

Three Sad Stories in Three Versions of Perspective Representation, Translation from German Original

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The first number indicates the story or gravity, the second number the version (degree of the presentation of perspective).

1.1 Most severe (death of brother), elaborate version

- 1) I have I had three brothers, a younger one and two older ones.
- 2) The second eldest spent half the summer holidays just sitting in front of the PC.
- 3) One afternoon a mate of his then rang up
- 4) and asked
- 5) if he wanted to go to the lake with him.
- 6) My brother did not.
- 7) My mother told him
- 8) it was about time he did something else
- 9) other than always just sitting in front of the PC.
- 10) So he called his mate back
- 11) and agreed to go.
- 12) His mate 'd only just got his driving licence,
- 13) but he promised my mother
- 14) to drive slow and "proper".
- 15) In the evening my mother and me heard the sirens of the ambulance.
- 16) As usual I didn't pay much attention,
- 17) there 're always ambulances driving around,
- 18) but my mother at once became nervous
- 19) because my brother wasn't home yet.
- 20) Three quarters of an hour later there were the police at our front door
- 21) and they informed us
- 22) that my brother was dead
- 23) because the driver 'd driven too fast.
- 24) My mother had a nervous breakdown.
- 25) Even today she reproaches herself
- 26) for urging my brother to go along.
- 27) I still ask myself
- 28) what would 've happened
- 29) if my brother 'd been driving.
- 30) At the time he was only eighteen.
- 31) In the meantime the visits to the cemetery still take place but only once a month.
- 32) I believe
- 33) it simply hurts my mother too much.
- 34) She still blames herself
- 35) although she knows
- 36) there's nothing she could 've done.
- 37) For me too the experience was real bad.
- 38) Didn't actually want to take my driving licence at all.
- 39) I find car driving awful.
- 40) Yeah, the loss of my brother was real terrible for my family.

1.2 Most severe (death of brother), dramatic version

- 1) That was in August 2001.
- 2) My second eldest brother spent half the holidays just sitting in front of the PC.
- 3) That afternoon a mate of his rang up
- 4) and asked
- 5) if he wanted to go to the lake with him.
- 6) My brother declines,
- 7) hangs up
- 8) and then sits down again in front of the computer.
- 9) My mother says to him:
- 10) "It's about time you did something else
- 11) other than always just sitting in front of the PC."
- 12) So he calls his mate back
- 13) and agrees to go.
- 14) His mate 'd only just got his driving licence,
- 15) before driving off he says:
- 16) "I'll drive slow and proper."
- 17) We waved
- 18) and watched them leave,
- 19) then we went back into the house.
- 20) I didn't even have a funny feeling,
- 21) actually it was a perfectly normal day.
- 22) When we – me and my mother – hear the sirens of the ambulance
- 23) it's already evening and my brother's still not back.
- 24) My mother looks over at the clock
- 25) and walks restlessly from left to right.
- 26) I say to her:
- 27) "Don't worry,
- 28) there 're always ambulances driving around."
- 29) Three quarters of an hour later there are the police
- 30) and they inform us
- 31) that my brother's dead.
- 32) My mother starts to tremble,
- 33) then at once she breaks into tears.
- 34) She had a nervous breakdown.
- 35) I had no idea
- 36) how I was supposed to react.
- 37) I was totally shocked.
- 38) I dunno
- 39) if I can reproach the driver for anything.
- 40) In any case that was a terrible experience.

1.3 Most severe (death of brother), impersonal version

- 1) That was in August 2001.
- 2) I have I had three brothers, a younger one and two older ones.
- 3) The second eldest spent half the holidays indoors at the computer
- 4) and that although it was fine weather.
- 5) That afternoon a mate of his rang up
- 6) and asked:
- 7) "D'you want to come to the lake with me?"
- 8) My brother declined
- 9) and sat down again in front of his computer.
- 10) My mother told him:
- 11) "It's about time you did something else."
- 12) So he then tells his mate he'll go.
- 13) His mate 'd only just got his driving licence,
- 14) but promises before their departure
- 15) to drive slow and "proper".
- 16) When you hear the sirens of the ambulance
- 17) it's already evening.
- 18) There 're always ambulances driving around,
- 19) no one thinks of anything like that.
- 20) My brother isn't home yet
- 21) and my mother keeps looking over at the clock
- 22) and makes you real nervous.
- 23) Then there are the police at our front door.
- 24) You know
- 25) how that sort of thing goes.
- 26) But you can't do anything about it any more.
- 27) His mate 'd driven too fast
- 28) and in a curve the car skidded off into a tree.
- 29) The driver survived, though badly injured.
- 30) My mother 's never driven a car since then.
- 31) Wouldn't actually 've even taken my driving licence
- 32) if they hadn't persuaded me.
- 33) Oh well, passed the test,
- 34) dunno
- 35) how I managed that,
- 36) even today still drive real shaky.
- 37) My father and my two brothers 've coped with it best I guess.
- 38) At least so it seems.
- 39) Anyway they don't talk about it.
- 40) Yeah, that's it.

