

2.

FRANCE.

PARIS

Bonjour, France! my GREETINGS, France!

Платон чи то подумки, чи вголос промовив ці слова, щойно шасі торкнулися землі.



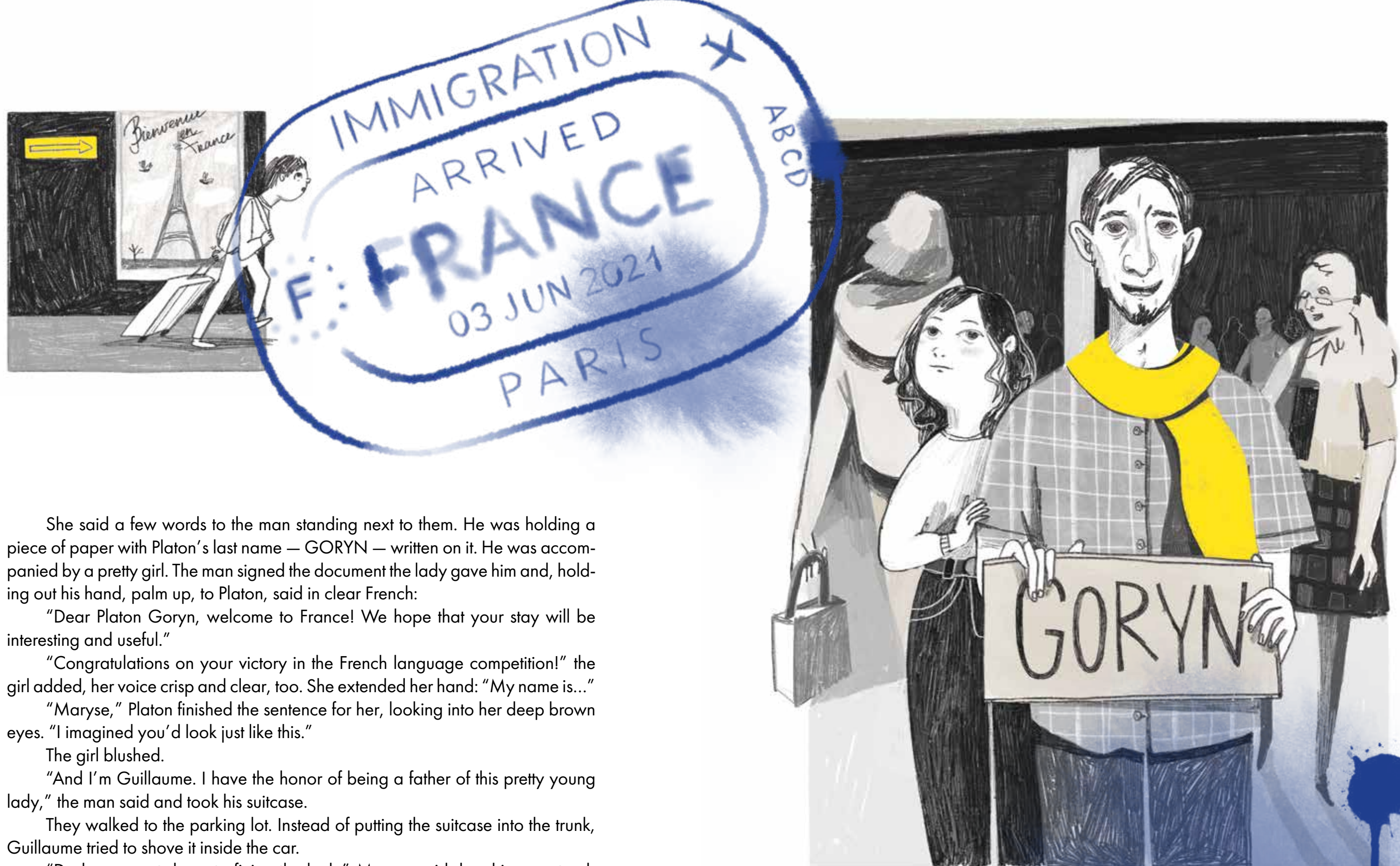
-Sca-A-A-ry!

Platon thought when the chassis touched the ground. "Sca-ry!" he whispered, exhaling after each syllable. "Switching my brain keyboard to French.

Madames et Messieurs!

Talking and thinking only in French! Don't be stupid, Platon! It's a great chance to check how well you speak the language. These are not your lessons with Hnat. It's spoken French." Platon was trying to overcome his fear of the unknown: "Focus when thinking and relax when talking," he repeated Hnat's farewell advice.

A lady wearing a badge similar to that of her colleague at Boryspil airport approached him. She asked his name and told him to follow her. Platon listened hard to her speaking in French. Then he relaxed a bit, responding to her questions about the flight. After he received a Schengen zone entry stamp in his passport and took his suitcase from the luggage belt, the lady ushered him to the automatic sliding door.



She said a few words to the man standing next to them. He was holding a piece of paper with Platon's last name — GORYN — written on it. He was accompanied by a pretty girl. The man signed the document the lady gave him and, holding out his hand, palm up, to Platon, said in clear French:

"Dear Platon Goryn, welcome to France! We hope that your stay will be interesting and useful."

"Congratulations on your victory in the French language competition!" the girl added, her voice crisp and clear, too. She extended her hand: "My name is..."

"Maryse," Platon finished the sentence for her, looking into her deep brown eyes. "I imagined you'd look just like this."

