



## #WARDIARY: FLOWERS AND GUNS

*Posted on 9. März 2022 by Lina Zalitok*

In ihrem zweiten Eintrag ins #WarDiary schreibt Lina Zalitok über ihre Eindrücke des Alltags und des gestrigen Frauentags in ihrem Heimatort nahe Kyjiw.

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In the last two days I finally managed to get out of the digital world of my phone and out of my flat. I answered almost all my foreign and Ukrainian friends how I was and how they could help. I finally managed to talk to my two school teachers (who are also my best friends) by phone about how the war would look like in our town judging from the Second World War and about their perception of today's war (they have many relatives and friends in Russia, so it was especially informative). I also managed to have a bitter written WhatsApp discussion with my best Italian friend about the cancellation of Dostoyevsky seminar at an Italian university. Both conversations were my most painful and perplexing experience since the war started. It is so strange that personal opinions hurt me so much deeper than the general situation. Nevertheless these red spots on the map of Ukraine showing the Russian military presence also hurt like real bloodying sores.

Anyway, I had a pretext to leave my flat and to get my eyes off my mobile phone, because a friend of mine who is hiding from war some dozen kilometres from my town, asked me to buy a back up cat food for her two cats. I made friends with this dance teacher shortly before the war started. We had tried to comfort each other after dance classes in Kyiv centre that there would be no war, hugged each other and then ended up escaping it and staying several dozens kilometres from each other. Accidentally. Now we are asking each other every day in Telegram: "is it quiet at your place?" and it feels so good.

People were walking around the town and buying stuff. In every shop you could hear something like: "Are you going to deliver more carrots tomorrow? - I don't know, we deliver as long as we can. But I cannot promise anything." "Before the war" (i.e. before February, 24, 2022, but let's be honest, the war started 2014) onions cost 8 UAH/kg and now they cost 18 UAH/kg and at some places 40 UAH/kg. Very few shops have credit card terminals, but you can

transfer money with your mobile phone app to the bank card of shop owners almost in every shop. SMS informs the shop owner almost immediately that money arrived and then you can take your carrots or onions. So you can still survive without cash, as opposed to Berlin ;)

As for ugly war phenomena, they are also not missing: A milk farm provided free milk for people, but some persons decided to take some and sell it afterwards. Now this milk farm is selling milk for 5 UAH. We also got free eggs from an egg farm. My father refused for half an hour to go and take some, because to his mind, these eggs were meant "for poor hungry people". But as literally everybody took them, there was plenty of them and nobody could guarantee us that we would have money or food in the next time, he finally followed my advice and took some eggs. To be fair, now I eat much better than in Kyiv, because my mother is cooking a lot. In Kyiv during last months, I couldn't even manage to buy food at supermarkets, because of work and plenty of dance classes.

At the shop with food for pets, I got to know that people were still buying brushes and other staff for their pets in spite of the fact that "it was not the right time for that" as one of the buyers expressed her thoughts loud deciding if she should buy a brush for her dog.

Now I have back up cat food for my friend from Kyiv. It feels peculiar to me, because my parents never gave special food to our cats. Today I risked to lose it, because my cat sniffed it and managed to open the cabinet where I have hidden it. It feels so nice that now my friend and her boyfriend have a pretext to visit me: I have back up cat food for their cats.

I was surprised to see that flowers were sold at several places as I walked back home. I was even more surprised that people actually bought them, in spite of all the uncertainty. International Women's Day is deeply rooted in Ukrainian conscience, despite the fact that many criticize it as a Soviet "heritage". Especially in dull provinces: I am sure, people will never do without it. I also was surprised that it started to snow. Before the war it was getting warm and I had thought that spring was irreversible.

Near my house I saw my father's friend with a gun. Although I recently changed my attitude to weapons and now I regard them as prerequisite for peace and means of saving human rights and lives, the sight of a gun made me feel uncomfortable. I noticed that while walking through our main street, I looked at all men like potential defenders and tried to appreciate visually their strength and health. I also smiled more to people and people smiled more to me than before the war. In my little town we rarely smiled before, unless we saw close friends. These smiles seem to me like small dialogues "We are in shit, aren't we? We'll get through it!" - "Sure".

My father came home after work and enthusiastically told us about the stories of his friends who just left Irpin or Kyiv how this or that exploded..."I met so many old friends," - he said with joy.

During my two walks in my town these days I looked attentively at all the dull and horribly looking buildings and their appearance comforted me. There is also one old public building with broken window glasses which nobody renovated, because there is no money. Grey sky. An old Soviet tank as a monument near the river. It seems like the war has already been there. And I don't think that this war can make it much worse. Everything already looks horrible. Also, the reason why my compatriots always complained about our town (there is literally nothing here), suddenly

became our advantage. There is almost nothing to bomb, so there is nothing to fear. It would still be better, if my family lived in a small house. I don't feel safe in a four-storey building...But I am so happy to be born and live in this dull province in a relatively big distance from both Russia and civilization "blessings", as opposed to people from Bucha, Irpin, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Okhtyrka, Sumy, Mariupol, etc.

*Bildquelle:* © Lina Zalitok, 2022. Blumen werden nahe Kyjiw zum Internationalen Frauentag am 08. März verkauft.