

## **PEBBLES** | the world has become a flatter place

— Ola Ståhl

1.

An architecture, angles are sharp, diagonals repeated, endless across the plains, then another, in slopes, repeated apartment blocks in concrete, slopes are terraces, pyramidal structures, or inverted ones, like absences, as there are no boundaries there are only passages, as terraces make a gradual slope, balconies toward an inner courtyard, a plane where frames interlock, and another one, entirely square frames, like quadrants, the compartments of the courtyard, walls at an angle, crates for windows and doorways, to block entry or to control entry and exit, but they are tilted ones, with concrete and stone, next to where the surface split, the stone, no, the cracked surface, split, where stones were lined up, across the surface now, concrete surface where stones had been lined up, sand too, on concrete, in cracks, split the surface, the room had little light coming through the boarded up windows, the concrete where the rug had been placed, no, a carpet but thick, it had once been thick, worn thin in places, now, the carpet, in the wallpaper, an incision there — in the slit go stones and plastic objects.

2.

You stick it in your mouth like you do with stones, in your mouth, into the mouth it goes, like you do with stones, go the pebbles into the mouth, we were there for pebbles for the mouth, for pebbles and such, for the mouth, for pebbles and marbles and such things to go in the mouth, to find pebbles there, to brush sand and salt of pebbles, to polish with a piece of cloth, but felt be better, the pebbles there, the pebble stone or other, the material is other, foreign, a polymer, a material like plastic, let's say pebble stone nevertheless, from stone, anyway, like a pebble or a marble, you stick it in your mouth, in the mouth it goes, like you do with stones, pebble there and wallpaper, an incision — in the slit goes the pebble, wallpaper is cut and the slit there, for pebbles and marbles, like you do with stones, those who stick pebbles in their mouths.

3.

Each flat has a hallway, each of them, a hallway, long, with bedrooms off to one side, the hallway itself was long, twisting but slightly, not circular or even semi-circular but twisting nevertheless, a circular shape not quite circular, bedrooms off to the left, bedrooms there like barren cells, bathrooms were larger, cellular rooms, the bedrooms, small windows, stone for the walls, they were made from stone, from quadrants and up the stairs and up further still to the hallway, it was poorly lit the hallway, kitchen was light but small, an apartment block, one of many, one of a complex, several complexes, across the outland plains, for interlocked frames, the plains where buildings were, blocks for flats with rooms with beds and desks otherwise barren with little furniture but a structure, in the larger room, a structure with beams and wood, some in metal, some wood, some foam to hold parts together, folded paper too, or card, there in the larger room, a desk for folding paper, and folded paper on the floor, folded card on the floor beneath the structure, other than that, little furniture, other than the kitchen table, foldable beds too for sleeping, little else but the structure, several objects scattered around there, a desk and several objects scattered about but no stones, no stones, no pebbles, stones and pebbles in the other room, a structure with no apparent purpose in the larger room.

4.

It was poorly lit the hallway, kitchen was light but small, where we stayed, drinking, in the evenings, we got drunk there, hunting for pebbles during the day, for pebbles and other stones, then drinking in evening, his disproportionately large head, his head, too large for his body, clearly, a large man but even so, ginger sideburns and bushy ones at that, head of curls, but disproportionate in size to his body, and that was that, where we stayed drinking, but his head was too large, as if he wouldn't be able to keep his balance, not that way, with that head, too large, to hunt for pebbles during the day, roam the complex for pebbles, for pebbles of the plains, and other stones from the region, then to drink in the flat with many rooms, several rooms, and room enough for stones and pebbles, barren with little furniture but a structure without apparent purpose, in the larger room a structure with beams made from metal and wood, folded paper too, stones and pebbles in the other room, and the kitchen where we drank in the evenings, his head too large, head to bob up and down as he walked, his gait impressive as he walked, with bobbing head he walked, for pebbles and stones, and stones too but not all stones, stones with holes in them but no other stones

but pebble stones and stones with holes in them, adder stones or serpent's eggs, the stones were serpent's eggs, with holes in them they call them serpent's eggs — and pebble stones too and some marbles for the mouth, and stones riddled with burrows, to stick in your mouth, in they go, like you do with stones, into the mouth they go.

5.

Complexes of blocks, made from several blocks, to form grids, across plains' expanse where doorways open out onto themselves only and nothing but themselves, frame to frame, then another, an incision there in the wallpaper, for pebbles and marbles, to be placed there, an incision — or for plastic objects, globes made from a polymer material, no, for pebble and marbles, an incision for the marble, marble to push the edges apart, wooden planks nailed to window frames, chairs in a circle, crosses of metal beams, in rows, they have been lined up that way, in the larger room with the structure, the crosses made from metal beams, wooden parts, foam to hold the parts together, wooden planks for the windows let in little light, the light is poor in there.

