

## **“Plastic Sea”** (excerpt)

by Mirko Bonné

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...Each black meter of water, rolling past ominously  
mute, had the momentum of over three  
hundred stacked-up fuel tankers,  
by someone's calculations.  
Meadows, playgrounds, riparian  
woodlands, the paths and many streets,  
as well as bridges, lots, docks, a big shed at  
the foot of the railway embankment holding God  
knows what long-forgotten junk were  
submerged and sank for days  
and for weeks. Children  
asked whether the water would  
stay like this now, so high, so dark, and  
so, so bad. Yes, I said to a little girl  
with an eye patch, it looks like  
it'll stay like this from  
now on. Ah well.  
The world is  
turning black.  
And the neighbor,  
arm in arm with his wife,  
dog invisible, gazing at a bend in  
the Alster where the river used to come  
around the curve and fling its gold-brown  
glitter at the bank, eyed the nightmarish  
immensity of water and said hollowly  
that never in his life, since he  
sailed boats here as a  
schoolboy, had he experienced  
the like on the Alster, never had it  
happened before, not even in a dream,  
in which everything is possible, was it  
possible. Too quickly for the darting pupils  
to follow, the river rolled under the Fuhlsbütteler  
railway bridge southward to the Free and  
Hanseatic city. I saw three plastic  
canisters and pictured a raft  
you could build with them.  
High water, said the stunned  
neighbor. Floods. They'd always  
happened, summer or winter,  
in the fall or especially in the spring,  
as soon as the snowmelt descended on Stormarn.  
But this here, the black water masses, such  
a draggled park, never, really, no