

The Child, at the *Weltgespräch*

von Vera Bühlmann und Andrea Collinari, Januar 2026

This quiet meditation discovers self-standing as a form of relation: a way of becoming young by learning to accompany the world without rushing to complete it.

The Child

I have learned to listen without interrupting.

I have learned to remain with something without making it mine.

That is called restraint.

And I can see now that it is not easy.

It takes years.

Once, the Mathematician told me that a thought may stand on its own.

Once, the Writer told me that a sentence may stand on its own.

I think a person may stand on their own, too.

Without relying on being older.

Without relying on knowing more.

Without relying on possessing things.

That is what it means to become young.

When you are small, you think youth is where life begins.

But here I have learned that youth is something one gradually reaches.

After trying to possess too much.

After trying to know too much.

After trying to explain too much.

Only then do you slowly begin to let things be.

And you become young.

I watch the two of them and think:

They are still becoming young.

They are learning how to sit without taking,
how to speak without possessing,
how to think without compelling.
I think it will take me many years to learn this well.
Growing up does not mean climbing higher.
It means learning how to stand without leaning.
It means learning how to keep company without pressing.
It means learning how to let something stand without
rushing toward it.
If one day I can do that,
then I will truly be young.

The Child Explains Growing Up

Everyone keeps telling me, very seriously,

"You're still so young."

I nod politely, because they seem to want to believe that.

But I've discovered something important while sitting
between the Mathematician and the Writer in the house
without walls:

Growing up is actually a long and rather complicated
process

of becoming young.

And as far as I can tell,

it takes forever.

When I was very small, I thought being young meant:

running fast,

asking loud questions,

touching everything,

and always carrying at least three sticks and one mysterious
stone.

But the two grown-ups do something entirely different.

They sit.

They wait.

They stare at notebooks and pages as though something
invisible were expected to arrive by prior arrangement.

At first I assumed this was because they were old.

Now I realize it's because they're trying to become young.
They are practising how not to touch things.
The Mathematician once told me,
"A thought must be able to stand on its own."
The Writer told me,
"A sentence must be able to stand on its own."
I think they are secretly talking about themselves.
They are learning how to stand without leaning on what
they know.
That is much harder than running around with sticks.
For example:
When I see something interesting, I want to poke it.
They see something interesting and don't.
Apparently that takes years of practice.
They call it restraint.
I call it remarkably impressive not-poking.
I've also noticed that they never seem to hurry to explain
things.
I tried that once.
It was extremely difficult.
I managed about twelve seconds.
They can sit there for minutes.
Sometimes for hours.
I think that's advanced youth.
Because when you're very small, you imagine being young
means doing lots of things.

But here I've learned that being young means not having to
do quite so much.

It means letting things remain interesting without needing
to own them.

It means seeing something standing there and saying,

"Ah,"

instead of,

"Mine."

I suspect it takes at least fifty years to learn that properly.

So whenever people tell me I'm young,

I smile politely.

They don't yet understand that I've only just begun the long
journey.

I still reach for things.

I still interrupt.

I still collect mysterious stones.

But perhaps one day—

after I've practised sitting quietly long enough,

and stopped poking at things quite so often—

I, too,

may finally become young.

Like them.