



8-1-1995

Dreams: A Translation of Günter Eich's Träume

Ursula Meyknecht Hovet

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Hovet, Ursula Meyknecht, "Dreams: A Translation of Günter Eich's Träume" (1995). *Theses and Dissertations*. 3813.

<https://commons.und.edu/theses/3813>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, and Senior Projects at UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact und.common@library.und.edu.

DREAMS

A TRANSLATION OF GÜNTER EICH'S TRÄUME

by

Ursula Meyknecht Hovet
Bachelor of Arts, University of North Dakota, 1987

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

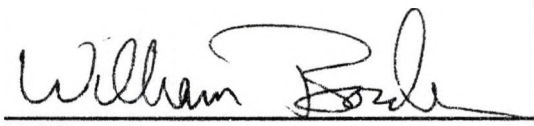
Master of Arts

Grand Forks, North Dakota

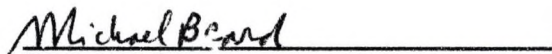
August

1995

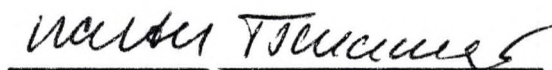
This thesis, submitted by Ursula Meyknecht Hovet in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.



William Borden

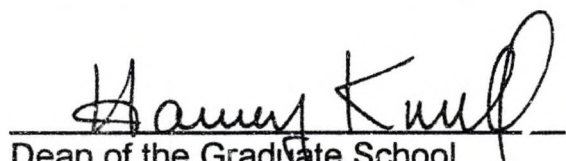


Michael Beard

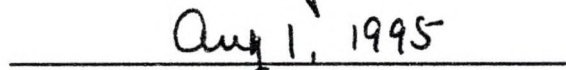


Walter Tschacher

This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.



Dean of the Graduate School



Date

PERMISSION

Title Dreams: A Transiation of Günter Eich's Träume
Department English
Degree Master of Arts

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree from the University of North Dakota, I agree that the library of this University shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my thesis work, or, in his absence, by the chairperson of the department or the dean of the Graduate School. It is understood that any copying or publication or other use of this thesis or part thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of North Dakota in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Signature Merula Howell
Date 25 July 1995

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	viii
INTRODUCTION	
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.....	1
DREAMS: INTRODUCTION TO AN INTERPRETATION	8
DREAMS: THE TRANSLATION	15
The First Dream.....	16
The Second Dream.....	32
The Third Dream.....	45
The Fourth Dream	60
The Fifth Dream.....	75
DREAMS: INTERPRETATION OF INDIVIDUAL DREAMS	92
The First Dream.....	92
The Second Dream.....	94
The Third Dream.....	96
The Fourth Dream	97
The Fifth Dream.....	99
Summary.....	101

NOTES	103
REFERENCES	108

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members of my committee: Professor William Borden, my thesis advisor, for his encouragement with this project and for his many years of support while I was his student in creative writing classes; Professor Michael Beard for his enthusiasm with my choice of text for this translation and his many editorial comments; Professor Walter Tschacher who first introduced me to Günter Eich and Dreams; and to Professor Ron Engle for agreeing to produce the radio play in translation.

I also want to thank Professor Robert Lewis for his support of many years; Professor Sherry O'Donnell for always encouraging me with my academic plans; Professor Richard Hampsten for teaching me how to translate and do it well; Professor John Crawford for introducing me to the study of language and Professor David Marshall for continuing it; and to Professor Norton Kinghorn for telling me that I "could do it."

Thanks also to my sister Veronika for her careful reading and suggestions; and to Mary Morley for her assistance with secondary literature.

A special thanks goes to my family: to my daughter Kristin for encouraging me when I wanted to give up; to her husband Kurt who helped

me with computer problems; and to my husband Terry and children for doing without many things during my years of study.

ABSTRACT

This is the translation of Günter Eich's Träume (Dreams), five radio plays, a series of fictive dreams. The individual dreams are framed and linked by narrative poems. I tried to keep Eich's style, including any proper names of the characters.

The Introduction provides a brief biography of Günter Eich and an overview of the dreams. A short interpretation of Eich's theme(s) in the individual dreams follows the translation.

To Werner and Veronika
who are already awake

INTRODUCTION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Günter Eich was born in 1907 in Lebus on the Oder River, now in Poland. Because his father was employed by various agricultural businesses, the family moved to "various deserts, villages and cities of Brandenburg State."¹

As a preschooler, Eich wanted to become a coachman, but as soon as he learned to read, Meyer's Konversationslexikon (Meyer's Conversational Encyclopedia) became the "most important book collection" in his father's possession (M, 2). In 1918, when the family moved to Berlin, Eich first experienced the theater and began to write dramas.

After Eich's mother's death, his father remarried, and the family moved to Leipzig. Here Eich "managed to get the Abitur² . . . in spite of my total ignorance of the principle of the steam engine" (M, 2).

After graduating from the Nikolai Gymnasium in Leipzig, Eich began his studies in Berlin. Acceding to his father's wish, he majored in Law and Political Science. In 1927, under the pseudonym of Erich Günter, he published his first poems in an anthology edited by Willi Fehse and Klaus Mann (Thomas Mann's son), Anthologie jüngster Lyrik (Anthology of Newest Lyric). In a discussion of the poems on radio in Berlin (19 April 1928),

Hermann Kasack describes Eich as the most talented among the young writers:

As far as the mood goes, his poems are influenced by Georg Trakl, as far as the vocabulary goes, they are influenced by Bert Brecht . . . but he holds his own ground with . . . his own musical power, . . . his own desperate helplessness of the world, a longing . . . the longing for a greater nature, the conquest of the imprisonment of Time and Self. . . .

