



Verena Mermer

AUTOBUS ULTIMA SPERANZA

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One December evening, a bright pink long-distance bus bearing the inscription SPERANZA sets off on its journey from Vienna to Romania. The nocturnal drive brings together people who spend their life in the grey zones of Europe's labour market. Their pay secures their family's subsistence, their absence creates new problems. Florin hires himself out as a harvest hand to enable his mother in Bucharest to retire. Daiana cleans private homes in Vienna, even though she has a degree. Ioan, one of the drivers, recounts his first border crossing. "Autobus Ultima Speranza" finds a language for a life spent continuously on the hop, for the hopes and disappointments, the restlessness and structural violence that accompany it.

VERENA MERMER

born 1984 in Lower Austria, studied German and Romance literatures with Indology. She has lived and worked in Delhi, Baku and Cluj-Napoca. Now she lives as a writer and academic in Vienna. She has published in a variety of literary magazines, was longlisted for the 2013 "European Poetry Festival Prize", shortlisted for the "Wartholz Prize for Literature", and received a "START" literature grant in 2014.