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Let there be peace!

At the time of writing, there is a war going on. It is impossible to ignore the signs. From my desk I can see armed police guarding the Israeli Embassy. "We must convey a sense of security," said one of them to me recently, bored out of his mind and afraid of being quoted because he would then have to guard the US Embassy, where it's even more boring. There's a war on. Passenger planes fly above the OSA, and I have only become aware of them in recent weeks. No more random zapping around channels when you switch on the TV: it's Euronews for breakfast, CNN for supper, and both before going to bed. Yet not ten days after the events of 11 September the first e-jokes started arriving in our mailbox. George Bush with a beard and turban, a veiled Statue of Liberty: humour in the face of adversity.

I would like to tell you how Switzerland views the events going on in the world. But this is not easy if one has no hard facts. Edu-

"It is the end of October and we are acting as if nothing has changed yet our unease tells us differently"

cated people prognosticate, interpret, surmise – and ultimately have nothing concrete to say. We sit in front of the screen and stare at the white dots flickering over a black background, or at green figures crossing a green desert under a green sky. We don't know ourselves exactly what we are looking at. Surely there are better ways to spend one's evening than watching macabre fireworks without a clue as to where they are actually coming to earth. Perhaps for the first time in our lives we actually want to do something, but the question is what?

The Swiss Review is translated into five languages and published in 25 regional versions, and is therefore subject to relatively long production cycles. We are still only in October, but when you read these lines you will already have celebrated Christmas and perhaps had occasion to utter the words "Peace on Earth, goodwill to all men". In today's issue of a Swiss newspaper a journalist who has little truck with Christianity asks why God permits "this sort of thing", meaning the breakdown of world order for which we, rather than God, are responsible.

It is the end of October and we act as if nothing has changed, yet our unease tells us differently. Our points of reference have disappeared. How can we plan the future, book holidays or judge the importance of this editorial?

It is war yet the sun is shining. Children are climbing playfully on the police barriers. The guard indulges the childish banter and casts a bored glance at his watch. Long may his boredom continue. And let there be peace when you read these lines!

Gabrielle Keller

Translated from the German by N. Chisholm



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Salvatore Mauro calls his rollator "Ferrari". Equipped with a ghetto-blaster, his walking aid turns into a megaphone vehicle. With this sound he entertains his fellow residents in the Basle Adullam Foundation's nursing home.

COVER: Photo Erwin Zbinden

SWISS REVIEW

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 28th year of issue and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 25 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 360 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

Gabrielle Keller (GK), Editor-in-Chief; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Freelance Journalist; Isabelle Eichenberger (IE), swissinfo/SRI; Pablo Crivelli (PC), Swiss News Agency; responsible for the Official News: Patricia Messerli (MPC), Swiss Abroad Service EDA, CH-3003 Berne. Translation: Nicolette Chisholm.

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Internet: <http://www.revue.ch> E-mail: revue@aso.ch



Gabrielle Keller