

Paulina Bukowska is 17 years old, and she has been writing all her life. In 2006 she was acclaimed by the jury in the “Creative Valley” competition organised by the Polish public television channel, awarding the then 16-year-old Bukowska second prize for short fiction. On the insistence of her friends, she then sent an extract to Znak. Our editorial staff could not believe it was the work of a teenager...

Her first novel is the stream of consciousness of a young man who goes through a gateway into the topsy-turvy world of the sensually rampant Love Zone. One day, this absolute loser meets a girl in a wheel-chair, and befriends her in a very strange way. Their first meeting marks a turning point in his so far worthless life. From now on, his initiation into life begins. He visits the Love Zone where he experiences a sexual initiation. He is accompanied on his escapades in the Love Zone by Feliks, a mysterious cowboy who might be the hero's alter ego, his God, or perhaps a demagogue?

Paulina is a fan of Stanley Kubrick and David Lynch. This is clearly visible in her writing. It is a stream of consciousness, in which the boundaries between reality and imagination get blurred, one world merges with the other, reality imperceptibly starts to lose its contours. It is a doubly created world of images and metaphors; first the author creates the narrator and his world, and then he plunges into a sensual world, in which events, emotions and thoughts function as metaphors.

The book reflects a young person's rejection of consumerism and life in a world in which the only thing that seems to matter is money, and the things we possess. Paulina juxtaposes this world with a world of rich imagination, in which money is of no importance.

The book gives the reader quite a lot of freedom of interpretation. After all, why does the main character have a flatmate whom he never talks to? Is this mysterious person some sort of alter ego for the narrator? The Love Zone might be real or just a vision in the narrator's head. What will become of the narrator once his friend, the disabled girl, dies?

You can ask yourself these questions, or you can just let yourself be carried away by this truly captivating vision of an inner life.