(M, 5)

In a restaurant in Berlin, Eich met a young Chinese man who helped him use chopsticks, then talked about his country, its culture, and language. So, "actually by accident," Eich began the study of Sinology, because he "wanted to do something that couldn't be of much use to anybody" (M, 8), first in Berlin, in Leipzig in 1929, where he added Economics as a major, and later in Paris. Here he continued writing poetry and drama and began writing translations from Chinese.

In 1928 Eich, for the first time, used his own name for his writing. He became a regular contributor to Die Kolonne,³ a journal of poetry, which, in 1930, also published Eich's first book of poetry, Gedichte (Poems). Two of his poems were published in the renowned magazine Die neue Rundschau (S. Fischer, Publishers). For his writing as a critic, Eich used the pseudonym Georg Winter.⁴

Eich's first radio play, Das Leben und Sterben des Sängers Caruso (The Life and Death of Caruso), a documentary co-authored with Martin Raschke in 1929, was broadcast on 9 April 1931.

In 1932 Eich joined Die Kolonne as an editor and gave up his studies "because of a lack of talent" and began to "earn his daily bread" as a freelance writer (M, 19). In its third issue (1932), his radio play Ein Traum am Edsin-gol (A Dream at Edsin-gol) appeared.

Eich returned to Berlin in 1933 and wrote plays for radio stations there. Der Präsident (The President), a play of which Die Kolonne had published the final scene, was never performed, but his play Die Glücksritter. Lustspiel nach Eichendorff (The Soldiers of Fortune. A Comedy after Eichendorff), written in 1933, could be seen in the Schiller Theater in Berlin that same year. "Katharina," a story, appeared in Das Innere Reich (The Inner Kingdom) in 1935 and was published as a book in Leipzig in 1936. Poems and short stories, written in collaboration with Raschke, were broadcast and published in 1936.

In 1939 Eich married Else Burk, an actress living in Berlin. In August he was drafted into the Luftwaffe as a driver and communications specialist "for a six-week exercise that ended in the Summer of 1945" (M, 25). From 1941 to 1942 he worked in the military libraries in Berlin, then was transferred to Dresden where, for the last time, he met Raschke, who was killed in Russia in 1943.

In April 1945 Eich was captured and stayed in an American POW camp in Remagen. Eich said of the Americans "[They] are adorable people. Clever . . . and so good-hearted, apparently the fruits of a century-old democracy" (M, 29). In the camp he wrote both poems and prose. Werner Weber said about one of Eich's poems, "Camp 16":

Heinrich Böll said that people still haven't understood what it meant to write even half a page of German prose in 1945. What did it mean? It is said in the poem "Camp 16." It meant: the "no" poem.⁵ (M, 28)

After his discharge in the summer of 1945, Eich returned to Geisenhausen in Lower Bavaria, where he had been as a soldier and had felt at home. Some of his war-time poems were published in 1946 in the new journal, Der Ruf, both of whose editors had been in American POW camps. Other poems appeared the same year in the anthology Deine Söhne, Europa. Gedichte deutscher Kriegsgefangener (Your Sons, Europe. Poems of German Prisoners-of-War).

He continued writing poetry, a collection of which did not appear until 1948 under the title Abgelegene Gehöfte (Remote Farmsteads). The title Homecoming, suggested by the publisher, seemed to Eich too much of "the usual pretty title for a volume of poetry. . ." (M, 32). Several of his poems were published in Untergrundbahn (Subway) in 1949, dedicated to "my friend Martin Raschke" (M, 42). He also translated Chinese poetry for an anthology. Eich says about the difference between the German and Chinese language:

Our language tends to dissect . . . [it] aims at the scientific, the Chinese language at the wise man. (M, 13)

The year 1949 was a difficult one for Eich. He had financial problems and his marriage to Else Burk had gone bad. ". . . in order to be rid of all debts and sorrows" he had to write another film script--he had written his first one in 1948--or radio play (M, 42). Eich divorced his wife in September 1949.

Many of Eich's manuscripts and tapes of radio plays of the pre-war era have been lost--only two complete manuscripts were saved--and his own papers were burned. In a letter to Kasack Eich wrote:

I . . . regret that some of my radio plays remain lost. I must admit that I need them desperately for financial reasons. Some of them have never been broadcast . . . because the [German] Armed Forces protested against the content. (M, 46)

In response to an inquiry from a German government office in Regensburg, Bavaria, about Eich's political involvement during the war--he had applied for a license and "clearing" for a script--his friend Hermann Kasack wrote:

[Eich] is a man who, because of his lyric ideology . . . is naive about and disinterested in all political questions. . . . [He] instinctively rejected Hitlerism. I know of no line in any of his poems nor dramas nor radio plays that were political. . . . Conversations between us were of a radical anti-fascistic nature. . . . (M, 31)

In the end no license was required.

Only in 1948 Eich had written:

I had given up my attempts at radio plays--strange that I was able to write them once in the most elegant fashion. Of course, I wasn't writing poetry at the time. They consume you in quite a different way. (M, 46)

He now resumed the writing of radio plays. After the premiere broadcast of Geh nicht nach El Kuwehd! (Don't go to El Kuwehd!) in 1950, written in 1932, he received several contracts from radio stations.

