

THE MUSEUM OF IMAGINED HEIRLOOMS



Train ticket

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, 1945

Grandpa/oto

A train ticket purchased by Ľudo Bešeňovský in April 1945 from Bratislava Hlavná Stanica to Ružomberok. He intended to use it to visit the neighboring town of Bešeňova and spend the Easter holiday with his mother. He was unable to use the ticket because the Soviets invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia and he fled the country to Austria.



IT IS THE THURSDAY BEFORE
EASTER AND THE AIR IS ELECTRIC
INSIDE HLAVNÁ STANICA —
BRATISLAVA'S MAIN TRAIN
STATION.



CHILDREN ARE SCREAMING AND
PEOPLE'S CONVERSATIONS HUM ALL
AROUND ME—BUT I CANNOT
UNDERSTAND A WORD.

ALL AROUND THE STATION ARE
BLUE AND YELLOW SIGNS IN SLOVAK,
UKRAINIAN, AND ENGLISH WITH
INFORMATION FOR THE FLOOD OF
UKRAINIAN REFUGEES FLEEING THE RUSSIAN
INVASION OF THEIR HOMELAND.



MY PARTNER, JONATAN, WAITS WITH OUR THINGS AS I STEP INTO THE LONG QUEUE FOR THE ONLY OPEN TICKET WINDOW.

BEHIND THE GLASS IS A STERN WOMAN WHO DOESN'T EVEN PRETEND TO WANT TO UNDERSTAND ME.

I STUTTER THE WORDS ON MY GOOGLE TRANSLATE AND THEN REPEAT THEM, SLOWLY, IN ENGLISH:

I NEED TWO TICKETS FOR THE EXPRESS TRAIN TO RUŽOMBEROK

PROSÍM

WE GO BACK AND FORTH, SCRIBBLING NUMBERS ON THE BACK OF RECEIPT PAPER TO FILL THE ABYSS BETWEEN OUR WORDS.



5 | KOMPLEXNÉ VYBAVENIE CESTUJUCICH
COMPLEX TICKET SERV
KOMPLEXER KUNDSERV

КВИТКИ ДІЯ
ЛЮДЕЙ З УКРАЇНИ
TICKETS FOR PEOPLE
FROM UKRAINE

LEGAL
ADVICE
© 1903/19



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AFTER WHAT FEELS LIKE AN ETERNITY,

I FINALLY GET OUR TICKETS,

MY BODY FLOODS WITH RELIEF,

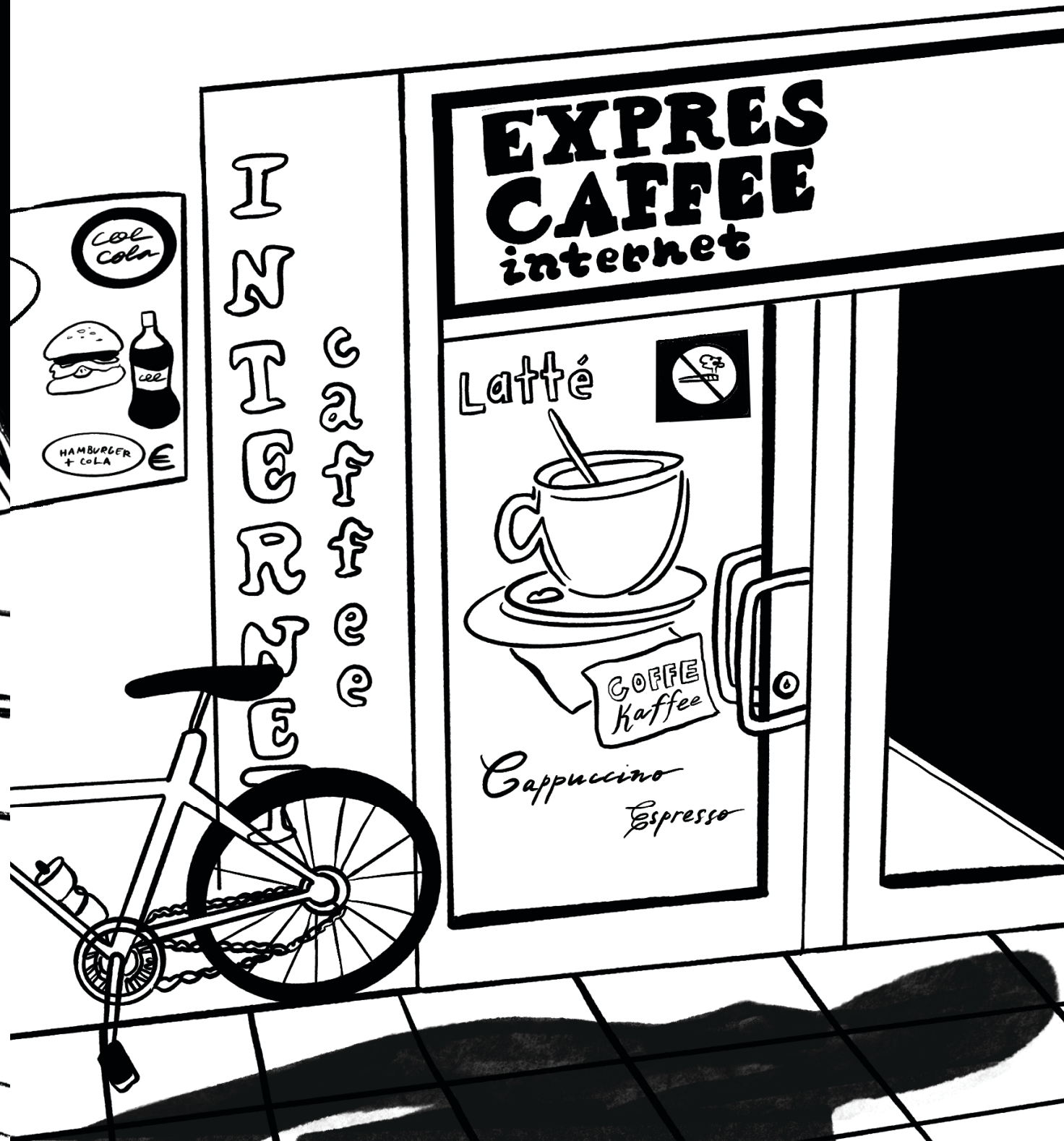
HNMM.