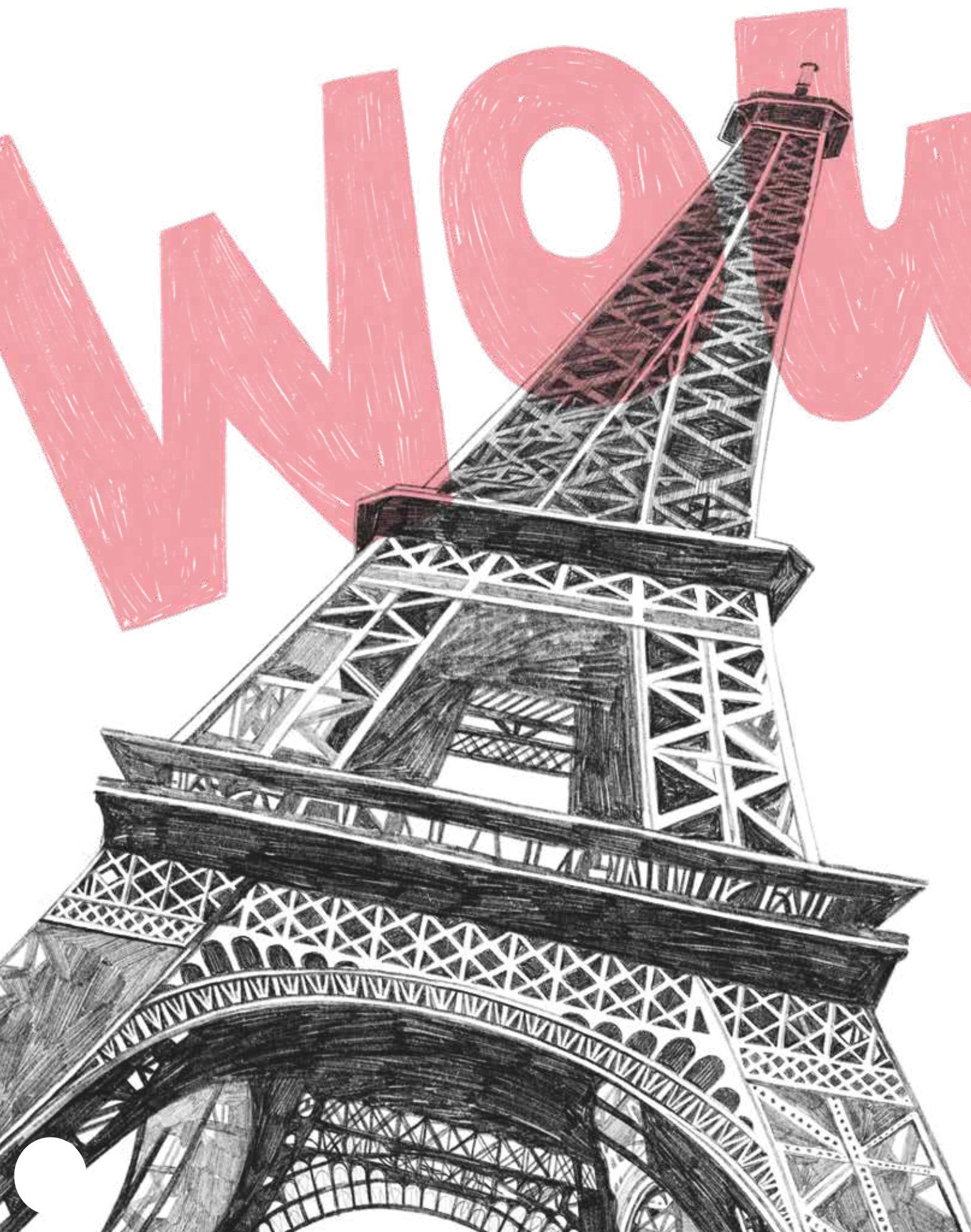
The girl blushed.

"And I'm Guillaume. I have the honor of being a father of this pretty young lady," the man said and took his suitcase.

They walked to the parking lot. Instead of putting the suitcase into the trunk, Guillaume tried to shove it inside the car.

"Dad never got down to fixing the lock," Maryse said, laughing, pretending to scold at her father. "You'll have to get used to that, Platon. You'll find many things in our family working not as they should."

"That's why our life is so exciting and adventurous," Guillaume said, winking.



The car was driving through downtown. Platon could not take his eyes off the buildings standing in strict geometric order amid coffeehouses and restaurants under green and burgundy awnings.

"So, Platon, what would you like to see now? What's your first association with Paris?" Maryse asked with a smile. "Close your eyes! No, not yet, not yet. Now! Open!"

Far away, where the sky melted into the cityscape, the boy saw the Eiffel Tower. He almost cried out with excitement.

"I knew you'd react like that!" the girl laughed. "Of course, we'll go there and take photos. Otherwise, your friends in Ukraine won't believe that you were in Paris, will they?"

"In a mere hundred of years, a tower that sparked public protests turned into a symbol of the whole country. Funny, huh?" Guillaume said, trying to speak slowly. "When it was being built, almost three hundred of famous Parisians—including Alexandre Dumas fils—sent a letter of protest to the Paris municipality. They called it a 'half-built factory pipe.'"

"And the writer Guy de Maupassant mocked it in his essays. When a journalist wondered why he had lunch at the Eiffel Tower's restaurant so often, he said: 'It's the only place in Paris where I can not actually see the Tower!'" Platon rattled off.

"That's right!" Guillaume said, giving him an approving look in the rear view mirror.

The Eiffel Tower grew larger and larger, as the car approached it. In a minute, they stopped. Platon looked around, confused. Can it be really true that he will live so close to the Eiffel Tower?

"Dad, please, be careful when parking your car," Maryse said, smiling. "Don't say that it's only metal and that all things material only harm the humanity."

The girl turned in her seat and said to Platon:

"The Parisians have this habit to park their cars until they hear the metal screech. You have to squeeze your car between your neighbors' cars, and it's totally okay if you have to push one of them a little bit."

