A series of short monologues from the paly [*Kaspar*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaspar_%28play%29) by Peter Handke.

It may help (but it is not required) to learn a bit more about the play and the fascinating story of [Kaspar Hauser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaspar_Hauser). But keep in mind what Handke writes in his prologue: “The play *Kaspar* does not show how IT REALLY IS or REALLY WAS with Kaspar Hauser. It shows what is POSSIBLE with someone. “

Ever since I can speak I can stand up in a normal fashion; but falling only hurts ever since I can speak; but the pain when I fall is half as bad ever since I know that I can speak about the pain; but falling is twice as bad ever since I know that one can speak about my falling; but falling doesn’t hurt at all any more ever since I know that I can forget the pain; but the pain doesn’t stop at all any more ever since I know that I can feel ashamed of falling.

Once plagued by sentences

I now can’t have enough of sentences.

Once haunted by words

I now can play with every single letter.

At one time I only spoke when asked,

now I can speak of my own accord, but now

I can wait to speak until I am asked.

Earlier on, each rational sentence was a burden to me

and I detested each rational order

but from now on

I will be rational.

Earlier, I threw down one chair, then a second, and then a third:

Now, with the introduction of order, my habits are changing.

I am quiet

now I do not want

to be someone else any more

nothing incites me

against myself any more.

Every object

has become

accessible

to me

and I

am receptive

to each object.

Now I know what I want:

to be

quiet

and every object

that I find sinister

I designate as mine

so that it stops

being sinister to me.

Already long

In the world

I realized nothing

I wondered

about the self-evident

and found everything finite

and infinite

laughable

every object filled me with fear

the whole world galled me

neither did I want to be myself

nor somebody else

my own hand

was unknown to me

my own legs

walked of their own accord

I slept

deeply

with open

eyes:

I was without consciousness

like someone drunk

And though I was supposed to be

I wanted not to be

of use

to anything

each sight

produced dislike

each sound

deceived me

about itself

each new step

produced nausea and sucking

in my chest

I could not keep up

I blocked my view

myself

no light

lit up for me

with the whole mishmash

of sentences

it never

occurred to me

that it was I who was meant

I noticed nothing of what

was happening

around me

before I began

to come onto the world.

I came into the world

not by the clock

but because

the pain

while falling

helped me drive

a wedge

between me

and the objects

and finally extirpate

my babbling:

thus the hurt finally drove

the confusion out of me.

I learned to fill

all empty space with words

and learned who was who

and to pacify everything that

screamed

with sentences

no empty pot

confuses my brain box any more

everything is at my will

never

again

will I tremble

before an empty closet

before empty boxes

empty

rooms

I hesitate before no walk

out into the open

for every crack

in the wall I

have sentences

as

lists

that help me

to keep the situation

under control:

I was proud of the first step I took, of the second step I felt ashamed; I was just as proud of the first hand which I discovered on myself, but of the second hand I felt ashamed: I felt ashamed of everything that I repeated; yet I felt ashamed even of the first sentence I uttered, whereas I no longer felt ashamed of the second sentence and soon became accustomed to the subsequent one. I was proud of my second sentence.

I can make myself understood. I think I must have slept a long time because I am awake now. I go to the table and use the table, but look at that – the table continues to exist after it has been used. I can appear because I know where my place is. I feel good when the door, have stood open for long, is finally closed. I know where everything belongs. I have a good eye for the right proportion. I can laugh to three. I am usable. I no longer understand anything literally. I have been converted to reality. –Do you hear it? (*Silence.*) Can you hear? (*Silence.*) Psst. (*Silence.*)

I felt

the cacophony

the screaming

outside

was a roaring

and gurgling

in my guts:

I had to suffer,

could not distinguish

among anything:

three was not more

than two

and when I sunned myself

it rained

while I

when I was sweating

in the sun

or heating myself

running

fought my sweat with an umbrella

I could keep nothing apart

neither hot from cold

nor black from white

neither yesterday from today

nor the new from the old

neither people from things

neither prayer from cursing

neither caressing from kicking

every room

looked flat

to me

and hardly

was I awake

when the flat objects

fell all over me

The pupil of the eye is round fear

is round had the pupil perished

fear would have perished but the

pupil is there and fear is there if

the pupil weren’t honest I couldn’t

say fear is honest if the pupil were

not permitted fear wouldn’t be

permitted no fear without pupil if

the pupil weren’t moderate I

couldn’t say fear only arises at

room temperature fear is less

honest than is permitted fear is

drenched warm as a hand on the

contrary

Everyone must be free

Everyone must be part of the scene

Everyone must know what he

wants

for the nonce

no one

may miss the drill

no one

may kill

himself in the morning

everyone must do his living

everyone must do his best

no one may walk across the bodies

no one may stand in the lobbies

everyone must be able to spy

into everyone’s eye

everyone

must grant

everyone

what is his

Everyone must be
his own man
everyone must see
to the bottom of the can
everyone must watch firmly
the other's lips
no one may blindly
trust the other's flips
everyone must see
the other's good side too
no one may willy
nilly
pooh pooh
what pleases
the other one
everyone
must let
himself be led
no one may let
lies to be spread
about anyone

No one may bite the fork

with his teeth

no one may mention

murderers

at dinner

no one may transport private

persons

in the official car

everyone must be worth everyone’s

while

no one may call a man by another

man’s

name

no one may live unregistered

everyone should buy heavy good

only on the way home

no one may ridicule anyone just

because

he has thick lips

no one may tap anyone on

the shoulder

no one may stick

a knife

between anyone’s

ribs

everyone must call a cop

on the street

officer sir

None of the furniture may

catch dust

no hungry man may

stand in line and rest

no adolescent may

loiter

no beanpole may reach the height

of the high-

voltage wires

no flag may flutter

like a goiter

in the wrong direction

all morality must

come into being

I trust

during work

every animal that remains what it is

must yield

to the animal that sheds its skin

on the field

every word that does not mean

well

must be cut.