ĎJAKUJEM.



WE GO OUT IN SEARCH OF FOOD TO KILL TIME BEFORE THE TRAIN. AS WE DO, THE WEIGHT OF THE COMING JOURNEY STARTS TO HIT ME.

WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE TO TAKE THE TRAIN RIDE MY GRANDFATHER NEVER COULD? TO BE THE FIRST IN MY BLOODLINE TO RETURN TO THIS PLACE? TO CLOSE AN ENERGETIC LOOP LEFT AJAR FOR DECADES?





I CAN FEEL MY HEARTBEAT QUICKEN AS THE TRAIN'S SPEED CLIMBS.

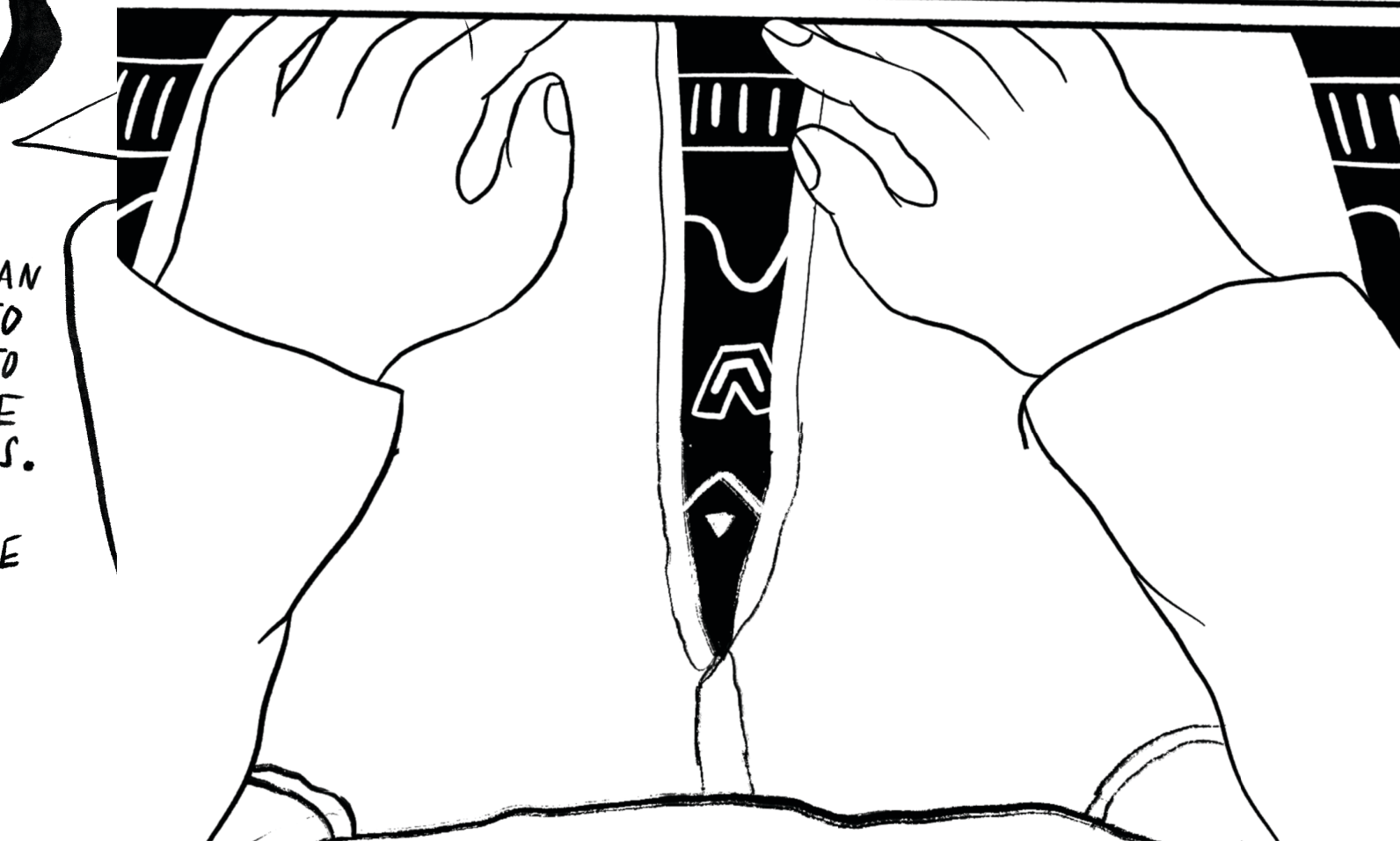
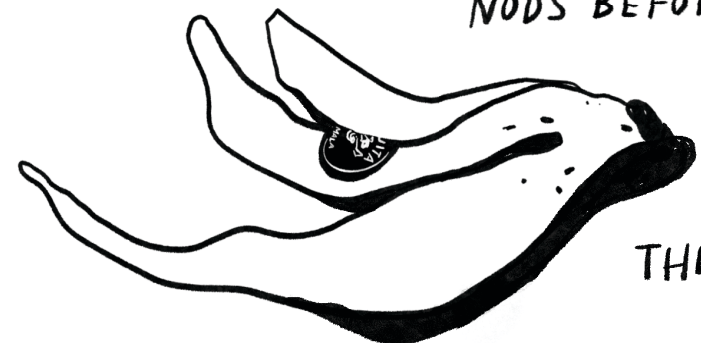
I PLACE MY HANDS ON MY LEGS AND CLOSE MY EYES.

I BREATHE IN THROUGH MY NOSE, OUT THROUGH MY MOUTH

AND SILENTLY SPEAK TO MY GRANDFATHER

THE TRAIN IS NICER THAN I EXPECTED. ONCE WE SETTLE INTO OUR SEATS, I TELL JONATAN I NEED TO SPEND SOME TIME IN SILENCE AND HE NODS BEFORE PUTTING IN HIS AIRPODS.