Platon got out and found himself in a nice courtyard with neatly trimmed hedges and a colorful flower bed. They took the stairs to the third floor. A tall door welcomed them to the apartment, and Platon was almost blinded by the brightly colored paintings on the walls, glinting in the late-afternoon sunlight.

"This will be your room, Platon. Get settled in and come to the kitchen. You must be hungry like a wolf. Come on, Maryse, let's cook the dinner."

The dinner was a real feast. Maryse took pleasure in recounting the ingredients of each dish to her father and guest and smiled happily as Platon said the meal was delicious.

Just as they cleared the table and put all the dishes into the dishwasher, a familiar Skype ringtone played.

"There's mom! *The Ivy League** calling!" Maryse wiped her hands on a towel and pressed "Accept." Beatrice's smile filled the screen.

*The Ivy League is an alliance of eight most prestigious universities in the United States: Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, and Yale University.



"Hi mom!" the girl cried out. "Yes, everything's fine! Platon is here. We met him and fed him. He's all set. Such a nice and polite boy. He speaks fluent French!" She added, winking at Platon.

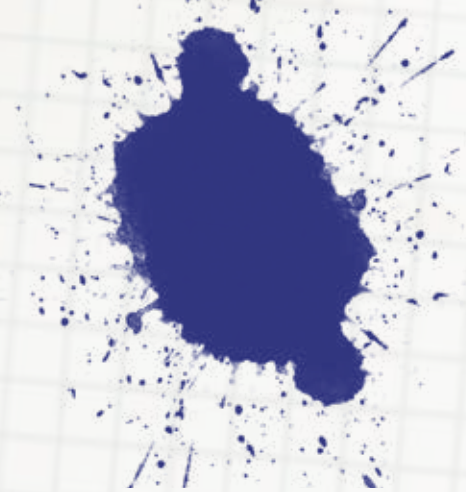


"Hello dear!" Guillaume said. "We're doing great. How have you been? Who are you lecturing on today? Sartre? Well, your students are lucky. Platon, come closer, please. Let my wife's bright eyes see you. She wants to meet you, too."




sant!

Platon answered Beatrice's friendly questions and laughed at her jokes. As far as he understood, she was a guest professor at the Brown University in the United States, giving lectures on the French literature of the 20th century. It was a shame they could meet and talk only virtually.



... the city was wrapped in twilight.
The eventful day was slowly becoming
a thing of the past, leaving behind
a trail of emotions and vivid impressions.

Having completed its mission, it was quietly
turning into a recollection. And no one knew
how long the memory would hold it in
one its nooks and crannies, not letting
the new facts of everyday life layer up and
erase it...



3. HORSES OF DAVYD BURLIUK (1882 - 1967)

All night long, Platon was riding a horse. It was weird because he never tried horseback riding in real life. There were no horses in his native town of Bohuslav. He only enjoyed a horse cart ride once, when staying with his friend Andriy at his grand-mas in the countryside.

A horse from his dream looked nothing like that horse, though. Oh no. It was a bay horse with a glossy, thick chestnut mane. It took the boy across the meadow and into the shrubs, and then it suddenly flew high into the sky, landing on a sunlit clearing. Platon lay in the tall grass, while the horse grazed on it, all juicy and sweet in June. The horse squinted at the boy, snorting with its wet nostrils. It flexed its muscles, chasing the pesky flies away.



A morning ray of sun wondered around Platon's face, tickling the boy.

"Where am I?" he thought, opening his eyes and looking around. He was searching for a hint. Oh, there was his shirt, jeans, and the suitcase. He realized that the ride on the swift horse had been only a dream.

"What a monster!" Platon gasped, terrified, when his eyes fell on a weird painting in an exquisite wooden frame. Platon hid under the blanket, the last few days flashing before his eyes: his parents, the flight, Guillaume, the Parisian apartment, the paintings on the walls. No. The nightmare in a beautiful ornament did not fit that perfect chapter of his life. Perhaps, he just imagined the whole thing? Platon pulled back the blanket anxiously. It was right there! He was not hallucinating. Two oblong eyes, like string beans, stared straight at him. Platon sat up. The monster did not take its eyes off him. Hmm... One ear slid

down; a hand hovering above the shoulder in an unnatural gesture. The figure was twisted, its nose strange and the duck lips like a separate living creature, puckered for a morning kiss. But the colors were really nice, so deep. "Well, let me turn to my common sense for help," Platon said, cheering himself up. "I guess some painter saw that handsome guy in his dreams and painted him on the canvas."

The boy smiled, hearing the familiar voices of Guillaume and Maryse outside his room.





"Thanks, dad! I can see that Carolyn already knows what we're going to get for breakfast. Was there a queue at the boulangerie, as usual?" Maryse asked, taking the paper bag from Guillaume. She put the croissants and quiches, still warm, onto a large plate.

"Yes. Lady Carolyn asked me to say good morning to you. I'm glad she wondered about our Ukrainian guest. Somehow, it didn't occur to me that I should get a couple of extra croissants and quiches. Is Platon still sleeping?"

"Good morning, Guillaume! Hi Maryse! I'm sorry but I forgot where the bathroom is," Platon smiled, embarrassed.

"We are lucky to have two bathrooms in our apartment, my dear friend. Maryse and I will use one, and the second one is entirely at your disposal."

A bit later, Platon, freshened up, his hair still wet, came to breakfast wearing a shirt his mother had carefully ironed. The coffee machine was gurgling, getting the fragrant coffee for Guillaume out of its insides. Hot chocolate was brewing in a glass pot, swirling down to the bottom in cloudy patterns.