6.

To speak, pebble-in-mouth, to speak still, stones too but not all stones, stones with holes in them but no other stones but pebble stones and stones with holes in them, adder stones or serpent's eggs, the stones were serpent's eggs, with holes in them they call them serpent's eggs — and pebble stones too and some marbles for the mouth, and stones riddled with burrows, to stick in your mouth, in they go, like you do with stones, into the mouth they go, to speak, pebble-in-mouth, to speak still — the large head, disproportionately large, it mumbles and the mumbling got louder, still only mumbling, words far back in the throat, from throat to mouth came the mumbling, the drunker the louder but mumbling still, when another shape appears, fragile, this one, arachnoid and bent, awkward in clothes too large and bent, clothes too large for fragile frame and bent over there, on stone steps, bent, a fragile shape, this one, awkward, clothes weighing body down, foot against stone steps as the mumbling got louder — loud as if he was shouting but mumbling still, profanities, certainly, then off we went to look for pebbles to stick in the mouth like you do with stones, pebbles for mouth as if we had one mouth together, to share, a mouth, one mouth only, cavity for all, for pebbles to go in the mouth, the mouth for pebbles and stones, and to speak that way, but what to say?, to attempt to speak, pebble in mouth, like you do with

stones, but which words to pick to from what sentences?, mouth for eating, mouth for speech, pebbles and marbles are not food, but it is all the same, is pebble and stones, from pocket come the stones, jacket or trousers, and from there to the mouth, into the mouth they go and back, several pockets and several stones, one mouth to share, for all, only one, from mouth then to pocket, trousers or jacket, from trousers, left pocket, then mouth, to jacket, left pocket to right pocket — no, stones in mouth, but pockets but from pockets to mouth and back again, with pebbles in mouth as if we had one mouth to share, one mouth, communal, for pebbles and speech.

7.

An architecture, at an angle, walls diagonal form a slope, concrete terraces form a slope, there, the sand and stones on concrete cracked, thing made from felt and wax, damp cloth too, hanging there, to rip pieces from when required, along the hallway past the bedrooms to the larger room, crosses there of metal beams and the structure of platforms, desk for stones and folding card, from concrete surface to desk, to brush the sand off, wooden planks nailed to windows for poor light, another piece of felt, wax and lard, drawing paper, and a paper, heavier, to fold, or card to fold, timbre of stone on stone, clinks, it echoes, form spirals in the sand soon gone as the world becomes a flatter place.

8.

Feel pebble cold, inside of cheek offers little resistance, hard against enamel, teeth are made that way, tongue's movement across pebble's surface, as the tongue enlarges everything to the senses like tongues do, they do it to pebbles and other things too, an incision there in the wallpaper, for the marble an incision, for the marble to push the edges apart, pebbles, marbles, adder stones, they call them serpent's eggs, felt and plastic globes, bright white, yellow thing, wax, graphite pencils, drawing paper, surface, rough, like concrete, rulers, raw canvas, lard, coal, folding card, felt smeared in lard or wax, to put in mouth, to soften, tip of tongue, into stone's hole it goes, into the hole in the stone with the tongue, now, marbles will roll off the desk unless you put them in your mouth, knock them together, pebbles and stones, to knock together for sound's sake, to make sound, it resounds, in some cases, stone to stone, pebble to stone, pebble to pebble, some resound, a larger sound, in spirals they form larger sounds, others do not, no sound at all or little sound, into the mouth or to discard them?, stones

without sound and those with, pebbles to stutter too, you stick them in the mouth like you do with stones, jaws and teeth, mouth without teeth, no enamel in mouth to stop mouth, from pebbles in mouth and stones, they go there, in the mouth like you do with stones, on concrete cracked, the felt, the wax, mouth for breathing, through pebbles, a wheezing sound, like a whisper but not, 'breaths' whisper through pebbles and felt, the felt mutes the wheezing sound, the damp cloth to stop the whistling, the felt in lard and wax be better, to dampen the sound the lard and wax, another piece of felt, drawing paper, and a paper, heavier, to fold, felt rubbed in lard for tongue to explore, pebbles too like you do with stones, mouth not to speak but to *un-speak*, not to breathe but to *un-breathe*, off they go with head to large, bobbing motion, curls and all, for the flatness of the world.