm observing children walking by. Everyone has their Sunday best on.
The red-haired girl with a wiroot necklace is Nielebsta from a village in the forest. I've met her once in the marketplace.
The twins in funny hats must be highlanders' children.
There are children from the far northern pectoral walking behind her.
There's nobody from the Velles tribe but they believe neither in the gods nor in the Storya.
'Should you stand the trial, you shall return transformed into images, perfect insects.'
'As a reward, Bielybog shall bestow you with a streak of white hair. Czernybog shall make you ripe as fruit. The mothers shall tell you the true names so that you could be fully born for your tribes.'
'This is the way it has been and shall ever be since the day when the grey waters of the Second Flood subsided until the day on which the humankind's time elapses.'
I had no idea they were so tall. It looks really huge when close by. It looks like they flu-lum used to describe. Its crown supports the skies and clouds lost in its same.
Two big trees made a gate.
We're walking hand in hand for a moment. I look at her in disbelief. She looks different. She's taller, more convenient.
Her facial features are sharper. I can see a thin streak of white hair in her red hair. I look at myself, at my hips and breasts. Have I changed the same way?
Has the rite succeeded? Nielebsta seems to see my doubt. She's smiling and nodding.
I'm floundering in the snow and mud. I'm getting tangled in the wiroots. Why so many? I can't set my foot free. I can't walk on. 'Help,' I'm crying out to the others.
It's not that easy.
Everyone LEAVES OUTSIDE THE HALLS of the Council of Elders. Only the Elders and the Chosen Ones are allowed to enter the Council Hall. Today, I am one of the Chosen Ones. I'm so nervous that I can't even feel the ground beneath my feet. The Council Hall is a large, round building made of white stone. It has no windows and no roof. The Council of Elders sits in the middle of the hall, on a raised platform. The Chosen Ones are seated on benches around the platform. The Council of Elders is a group of old people who have lived in the village for many years. They are the wisest people in the village. The Council of Elders is responsible for making all the important decisions in the village.
'Yoja, come forward.' I stand up and walk to the platform. The Council of Elders is looking at me with a mixture of curiosity and skepticism. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a strange creature. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a threat. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a problem. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a mistake. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a sinner. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a criminal. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a traitor. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a heretic. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a pariah. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a leper. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a plague. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a curse. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a disease. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a virus. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a bacteria. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a fungus. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a parasite. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a worm. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a maggot. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a rat. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a mouse. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a cockroach. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a spider. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a scorpion. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a snake. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a lizard. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a frog. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a toad. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a newt. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a salamander. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a crocodile. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a dragon. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a demon. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a devil. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a witch. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a wizard. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a sorcerer. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a magician. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a shaman. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a priest. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a priestess. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a prophet. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a prophetess. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a seer. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a seeress. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a soothsayer. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a fortuneteller. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a psychic. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a medium. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a clairvoyant. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a clairaudient. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a clairsentient. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a clairsensitive. I feel like they are looking at me as if I am a clairsensible