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pecially if one happens to be American Swiss or Swiss American. If we become the 27th canton one day, we will be divided at least into five parts: the EC Swiss, the Swiss American (the American Swiss who are presently treated the worst by our banks – all thanks to the Americans of course!), the Common Wealth Swiss, the South American Swiss, and for brevity the Rest of the World Swiss. In terms of Switzerland, we often older folks are mostly Heimweh-Swiss, who may be in search of a bank account in order to buy a Swiss cup of coffee.

ROBERT ENGGIST, HAMILTON, NEY JERSEY, USA

Putting in our two cents' worth

I find the demands of many Swiss Abroad concerning political representation and their own electoral constituency downright impudent. It was our decision to leave Switzerland!!! I believe it is an extremely generous display of social solidarity that we can still vote – or put our two cents' worth in – at all despite no longer living in Switzerland and the fact that our everyday lives are barely affected by ballot results (except where issues of the Swiss Abroad are directly concerned). I am very much opposed to a special constituency for the Swiss Abroad. I would never vote for a Swiss Abroad either. Anyone wishing to be actively involved in Swiss politics should kindly return there to live. In my view it is a privilege that we can take part in elections and referenda at all and one that far from every country grants to its citizens residing abroad.

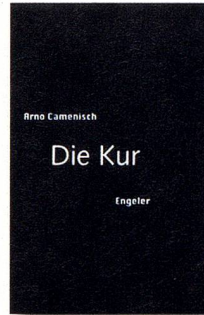
SUSANNE BOSS, S-BOSS@ONLINE.NO

A shift to the right please!

It is high time that the Swiss reflected upon their 724 years of independence. Instead of edging its way towards the EU while spouting empty phrases that have no clear meaning (with the exception of the straight-talking SVP), Parliament would do well to use its precious time for better purposes, namely Switzerland and the Swiss people. Only the SVP is doing this. I urge MPs and Federal Councillors from the other parties in Switzerland to shift significantly to the right towards the SVP. The Swiss people will be grateful to you. Europe is a corrupt union that squanders taxpayers' money rather than looking after it. Just look at Greece and the unfortunately ever-more corrupt "Podemos" socialist/communist party in Spain. Andalusia is the best example of the problem.

DANIEL OPPLIGER, DANIELEUFEMIA@GMAIL.COM

The pessimist and the dreamer



ARNO CAMENISCH:
"Die Kur"; Engeler-Verlag
Solothurn, 2015;
96 pages; CHF 25;
around 19 euros.

"The dead are dancing too tonight" or "you feel an outsider in your own living room, and you are happy when you can leave again". These are sentences uttered by the man who travels with his wife to Engadine. The recently retired couple of modest means have won first prize in the village tombola – several nights at a five-star hotel. Readers accompany the disparate couple in 47 scenes set in and around the hotel. The husband constantly has his plastic bag with him from which he pulls all sorts of items, ranging from a pocket torch to chocolate. He is always looking for something to eat, while his wife's hunger is for life. The habitual moaner ponders death fantasies and the passing of friends. His wife, the proud owner of a sequin dress, wants to see something of the world. Will their stay at the luxury hotel turn out to be therapeutic or a macabre nightmare?

The individual scenes read like stage directions to a comedic theatrical production where the two main characters talk at cross purposes. The husband, a pessimist, and his wife, a dreamer, are completely incompatible but nevertheless treat one another respectfully and lovingly. As close as they are after over 30 years of marriage, they still remain strangers to one another. The exaggerated characters are often close to us as readers but yet remain nameless. The situations switch between tragedy and comedy, making it easy reading. Despite focussing on the dialogue, the author's attention continually zooms in on the surroundings like in a film. The retired couple's conversations – no real dialogue – are sprinkled with expressions from Swiss dialect. It will be interesting to see how that is dealt with in translation.

Arno Camenisch tackles major issues, such as death, but often only goes halfway. Greater depth is required, but this is nonetheless a highly stimulating read. The author born in Grisons in 1978 writes in German and Romansh. He worked as a teacher at the Swiss school in Madrid and then studied at the Swiss Literature Institute in Biel where he lives today. The media like to call him a rising star of Swiss literature. He has received many awards for his work. His books "Sez Ner" (The Alp) and "Hinter dem Bahnhof" (Behind the Station) are available in French, Italian, English, Dutch, Spanish, Hungarian and other languages. Anyone fortunate enough to attend one of his readings will also enjoy Camenisch's theatrical talents.

RUTH VON GUNTEN