1951 was the year of radio plays. Besides Träume (Dreams), Sabeth (Sabeth), Fis mit Obertönen (F-Sharp with Overtones), and Unterm Birnbaum (Under the Pear Tree) had their premiers; a year later Die Andere und ich (The Other and I), Der Tiger Jessuf (The Tiger Jessuf), and Blick auf Venedig (View of Venice) were broadcast. His radio plays continued with the theme of dreams, dreams of visions in which unreal and real were mixed, or the unreal became real (M, 47).

Eich was one of the early members of Gruppe 47⁶, the "most lyrical and the most quiet one. . ." (M, 42). At one of the group's conferences, he met the Austrian writer Ilse Aichinger. They married in Munich in 1953. That year Träume was published, and the radio play Die Mädchen aus Viterbo (The Girls from Viterbo) premiered.

After a move to Chiemsee in 1954, their son Clemens was born. Eich wrote the radio plays Das Jahr Lazertis (The Year of Lazertis) and Allah hat hundert Namen (Allah Has a Hundred Names) for which he received a literary prize. A collection of poetry from 1949 - 1954, Botschaften des Regens (Rain's Messages), appeared in 1955.

Eich began going on reading tours through western and northern Germany during 1956 to 1957. He wrote the radio play Die Brandung vor Setubal (The Surf by Setubal) in 1957, the year his daughter Miriam was born. He toured for the Goethe Institutes in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt in 1961. From September to December 1962 he read in India, Thailand, Hongkong, and Japan, where he stayed for several weeks before returning through Canada and the U. S.

In 1963 the family moved to Großmain near Salzburg. In the following year Zu den Akten. Gedichte, Marionettenspiele (To the Files.: Poems, Plays for Puppets) and In anderen Sprachen. Vier Hörspiele (In Other Languages: Four Radio Plays) were published, and Eich wrote a new radio play, Man bittet zu läuten (You Are Asked to Ring). Reading tours took him to northern Germany, Paris, and England. In 1965 he received the Förderpreis für Literatur (Prize for Literature) from the City of Munich.

A collection of poems, Anlässe und Steingärten (Occasions and Rockeries) and Fünfzehn Hörspiele (Fifteen Radio Plays) were published in 1966, the year he and Ilse Aichinger traveled to West Africa. "Maulwürfe" (Moles)⁷ was first published in Merkur and Akzente. He read at a Gruppe 47 conference the following year, during which he went on a reading tour to Iran. In 1968 Kulka, Hilpert, Elefanten (Kulka, Hilpert, Elephants) and Maulwürfe (Moles) were published. That year he received the Schiller Prize from the State of Baden-Württemberg. The first symptoms of his heart problem appeared. A year later, after the publication of Ein Tibeter in meinem Büro. 49 Maulwürfe (A Tibetan in My Office. 49 Moles) he had his first heart attack.

From 1971 to 1972 Eich suffered new heart attacks. A selection of his poetry, Ein Lesebuch (A Reader), Die gesammelten Maulwürfe (The Collected Moles), and his last poems Nach Seumes Papieren (After Seume's Papers) were published in 1972. His last radio play, Zeit und Kartoffeln (Time and Potatoes), was broadcast that same year. On 20 December Eich died in Salzburg.

Walter Mannzen, one of the Gruppe 47 members, had predicted in a letter to Eich (1953):

Once the radio has been completely pushed aside by television, we will remember your radio plays as we now remember the Potemkin movie. . . . (M, 52)

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DREAMS

Although Eich's Dreams was not chosen in a competition sponsored by a radio station in Munich, it was broadcast in Hamburg in 1951. Gerhard Prager, dramatic advisor at a radio station in Stuttgart, had called the broadcast of Eich's play "the birth of the German radio play," because, as Hermann Naber states, a radio play "must challenge and provoke the public" (M, 48).

The Fifties were a time of restoration in Germany: people wanted to rebuild and begin anew after years of destruction and hunger and tried to forget the horrors of a recent past. Books were published at a slow pace and were expensive. During World War II the German population had become accustomed to listening to the radio--speeches by Hitler, Nazi Propaganda, warnings of air attacks--so it was only natural that Eich would choose the radio as his messenger of warnings, to quickly "wake up each sleeper" who enjoyed the newly found comforts. He was dismayed by his contemporaries who wanted to deny, repress, or forget the past (Goß, 25). Eich wanted to show that the proclaimed "intact" world was in fact a world of inhumanity (Goß, 33).

This inhumanity is significant in the audio version of Günter Eich's Träume (1951, Produktion NWDR). The radio play is introduced by the

following, read, without any emotion, in a voice reminiscent of a clerk or a tour guide who has repeated the same information once too often:

On 1 June 1949, a child with two heads and three arms was born in Dortmund. On this occasion it was stated that birth defects in people and animals had increased since the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the atomic test on Bikini. The official clerk in the Office of Records merely had to solve the quite difficult problem of whether to record one or two births.

The atomic test on Bikini took place on 1 July 1946. The atomic bomb was caused to explode under water. In the beginning of the test it was not known how far-reaching the chain reaction would be. It will be the task of future scientists to determine, through experiments, under what circumstances any life on earth might be impossible, making science superfluous.

