

# In a Grid

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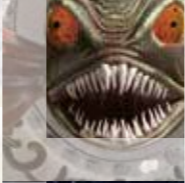
















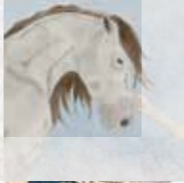




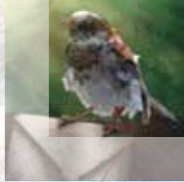




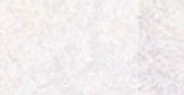



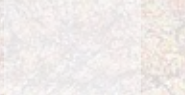



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# In a Grid 7

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The "In a Grid" magazine is an irregular published by The Culture House Foundation. It is a magazine created by women serving prison sentences in the Warsaw Detention Centre in Grochów, guests invited from other units in Poland, as well as artists.

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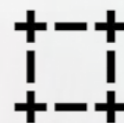
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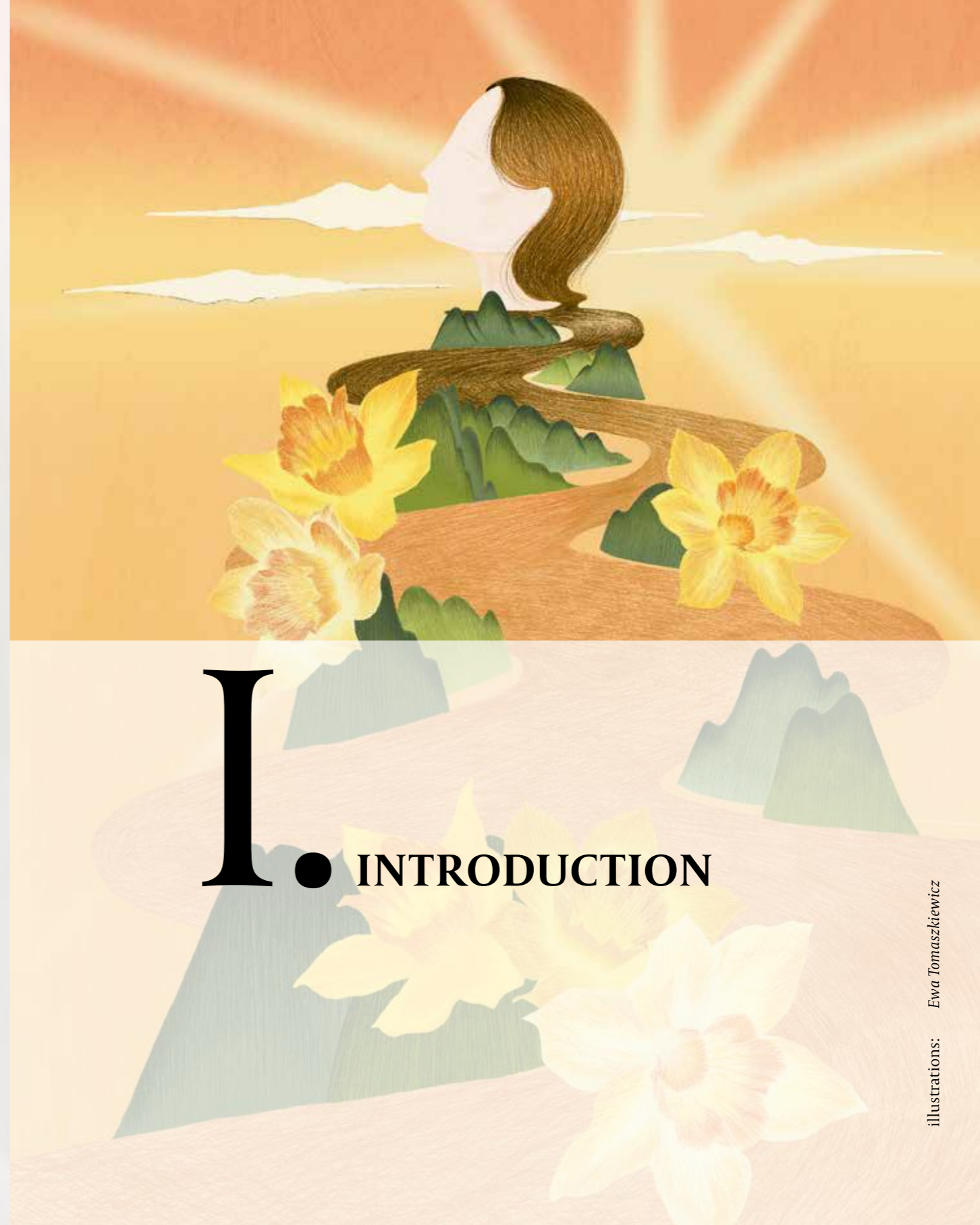


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English translation  
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# I ● INTRODUCTION



## To cope regardless

Once upon a time there lived a man called Baron Münchhausen. He was a German nobleman and traveler. He spent most of his crazy life wandering the seas and distant lands and had lots of unusual adventures.

Once he was fired from a cannon, in Turkey he became a bee keeper. At one time, in the open sea, he got swallowed by a large fish, from whose belly he was released after a long time. Were he alive today, his Instagram profile would be exceptionally popular: We all like interesting lives full of adventures. Münchhausen, however, lived in the 19th century. He was only able to tell listeners about his adventures by the fireplace. One of them turned out to be so interesting and thought-provoking that it became the baron's most famous adventure.

Once, while wading through the swamps, he got stuck waist-deep in mud and began to sink. He screamed for help but there were no people around so no one came to his help. He realized

he would drown. Not knowing what to do, he came up with the idea of pulling himself out of the swamp by his own hair. Impressive? Very. True? Unlikely. It's obvious that lifting oneself up is impossible. But to the audience gathered around Münchhausen it didn't matter anyway. The message was simple: at the end of the day, you can only count on yourself.

The theme of the 7th issue of "In a Grid" is coping. Every day we have to cope – find a solution in every situation, even when at first glance there seems to be no way out. Regardless of where we are: at home, in prison, in the hospital or in the street. To cope means to keep fighting. Believe that you will succeed and never give up. Ultimately, you have to survive. For yourself, but above all for others.

*Mateusz Marczewski,*  
editor-in-chief of the 7th issue of "In a Grid"



# II ● BEAUTY IN THE NICK

There are things on the outside that you wouldn't think could come in useful. In prison used plastic bags, plastic yogurt cups or cheese wrappers turn out to be items that can be used in the most unobvious ways. For example, you can make a foam beater out of two forks, or a sink plunger out of a used pen refill. Easy? Of course, you just need to work out how best to manage. The radiator and a tin chocolate wrapper can serve as a toaster. And the iron? One moment it's a hair straightener, the next a device for warming cheese on bread. Every little thing that on the outside would end up in the trash turns out to be worth its weight in gold round here. Ingenuity is in demand. Even when it comes to beauty.

Wiewióra

### Hair gel

Take water and sugar and mix well so that you get thick consistency. Put it on your hands and rub it into your hair.

Amanda

### Tweezer-thread

Need tweezers? Make it yourself! All you need to do is tie two ends of a string about 15 cm long and weave them around your fingers. You drag it across your face, epilating the hair.

Bridget

### Exfoliator

Take used coffee grounds, add sugar, mix and apply to your face or body. Wash it off after twenty minutes. For an expanded version: take sugar, cinnamon, two drops of lemon, Nivea cream, oil and you've got a great body scrub. Be careful, you'll get a bit sticky like a fly glue trap, but nothing is as important as your charm and young face!

Amanda i Bridget

### Cream

The margarine we get for breakfast can be used as face cream, foot cream or hand cream.

Amanda

### Face mask

Add boiled water and a tiny bit of oil to oatmeal. Apply it to your face. You can wash it off after twenty minutes.

Amanda



### Hair conditioner

Dissolve a small amount of gelatin (approx. one tablespoon) in warm water, add one tablespoon of flax seed, mix and apply to the entire length of dampened hair. Leave for about half an hour, rinse with warm water.

MiN

### Perfume

Take two caps of Cocolino or Lenor fabric softener, depending on which scent you prefer. Dilute it with water, preferably in a bottle with atomizer, and you have your own perfume.

*MiN*

### Hair straightener

Pour boiling water into a plastic bottle, take a towel and run along the entire length of your hair, strand by strand. After 10 minutes, your hair will be as straight as when using a straightener.

*Ziuzia, Miszania, Kacha*

### Paste for special tasks

Prison toothpaste can be used to clean a kettle, clean white shoes, also as glue and even to whiten clothes.

*Amanda*



# III ● DAY ONE

Let's talk about coping in prison. First of all, once you get here, you need to know what's happening around you.