2.1 Medium severe (death of grandmother), elaborate version

- 01) Well on May 12 1997 I had my last written A level.
- 02) We were all in real high spirits at school
- 03) because we'd got it all over with.
- 04) But when I came home at lunchtime
- 05) the phone rang.
- 06) It was my aunt,
- 07) her voice sounded so funny.
- 08) At the time my granny was in hospital
- 09) because she had a heart attack,
- 10) but the doctors said
- 11) she was already much better
- 12) and her condition was absolutely no cause for concern.
- 13) Oh well, she died in the morning.
- 14) She was only 64 years old
- 15) and lived near us.
- 16) I couldn't help thinking the whole time about
- 17) how to tell my mother.
- 18) Then half an hour later she came home from work
- 19) and I told her
- 20) that her mum had died.
- 21) Was thinking the whole time
- 22) how it would be
- 23) when one day my mother isn't there any more.
- 24) That was terrible.
- 25) And then the funeral: a minister gave a little sermon
- 26) – the memory of it is still real bad –
- 27) my little cousin wept beyond words,
- 28) then one by one we went over to the coffin
- 29) and could say goodbye.
- 30) I laid a flower in the coffin
- 31) and then prayed.
- 32) Really start bawling, I didn't want that
- 33) because otherwise it'd 've been even worse.
- 34) At suppressing things I'm now an expert.
- 35) In the meantime I like thinking back to my granny.
- 36) Today I believe
- 37) she must 've been somehow released
- 38) as she suffered badly from tinnitus.
- 39) But that really was a hard time
- 40) because I was like paralysed.

2.2 Medium severe (death of grandmother), dramatic version

- 01) Well, took my A levels in 1997.
- 02) May 12 was my last written exam
- 03) and I was in real high spirits at school,
- 04) but when I came home at lunchtime
- 05) the phone rings.
- 06) I picked up the receiver,
- 07) It was my aunt,
- 08) her voice sounded funny.
- 09) At the time my granny was in hospital
- 10) because she had a heart attack,
- 11) but the doctors 'd said:
- 12) "She's already much better,
- 13) her condition is no cause for concern."
- 14) And my aunt is just saying:
- 15) "She died this morning."
- 16) I hang up,
- 17) go in my room
- 18) and creep into my bed.
- 19) First I cry,
- 20) then I'm like in a state of shock.
- 21) I'm thinking the whole time about
- 22) how to tell my mother.
- 23) Half an hour later she comes home from work
- 24) and at once I tell her:
- 25) "Granny's dead.
- 26) I'm so sorry."
- 27) And then the funeral: up front a minister gives a short sermon,
- 28) then one by one we go forward to the coffin
- 29) and there say goodbye.
- 30) I stand with my mother before it,
- 31) see the coffin standing there
- 32) and can't grasp
- 33) that my granny's supposed to be lying inside.
- 34) As for the loss I've simply suppressed it.
- 35) At suppressing things I'm an expert.
- 36) Only later could I talk quite normal about
- 37) what she was like
- 38) or what we experienced
- 39) and that I like thinking back to her.
- 40) But that really was a hard time.

2.3 Medium severe (death of grandmother), impersonal version

- 01) That was May 12 1997,
- 02) have just taken my A levels.
- 03) May 12 was my last written exam.
- 04) Then you're in real high spirits at school
- 05) because you've got it all over with.
- 06) But when I come home that day
- 07) the phone rings.
- 08) It's my aunt,
- 09) her voice sounds so funny.
- 10) At the time my granny was in hospital
- 11) because of a "small" heart attack,
- 12) but actually she was over it.
- 13) They'd said:
- 14) "Her condition is absolutely no cause for concern."
- 15) Oh well, she died that morning.
- 16) Went pretty quick it seems.
- 17) She was only 64 years old.
- 18) Yeah, you've no idea at all
- 19) how you're supposed to react.
- 20) My mother's still at work
- 21) and only comes home half an hour later.
- 22) Was then my job like
- 23) to tell her.
- 24) So I'm thinking the whole time
- 25) how best you can do that sort of thing
- 26) and then tell her:
- 27) "Granny's dead."
- 28) And then the funeral: one day there was first that saying goodbye
- 29) where the coffin was laid out.
- 30) A minister gave a little sermon,
- 31) then one by one we went forward to the coffin
- 32) in order to say goodbye.
- 33) Stood with my mother before it,
- 34) but didn't really say goodbye
- 35) because I couldn't cry proper,
- 36) wasn't possible somehow.
- 37) Am now an expert at suppressing things.
- 38) Well, so far it's worked quite well.
- 39) In any case everybody celebrated their A levels
- 40) and I just couldn't.