SLOWLY, THE TRAIN STARTS TO MOVE



WHEREVER YOU ARE,
I WANT YOU TO KNOW

I AM GOING BACK TO BEŠEŇOVÁ
I AM TAKING THE TRIP YOU COULDN'T

YOU NEVER MADE IT HOME
BUT YOUR BLOOD
RUNS IN MY VEINS

AND I AM
GOING BACK NOW.

I HOPE
SOMEHOW
YOU CAN FEEL THIS

I HOPE
YOU ARE
AT PEACE

I BLINK OPEN MY EYES
AND WIPE THE TEARS THAT HAVE
DRIPPED DOWN MY CHEEKS.

ACROSS THE AISLE, A GROUP OF
MIDDLE-AGED MEN ARE DRINKING
TALL CANS OF ZLATÝ BAŽANT BEER AND
SWAYING IN THEIR SEATS.

BEHIND THEM, A BOY SLOUCHES
WHILE SWIPING HIS IPAD SCREEN.
SOMEWHERE IN THE TRAIN CAR,
A BABY FVSS ES.

IT IS STRANGE, I THINK TO
MYSELF, THAT AN EXPERIENCE CAN BE
SO MOMENTOUS AND SO ORDINARY
AT THE SAME TIME.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS JOURNEY
SENDS ELECTRICITY THROUGH MY WHOLE
BODY — BUT IT IS ALSO JUST
A NORMAL TRAIN RIDE.