"Have you seen any prophetic dreams, Platon, now that you slept in a different house?" Maryse asked, pouring a cup of hot chocolate for him. "Please help yourself."

Platon glanced at the table and sighed with relief: "the cutlery test" was put off until later. French pastries and Ukrainian buns could be eaten with one's hands.

"I'm not sure that was a prophetic dream, because I haven't seen any horses in Paris yet. But early in the morning, I rode a bay horse, really handsome. It was so real! But I'm thankful to that weird man who chased my dream away and made my morning more emotional."

"Who is that weird man you're talking about?" Guillaume asked, sipping his coffee. He listened to Platon with keen interest.

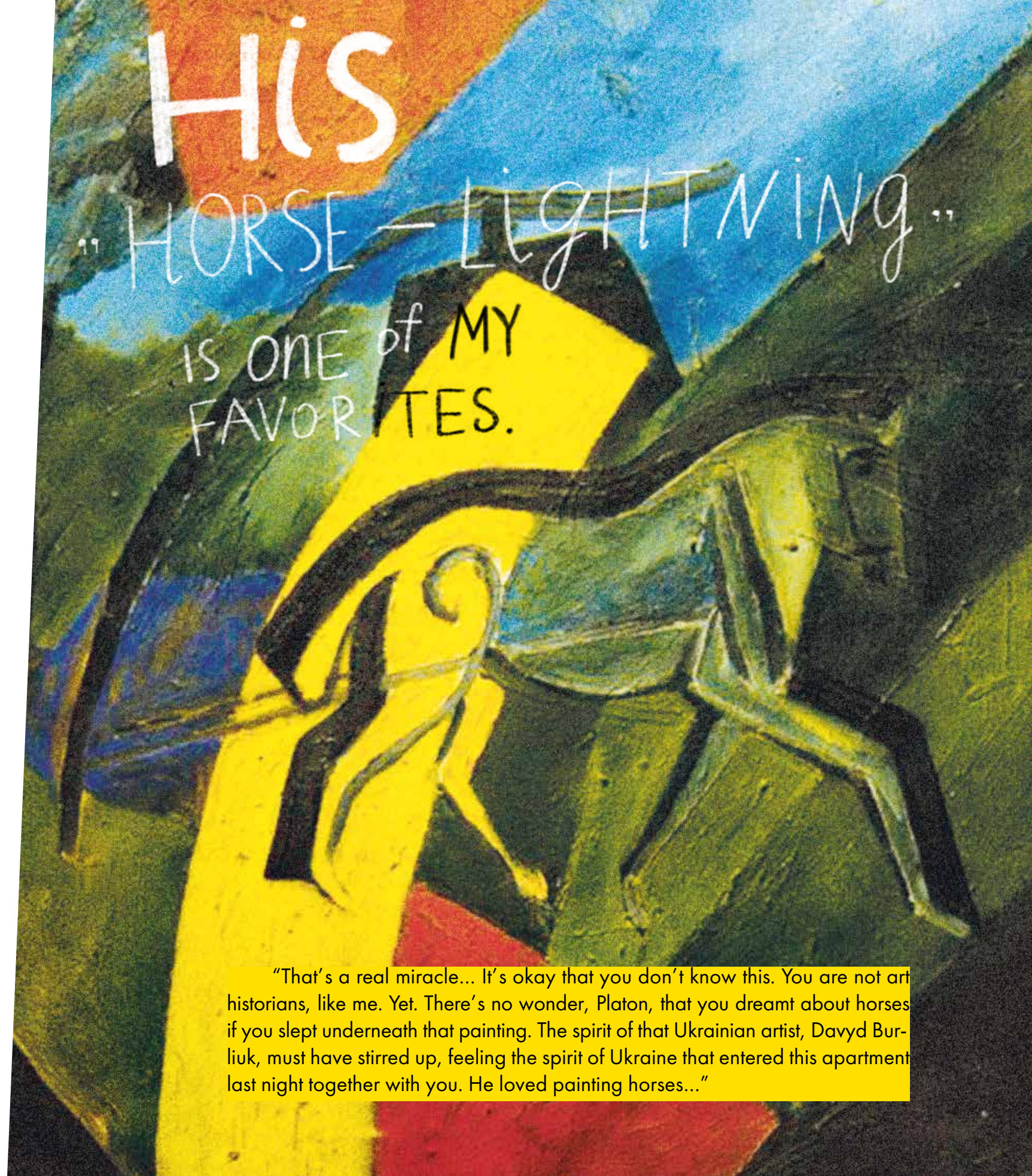
"I mean one of the paintings on the wall. It shows a man with crazy eyes, in a suit and tie."

"Hmm... Horses, you say... This is really odd," Guillaume said, looking at Platon and then out the window. "Did you understand which painting our guest is talking about?" He turned to Maryse.

"Of course. I was scared of it, too, when I was little."

"And horses... He painted lots of them, those Ukrainian steeds. Paraphrasing Herodotus, he called himself 'a bard of mares.'"

"You're talking in riddles, dad. I figured out it's 'A Portrait of My Uncle' by Davyd Burliuk. But what do Ukrainian horses and Herodotus have to do with it?"



"That's a real miracle... It's okay that you don't know this. You are not art historians, like me. Yet. There's no wonder, Platon, that you dreamt about horses if you slept underneath that painting. The spirit of that Ukrainian artist, Davyd Burliuk, must have stirred up, feeling the spirit of Ukraine that entered this apartment last night together with you. He loved painting horses..."

"That's a real miracle... It's okay that you don't know this. You are not art historians, like me. Yet. There's no wonder, Platon, that you dreamt about horses if you slept underneath that painting. The spirit of that Ukrainian artist, Davyd Burliuk, must have stirred up, feeling the spirit of Ukraine that entered this apartment last night together with you. He loved painting horses..."

