

Impressum

Klaus Bung: Coming home: a vignette

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Summary: Discharged after a long stay in hospital (on Monday, 28 July 2026), after weeks spent in semi-darkness, the heroine enjoys the familiar signs of life in her own home, the few plants and animals surrounding it, modest though they are in the brick and mortar canyon in which she lives, resembling more a prison yard than a summer colony. During her second night she wakes up, has forgotten that she is no longer in hospital and calls for the nurses. Her husband does not correct her error. She reveals to him that she only pretends to be in pain when all she wants is turning over.

Klaus Bung: Coming home

On Tuesday, 28 July, Pilar was brought home from the hospice. The ambulance parked six houses away from her door because a barrier separated the pavement from the road.

She was so heavy that the two strong ambulance men could not carry her on a stretcher. They managed to manoeuvre her into a wheelchair, rolled her into her ground floor flat, and hoisted her into her bed.

Now she could look out of the window, saw the single mighty tree in the middle of the lawn, surrounded on all sides by the brick and mortar of council estate.

From the flat above, she could hear the voices of two drunken men swearing at each other or the world.

Adjacent to her flat, between the public lawn and the house, bordered by a wall, was a strip of paved land, three yards wide, which she daringly called her garden.

A vigorous vine plant and an equally vigorous Jasmine planted by a previous owner many decades ago came out of an opening in the cement slates entirely covering this so-called garden.

Claudio, her mate, calls it Pilar's vineyard. It was not Martha's Vineyard, and yet it gave her joy. You must take your joy, big or small, or miniscule, where and as you can find it.

The vines do bear small red grapes. Quite edible but not very sweet.

Claudio bravely eats them, proud of the fact that they are home-grown, from their own vineyard.

This is the kingdom into which Pilar looks from the hospital bed that has been installed in her flat.

She rejoices seeing the two pigeons that come several times a day, sit on the wall waiting for food, usually a handful of rice dispensed by Claudio.

Claudio's Muslim friends encourage his custom to feed the pigeons: "When you feed the pigeons, they pray for you, head down, head up, head down, head up, like devout Muslims."

Pilar and Claudio don't have a pet: the flat is too small. So they do have a zoo.

Two pet pigeons who sit on the vineyard wall and wait for their food. Pilar can see them from her bed and is excited when they appear.

Claudio, who believes in the Five Commandments, also has smaller pets to look after.

https://www.rochdalewriters.org.uk/bung_klaus/2024_12_11_the_five_commandments.pdf
(Copy and paste this link.)

From his travels during his younger years, he fondly remembers a hoarding (billboard) in a garden in the Bavarian town of Utting am Ammersee:

In diesem Reiche gilt als oberstes Gesetz: 'Was lebt und atmet sollst du gütig schützen!' Drum schon' auch das Insekt Und pflück' die Blume nicht, die dich erfreut: Auch deinem Heil wird's nützen.'	In this reign there is a supreme law: 'Whatever lives and breathes thou shalt lovingly protect!' Thus you should even spare the insect's life, And do not pluck the flower which makes you smile: This will be good for your salvation too. (translated by Klaus Bung)
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He closely watches the ants scurrying about for food on the lifeless and inedible paving slabs in front of the house, and often gives them a spot of honey the size of his thumbnail. Soon the ants discover this, and Claudio sees them neatly lined up around the honey like a pearl necklace. It is easier to get his ants in a circle than his ducks in a row.

This section to be expanded

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Regular visitors at that side of the house

insert the fox, the snails and slugs

In the vineyard is a birdbath which the pidgin pigeons
ns and

rescuing insects from the drinking water, a bee, a fly

the cheeky fruit flies

* * *

It is half past one in the night from Tuesday to Wednesday, the second night Pilar is spending at home after several weeks in hospital and then in the hospice.

Pilar is in her all-singing-and-dancing hospital bed which was installed in her flat a few days ago.

Claudio is asleep on the floor, on the side of her bed, far below her.

At one in the morning he hears her calling, imperiously: "Nurse, nurse!" and soon again "Nurse, nurse". He gets out of his sleeping bag and bends over her: "What is wrong?"

"I need turning over."

"Nurse, nurse," she shouts.

"Don't shout so loud, you'll wake the other patients. I'll go and fetch the nurse."

"I'm in pain," she shouts.

Then she stretches out both arms and pulls his head towards her, something that she has never done before, a very intimate gesture, an action that requires thought and determination, and she whispers her secret into his ear: "I am not really in pain. I am only saying it because that makes them come."

"I'll go and fetch them," he says, to make her stop shouting, and leaves the room for a couple of minutes.

"They are with another patient, a difficult one, they'll come as soon as they have finished. Meanwhile go back to sleep, and I'll do the same. Good night, I love you."

In the morning she has forgotten about the nurses who wouldn't come to shift her, and she remembers that she is back home.

"My bum is aching," she says.

"That's because you have not been moving all night. Would you like some Paracetamol?"

"Yes, please."

"How many, two?"

"No, one is enough."

Claudio brings one Paracetamol, in a brown tapas bowl, and puts it on her bed table. She has gone back to sleep.

In the evening, the lonely pill in the bowl is still there.

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