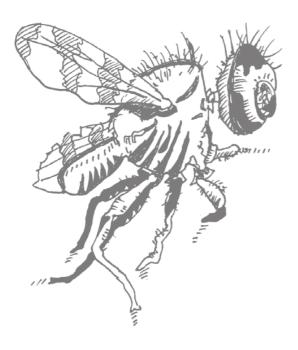
Kostja Ribnik

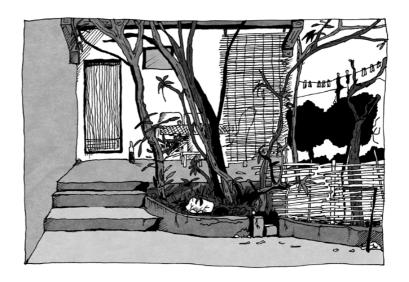
## HEALING ISLAND

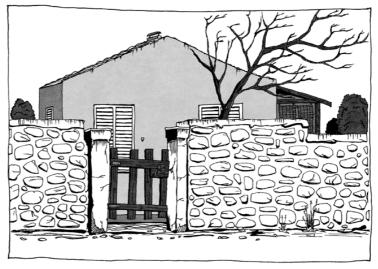


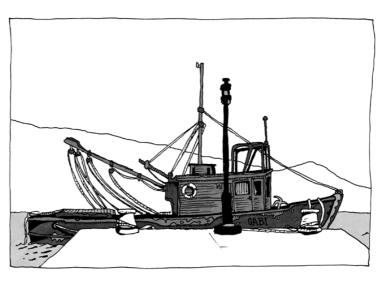












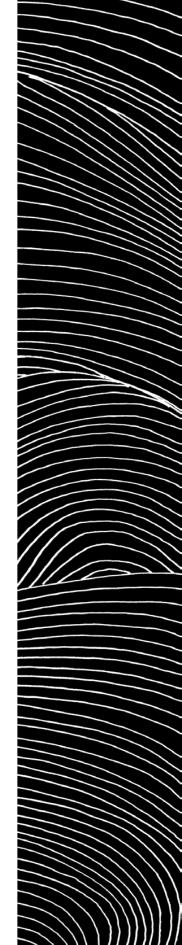
ebook

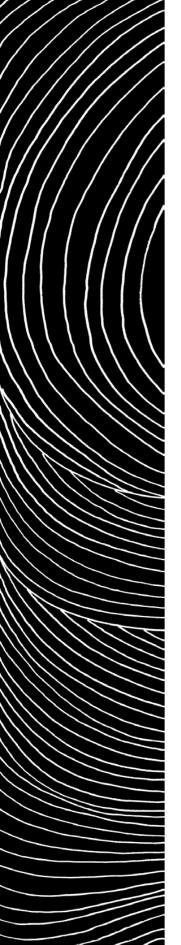
Kostja Ribnik

### THE HEALING ISLAND









#### Kostja Ribnik **The Healing Island**

Published by Modesty Comics in 2014, London, UK www.modestycomics.com office@modestycomics.com Editor: Živojin Tamburić

Original title: Otok iscjelitelj
Script and Art © Kostja Ribnik

Copyright for this edition  $\ensuremath{\texttt{@}}$  Modesty Comics

English translation: Dijana Misaljević Proofreading: Tijana & Živojin Tamburić

Foreword © Pavle Zelić

Graphic design: Kostja Ribnik

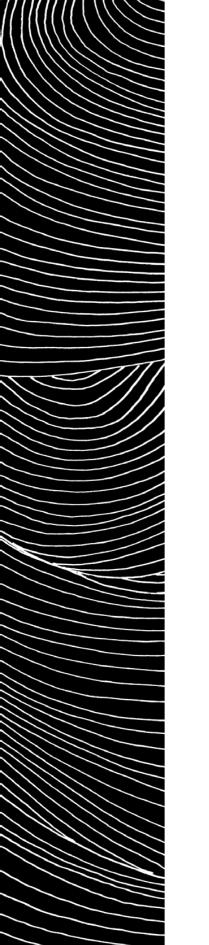
All rights reserved. Permission to reproduce material must be obtained from the autors or the publisher.