The atomic bomb compares to a hydrogen bomb like a sling shot to a modern weapon. So reject the atomic bomb!

In the manual for staff officers, 1980 edition, you will read the following: The dropping of bacteria over enemy territory is an outdated form of warfare. It is not without effect, but cannot be regarded a deciding factor in warfare.

The printed edition of the radio play (hard cover 1966; paper back edition 1973) does not include these lines but replaces them with the first of narrative poems Eich uses to link the dreams. This printed version was not, however, any less provocative. These are the warnings and messages Eich sent to the German audience in 1951:

Everything that happens is your business. (Dream 1, beginning)

*Remember that man is man's enemy
and that he thinks of destruction.*

....

*Remember that you are guilty of all things horrible
that are happening far away from you-- (Dream 1, end)*

When the Hour X comes. . . . (Dream 2)

*I know you don't want me to wander through your thoughts, . . .
Each century gives us new things to hide, . . . (Dream 3)*

*How many such inaudible sounds live around us? One day they will
become audible and fill our ears with horror. . . . (Dream 4)*

*Wake up, for your dreams are bad!
Stay awake, because the horror is coming closer.*

....

If it doesn't come today, it will come tomorrow, . . .

....

*No, don't sleep, while the technocrats of the world are busy!
Be suspicious of the power they pretend to use for you!
Be aware so that your hearts won't be empty, when they count*

on the emptiness of your hearts!

Do the unuseful things, . . .

Be bothersome. Be the sand, not the oil in the gears of the world.

(Dream 5)

The same messages can be found, less directly, in the dreams.

The public reacted with thousands of passionate letters and phone calls in protest of Dreams.⁸ This reaction did not discourage Eich, who thought that a writer had to have the courage to write against the reader/listener (IV, 395), that by denying the past, mankind was steering blindly toward the next catastrophe (I, 196), listing as examples the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then, only years later, the beginning research on a thermo-nuclear bomb (1946) and the use of biological warfare.

Not all the listeners reacted negatively. Critic Joachim Kaiser, for example, wrote in Frankfurter Hefte:

Günter Eich calls his radio play "Dreams," but this is actually an understatement. For there are realities; granted, realities of tomorrow, but those already sleeping . . . that could be awakened at any time. . . . Utopias of horror. . . . There are no greater symbols for the horror, inhumanity, servitude and the total bankruptcy of the homo sapiens anywhere in Germany. . . . (M, 49)

Eich is in fact writing about the homo sapiens anywhere in the world. Why else would he choose the dreams to take place in China, Australia, a jungle in Africa, and the United States, and the dreamers to be in those countries and in Russia? His warning is to the entire world, his message is to all:

Everything that happens is your business.

....

You are guilty of all things horrible that are happening far away from you.

Thirty years later, on World Peace Day in 1981, Dreams was broadcast in the German Democratic Republic. In the newspaper Sonntag of East Berlin, Waltraud Jähnichen wrote:

Suggestive sentences. Appellative as signals. To hear them and to remain silent would be like a transgression, not dealt with in a court but with one's own conscience. . . . Hard hitting like whips they approach you from the radio. . . . they hit those who are sitting in front of the radio right in the face. . . . more than visionary. (M, 49-50)

I am especially fascinated by the fact that Eich uses dreams, which are ordinarily visual, in a genre written for the ear. The radio addresses the general public, where, paradoxically, dreams are subjective, since they are dreamed by the individual. Yet dreams and Eich's radio play have some things in common--they want to send messages, predictions, warnings. In addition, analyzing dreams requires the same effort that Eich expects the audience to make, namely to uncover the hidden, threatening messages. Without the "healing effect" of understanding them, there is no chance for change and rescue.

Eich, when asked to interpret his play, responded:

I have something against writing that must be explained. . . . I can't say any more about the radio play [Dreams] than what is written. . . .
(IV, 401)

Years later, in his acceptance speech of the Schiller Prize in Stuttgart (1968), Eich said:

It has always been my subconscious task to translate the necessary silence into a dialogue, into words, in such a way that it would not lose the character of silence. This paradox exists in the radio play. . . .

Sometimes it seems that the Hour of the Radio Play is coming to an end. That would make the world poorer. The radio play must not die.

(M, 52)

One way to interpret his messages is to use the method of depth psychology in analyzing dreams, i.e., explaining symbols, ambiguous words, by association, and by decoding the alienation in the dream pictures. In the interpretation of the individual dreams I suggest some of these elements.

The themes in Dreams are misuse of power, destruction, loss of home and dignity, existential threats, loss of identity, repressed memories. The scenes take place in a train car, house, tent, and apartment, and although they are independent from one another, they are related by the same motifs and messages.