3.1 Least severe (death of dog), elaborate version

- 01) It was, it isn't about a human being like but about my former dog.
- 02) As with time he keeled over more and more often
- 03) at some point my parents said
- 04) that healthwise he was no longer acceptable
- 05) and therefore must be put to sleep.
- 06) At the time the dog was 13 years old
- 07) and for me he was sort of a little brother like.
- 08) On the day we were er digging the grave
- 09) he was running around between our legs,
- 10) rooted around in the earth
- 11) and wanted to help us somehow with the digging.
- 12) Then that hit us all real badly at the time.
- 13) Er, yeah, sure we gave him the sleeping pill too late.
- 14) When the vet came
- 15) he crawled under my bed
- 16) and I could really see the fear in the dog.
- 17) That was terrible.
- 18) But I wasn't allowed to help him,
- 19) much as I'd 've liked to.
- 20) Till the second attempt by the vet then came
- 21) I was hoping all the time
- 22) that then perhaps he wouldn't die today after all.
- 23) And I was right there then,
- 24) I sat with him
- 25) and then I er saw
- 26) how he was sleeping peacefully
- 27) and how then the injection gradually...
- 28) and how he breathed his last.
- 29) And oh well, his death struggle took a pretty long time.
- 30) Yeah for me it's still real bad.
- 31) Even today I still reproach myself for that.
- 32) Well really digested it, that I still haven't even done today
- 33) because I go over that day again and again.
- 34) Er I still remember sort of my little brother. Hm yeah quite stereotype bittersweet.
- 35) On the one hand I remember all the lovely and funny things,
- 36) or I think to myself:
- 37) Oh, now he'd be here
- 38) and would do this and that and –
- 39) on the other hand it's also again, oh well feelings of guilt and sad like.
- 40) That's somehow strange.

3.2 Least severe (death of dog), dramatic version

- 01) It was, it isn't about a human being like but about my former dog.
- 02) At some point my parents then said
- 03) that he must be put to sleep.
- 04) Well everything wasn't half as bad till the day itself,
- 05) then we were digging er the grave right there in our garden,
- 06) he's running around between our legs
- 07) and roots around in the earth.
- 08) Er yeah, and sure we gave him the sleeping pill too late.
- 09) And then the vet came round,
- 10) the dog barks at him
- 11) and then hides behind the sofa.
- 12) I see the fear in his eyes
- 13) and at once think:
- 14) "He knows
- 15) there's something wrong
- 16) and probably he knows
- 17) that he must die."
- 18) But we weren't allowed to help him.
- 19) Till the second attempt by the vet then came
- 20) I was of course hoping the whole time
- 21) that then perhaps he wouldn't die today after all.
- 22) And then my father calls:
- 23) "Come down,
- 24) now it's time."
- 25) And er I still see
- 26) how he's sleeping peacefully
- 27) and how then the injection gradually...
- 28) I sit next to him
- 29) and so kneel there
- 30) and am right there
- 31) when he breathes his last,
- 32) but also notice at once
- 33) that he's resisting,
- 34) that he's fighting against it.
- 35) Yeah for me it was
- 36) as if I'd helped kill my little brother.
- 37) Yeah well bury him, that I then did not do,
- 38) but I still felt
- 39) how his skin became colder.
- 40) Well er yeah, that was not a lovely experience like.

3.3 Least severe (death of dog), impersonal version

- 01) It was, it isn't about a human being like but about my former dog.
- 02) That was a bull terrier.
- 03) At some point they then said:
- 04) "He must be put to sleep."
- 05) Well, everything wasn't half as bad till the day itself,
- 06) then we 're digging er the grave right there in our garden.
- 07) At this moment he's still alive
- 08) and running around between our legs.
- 09) Er yeah, and sure he got the sleeping pill too late,
- 10) so then he was still in top form,
- 11) so wasn't at all tired or anything
- 12) when then the vet came.
- 13) And the whole thing dragged on for a very very long time like
- 14) till the second attempt by the vet came.
- 15) And then they say:
- 16) "Now it's time."
- 17) So I'm right there then
- 18) when he gets the injection
- 19) – there was no other way,
- 20) couldn't do anything –
- 21) and er you still see
- 22) how he's sleeping peacefully
- 23) and how then the injection gradually...
- 24) Then sat over it over him
- 25) and so kneeled beside him
- 26) and was also right there then
- 27) when he breathed his last.
- 28) And oh well, his death struggle took quite a long time after all,
- 29) but you also noticed
- 30) that he's resisting
- 31) and fighting against it.
- 32) Yeah, somehow it's still
- 33) as if you'd helped kill your little brother.
- 34) Yeah well bury him 's something I then did not do.
- 35) But you still like feel
- 36) how the skin becomes colder
- 37) after he stops breathing.
- 38) And yeah, I still reproach myself even today.
- 39) But that's how it is.
- 40) Everybody must die someday.