#### **Contents:**

Poetry of silence and all things small by Pavle Zelić	7
The Healing Island	
Chapter One: Vertigo	13
Chapter Two: Bucket Full of Destiny	39
Chapter Three: Poetry of Loneliness	57
Chapter Four: From Sea to Cemetery	69
Chapter Five: Hidden Gallery	91
Epilogue	113



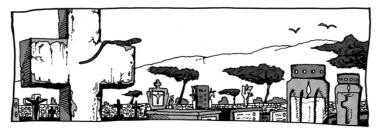






#### Poetry of silence and all things small

The greatest success in storytelling is to draw the readers into an intimate narrative, a world built for the purpose of the piece and to speak up about universal and eternal themes in a way that cuts into the minds and souls of readers. Kostja Ribnik certainly does this in his experimental graphic novel, which uses its innovativeness for bringing out emotions and conveying ideas in a way that is rarely seen on the stage of the former Yugoslavia, but also much wider and further too. The confidence with which this young author plays with structure and form of the comic book medium, and all this at a significant number of pages, is refreshing and announces greatness and durability of a new expression and poetics.



The story about a young man named Steinbock who comes to an isolated island to buy an antique car, and then becomes a toy of magical circumstances that lead him on a path to achieving his creative and romantic potential is both ordinary and totally unusual and perfectly mimics the creative process of creating a work of art. As it says at the beginning, "the healing island" is a real place, as real as Macondo by Márquez or Stephen King's Castle Rock, with echoes of Shangri- La or Neverland, based on the Croatian island of Pag, but also a place where miracles inflame the imagination. From the skeleton - pointers through the hallucinogenic liqueur višnjorez and the bucket of destiny to the larvae that gets under your skin, everything here serves a purpose of creating a unique atmosphere that enchants, both characters in the story and readers alike. Postmodernism in this story is consistent and crashes over the "fourth wall" to the consumer, so the real and surreal are mixed up, and phantasmagoria alternates with courteous





parley. Sometimes instead of the panels we have pages of Steinbock's (Ribnik's?) artistic diary, and characters themselves become (action) heroes of a comic book inside the comic book, which gets additional life through the covers for future adventures and more convincing, through the letters of passionate readers. The quaintness of the people who inhabit the "the healing island" lies in its foundation that definitely comes from our world, but they are also something more, guides for Steinbock, and all of us, sometimes literally, thanks to the many maps with instructions they draw, and even more so in a figurative meaning, as they lead him into a new, better life.

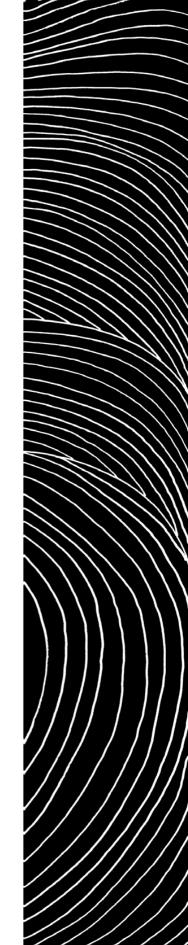
Ribnik is most poetic in the silent scenes, in the beautiful scenery



and views of deserted streets, bugs and plants, and details like a lizard on a tombstone or a reflection of the birds in a cup of coffee. His stylization is authentic and serves well for both realistic and fantastical scenes, and strong and clear lines and framing reduced to functionality exposes the essence of what is presented.

The language that Ribnik uses, and a font designed specifically for the needs of this comic so the words look like handwritten notes, is part of what helps it gain importance and weight, and above all, beauty. The nostalgia that permeated the entire comic is most evident right there in the free associations of the past and childhood, in the contemplation of the main character and suggestive objects he exchanges with other picturesque actors of the story.