The structure of Dreams is a series of narrative poems, "facts" about the dreamer, and five dialogues, the dreams themselves. Eich begins each scene with "real" information, reminiscent of the byline "Based on a True Event" at the beginning of a TV movie:

In the night from August 1 to 2, 1948, locksmith Wilhelm Schulz from Rügenwalde in Lower Pommerania, now Gütersloh in Westphalia. . . . (Dream 1)

On 5 November 1949 the fifty-year-old daughter of rice merchant Li Wen-Tschu in Tientsin. . . . (Dream 2)

In Freetown, Queensland, Australia, auto mechanic Lewis Stone dreamed on 27 April 1950. . . . (Dream 3)

On 29 December 1947 the cartographer Iwan Iwanowitsch Boleslawski was lying ill in his apartment in Moscow. . . . (Dream 4)

. . . Mrs. Lucy Harrison, Richmond Avenue, New York, heard them on 31 August 1950. . . . (Dream 5)

The "factual" information is followed by ironic commentary in some of the dreams, including an interpretation of why the nightmare occurred:

. . . dream, one that should not be taken seriously, because the locksmith . . . suffered from chronic stomach problems. . . . Bad dreams come from the stomach that is either too full or too empty. (Dream 1)

. . . dream which undoubtedly could cast a bad light on this old girl. . . . Presumably the pleasant dreams in this world are dreamed by villains. (Dream 2)

I would like to assure you that Stone at this time enjoys the best of health. . . . (Dream 3)

. . . dreamed a lot, mostly of countries he had never seen. Of course, it's possible that he will still see them sometime during the rest of his life. (Dream 4)

. . . had fallen asleep in the afternoon while mending the torn seam of a skirt. (Dream 5)

These brief introductions are not just written to keep the attention of the audience; they, too, hide clues. Klaus-Dieter Post writes that they are antagonists to the action in the dreams (142).

DREAMS

Voices

The First Dream: *Great-Grandfather . Great-Grandmother . Grandson . Woman . Child.* The Second Dream: *Man . Woman . Gentleman . Lady . Child.* The Third Dream: *Father . Mother . Neighbor Woman . Bob . Elsie . Mayor . Voice .* The Fourth Dream: *Anton . Wassilij . Cook .* The Fifth Dream: *Mother . Daughter . Bill . Announcer . Professor*

*I envy all those who can forget,
who can go to sleep calmly and have no dreams.
I envy myself the moments of blind contentment,
once I have reached a vacation spot, spa at the North Sea, Notre Dame,
red Burgundy in a glass and the day you receive a paycheck.
But strictly speaking I mean that even a good conscience won't be enough,
and I doubt the quality of sleep in which we all lull ourselves.
There no longer is pure happiness (--was there ever?--),
and I would like to be able to wake up each sleeper
and tell him, all is well.*

*Did you ever get startled from the arms of lovemaking
because you heard a scream, the kind of scream
earth screams out incessantly, a scream
you may take for the sound of rain or the rustling of the wind?*

*See, this is what you find: prison and torture,
blindness and immobility, death in many forms,
the bodiless pain and the angst which means life.
The earth gathers the sighs of many mouths,
and in the eyes of the people you love lives horror.*

Everything that happens is your business.

The First Dream

In the night from August 1 to 2, 1948, locksmith Wilhelm Schulz from Rügenwalde in Lower Pommerania, now Gütersloh in Westphalia, had a not particularly pleasant dream, one that should not be taken seriously, because the locksmith, now deceased, suffered from chronic stomach problems, as can be proved. Bad dreams come from the stomach that is either too full or too empty.

A slow moving train. Voices in the car.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

It was four o'clock at night when they dragged us out of our beds. The grandfather clock struck four.

GRANDSON

You're always telling the same story. That's boring, Grandfather.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

But who was it who came to get us?

GRANDSON

Four men with inscrutable faces, right? That's how you warm up your past for us every day. Be quiet and go to sleep!

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

But who were these men? Did they belong to the police? They were wearing uniforms I didn't recognize. Actually, they weren't uniforms, but they were all wearing the same suits.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

I'm sure it was the Fire Department.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

You always say that. But why would the Fire Department get us out of our beds at night and lock us up in the car of a freight train?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

It's no stranger than if it had been the police.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

You get used to it in time. The life we had been living up to that day had actually been even stranger.

WOMAN

God knows it had to have been quite strange.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

In the end, living in a freight train is the more common thing?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Quiet, you mustn't say that.

WOMAN

Yes, be quiet, you two! This stupid talk! (*More quietly*) Come closer, Gustav, and keep me warm.

GRANDSON

Yes.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

It's cold. You move closer too, old woman!

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

I'm no longer much good in keeping you warm.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

How long has it been since we had to leave our home? How long has it been since we started riding in this car?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

No watch, no calendar,--but the children have grown up in the meantime, and the grandchildren have grown, and when it gets a little lighter--

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

You mean, when it becomes daylight outside.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

--when it gets a little lighter and I can see your face, I'll read in your wrinkles that you have become an old man and I an old woman.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

I bet it's been forty years.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Yes, something like that. Put your head on my arm. You're lying so hard.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Yes, thanks.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Can you remember: There used to be something we called sky and trees.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Behind our house the road would incline a little toward the forest. In April dandelions would bloom in the pastures.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Dandelions--what strange words you're using!

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Dandelions, try to remember, a yellow flower, the pastures were yellow all over from them, there was a milky, white juice in the walls of the stems. And after they stopped blooming, there were woolly, white balls on the stems, and the feathery seeds would fly away when you blew into them.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

I had forgotten all about that, but now I remember.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

And do you remember the goat we had in the stable?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

I still remember her. I milked her every morning.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

There was a wardrobe in the bedroom, and I had a dark blue dress suit in there. Why am I thinking of that? As if the dark blue suit had been the most important, the best thing!

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

What was the best?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Everything was good, the acacia in front of the house and the raspberries by the fence.

VERY OLD WOMAN

The best thing was that we were happy.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

But we didn't know it.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

What was the name of the flower you mentioned a while ago, the yellow one?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Dandelion.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Dandelion, yes, I remember.