Guillaume jumped to his feet in a rather comical way and looked closely at the bookshelves reaching the ceiling of the living room. Then he dragged a ladder and climbed it up fast, like a horse-lightning — and it did not matter that he didn't look like an athlete at all.

Maryse watched him with a tender smile of someone who saw things. Platon was perplexed. He figured that it was the way researchers behaved when a genius insight dawned on them and absorbed them whole.

"Well, where is the Burliuk album now?" Guillaume murmured. He was going over the books, pulling them out and then pushing them back in place.

"Is your father really an art historian?" Platon asked in a whisper.

- But he is not acting like a walking encyklopedia. He's able to say „I don't know". It is this phrase that inspires people to do research. I'm yet to learn how to admit that I do not know something.

"My father? Yes, he is a researcher. He wrote many books, and they ask him to evaluate art works. His opinion is well-respected. Dad worked at Louvre for many years, and now he's at Musee d'Orsay. You can ask him whatever you're curious about. Even if he doesn't know the answer, he'll find it, for sure," Maryse said. She was clearly proud of her dad.

"There you go!" The girl's monologue was interrupted by her father's happy voice. He was flipping through the book, all excited, feeling for the rung of the ladder at the same time.

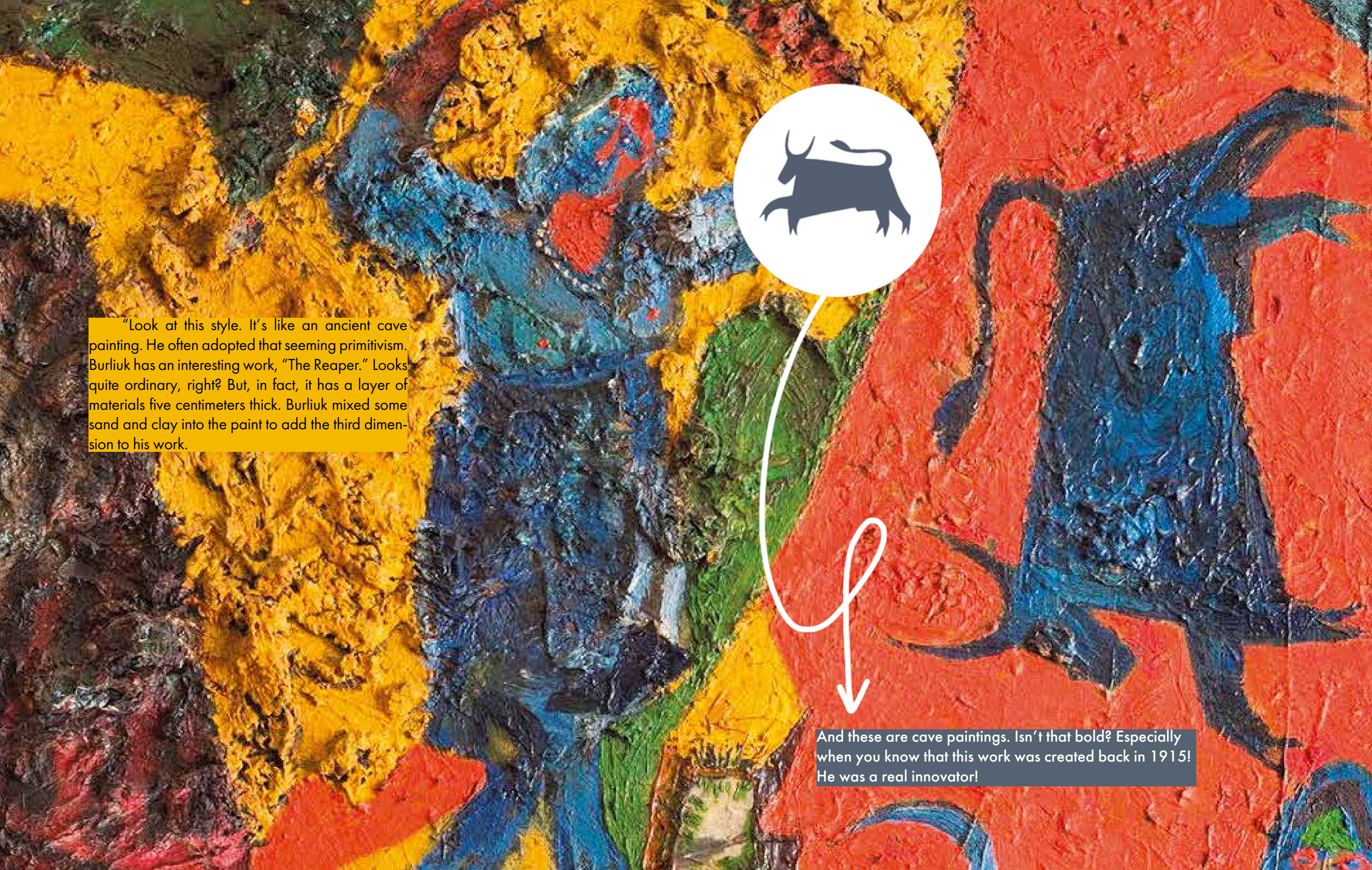


"Mister Guillaume! Be careful! Remember the sequence of actions! Watch out, dad! You don't want to break a leg!" Maryse warned him, half-jokingly. "Welcome to the morning lecture!" She said to Platon, and gave a conspiratorial wink.

"Well, my dear friends, here he is — a remarkable Ukrainian man Davyd Burliuk, the father of the Russian futurism. And not only Russian—he contributed to Japanese futurism, too. A talented, fearless artist, a trailblazer. It's so wonderful that some people always lead others, inventing new artistic styles. Actually, it's a great talent — to know how to shock others with style. Burliuk had that skill."

