

The Serious Writer Occupies Wall Street

by Marcus Speh

When thinking of the commotion surrounding Wall Street, the serious writer gets very upset. But he is distracted by his personal life: a letter reminds him to pay his taxes, which makes him want to go back to sleep every time. His helper, herself in her mid-eighties and therefore barely younger than the serious writer himself, reminds him to throw in the yellow pill “every hour on the hour, if you please.” She says this sitting on the side of his bed in the morning. She says it again later in the day when he has moved from the bed to the chair by the window, looking at the latest news from the ongoing occupation of Earth. “We used to do this stuff,” he says to his helper, “and if nobody came to beat us up we knew we hadn't hit a nerve.” — “Don't forget to take the yellow pill every hour on the hour,” says the helper. “Thank you,” says the serious writer, “the yellow pill does calm me down. It pacifies the effects of all the other pills in my system.” The helper looks out the window. There is nothing to see. All the action is on the small blueish screen where a young, fat man is now being led away in hand cuffs. He shouts a poem at the policemen. It's a funny poem and even though he teases them they smile. You can see the policemen relax their grip. The serious writer thinks this is heartening and wants to tell his helper but he cannot find the right words just then. He often cannot find the words these days. He thinks and feels in colors and sounds rather than letters. “Who knows,” says the helper in that moment, “if they'll ever invent a happy pill. That's the one I'd like to take.” — The serious writer points at a row of black bound books in a shelf next to his bed: “I've been reading my grandfather's journals,” he says. “he wrote them in Neuengamme concentration camp where he was imprisoned at the end of the war. He explicitly says that there is no ‘happy pill’.” — “But science has moved on so much since then,”

she says, "things have changed."—"Yes they have," says the serious writer. He carelessly drops the yellow pill behind the chair where all the other yellow pills lie already like a confused army of yellow ticks, and makes a fist under his blanket. "Yes, they have indeed."