A child begins to cry.

What's wrong with the little girl?

WOMAN

What's wrong, Frieda?

CHILD

They're always talking about yellow flowers.

GRANDSON

They're always talking about things that don't exist.

CHILD

I want to have a yellow flower.

GRANDSON

That's what you get from your talking like that, Grandfather. The child wants to have a yellow flower. None of us know what that is.

WOMAN

There are no yellow flowers, my child.

CHILD

But they always talk about it.

WOMAN

Those are fairytales, my child.

CHILD

Fairytales?

WOMAN

Fairytales aren't true.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

You shouldn't say that to the child. It is true.

GRANDSON

Then show it to me, that yellow flower!

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

I can't show it to you, you know that.

GRANDSON

So it's a lie.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Does it have to be a lie, because I can't show it?

GRANDSON

Not only the children, you are driving all of us crazy with your stories. We don't want to know these fairytales, don't want to know what you're dreaming up day and night.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

It isn't dreamed up. It's the life I used to live. Isn't that so, old woman?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Yes, it's true.

GRANDSON

No matter whether it's true or not, do you think it makes us happier when you tell us that it used to be more beautiful and that it's more beautiful somewhere other than here? That there's supposed to be something you call a yellow flower, and some creatures you call animals, and that you used to sleep on something you call a bed, and that you used to drink something you call wine? Nothing but words, words--what are we supposed to do with that?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

You must know about it, you can't wake up without any idea about the real world.

GRANDSON

There is no other world except this one here.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Except this cage we live in? Except this eternally rolling train?

GRANDSON

A slight change between light and dark, nothing else.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

And this weak light, where does it come from?

GRANDSON

Through the trap they use to shove bread through.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

The moldy bread.

GRANDSON

Bread is always moldy.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Because you don't know any other kind.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Now listen, my grandson: But who is it who shoves the bread in here?

GRANDSON

I don't know.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

So there is something besides this room where we are.

GRANDSON

Sure: but I bet it's no better than in here.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

It is better.

GRANDSON

We don't know anything about it and don't want to hear any fantasies about it. This here is our world, the one we live in. It consists of four walls and darkness and it rolls on to somewhere. I'm sure there is nothing else outside but the same dark rooms that move through the darkness.

WOMAN

He's right.

VOICES

Yes, he's right.

WOMAN

We don't believe in the world you two are always talking about. You just dreamed it up.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Did we just dream, old woman?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

I don't know.

WOMAN

Just look around: no trace of your world.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

What if they were right? My God, it's been so long. Maybe I did dream everything, the blue suit, the goat, the dandelions--

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

--and I only know about it from you--

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

But how did we get into this car? Wasn't it four o'clock at night when they got us from our beds? Yes, the grandfather clock struck four.

GRANDSON

Now you're starting the whole story again, grandfather.

The child begins to cry again.

WOMAN

What is it, my child?

CHILD

There, look, on the floor!

GRANDSON

A glowing, shining wand. But--you can't touch it. It's made of nothing.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

A beam of light. Somewhere a hole formed in the wall, and a sunbeam is coming in.

WOMAN

A sunbeam, what is that?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Do you believe me now that there is something else out there besides what's in here?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

If there's a hole in the wall, you should be able to look out.

GRANDSON

Fine, I'll look out.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

What do you see?

GRANDSON

I see things I don't understand.

WOMAN

Describe them.

GRANDSON

I don't know what words go with them.

WOMAN

Why don't you look out even further?

GRANDSON

No, I'm afraid.

WOMAN

Isn't it good what you're seeing?

GRANDSON

It's terrible.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Because it's new.

GRANDSON

Let's close the hole.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

What? Don't you want to see the world the way it really is?

GRANDSON

No, I'm afraid.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Let me look out.

GRANDSON

Look out and see if it's the world you're always talking about. (*Pause*)

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

What do you see?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

That's the world outside. It is going by.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Do you see the sky, do you see trees?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

I see the dandelions, the pastures are yellow from them. There are mountains and forests--my God!

GRANDSON

Can you stand seeing that?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

But--*hesitantly*--but something is different.

WOMAN

Why aren't you looking outside any longer?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

The people are different.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

What about the people?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Maybe I'm mistaken. You look outside!

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Yes.

(Pause)

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

What do you see?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

(frightened)

They're no longer people as we knew them.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

You see it, too?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

No, I don't want to look outside any more. *(Whispering)* They are giants, they are as tall as the trees. I'm afraid.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Let's close the hole.

GRANDSON

Yes, let's close it. There.

WOMAN

Thank God that it's the way it was before again.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

It isn't the way it was before.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

The thought of the yellow flowers makes me feel chilly.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

So what can we think about now?

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

The memories scare me.

GRANDSON

Be quiet, you two! Don't you notice anything?

Pause

WOMAN

What?

The child begins to cry again.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

What's the matter, Frieda?

GRANDSON

Don't you notice it? Something has changed.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Yes, the world outside.

GRANDSON

No, here where we are.

Pause while the rolling of the wheels can be clearly heard.

WOMAN

Why were you crying, my child?

CHILD

I don't know.

GRANDSON

Something has changed. The child noticed it.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

I know what it is. Don't you feel it?

WOMAN

whispering

We're going faster.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Yes, we're going faster.

Pause

The rolling of the wheels is somewhat faster.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

What can that mean?

WOMAN

I don't know what, but nothing good for sure.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

You must find out if the speed is going to stay the same.