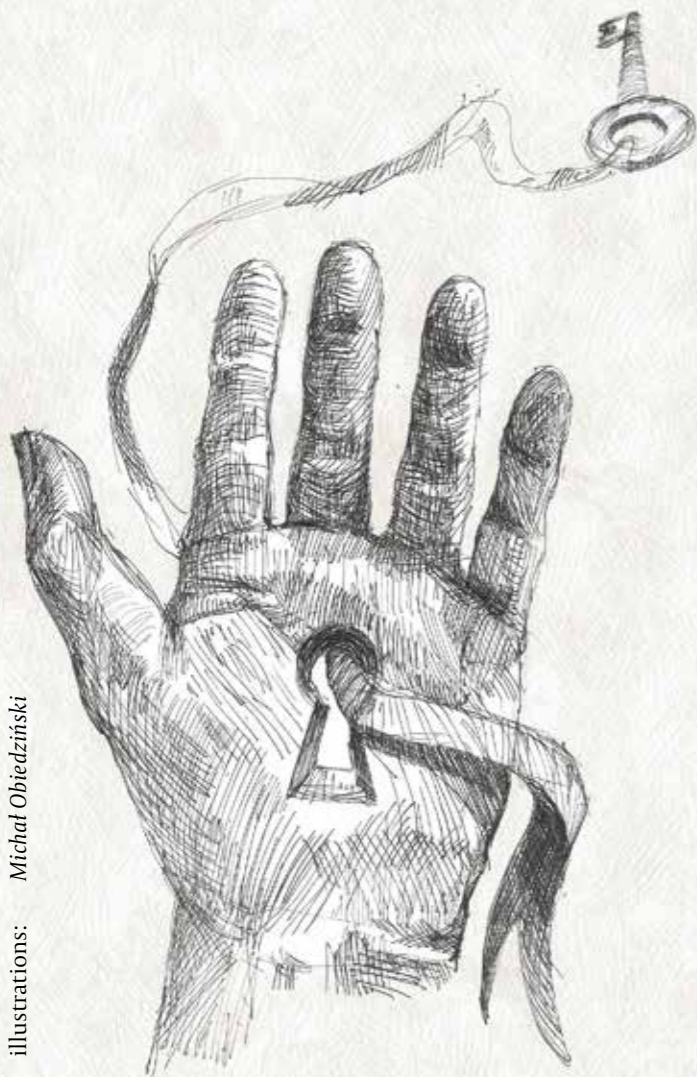
So one by one. First you get to the "grinder" – a place with no windows, filled with a strange smell. Future prisoners spend many an hour there.

They will hand you "the cube". "The cube" is a must-have. It includes two blankets, two sheets, two towels, a cloth, a pillowcase, dishes: a green field set (mug, bowl, plate, fork, spoon, knife), detergents and toiletries (washing powder, dish washing liquid, shampoo, sanitary pads, toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrush, soap).

If you do not have any personal items apart from what you are wearing, you can ask for the so-called treasure items: a shirt, panties, flip-flops (so-called slippers), pajamas or a nightgown. And the prison uniform in green (supposedly the colour of hope) – a skirt or trousers, depending on the time of year you end up here.

Then you end up in a transit cell. You go behind a "hatch" – a door without door handles, where there are already girls, green freshies like you. They're most likely crying at the window that can't be seen through. Sure, it's easy to break down at the beginning. Immediately ask the warden for a washing bowl. Rinse it with boiling water before use. You will find a kettle in every temporary cell. Write to the management asking for a voucher for your bowl and personal items. And remember that there is no such thing as "they have to". They "can". Practice patience.

*Ziuzia, Miszania, Kacha*



The prison reality seems terrifying at first.



The handcuffs, the tight cell, the strangers. The mind cannot keep up with new stimuli, so on that first day one understands little.

You don't even know how to behave or take care of yourself.



Bars on the windows, strangers around. They may well be smiling, but you feel that something is wrong. It's as if they are pretending to be nice.

That's how it works. The old life is just ending and in these first days you are born again.

Try to stay upright. Fight for yourself.  
Spot rare cases of honesty.

*MiN*

That first moment is the hardest, but a lot depends on it. You enter through the gate for the first time and see a few girls. Instinctively, you look around the cell. Don't show your feelings. If you experience fear, forget about it. It will get better soon, even the next day, just this first moment needs to be endured. The girls in your cell may try to take advantage to get you to do things for free. Understand this and don't worry. Just be mindful. Be yourself and behave naturally. Not everyone will like you, you are not tomato soup. If there's something you don't know, ask,

but if you do ask, listen carefully to what people say – no one will keep explaining endlessly. Those who have been inside longer will help because they were once in your position. And don't get drawn into a life of crime. Remember that there will come a day when you leave this place. No need to make the nick your life, you actually always have one foot on the outside. You'll get out someday after all. Be prepared for anything.

*Barbi*

Then comes the tough everyday life inside. I will give you some tips that I myself received from one inmate.

First of all don't lose hope. Always have your own opinion and don't yield to other inmates. Always be independent. Don't look for friends in prison. If you feel lonely and miss home, write a letter. If you want to work, tell your attending warden about it. The rest is a matter of regulations.

Morning roll-call is between 6:15 and 6:30 a.m., evening roll-call from 6:15 to 6:30 p.m. During roll-calls you must be fully dressed and have your bed made.

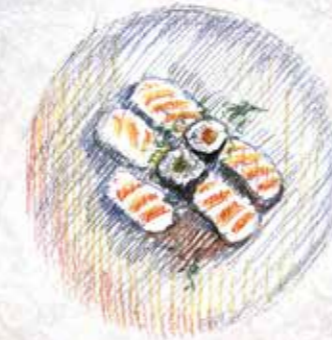
Breakfast is at around 7:30, then a walk and private activities.

At around 1:30–2:00 p.m. there's lunch, then private activities.

Dinner at 6.15–6.30 p.m.

Then we have a wash in a bowl, in cold water because that's what's in the tap, and we go to sleep.

Before sleep we wish each other colourful dreams.



Sleep well, don't worry too much, it's just prison.

*Amanda*

I remember that first moment well. It was as if I had entered a completely new world. Gray walls, bars on the windows. I was holding “the cube” in my arms. That’s how I entered the ward.

I tried to understand some things, but it was dif-

ficult. I looked at the corridor,

at the door leading to the cell and wondered

what awaited me. As soon as I entered, I knew

I it was going to be eventful. I’d not yet entered

the cell and was already tormented by thoughts

like: who will I be there with? Who’s on the oth-

er side of the door? Who am

I gonna spend long hours with? Who am I gonna

meet on my way? How will I spend my first

night? The cell turned out to be a small room.

When I crossed the threshold, one of the girls

said to me “come in, here’s your bunk.” She just

said that. I didn’t understand

the slang yet, but I knew it meant the bed. I tried

to remember new words.

As soon as I sat down, the girls started explaining

to me what was important:

what the rules were in the ward, who deter-

mined the hierarchy. Today

I know that they really wanted to help me.

I immediately knew that kipisz – the cell

inspection takes place once a month. Roll call

is always at 6:30, then breakfast, a walk and so

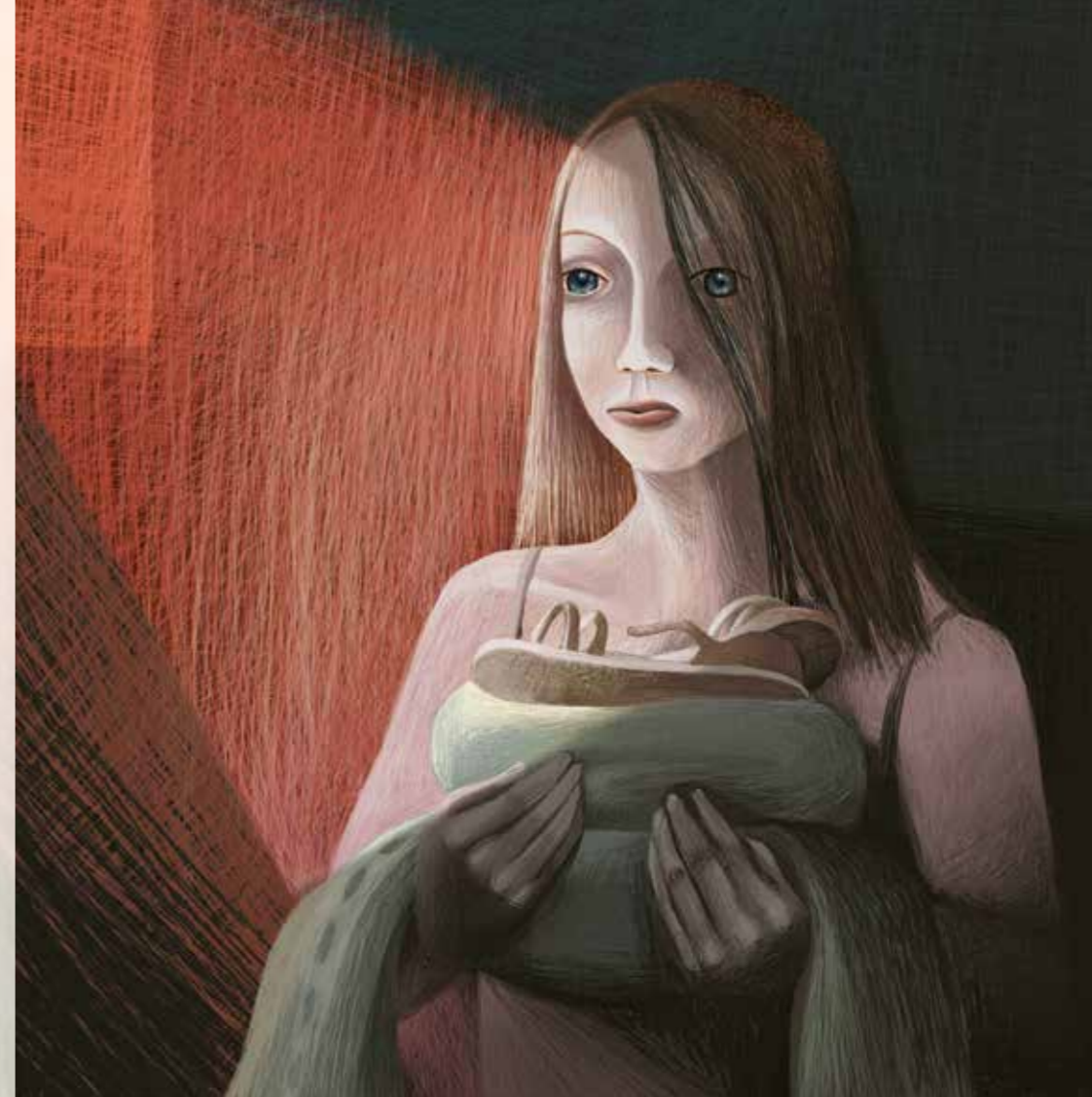
it goes on repeat. The girls informed me about

cleaning duties. They said the cell

had to be tidy. But then it turned

out that not everyone was able to

adapt. Prison is not home after all.