Guillaume gave Platon an album with color reproductions.

Burliuk himself was looking at him from the cover, a horse tattooed on his cheek.



"Look at this style. It's like an ancient cave painting. He often adopted that seeming primitivism. Burliuk has an interesting work, "The Reaper." Looks quite ordinary, right? But, in fact, it has a layer of materials five centimeters thick. Burliuk mixed some sand and clay into the paint to add the third dimension to his work.



And these are cave paintings. Isn't that bold? Especially when you know that this work was created back in 1915! He was a real innovator!

"And this style is called futurism because it looked into the future?" Platon wondered aloud, flipping through the album and glancing down at his phone screen at the same time.

"Yes, you can interpret it like this. In Latin, "futurum" means "future." Historical and technological progress dictates its conditions and demands. Futuristic art depicted the onset of the industrial revolution and the machine age. The humans were pushed aside. It was three Ms —

**"M" — METROPOLIS,
MACHINE,
MASS.**

That kind of art was characterized by dynamic movement. It was that movement, not humans with their fragile mental state and emotions, that the fine arts, sculpture, and literature glorified."

"Similar processes are happening now," Maryse added. "We all are a bit like futurists, using emojis to express our emotions and attitude to people or events. Emojis show how we feel—sad, happy, frustrated, hurt, bored."



"And we don't care about punctuation or grammatical errors in our messages," Platon said. "Mama gets angry when I send her emojis instead of words, but I think it's fun. That's the way I communicate with my friends."

"That's an interesting observation, young people," Guillaume said. "It never occurred to me. But now that I think of it, I realize that in the early twentieth century, it was the futurists who deliberately omitted punctuation marks and capital letters. Adjectives or nouns, too. They valued action—so, verbs became powerful and important."

"Like in *Veni, vidi, vici*? 'I Came, I Saw, I Conquered'?" Maryse said, laughing.

"Well, I wouldn't call Julius Caesar a futurist, sweetie. He said that back in 47 B.C.," her father said and laughed, too. "But it's a funny observation."

"So, that artist, Davyd Burluk, is really a Ukrainian?!" Platon exclaimed, reading the article on the French Wikipedia. "Born in 1882 in Semyrotovschyna hamlet in the present-day Sumy region. It's in the north-east of Ukraine," he explained. "His mother was gifted and skilled at painting. All her six children were talented, taking up music and painting."

Platon was reading the text on the screen out loud.

"Here's a nice quote about his origin:

„On the father's side, we are Ukrainian Cossacks. Our family went by the name of the Zaporozhian Cossack army.

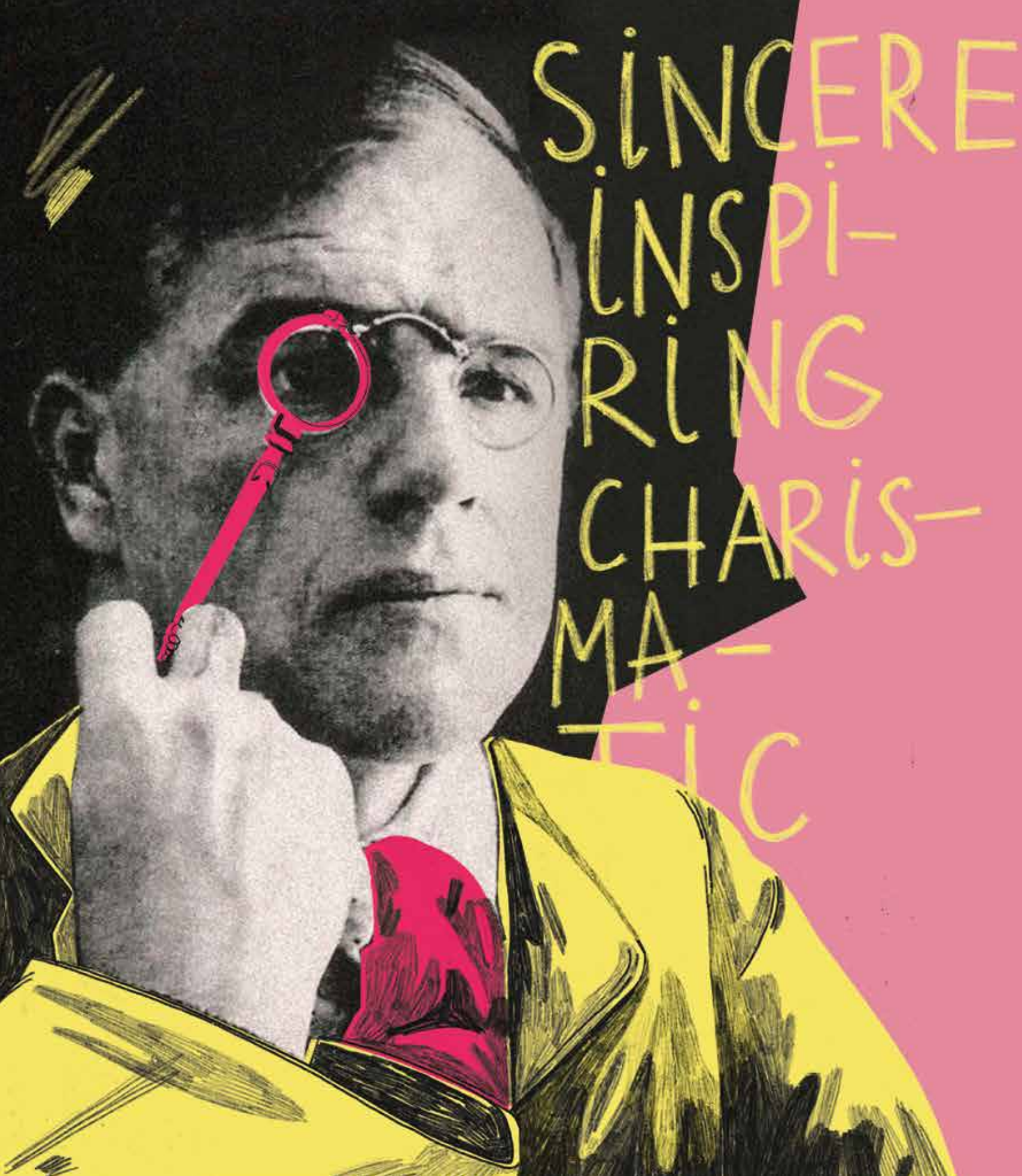
... 1915, I painted „Svyatoslav.” The colors of this orange, green and yellow, red, and blue colors are