GRANDSON

Or what?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Or if it's going to increase further.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Listen!

Pause

The rolling of the wheels continues to grow faster.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

whispering

It's getting faster and faster.

WOMAN

Yes, it's getting faster and faster.

The rolling of the wheels is going faster and louder.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

I believe there'll be an accident. Isn't there anyone to help us?

GRANDSON

Who?

The sound of the train swells to the highest noise, then becomes more distant at high speed and dies farther and farther away.

Remember that man is man's enemy

and that he thinks of destruction.

Remember it always, remember it now,

during a moment in April,

below this overcast sky,

while you believe to hear growth as a fine rustle,

the maids are digging out thistles

below the lark's song,

remember it also at this moment!

While you are tasting the wine in the cellars of Randersacker

or picking oranges in the gardens of Alicante,

while you fall asleep in the Miramar hotel by the beach of Taormina,

or lighting a candle on All Saint's Day in the cemetery of Feuchtwangen,

while you as a fisherman pull up the net across the Dogger banks,

or taking a screw from the assembly line in Detroit,

while placing plants into the rice terraces of Szetschuan,

riding across the Andes on the mule,--

remember it!

*Remember it when a hand tenderly touches you,
remember it in your wife's embrace,
remember it during your child's laughter!*

*Remember that after the vast destructions
every man will prove that he was innocent.*

Remember:

*Nowhere on the map lie Korea and Bikini,
but in your heart.*

*Remember that you are guilty of all things horrible,
that are happening far away from you--*

The Second Dream

On 5 November 1949 the fifty-year-old daughter of rice merchant Li Wen-Tschu in Tientsin had a dream which undoubtedly could cast a bad light on this old girl. But her parents and siblings assure us that she is a good-natured and harmless person. Presumably the pleasant dreams in this world are dreamed by villains.

In the street

WOMAN

Number 57b. Here is the house.

MAN

You should have combed Tschang-du's hair. He doesn't look very appetizing. Wipe his nose!

Sound of nose blowing.

CHILD

Do we have to go into this house, mother?

WOMAN

Yes, Tschang-du.

CHILD

What do we want there?

WOMAN

Oh, nothing special.

MAN

Are you done with the boy now?

WOMAN

Yes.

MAN

Then I'll ring the doorbell.

Ringing

CHILD

That's a loud bell.

MAN

Didn't you take a comb along? His hair is messed up.

WOMAN

Well, that doesn't matter now.

MAN

It certainly does matter.

CHILD

I can stay outside, Father.

MAN

Definitely not.

WOMAN

Nobody is opening the door.

CHILD

No, please don't ring the bell again!

MAN

Why not?

CHILD

The bell is so loud. I'm afraid.

MAN

That's nonsense.

WOMAN

I hear someone.

The door opens.

MAN

We are here because of the ad in the paper.

LADY

Because of the ad, I see. Is that the child?

WOMAN

The wind ruffled his hair.

LADY

Hm.

MAN

I hope you are still in need. Or are we too late?

LADY

He looks pale. Is he anemic?

CHILD

Let's leave this place, Mother!

WOMAN

He is just pale because he's afraid.

LADY

Afraid? Why? Does he know something?

WOMAN

No.

LADY

Well, come in then.

All enter. The door is closed.

LADY

That is my husband. He's ill. Hello, Pi-gu!

GENTLEMAN

weak Yes?

LADY

There are people here with a child.

GENTLEMAN

Yes.

LADY

I'm guessing he's six years old.

WOMAN

Exactly.

LADY

Look at him, Pi-gu!

GENTLEMAN

Let him come closer.

MAN

His name is Tschang-du.

LADY

It doesn't really matter what his name is.

CHILD

Breaks out in tears.

WOMAN

What's the matter, Tschang-du?

CHILD

The gentleman has such cold fingers.

WOMAN

Don't act up. That's the disease.

CHILD

I want to leave here.

MAN

Be quiet now!

CHILD

Sobs more quietly.

GENTLEMAN

He's pale.

LADY

That's what I say.

MAN

He's not anemic.

GENTLEMAN

If he's anemic, I can't use him.

MAN

I guarantee you he's not anemic.

LADY

The blood is what counts.

WOMAN

Of course, we know that. It said so in the ad.

LADY

That's the new therapy, you understand.

WOMAN

A great discovery of medicine, a blessing for humankind.

LADY

But I don't know if little Tschang-du is suitable.

MAN

My wife has a child every year, sometimes twins. They were all used for the new therapy.

WOMAN

Six is the best age.

MAN

We only deliver healthy children of first-class breeding. Here--I have references.

LADY

Let me take a look!--I see.

WOMAN

Show the gentleman your neck, Tschang-du!

CHILD

Sobbing Yes.

GENTLEMAN

Here is the artery, An-ling.

LADY

Yes. But this time the maid can do it.

GENTLEMAN

Does she know how?

LADY

Of course.

GENTLEMAN

I don't think highly of maids. But if you think so.

LADY

The references, by the way, are exemplary.

GENTLEMAN

Fine, as far as I am concerned.

LADY

We would have to discuss the price.

MAN

Three thousand.

LADY

Excuse me, but you're crazy.

MAN

You can get that for four- and five-year-olds. We had expenses for him for a year longer.

LADY

Two five. We cannot pay usurious prices.

MAN

Not under three thousand. I have set prices. Besides, you must take the ideal values into account.