Then there’s the cell. It is small, claustrophobic. In the evening there is semi-darkness. Little light comes in through the bars and plexiglass in the windows. You need to remember to treat the officers with respect. Personal inspections are the worst. Every time you come back from

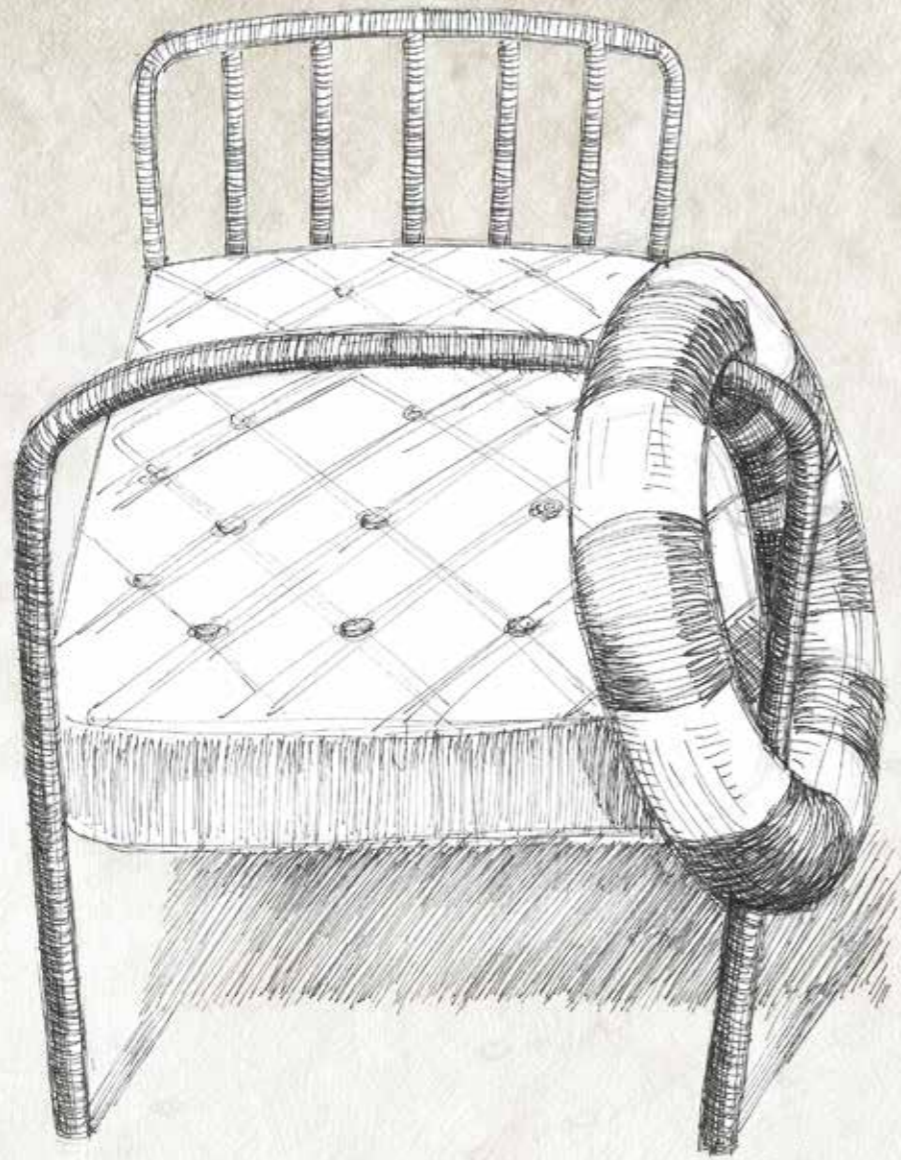
a visit, they search you. You have to take off your underwear. It’s not pleasant.

I would say it is an infringement on a person’s dignity. For the officers it is a norm, for us – an insult. Then I met the recidivists – inmates who returned to prison. They have a particular aura. You would mostly bow to them. They are like gurus in our closed world.

*Bridget i Kosior*

Push away thoughts about family and friends if you have enough strength. Don't think about what you could do on the outside. Learn to be careful. Don't talk much, listen more. Do not engage in gossip and unnecessary discussions, don't interfere in exchanges of opinions that do not concern you. Take care of your hygiene. If you stop complaining about everything and everyone, it will be easier for you. If you can, seek help from a counselor.

NN



# IV

● WE GO INTO  
THE FOREST

An encounter with forest is always mysterious. Maybe because the forest offers something different to everyone who enters it. The forest invites you inside, and once you are among the trees, you tend to get what you want most. It may be an escape from the hustle and bustle of life, from the city, the noise of cars, to land on a blanket spread out in a clearing with a group of friends. Some enter the forest for an injection of good energy or a simple rest. It is enough to fall asleep in tall grass, in the shade of trees, to wake up in a completely different state, as if with a clearer mind.

*Zuzia, Kacha*

I think in the forest it's best to just lie down and keep on lying. It feels good. Peace and quiet ensue. Clean air fills your lungs. You need to focus on this delicate feeling, cut yourself off from everyday life and immerse yourself in yourself. things immediately get better.

*Karolinka*

When I enter the forest there is absolute silence. The only thing you can hear is the singing of birds and the rustling of leaves. I am walking and inhaling that scent. I know it, it can't be confused with anything else. I stand with my eyes closed and tell myself that it is the smell of nature. This is what trees and plant litter smell like, but it's something more, it's the smell of the light-filled forest air.

*Klaudia*

The forest lets you connect with the environment and for a moment become one with nature and maybe even with the world. In the forest, everything seems clear and beautiful. When you walk, you can hear birds singing and the cracking of twigs breaking under your shoes. The scent of the trees brings with it their power. The forest feels like an oasis. It is full of life and peace at the same time. A walk in the forest is actually about getting through to yourself. Thanks to this, when in the forest, we are close to ourselves and can look at the world from a distance.


*Magdzik*

The moment I stepped in among the trees, peace came over me. The forest has this effect on people. They say greenery calms you down. The wind gently sways the branches and its gusts bring with them the scent of pine needles and mushrooms. I lie down on a hammock stretched between the trees. Lying down, I listen to the distant echo and look at the treetops. I watch the light fall through the branches. There's no one here except me. As if the entire show was organized especially for me. My body feels relaxed, Right away my thinking gets clearer. There is no stress. It's gone elsewhere.

*Angelika*

I have liked the forest for as long as I can remember. As a child, I often went mushroom picking. I knew the forests around where I lived well. From an early age, I knew how to behave in the forest – to not raise my voice or trample the undergrowth, to move so as not to damage plants, preferably walk along well-trodden paths. My mother always told me that the forest is the home of animals, so you have to respect it. We, the people, are guests there. To this day, I consider the forest to be a special place.

*Nati*



When I used to go to the forest to pick mushrooms, I was entering a completely different world. Yes, I was picking mushrooms, but sometimes I would stop for a moment and listen to the sounds in the distance. I was immediately drawn to peace and silence, but so different, as if mysterious. I used to live in the forest and I know something about it. In my youth, I used to sit on a bench outside my house in the evening and listen to the sound of the trees.



Sometimes animals would speak. It's a different world. A place that allows you to escape from everyday life and connect with nature.

Poetka M.



# V ● VARIOUS

## Can I give advice?

Let me start by saying that I don't want to give advice to anyone, I'd rather tell you what it was – and is – like for me. It's easy to throw around slogans about the golden mean that will make everything fine, or at least easier. No. It will not be the case and we need to make that clear. There are a million reasons that put us behind bars. There is also the difference in the length of sentences. And I will focus on this aspect first.

With a 25-year sentence, I can't give advice to someone who will spend the rest of their life inside these walls, or a few months, or years. For me it was, is and will continue to be just the beginning. Yes, you read that right. What I consider to be my huge "success" is telling myself that I have been here for a week and have a few days to go. After a decade in prison it still works! They say that a lie repeated many times becomes the truth. I really believe that.

It is obvious that I had to somehow adjust to my new reality, despite my "imminent exit".

I started with affiliation trials. Here I established rather quickly that I was following my own way. I will never know what would have happened had I decided otherwise. What I do know though is that I wouldn't advise anyone doing what I do.

After a period of melancholy that I fell into for about two years, there came a time of sobriety.

Neither will I hide the fact that when it comes to the plans I had made, I have stuck to them one hundred percent. Quite the opposite. Twenty percent have come true (and even that number is still rather stretched). I have learned, thank God, to be happy with what I have, and not to grumble about my failures, what I do not have, what I have missed; I won't mention these (there have been too many).