Finally, it is impossible not to be enchanted by the directness of the "The Healing Island", it has an understated charm that draws the reader into his twisted world, a world that treats melancholy and rewards with inspiration, a world inhabited by good witches and muses ready for cooperation... a world in which we are all welcome.







While all characters and events in this story are a figment of my imagination, this scanned piece of Wallpaper serves as evidence that the Healing Island is real. I was there; and now you will go there, too.

Kostja Ribnik, Sarajevo 2014



Welcome to the Healing Island The island of obsessions, The end of everything

Karlo K. (1952 - 1989)

Chapter One: Vertigo





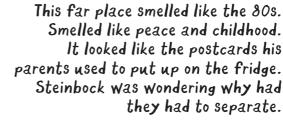
Steinbock rarely left his safe and stagnant dark room. He hasn't been this far from his home in Vienna since the summer of 1989.



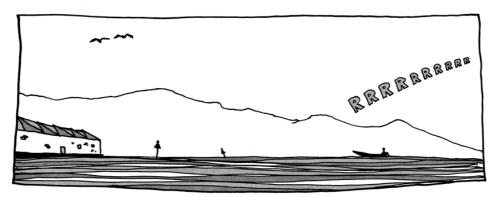
He used to go to the seaside with his parents.
Used to; While they were still happy. They'd
drive along the coast in their 50s family car,
listening to their sun-heated audio cassettes.











He ordered another cup of sugarless black coffee. He was thinking about the old tiles in the bar's toilet. They had an interesting clean line pattern that resembled rough sea.

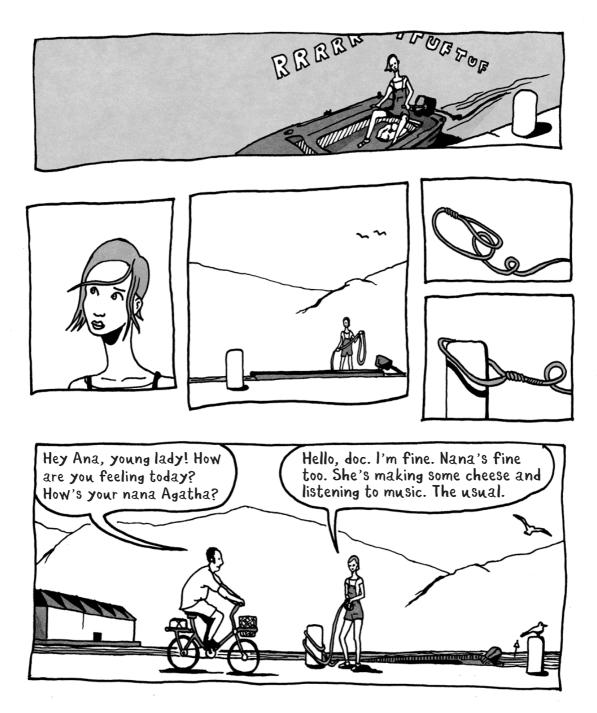


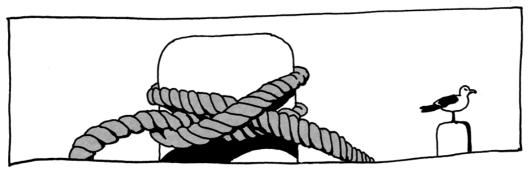
He was trying to enjoy the smell of the sea air, to listen to the magical sounds and to appreciate all those vivid colors. He had very little time for all of that, since he was planning to be home before sunset. Only one thing left to do so he could leave.



He hated waiting. He'd usually be writing poetry while waiting. But he didn't feel like it now. It was getting hot. He felt a little nauseated and his eyes were still dry from traveling that morning. The third strong coffee on an empty stomach only caused vertigo.

# 















- Let's meet in the seacoast café.

#### Steinbock:

- O.K. you'll have no trouble recognizing me; messy hair and wearing all black.

