

Joris Vermassen
The Suspension of Disbelief
stories

The Revelation	3
The Sweater	9
The Suitcase	15
The Lady	23
The Mission	29
The Cure	39
The Pastor	55
The Devil	71
Mother	77

The Revelation



It was May 1st, 1986. I checked the alarm clock: ten to nine in the evening. I got down on my knees next to my bed and prayed. God, I don't know what to do. If You do, please tell me.

Then God began to speak to me. He had a shrill voice. Maybe it was the voice of Jesus Christ. He asked me a question. I didn't know what to say. I was so overwhelmed I didn't answer.

I had always prayed to God that he would reveal himself to me. Not in the rising or setting sun, the birth of a child or the beautiful nature, no, in something more. And now that he finally had done, I couldn't react.

Later someone said to me: that voice, it was you. But it wasn't. It was the voice of God.

The Sweater





They're sitting in the garden. The sky glows pink on the horizon. The heat is still in the air. He closes his book.

Shall we watch the sunset? he suggests.

Not now, she answers, continuing to knit industriously.

How long has it been since we walked to the beach to watch the sun set? He asks.

There are still plenty to come, she responds without looking up.

It's only a fifteen minute walk. It could be our last.

Don't be so dramatic. We still have eight years. Plenty of time ...
What?

She puts down her needles and looks at him.

We were both going to make it to a hundred, right?

He smiles. That was the plan, yes.

She is silent and picks up her needles again. The clicking picks up pace.

It's summer, no one needs a sweater, he says. The children and grandchildren have enough for the rest of their lives.

A good sweater always comes in handy, she says.

He stares straight ahead. A moment later he gets up.

Then I'll go alone.

Hey ... don't be stupid. What if you fall?

I'm going to live to a hundred, right?

She sighs and sets aside her knitting.

12 Alright.

From their familiar bench they watch the red ball sink rapidly into the sea.

Aren't you happy now? He looks at her.

Yes, she murmurs.

What's the matter? He asks.

She puts her hand in his lap.

Sometimes I wish I was naive enough to believe this was all for us, she says.

He takes her hand.

No point counting on the land of milk and honey, he says.

And forty virgins would be too much for your heart, she says.

They laugh.

The last red pin-prick of light goes out. At the waterline, a young couple quickly takes a selfie.

Come on, he says, getting up. It's getting chilly.

You see, she says, we should have brought a sweater.