



REBELLION OF THE HEART

*To all of those who carry the fire of rebellion within their heart
Especially to those three people who might discover splinters of
their souls within this text – Mischa, Sylvia and Holger*

Remember we were young

Rebellious and brave

And you and me we thought together we're safe.^[1]

I still remember well when I first heard *Voices of Doom*: even then, I was convinced that I would listen to this band a lot – of course, I had no idea that a few years later I would even get a tattoo. Solidarity, tolerance and love: that's what I associate with the raven flying on my shoulder. Several concerts later, I'm now sitting at my desk listening to the limited edition of *Darkness* on vinyl.

One song that particularly fascinates me is 'We Were Young'. I don't really like thinking about age. While I deal with death quite intensively, I hate the idea of ageing. The thought of gradually losing control of my body, experiencing slower thinking, no longer being an active part of society, perhaps even becoming bitter and hopeless, terrifies me. I have known too many people whose lives consisted of suffering. I have no desire to vegetate away in a clichéd manner. I fear that more than what might lie ahead: *You say you're tired now / At the end of your way*. In some biographies, being tired is an inevitable consequence of life experiences. Being able to create moments of peace and quiet is not always a given; even some younger people are unable to do so. At some point, you may even forget how to do it.

So many people have pondered the afterlife: From the Christian idea of an afterlife in which the soul of every human being is tested to decide whether life after death will be pleasant or accompanied by further tribulations, to the idea of eternal rebirth, to dissolution into nothingness, to the notion that it simply seals the end of existence, there are many shades of thought. When the Days of the Dead are celebrated in Mexico, those in the afterlife are welcomed as old friends who just happen to live further away.

If you ask me what I think, I don't have a ready answer. These are questions that arise for me, even after long and intense reflection. I know that everyone must experience this differently, that everyone must find their own answer – and must find their own path to that answer. Because only in this way can death perhaps be bearable. It is essential to find this answer before it becomes urgent, even if hardly anyone wants to think about this moment of death or farewell, especially in early adulthood.^[2] *And you and me we thought we'd always be*. I myself find peace in the thought that someone can only cease to exist when no one remembers them anymore. This makes it all the more important to cherish and pass on the memory of every living being, no matter how insignificant their existence may seem.

However, Mono Inc.'s song is not only about the end of life, but also about memories of days gone by. In our childhood, we are dependent on our parents, who dictate when we should come home and what we should or should not do. The lyrical narrator also remembers feeling exalted: *And we felt like kings*. When you are young, little can affect

you; many feel strong, invincible. They are *rebellious and brave*, two of the attributes mentioned in the song.

In our youth, we all wanted to change the world. In my work over the last few years, however, I have increasingly encountered young people who do not carry this burning fire within them. They let what was happening in the world around them happen without resistance. I, who am now, purely biologically speaking, several years removed from the time depicted in the play, was (and am) appalled by such a passive attitude, which may also be reflected in the following verses: *And you and me we thought together we're safe/A little overdone and even more blue-eyed*. I do not share this view, even though it was during precisely those years that I found the person who gives me the security that is purely hypothetical in the play. However, our world is one that is currently going up in flames outside this microcosm. So we must always be able to think in several worlds at once – even if we ourselves feel safe and perhaps are safe within our own borders, we must never forget that this may not be the case for others.

But boundaries are precisely what young people find uncomfortable, because this is a time of life when you can and want to be curious and free. These are exactly the qualities that we lose over the course of our lives. We bow to conventions that we neither understand nor approve of. We lose ourselves in a labyrinth of unfamiliarity and also lose the desire to discover ourselves and others. We begin to fear the new. And with that, we embark on the path that I fear so much. I, too, want to be able to say at the end: *And you say that if you could turn back time/You wouldn't change a single thing*. And yet it's not just about being able to say at the end that you wouldn't change anything, but about being able to retain your own curiosity – and your freedom.

I may be quite radical in this regard, because I have internalised neither conventions nor other barriers. I follow the systems as long as I am able to change them. Sometimes I am ready, and even if I don't always take the plunge, I am willing to consider it again another time – just as Mono Inc. say in the song, at the end of a lifetime, it should not be the question mark and regret about what one should have changed that are at the forefront, but the thought that everything was right, the way one lived.

The lyrical narrator always addresses a 'you' who is the mirror of this person, their companion, their beloved. For so many people, this mirror remains blind; for some, it shatters. Nevertheless, it may be a comforting thought that all these shards contain and carry on the smallest elements of our being. As in Hans Christian Andersen's story, these mirror fragments can amplify what we once saw in the intact mirror. Alone, we are unable to put all the shards back together again, similar perhaps to the principle of kintsugi. For this, we need those people who walk with us to the end of one or many lives.

*And you ask will you stand by me
Till the end of your way.*

Not everyone finds that person who will stand by them faithfully until the end of time. Friendships break apart, are built on treacherous foundations, and get lost at crossroads. Other friendships seem fragile, yet withstand so much. Then, and only then, can we be a little bit more certain that at the end of our days, when we are tired of life, we would want to walk the same path again.

^[1] If not stated otherwise, all of the following quotes are taken from: Mono Inc.: «We were young», in: *Darkness: 2025*.

^[2] Those who are confronted with the death of close friends or relatives at a young age will have to find these answers sooner. Such a loss will rob them of a piece of their freedom and carefreeness, shaping the years of youth and early adulthood addressed in the play differently. In such cases, death often casts a long shadow over what is to come. I myself lost my father at an early age and was unable to share many of the moments that every person wants to share with their parents.