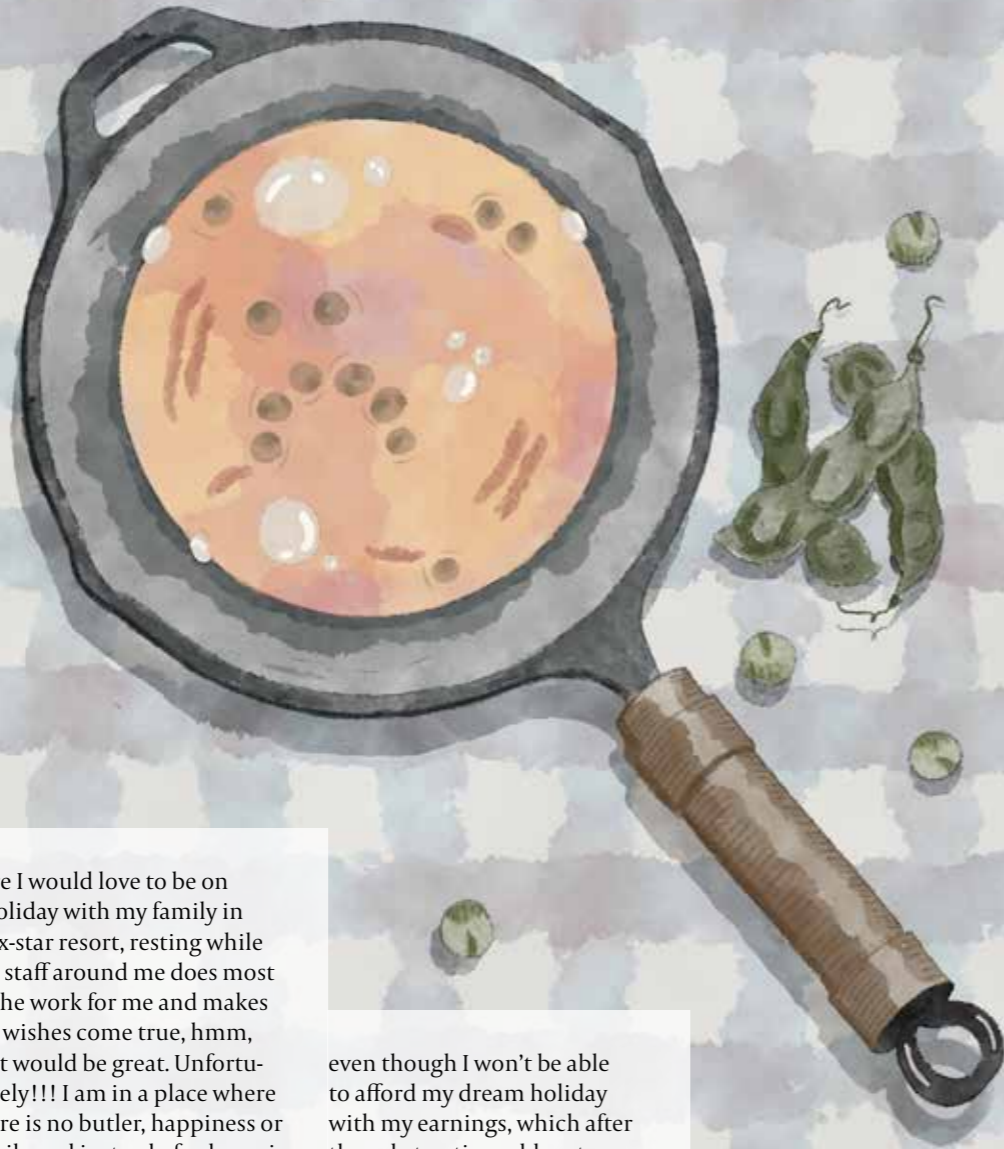


However, I will boast about one skill I acquired thanks to Agnieszka, a counselor from the Gdańsk Remand Center, which undoubtedly saved me from the boredom of prison, our greatest enemy. This activity is cross stitch embroidery. When I was free, I had never even heard of such a thing. I have been involved in sports all my life, and having no talent for drawing, I did not believe that I could, especially with the help of a needle and thread, create a picture, a character, a reproduction of a famous painting.

Fortunately for me, the counselor thought otherwise. With the patience of a nun, step by step she showed me how to do it, gave me fabric, took time and, above all, she didn't doubt me (when she saw me drawing because I wanted to and did prove that I was a total ignorant in that field). And so today images of famous people, paintings by the greatest painters or simply portraits of my friends and family are the best gifts I can give them. I recommend embroidery to everyone. If I managed to learn

it then, I swear, anyone can learn it. A painting the size of an A4 sheet of paper takes three to five weeks to create. Time flies I don't know when. And at the same time, I catch up on the classics of world literature by listening to audio books. If you can trust a prisoner, try this type of art, it's really worth it. You can hang "The Lady with an Ermine", "The Last Supper" or a picture of your crush on your wall. Break a needle!

*Nobsiemion*



Sure I would love to be on a holiday with my family in a six-star resort, resting while the staff around me does most of the work for me and makes my wishes come true, hmm, that would be great. Unfortunately!!! I am in a place where there is no butler, happiness or family and instead of calamari, the menu is dominated by soy stew, soy patties, soy schnitzels, soy pork chops and – let me tell you more... I get up at 3:00 AM and I am forced to cook all that “SOY” myself because I work in the kitchen. And

even though I won't be able to afford my dream holiday with my earnings, which after the subtraction add up to no more than 20%, I still get up in the morning, go to work and somehow put up with this “soy” because at least time flies and I simply COPE.

*Dawid*

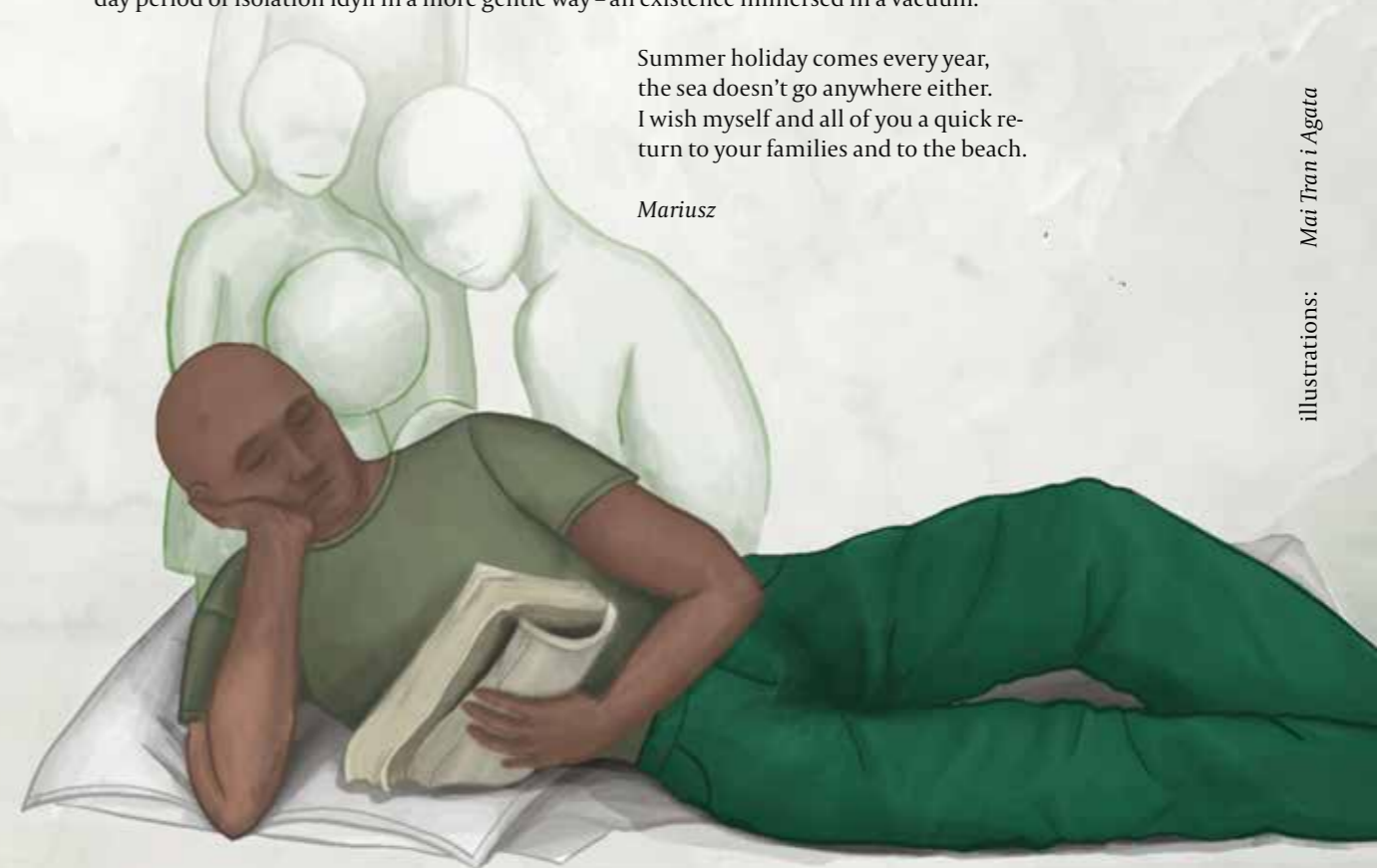
## Summer holiday period in isolation

If you prefer, you can simply say “Holiday in Penitentiary”. People who are free would probably allow themselves a little sarcasm and say “but they are on a permanent holiday there”. Well yeah, that comeback is well-deserved, no one invited us here. Nevertheless, during the summer holiday season, we can observe more intense activity among residents of the units, due to longer days and short nights, as well as sunlight that charges our batteries with vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Someone wise once said “an intelligent person never gets bored” which is why we move in this isolated world in a certain pattern. And so: those who can work, perform specific tasks or learn to improve their qualifications. Yes, work and school let you be out of your cell more often than in reality, it's a privilege. A large number of people who do not take advantage of the privilege cultivate their own body and scare others with their appearance and behavior. Many people exist just because they do and it doesn't bother them. I wouldn't lie if I said that those people never disgrace themselves by reading books or analysing themselves. I conclude this from what I hear and see during the walks and outside the window.

I know one thing, until I have served my sentence, I won't take my wife for a walk along the beach or invite her to a seaside restaurant for a skewer with smoked salmon and pineapple. Children also have to wait before we go crazy together in the sea waves. We really like doing many things together. My family and I love our family life. I'm sorry, my dears that I'm not by your side. I immerse myself in books and responsibilities that will let me survive this holiday period of isolation idyll in a more gentle way – an existence immersed in a vacuum.

Summer holiday comes every year,  
the sea doesn't go anywhere either.  
I wish myself and all of you a quick re-  
turn to your families and to the beach.