... I have painted countless Ukrainian steeds in my call myself 'a bard of mares.'”

Cossacks, descendants of Zaporozhian Pysarchuk — „a scribe.” We were scribes

painting are deeply national. Bright gushing from my brush.

life. Paraphrasing Herodotus, I could



"That's what you told us, mister Guillaume! How can you remember all these details?"

"Well, that's my job! I read his book "Fragments from the Memories of a Futurist" when I was a student. I loved Burliuk's rebellious nature! I admire people like him who stir up public opinion and are not afraid to go against the flow and grab people's attention. Perhaps, because I'm not much of a rebel myself. Look at this photo—he wears a monocle in his left eye. Davyd lost his eye in a fight with his brother—they were still children at the time—but he found a way to benefit from his disfigurement. Later, he had a glass eye made. Now, it's a museum exhibit. One-eyed, he surrounded himself with all kinds of myths, and he was big on creating them. Burliuk claimed that his paintings had flat perspectives because he had only one eye—it was the way he perceived the world around him. And how could you argue with that? Burliuk created lots of paintings in the manner of art panels or stained-glass windows. Sincere, inspiring, charismatic, he attracted a large following," Guillaume said, his eyes shining with the researcher's energy. "Burliuk spurred people around him to discover their talents. Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky was one of them. He became friends with Burliuk back in 1910, when they both studied at Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. Burliuk gave his younger friend a daily allowance so he wouldn't go hungry and could write his poems. But he did that in a casual, easy, humorous manner. By the way, Platon, does Burliuk's last name mean anything in Ukrainian?"

"Burliuk... I guess it comes from the verb "burlyty," Platon said. "How can I explain that? Hmm... Burlyty is like... what the river does in spring, rolling its waters in a powerful flow in the direction only the river itself knows. It's like water bubbling in the kettle. Actually, I think that "zburiuvaty"—"to provoke," "to stir up"—also comes from that verb, 'burlyty.'"

"How interesting!" Maryse said. "The pace of his life was set by his last name!"

"Yes, that's a telling fact. Thank you for your explanation, Platon. That Ukrainian, Davyd Burliuk, really stirred up the art of the early twentieth century. He was temperamental and full of creative energy. The splashes of his 'bubbling' fell onto talented artists around him and placed him in the very center of artistic life at the beginning of the last century."

"Now these are some interesting facts, too," Maryse said, scrolling through her phone. "In Russia, Burliuk was criticized for overusing Ukrainian words in his poems. And his paintings—"Svyatoslav," "Mamay," and "Taras Shevchenko"—were said to be too Ukrainian."



"Oh, so he wrote poetry, too?" Platon turned to Guillaume — he was flipping the pages of a book and moving the mouse pointer around the computer screen at once, absorbing the information.

"Sorry, dad, but aren't you late yet? Isn't it time to go to work?" Maryse whispered. Her father was so engrossed in his research that she did not want to startle him.

"Yeah...Hold on...Just a minute... He was such a versatile personality, Platon, that painting was not the only thing he did. In 1919, Burliuk published a poetry collection. It had a rather funny title — "A Balding Tail." He was a literary and art critic, as well as publisher. Oh, you will like this one. Burliuk and the Russian writer Velimir Khlebnikov called themselves 'Presidents of Planet Earth.' Hmm... Sounds like those guys had lots of fun a century ago! I know what you're going to ask me. "Presidents of Planet Earth" or Society of 317 was a poetic utopia created in 1915-1916 to implement the idea of the world harmony. Well, given the events that happened next and the Russian revolution of 1917, that idea did not stand the test of time. But I guess each of us seeks harmony with the world in our own way."

