

Marpod, in September 2024

Dear friends,

A big party in the Roma settlement, dancing, laughter. Although: one person was missing who would otherwise have fuelled the atmosphere. Moise was supposedly feeling poorly, headache, dizziness ... Maybe he would join us later for dinner, he said. But when we returned to the house unexpectedly early, his plan was exposed. Moise's closet was empty and his packed rucksack stood on the floor. „It's enough, I have to leave," he said again and again. I was speechless. Moise, who had spent his life roaming the streets, had lived in the house with us for almost a year. It would be hard for him to be back at the station after having had a room, a shower, food and a community here. Or so I would have thought. But Moise had made up his mind. He took his rucksack and left, back to the station, to drugs, alcohol, violence, neglect. He wished us: „Stay healthy and strong! Take in children who need you, now a place is vacant again!"

Was all we had offered him nothing? Had not a friendship grown in him that would have bound him to us? He had prepared the morning prayers, made jokes at breakfast, often cooked his favourite dish, stuffed peppers, entertained the children in the social centre and sat in the courtyard until late at night, surrounded by volunteers and friends. Moise defined life in our community. The best thing was when he came to me in the morning to discuss a topic he was going to draw. An event from his exciting life, in the children's home, on the street, on the road. It became a journey through his life. Every picture surprised me - the strong colours, the faces, and how he portrayed what he had suffered as a child. He told me more and more about himself. He also told me his ideas about survival. At first the painting was just a way to keep Moise busy, but it became his main task. Three new pictures were added every day.

Then we set off together into his childhood. A six-hour car journey took us to the place where his parents had lived. We saw the house where he was never taken in, the children's home he ran away from, the railway station where he had jumped on the train to Bucharest. Moise was agitated, at every place names and past horrors came to his mind. On the journey back, he fell into a deep sleep, exhausted, fulfilled, happy, unhappy. He then transformed everything into drawings. Friends discovered our artist

and a book was created. „Moise my friend“ is the title of the book, but also of the year we spent together, the merry and the difficult times.

Now his work was over. There was nothing left. Except - back on the street, where he would feel free again. Moise will not change, he will not become the domesticated person we would wish he were. He will remain on his difficult path. He has left a big mark in my heart and in our household, with the children. We miss him.

Sometimes it may be good to leave. To discover something new, not to get stuck in the familiar rut? Father Georg has set off on a journey. He will take a three-month sabbatical and retreat to the desert. There he wants to look what the future demands of him and of us. To gather the strength we need for our - often unpredictable - children and young people. He prays for us and for you, our friends.

We move on, we stay connected.

With great gratitude,

Reinhold Reuber

Moise helps with the birth of a street child.



Moise teaches at the social centre.



Write us, if you are interested in our German book „Moise my friend“!