*Mariusz*





## Summer holiday!

At last, or again? I would say again but also at last! Even spring has the effect of filling me with new vitality and being in prison gets a little easier to bear. If it's even possible to make bearing easier, let's call it that. A walk when the sun is shining beautifully is so relaxing that I am in a great mood until the evening. This year's holiday was supposed to start a little differently for me, everything was already planned.

If you are meant to go on a holiday, where should you go? I know, I know, opinions will be divided. Some people are passionate about mountains and hiking trails, others will take a tent and a backpack and go to the Bieszczady Mountains, and still others will choose Masuria and regattas. Personally, all these options are fantastic for me – I love walking, climbing, paths, stairs. Conquering mountain peaks sounds exciting, wouldn't you say? There will be as many preferences as people so it's nice when two halves get together in such a way that common passions bond their relationship, right? Obviously but I've been going on about this HOLIDAY as if I had to make a tough decision regarding the trip of a lifetime. Isn't that what you thought?

I'll tell you then that I have a real problem with this HOLIDAY. After all I was meant to go somewhere yet it's July 3 and I'm still in Warsaw. I chose the seaside as my destination again. It's not that I'm such a fan of the seaside – how is lying among a huge crowd like sardines in a can meant to be fun? And the sand on top of that. Sand everywhere. Covered in all that oily crap, you need to pull the stomach in because you can feel the staring eyes of all those anorexic sex models. Whether I look good always on my mind cause social media is in constant motion and if I don't post a few photos a day people might forget about me. And this is supposed to be a HOLIDAY?! Not for me, still, I too will go to the seaside. Probably to the seaside, because I can't be sure where they take me. My pious hope is Grudziądz, but will it happen?

I'll tell you once I have left this place. For now, I'm enjoying the sun in Warsaw's Grochów, glad that when I get up in the morning I can hear birds singing, that I had the opportunity to talk to my friend and at last she was not sad. In a few days time I will see my nieces and I'll be going closer to another friend who lives in Gdańsk and I might finally be able to see her..

Majki



## Summer holiday break

The sun is rising earlier and earlier, the temperature is rising. Yes, the summer is approaching inevitably.

For those who like warmth, the most wonderful time of the year. It's time for a holiday. We work hard to save pennies and go to our dream destination for a break.

I also get my break. Making fun of my situation, I can say that I have been on one for several years and I still have 17 months of rest to go, but unfortunately it's not the case. I also work, I get up at 3 a.m. and go to work to cook a delicious prison dinner for the inmates. I started working in August, so my leave starts at the beginning of August. Now I have to choose my dream "place" of rest and relaxation. Unfortunately, it is not the beach, cocktails and a hammock, but with a bit of my imagination and an additional walk – believe me, I am where I want to be!!!

Already 2 months in advance, I take a bottle of water on a walk and water one spot where some drying grass is growing. Thanks to that, in August, that's where I find my peace. I lie there with a bottle under my head and imagine that I am in my PARADISE. HmMMM. I sunbathe and occasionally drift off so far that I have had a nap while floating in the clouds. HmMMM, I'm floating in an oasis of peace!!! And the only thing that can disturb my rest and wake me up from my sleep is the Walk Warden: END OF WALK!!!

Dawid

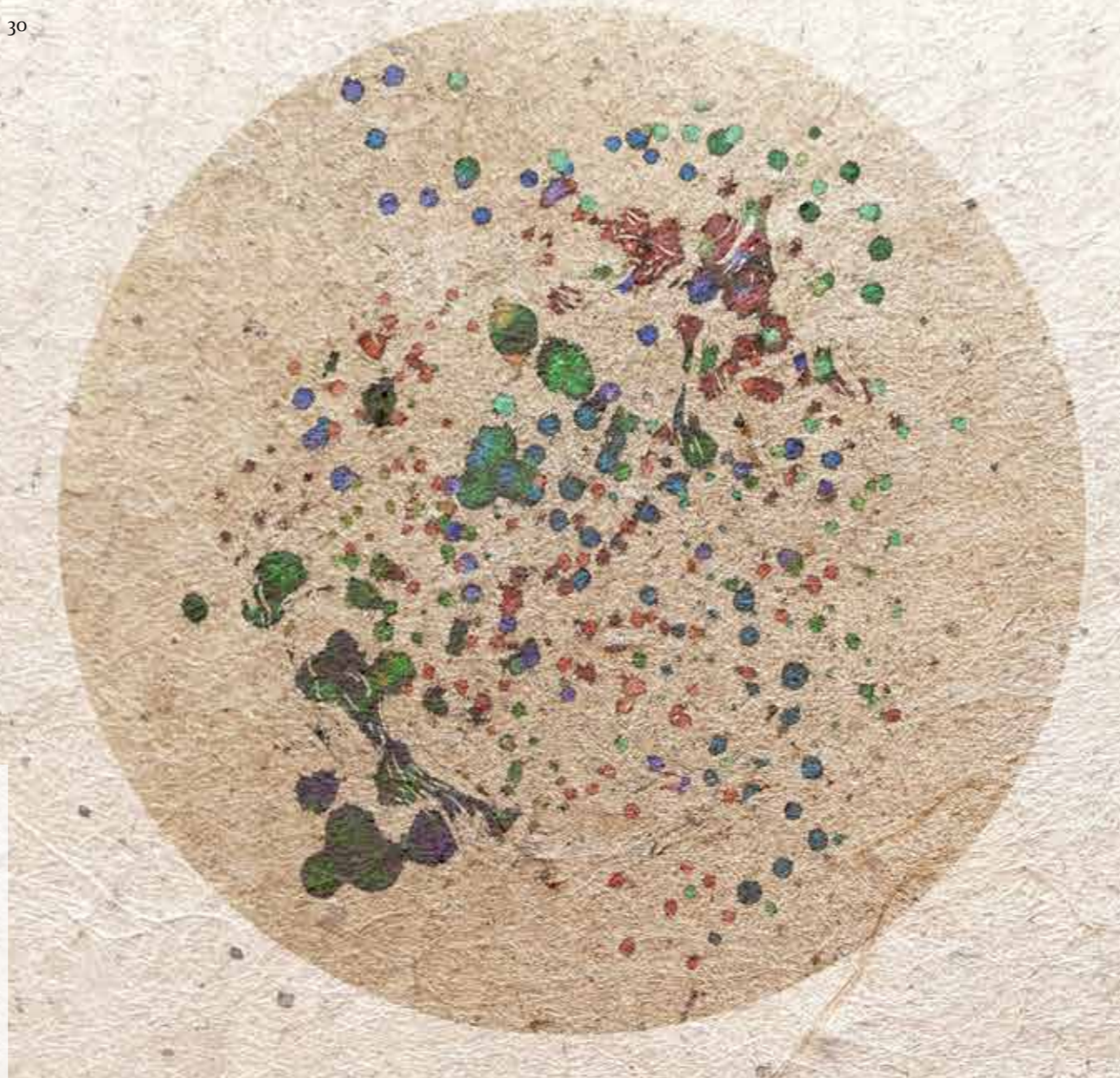


## Not-Being

I don't like the words they use in "this place", words that sound different than in reality, words that don't sound normal or nice - I don't use them. I prefer the language of communication to sound aesthetically pleasing, not distorted. I like it when the conversation is conducted calmly, without haste, without negative emotions and, importantly, without words that are obscene or insulting. Poor vocabulary puts me in a bad mood. Combined with a bad attitude, it leads into a dark tunnel, and the longer it lasts, the longer the return path will be. I don't judge anyone because I myself am subject to judgement. In "this place" where I am deprived of freedom, I often hear and see people breathe fire. That's when I experience fear. I get scared when people pour buckets of verbal feces on each other - it leads to greater misfortunes. Whether they are right or wrong - doesn't matter.

We are all people, each one of us sees, hears and feels. Everyone has the right to choose. Most inmates never stop to ponder their choice

of words. Let the statement be as simple as possible, but let it be uncontaminated with filth and hatred. I like people, I can be a faithful listener and a worthy interlocutor, I treat people who are smarter than me with humility and respect, those who, most importantly, devote their time and energy to enriching me with the knowledge that I lack. I don't like it when people are aggressive, it makes me scared. I don't want anyone to get hurt, it makes me fear for



I would love for people "here" to understand that tomorrow can be better. Each following moment can be better than the one before when we were not so good.

It doesn't take much for people to become better even in this "purgatory" despite the reflection in the mirror, despite what happened yesterday.

All you need to do is stop for a moment, be silent for a moment, consider for a moment whether it is worth taking the next step and in which direction, whether it is worth saying another word and what it should be.

I don't follow the "when in Rome..." rule, but there is something of a warrior of light in me.

I assure my wife and children that this place and the people here won't change me for the worse, so help me God.

Mariusz

my safety. It is better to stay away from evil and hatred. In this place they can get out of control.

