

Epilogue by Walther

### **The bag of velvet in Maria's suitcase**

23.March 2015

Three weeks ago Maria has left our apartment, and her suitcase is back in the corner, where I dropped it on the morning of her death. Now I open the suitcase first time: it contains Maria's red coat together with the curled scarf – herewith she wore a distinctive appearance noticed by certain people.

Furthermore there are her shoes she wore when leaving the apartment, going down the three stairs towards the palliative unit, and there is her green dressing gown which she ordered when waking up in the intensive care unit two years ago. What else she chose as clothes for her last way, she wore on the deathbed: the black pullover, the dark grey trousers, whereas Barbara added an appropriate scarf from Maria's large collection.

And there is a small bag serving female beauty side by side with the book „The Song of the Swiss stone pine“. Maria had read the book years ago; the book tells about a talented country-bred boy, who made his way to an acknowledged violin maker – this story had fascinated Maria. But as far as I saw, she was occupied by other issues than reading in her last days.

Finally there is her red bag of leather in the suitcase, its colour matching the colour of the coat. The bag was a taboo object for me since ever, without any dispute as I notice in that moment. First I open the small pocket at the side of the leather bag: it contains her keys, I put them back. Then I open the zip on top and see that the large main pocket is almost empty. The small pocket at the inner side contains Maria's driver's license, issued at Salzburg in 1990 derived from an original issued May 19 in 1969. At that time she began to go back and forth between two workplaces, Aistersheim and Weibern in Upper Austria.

The last things I find are a little bottle with skin oil, a lipstick, a package „Feh“ handkerchiefs, a ginger candy for the stomach, a little blue bag of velvet and Maria's purse.

I never had seen the bag of velvet before; carefully I open the knot, which closes the bag. When I shake the bag three little things fall out: an Effentora tablet, a little piece of wood and then I hear a metallic sound. The piece of wood is nicely veined, looks like a slanting „T“ and evokes an impression of a cross. The metallic sound was caused by a copper brooch with fine chasing and a black gem containing a metallic blossom with three tiny jewels: This brooch is known to me, it is one of the most beautiful pieces of the jewellery passed on to Maria by her father many years ago.

Then a lightning strikes me: Maria apparently had prepared these things to be adorned with on the deathbed – but there was no time to tell me, and now she is buried.

I am perplexed, take the ginger candy and chew it devoutly. Then I put the wooden cross and the brooch back into the bag of velvet and store it safely at a special place. And I do not yet know: Shall I bring it over to Maria when I follow her into our grave, or shall I pass it on to our daughter Barbara?

Finally I carefully restore all the contents (without the bag of velvet) of the suitcase, close it and put it back to the corner, where it was before. Again I do not know, for how long the suitcase will stay there, awaiting Maria to accompany me to another conference.