

## EXTRACT: ALAN QUIREYNS

The roof is always interesting: to watch it develop, to see how it comes and goes. It is never resolved though occasionally appears to settle for a while: what looks like the beginning of a dome, a balcony or high windows hinting at a summit reached. But always this is nothing more than a passing layer, the next new level. I fantasize to myself that behind the gates the tower goes down as well as up; caves dug down into the earth that find their way to the centre of a mountain like the one in the Pied Piper. I can remember how much I despised that story and the figure of the piper, how I was never convinced of his sinister promises and hated the way he had left a lame boy behind. I often wondered what happened to the children after the wondrous portal had closed on them, leaving them in darkness, after the music stopped. Silence and darkness. The spell would have been broken then, an awareness of what they had lost, left behind, what they would never see again. How would they survive? Perhaps some would die of the shock, the cold; the rest would live how they could from what they found in caverns of the mountain. Would they be able to make fires? No doubt they would daub the walls of their mountain, ancient cave paintings, with ash from the fires, and everything, all the images would be of the world of light they had known and perhaps these would be the gods that as they grew, would rule them. I fantasise to myself about the charismatic children's leader, I imagine them, a girl or a boy, wielding a huge axe attacking our sanatorium building singlehandedly. I am not sure why. The child makes its way into the refectory. With enormous power no child could possess, the blade of the axe slashes into the concrete floor, that opens like skin. The same hand drags the blade to the other side of the space, thus enlarging the wound until it runs diagonally from wall to wall. Tables scatter. The sound of metal on concrete is unbearable. The axe leaves an outrageous scar. The action and the wielding of the axe harness all the energy contained within the fortress. It is one pure, massive, monumental gesture, opening the ground on which we stand. I imagine that all the children are afraid of the leader and their axe and its power and its cruelty, but without the axe I imagine, I imagine there is nothing.