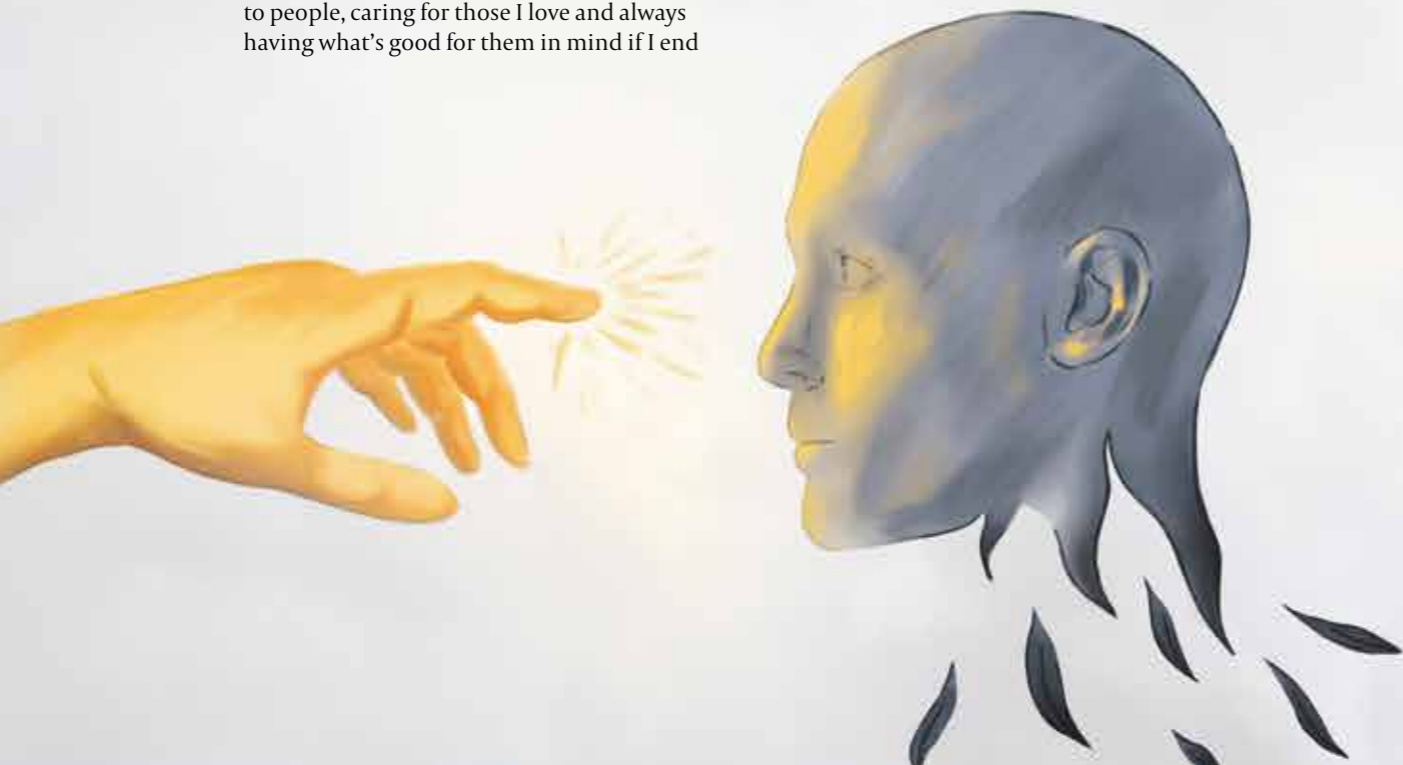
I like people and can be the life and soul of the party, but in this place I prefer to isolate myself. My thoughts and heart are with my wife and children, my own paradise is my home and family. When I cry with longing, at least no one can see it.

## Self-reflection

I ended up in prison one more time, even though I had been promising myself I would never end up in this place again. I'd been promising this to my wife and children. In order not to return to the wrong path I prayed and had hundreds of conversations, thanks to which I learned how to live with legal income from hard work. I had promised myself I wouldn't hurt people anymore. I prefer to be the good one, someone people are not afraid of, someone they can trust. If somebody asks me for help, that means I'm still worth something. In life there come moments when something bothers us and we can't avoid them because they happen for a reason. We don't know how to answer this question neither beforehand nor when difficulties do arise. Only when they are behind us do we understand why they stood in our way. It's all in vain. Because what's the point in working hard and doing no harm to people, caring for those I love and always having what's good for them in mind if I end

up behind bars? To understand that you made a mistake somewhere, you stupid man!

Each of us has their own guardian angel, and as we go through life we learn to understand what he tells us. We want to talk to him so much that we often don't hear what he's saying. It's not easy to listen. In our prayers we keep making excuses for having gone astray and asking for something, wanting something. But God knows all this and sometimes all he asks of us is to listen to what He tells us and to be patient. All the battles of our lives teach us something, even the ones we have lost. We can't let ourselves repeat past mistakes by deceiving ourselves and suffering over trivial things. I know that while serving my sentence I have to take responsibility for my actions again – I was



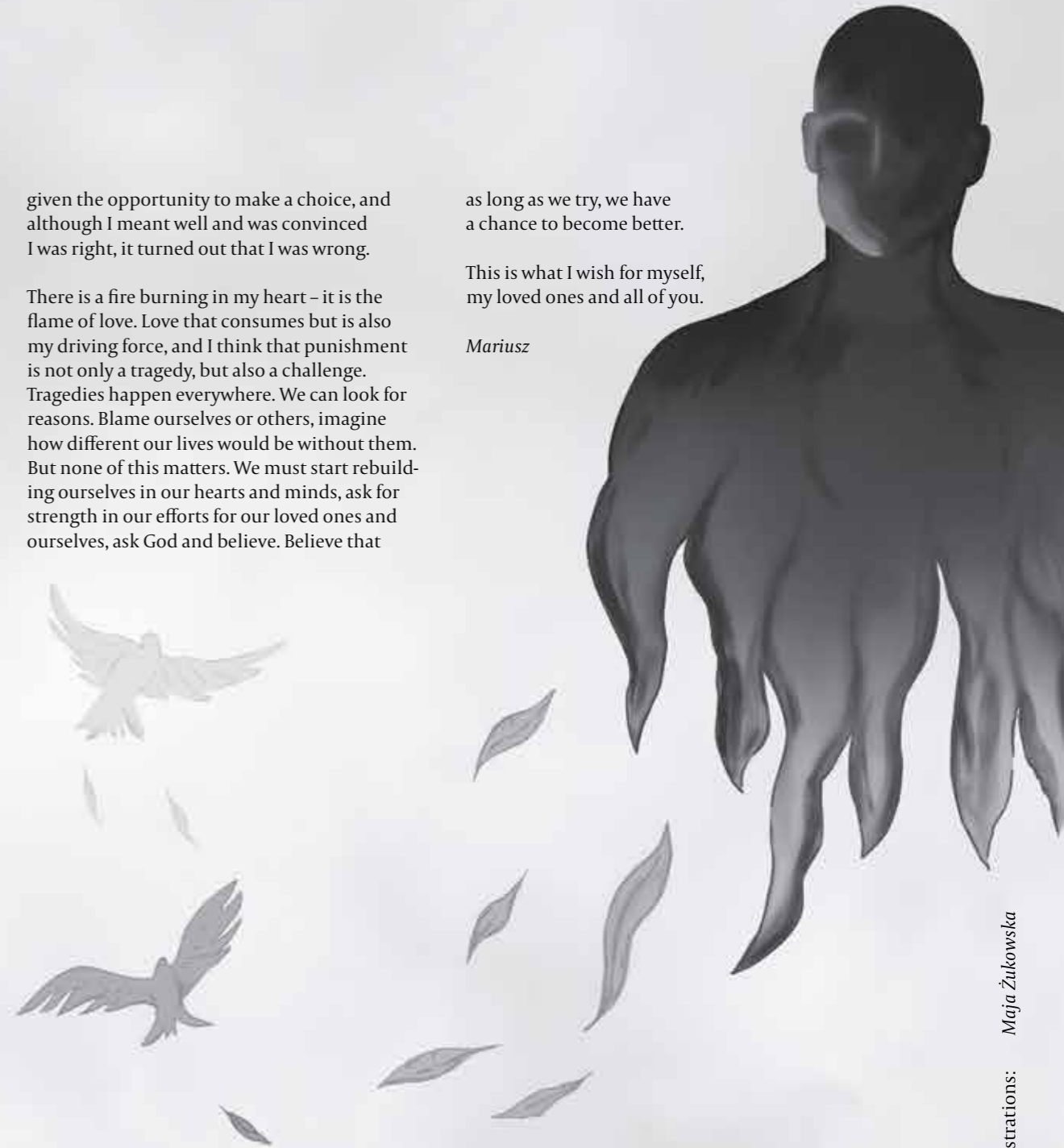
given the opportunity to make a choice, and although I meant well and was convinced I was right, it turned out that I was wrong.

There is a fire burning in my heart – it is the flame of love. Love that consumes but is also my driving force, and I think that punishment is not only a tragedy, but also a challenge. Tragedies happen everywhere. We can look for reasons. Blame ourselves or others, imagine how different our lives would be without them. But none of this matters. We must start rebuilding ourselves in our hearts and minds, ask for strength in our efforts for our loved ones and ourselves, ask God and believe. Believe that

as long as we try, we have a chance to become better.

This is what I wish for myself, my loved ones and all of you.

*Mariusz*



## Is it possible to sunbathe in prison?

This question may well be banal for everyone... well, I admit that in here so it is for me – we do get a walk after all. Just one hour but still. It's not a stroll along the beach at Monciak in Sopot of course, but on the kakakumba. For the uninitiated – it is a small square of up to 20 m<sup>2</sup> surrounded by a wall, and when you look up, you see a wire mesh. There is one bench there, with no backrest. (Haha).

In general, sunbathing is not prohibited in here, or maybe they simply forgot to mention it in the internal regulations, but lying down with just underwear on is prohibited (I am talking about the concrete bit of this place because we have a warden above our heads who is keeping an eye on us). Theoretically, we sunbathe in sports wear (ankle-length pants + T-shirt), and if you get lucky you manage to take the T-shirt off, but that's rare. On top of that, because of the the mesh above there's a real chance that we get a checkered tan – literally checkered.

I try various methods to speed up the tanning, such as using butter or olive oil purchased in the canteen. It's not easy but I'm still glad to catch some sun, and the butter tan makes me feel like I'm on holiday, because I am after all. (Boohaha)!

Magdzik

But of course! It's not really tolerated by the guards, but just like in life – it's otherwise. We can undress and lie down or prop up the walls. You'll sure get a tan by standing in the sun. Some are so lucky that all they need to do is walk around in the open air to catch the sun. And after several such walks their skin tone changes and that's it!