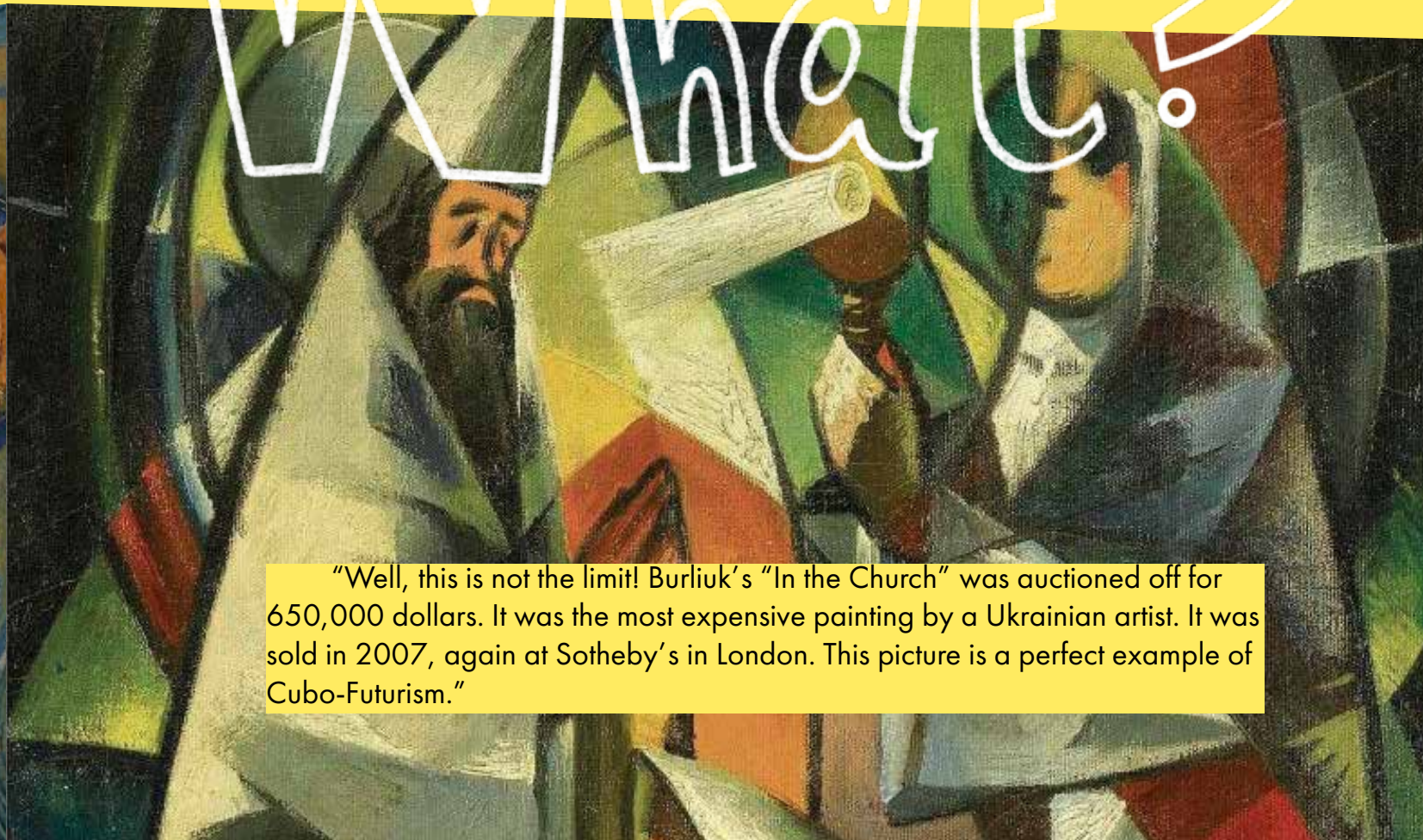
"Let's set up our own society of world harmony!" Maryse said, laughing. "A secret society of world art explorers!"

"That's a smart idea, honey," Guillaume said. "Davyd Burliuk welcomed the revolution of 1917 in Russia, but just like most artists and intellectuals, he quickly grew frustrated with it. He could not settle in a violent country that was racing towards totalitarianism, so he moved to Japan and later to the United States. During his years in Japan, he made a serious contribution into Japanese futurism. Look what he did in his "Japanese Woman Planting Rice." It's a vivid example of futurism. He expressed movement through the repetition of lines. If I'm not mistaken, that painting was sold at *Sotheby's* for 230,000 pounds in 2013."

* The oldest auction house in the world, established in 1744.

Platon and Maryse exclaimed, rolling their eyes in childish surprise. Two pairs of black eyebrows almost flew off their foreheads up to the ceiling.

What?



"Well, this is not the limit! Burliuk's "In the Church" was auctioned off for 650,000 dollars. It was the most expensive painting by a Ukrainian artist. It was sold in 2007, again at *Sotheby's* in London. This picture is a perfect example of Cubo-Futurism."

"Cubo-Futurism..." Platon repeated the complicated word, raising his shoulders.

"It's easy, Platon. Just mix cubism and futurism, and you'll get this difficult term. But let's leave cubism for later. Enough of art terms for today. We'll talk about impressionism later, too. It's the style in which his "Portrait of a Mother" is painted. Do you see that remarkable interplay of shades? He created it with his sketchy strokes, as if in haste."

"Oh, I haven't talked to my parents yet," Platon said, realizing it suddenly. "I texted them last night and wished them a good night's rest, but I forgot to text them in the morning. Mama must be worried." He quickly typed on his phone.

"Right, our breakfast is taking too long. I should leave for the museum."

"One last question," Platon said, pressing the Send button. "Did Davyd Burliuk return to Ukraine, after all? I'm wondering how things have turned out for him."

"He stayed true to his tastes and preferences, but his art changed slightly under the impact of the Western traditions. After he moved to the United States, he painted mostly landscapes, wrote poetry, and published a periodical, "Color and Rhyme." His flurry of activity had no limits. He organized solo exhibitions every year and showed them on all continents. In 1962, Burliuk wanted to bring his exhibition to Kyiv, but the communist regime did its best to prevent that."

"What a shame," Maryse murmured.

"Yes, it's a pity. Only thirty-five works by Davyd Burliuk survived in the Ukrainian museums and private collections. They were exhibited at the National Art Museum in 1998. Most of his works are kept at his heritage museum in the United States, as well as in Russia, Japan, Canada, and Europe."

"Well, Platon, now you know what happens in our family when someone retells their dreams in the morning!" Maryse said, smiling.

"Thanks, Maryse! Thank you, Guillaume! It's so odd that I never heard about this artist earlier. But as my teacher Hnat Zalizniak says, "Better learn something new and interesting late than never!""

— Let's get ready.
Paris is waiting for you!