Wiewióra



## Is it possible to cook in prison?

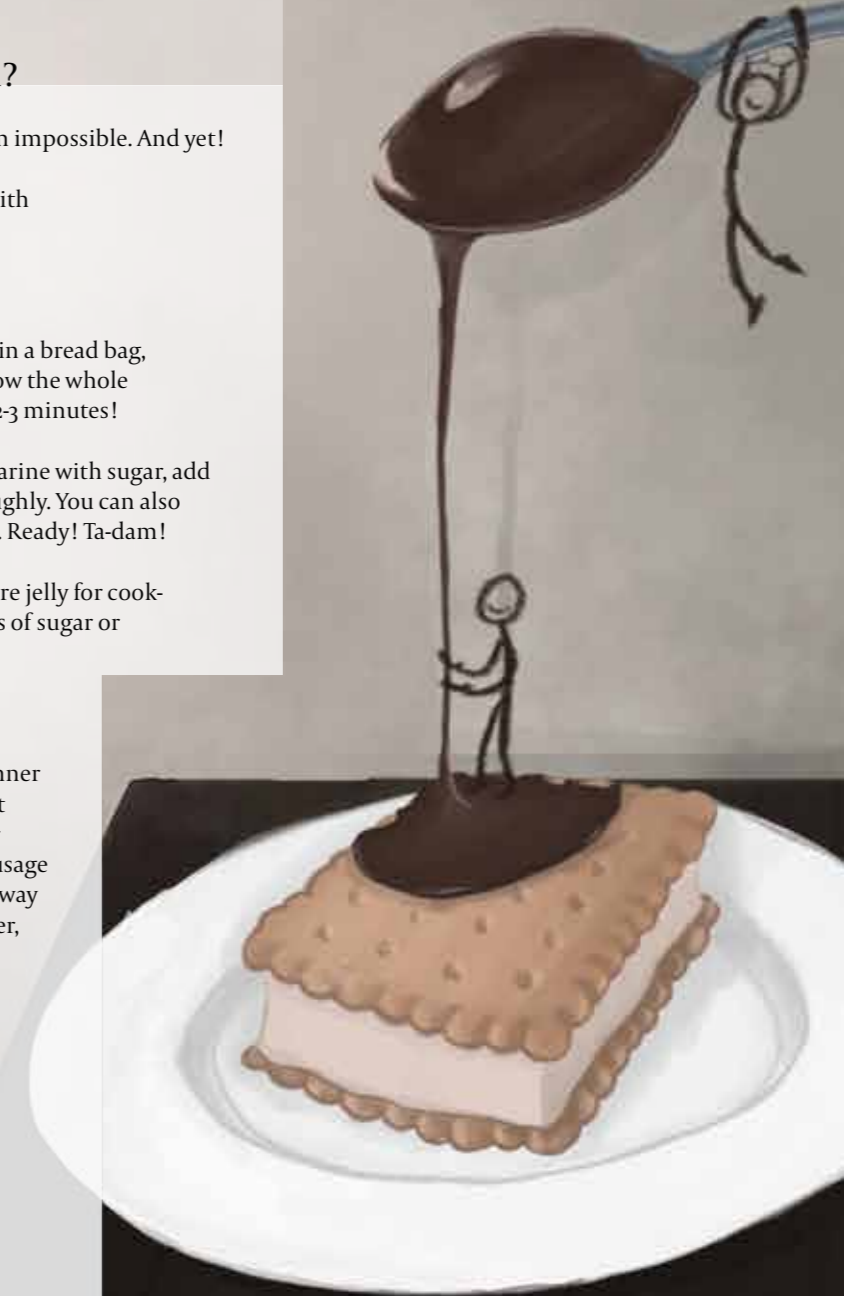
To some people cooking in prison may seem impossible. And yet!

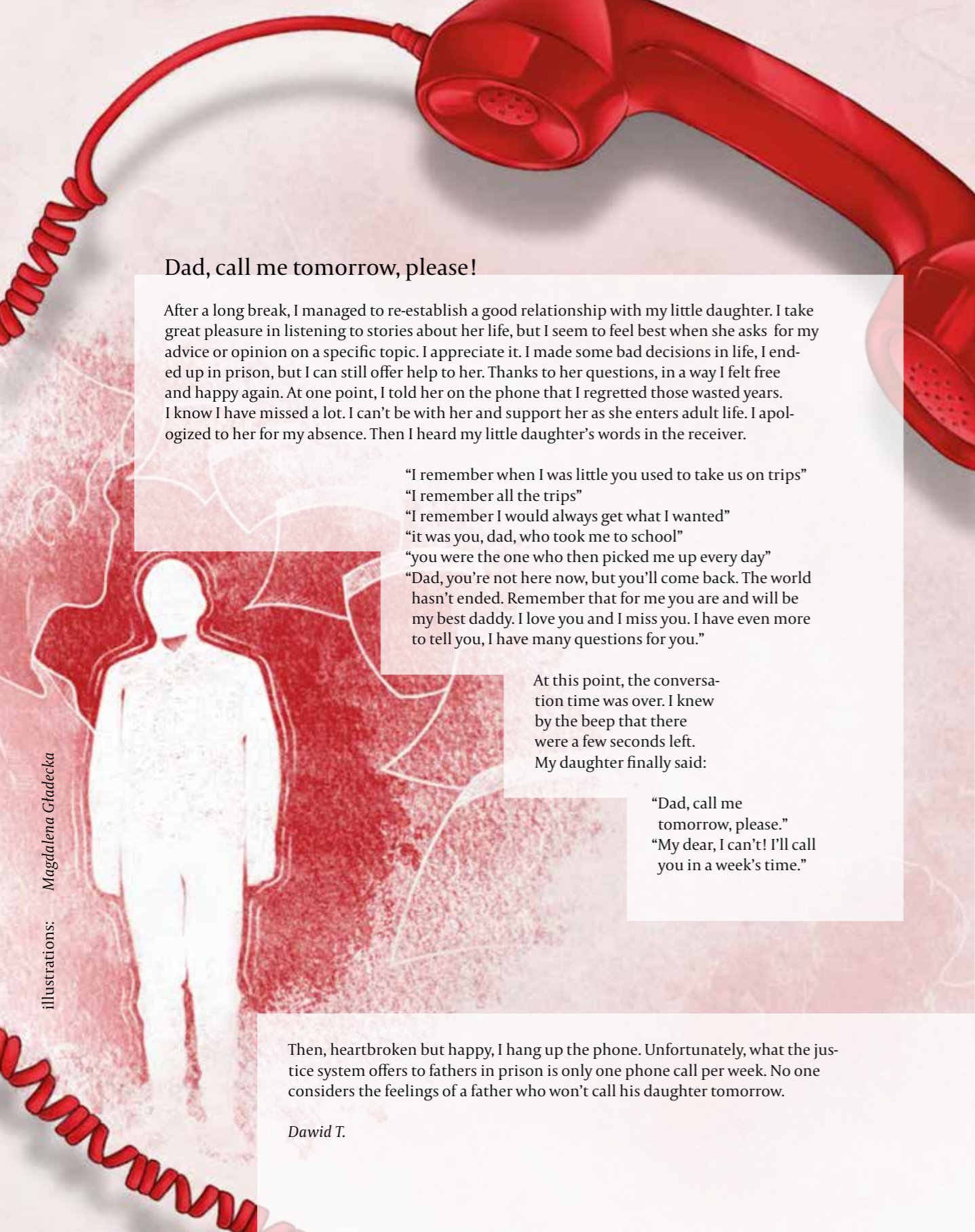
Since there are no pots, inmates come up with different ideas to make cooking possible.

Here are some examples:

- hot black pudding: put the black pudding in a bread bag, add finely chopped garlic or onion and throw the whole thing into boiling water. Ready to eat after 2-3 minutes!
- cream for cookies or cakes: grind the margarine with sugar, add a flat spoon of vanilla sugar and mix thoroughly. You can also add 2 tablespoons of granulated milk and... Ready! Ta-dam!
- another kind of jelly – here's how we prepare jelly for cooking: when it is still hot we add 2 tablespoons of sugar or 6 sweeteners and 2-3 tablespoons of vanilla cream cheese or "Jogobella" yogurt. And we can start enjoying the dessert!
- hot sausage hot dog style: sausage from dinner (or purchased if someone can afford it), cut it across the top and put pieces of cheese or processed cheese into the holes, put the sausage with the extras into boiling water in such a way that the top of the sausage is above the water, cover with a plate for 2-3 minutes, then put the sausage between two slices of bread, and we can start eating ourfast food!
- custard creams: we put cream (for the recipe see above) between biscuits, cover with another biscuit, you can also melt some chocolate (3-4) pieces in a hot water bath and pour it over the top biscuit. And this is how we can sweeten our day.

Poetka M.





## Dad, call me tomorrow, please!

After a long break, I managed to re-establish a good relationship with my little daughter. I take great pleasure in listening to stories about her life, but I seem to feel best when she asks for my advice or opinion on a specific topic. I appreciate it. I made some bad decisions in life, I ended up in prison, but I can still offer help to her. Thanks to her questions, in a way I felt free and happy again. At one point, I told her on the phone that I regretted those wasted years. I know I have missed a lot. I can't be with her and support her as she enters adult life. I apologized to her for my absence. Then I heard my little daughter's words in the receiver.

"I remember when I was little you used to take us on trips"

"I remember all the trips"

"I remember I would always get what I wanted"

"it was you, dad, who took me to school"

"you were the one who then picked me up every day"

"Dad, you're not here now, but you'll come back. The world hasn't ended. Remember that for me you are and will be my best daddy. I love you and I miss you. I have even more to tell you, I have many questions for you."

At this point, the conversation time was over. I knew by the beep that there were a few seconds left. My daughter finally said:

"Dad, call me tomorrow, please."  
"My dear, I can't! I'll call you in a week's time."

Then, heartbroken but happy, I hang up the phone. Unfortunately, what the justice system offers to fathers in prison is only one phone call per week. No one considers the feelings of a father who won't call his daughter tomorrow.

*Dawid T.*

illustrations: Magdalena Gładcka



# VI ● FAIRY TALES

illustrations: Anna Birecka



## The mustang and the boy

Listen. Far, far away, beyond valleys and rivers, in a place where the sun sets behind the horizon every evening, there lived a herd of horses. They were fast horses, mustangs. They moved so fast that people could only see clouds of dust raised by invisible hooves. People never managed to establish contact with them because they were distrustful and whenever they saw people, even from afar, they ran away. But one day an old man went out to the prairie with his grandson. He wanted to show him the place where the herbs the women from the village gave to the sick grew. At one point, while leaning over the plants, they heard the sound of hooves. They saw a cloud of dust approaching. There they were, the mustangs. The herd stopped in front of the grandfather and grandson. For another moment they could see nothing, everything was covered with dust, but when it settled, they saw the proud animals in front of them. At their head was a white and brown mustang. He looked at the boy with its huge eyes. Then he approached and leaned down. The boy felt the horse's breath on his face.

The grandfather slowly stretched out his hand and placed it on the horse's mouth. He felt its muscles tremble under his fingers, and from this trembling he concluded that the ghost of a long-dead chief was standing before them. For many years, the elders wondered what happened after his death, and now it turned out that he had turned into a mustang. The horse and the grandson looked at each other in silence. The silence was impossible to describe. The grandfather kept watching the two figures: a horse and a child. He shook his head in disbelief as he realized what the boy's true destiny was. From this day on he would talk to animals. The grandfather knew it was time to pass on all his knowledge to the boy so that he could live in harmony with nature.

Years have passed. The boy grew up to be a wonderful shaman who helped people, and the mustang became his best friend..

*Wiewióra i Kasia*

## Sisters with closed eyes

In a distant land, on the far bank of a golden river, two sisters lived in one of the towers of a mighty castle. They had been inseparable since childhood, loved each other very much and loved spending time together, so they organized dances and games in their tower. However, evil spirits, unable to bear their happiness, decided to ruin it. A witch they sent into the sisters' room separated them by treachery. She locked one in the tower and sent the other one to an old wood. Separated, the sisters spent their days in solitude, lying down with their eyes closed. They thought about each other so much that one day they saw each other again. They didn't have to open their eyes to see each other. They simply closed their eyelids and met there, in

the darkness. They would spend time together again. But one day they came up with an idea how to meet. The one who lived in the tower kept looking at the forests in its vicinity and eventually managed to spot the old wood where the other sister was kept. Then, with her eyes closed, she showed her sister the way home. She led her with her eyes closed until they reached the edge of the forest. The tower could be seen in the distance. They were together again.

*Kasia i Angela*

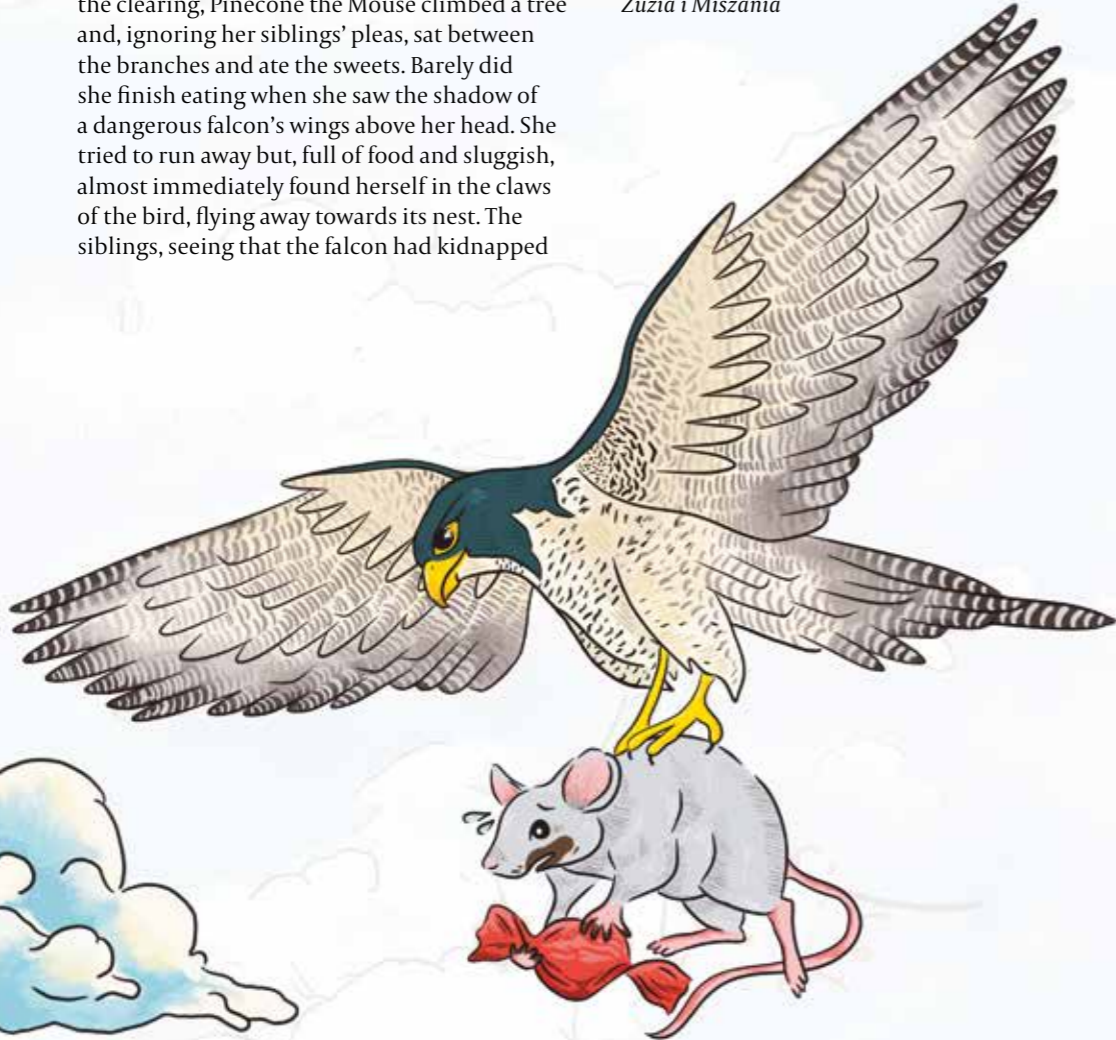


## The Pinecone Mouse

Listen to the tale about Pinecone the Mouse. One beautiful sunny day a mouse called Pinecone was playing with her siblings in a meadow. Just before they left the house, Mom gave Pinecone some sweet treats and asked her to share them with her siblings. Pinecone the Mouse promised to give each sibling the promised portion, but as soon as the brothers and sisters showed up in the clearing, Pinecone the Mouse climbed a tree and, ignoring her siblings' pleas, sat between the branches and ate the sweets. Barely did she finish eating when she saw the shadow of a dangerous falcon's wings above her head. She tried to run away but, full of food and sluggish, almost immediately found herself in the claws of the bird, flying away towards its nest. The siblings, seeing that the falcon had kidnapped

Pinecone the Mouse, called their mother for help. Mom didn't wait for events to unfold but rushed to help Pinecone the Mouse. She climbed the high rock straight into the falcon's nest and, with a crafty ruse, stole Pinecone. Pinecone the Mouse has been sharing food with the siblings who saved her life ever since.

*Zuzia i Miszania*



# VII ● POEMS

## Horses

Their flowing manes,  
 where do they run against the wind?  
 Look like flowing hair of a girl,  
 running to the hills.

Wild horses are me.  
 Completely free, but they can be captured.

When animals were domesticated  
 they must have felt  
 just like I do – locked up  
 in a “cage”, obeying  
 orders of their owners.

Eating when food was given to them,  
 working when they had to.

Hungry at times, but always in demand.

It's similar to how I feel being a prisoner.

They reward me when I deserve it  
 and punish even  
 when I'm not guilty.

Horses are clever animals.  
 Not always appreciated  
 by people.

Get to know and appreciate others.

*Poetka M*



## Simple mistakes, great success

I'm writing a letter home, to my family  
 I have to let them know that they got me.  
 The letter written, the stamp attached  
 I got the address wrong as I rushed so much.  
 This will result in a bit of a hassle  
 I've got another envelope but not another stamp!!!  
 It won't peel off and I have no scissors  
 I've got water here though and a small con-tainer.  
 The paper soaked, the stamp – off it comes  
 I have to manage somehow, that's how it is sometimes.  
 The address is written, the right one this time  
 The stamp is still good, a bit worn out but functional.  
 Still a bit wet, even somehow sticky  
 It will dry on the envelope (maybe it will stick).  
 Surrounded by four walls, it was a tough fight  
 But I surely won, the letter's gone out.

*Dawid T.*







## What it means to tame

Such radical step, to kiss a frog...

Evil spell lifted with a tender gesture

No turning back... You have to love

The prince who yearns for affection.

He's not from the stars. From the sky above

The ugly amphibian was drowning in des-pair...

You've broken the spell? You have to love

You kissed... Keep kissing till the end!

Mistress of spells, my lady savior...

The charm in your eyes - little ray of joy

The fairy, my little Isabel

You carry fate's gift in your open hands.

I want to water the rose with feelings,

She is the only one capable of taming.

Rafael O. Bezpański



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(in order in which the illustrations appear):

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*Marcel Dul*

*Maja Żukowska*

*Magdalena Gładecka*

*Anna Birecka*

*Paulina Adamczyk*


The background of the entire page is a soft-focus photograph of a sandy beach. Scattered across the sand are numerous pieces of torn, white and light blue paper, some overlapping each other. The lighting is bright and natural, creating a warm, textured scene.

illustration: *Piotr Szewczyk*