LADY

Don't be ridiculous.

WOMAN

Come on, Tschang-du, we are leaving.

CHILD

Yes, mother.

GENTLEMAN

Stop!

LADY

What is it, Pi-gu?

GENTLEMAN

Write the check.

LADY

If you insist.

CHILD

Come, let's get away from here, mother!

WOMAN

Wait!

LADY

Here's the check.

MAN

Thanks. You'll be satisfied.

CHILD

Are we leaving now?

WOMAN

Father and I are leaving now. You'll stay for a while.

CHILD

I don't want to stay here.

WOMAN

Don't act up. It's much nicer here than at our house.

LADY

Do you want to take the clothes with you right now?

MAN

We'll pick them up tomorrow. We'd ask you for a reference then, too.

LADY

Alright then. Good bye.

WOMAN

Good bye.

MAN

And many thanks.

WOMAN

We'll be right back, Tschang-du, we just want to do some shopping.

CHILD

Sobbing Yes, mother.

MAN

Come on then!

Man and woman leave.

LADY

I'll let the maid know so she can get everything ready.

GENTLEMAN

Yes, do that, An-ling, I'm dreadfully hungry.

LADY

Leaving Li-bai!

GENTLEMAN

Why are you looking at me like that, Tschang-du?

CHILD

You are so pale in the face.

GENTLEMAN

Well, I hope that will change soon. Say, we have a train in the kitchen that you can play with, an electric one.

CHILD

You do?

GENTLEMAN

Do you like to play with trains?

CHILD

Yes, I love it.

GENTLEMAN

Then you go to Li-bai in the kitchen in a little while and play there.

CHILD

Oh, yes.

The lady's steps are approaching.

LADY

Everything is ready.

GENTLEMAN

Thank God. I'm already very weak. Little Tschang-du wants to play with the train.

LADY

With the train?

GENTLEMAN

Yes, in the kitchen.

Both break out into laughter.

Child also begins to laugh.

LADY

Now go in there. There is the kitchen.

CHILD

Yes, Auntie.

He leaves.

CHILD

from a distance There is no train.

LADY

Go in there now. Li-bai, close the door.

The door is closed.

GENTLEMAN

Do you think Li-bai will do it correctly?

LADY

She's done it in her previous position.

GENTLEMAN

I would have preferred your doing it yourself.

LADY

Why would we need a maid if I'm to do the dirty work myself?

GENTLEMAN

My health depends on it, after all.

LADY

I'm sorry, darling, but I've become so touchy lately. I fainted the other day when I had to butcher the dove.

GENTLEMAN

At least you should be present to make sure that everything's done right.

LADY

After you've drunk the blood, Li-bai will fry the heart and the liver for you.

GENTLEMAN

It sure takes a damned long time.

Tschang-du's screams in the kitchen, which stop during the following

GENTLEMAN

angry There! Do you hear that! She didn't anesthetize him correctly.

And I have to listen to that.

LADY

Now calm down. He's quiet already.

The door is opened. Steps are approaching.

See, there's the bowl with the blood, still steaming. It will be good for you.

When the Hour X comes, I shall still think that the earth was beautiful.

*I'll think of the friends, of the goodness which makes an ugly face beautiful,
of love that bewitch the eyes.*

I'll think of the dog, my play mate, when I was a child,

of the blue lupines at the coast of Samland during a visit on a vacation,

*I'll see the long shadows of the fir trees once more on the Alpine pasture of
the Bauernschmied*

and will go with Emmy Gruber to Gederer Mountain,

I'll remember the migrating birds over the airport of Märkisch-Friedland,

*the smell of the beer cellars in the "Gasthaus Zum Hirschen," that belonged
to my grandfather,*

*the elderberries, rape and poppies, seen in passing from the window of a
 train,
 the blushing of fourteen-year-old Gabriele Dembitza,
 the red and green lights of an airplane, flying below the constellation
 Cassiopeia,
 the dance under the Chinese lanterns of the Quatorze Juillet,
 the scent of fruit in the morning on the stands in front of the castle in Celle,
 I'll think of the lizard's heartbeat when it noticed me,
 and of a poem in "Westöstlicher Diwan," that comforted me.*

THE THIRD DREAM

In Freetown, Queensland, Australia, auto mechanic Lewis Stone dreamed on 27 April 1950 of an Hour X of which there can be several, as everyone knows. I would like to assure you that Stone at this time enjoys the best of health and has long forgotten his dream.

Singing and laughter by men, women, and children. When the noise decreases at one point, the approaching neighbor woman can be heard.)

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Hello! Heh! You!

It gets quiet.

FATHER

What's the matter, neighbor?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Up close. You're laughing!

MOTHER

Why shouldn't we be laughing?

FATHER

We're happy.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

How can you be?

FATHER

We have five children and our daily bread. Do you have worries, neighbor?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Don't you know that the enemy is coming?

FATHER

The enemy?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

He was seen on the road coming from Sydney.

MOTHER

It doesn't mean he has to be coming here.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Where else does the road go?

MOTHER

It doesn't mean he's coming into our home.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

No, maybe he's coming into mine--and that's why your laughter makes me angry. *Leaving.* Farewell, and lock your doors. Good night.

FATHER

The gate is locked.

MOTHER

Look outside: All the lights are out.

FATHER

We want to turn ours off, too.

MOTHER

Yes.

FATHER

That's better.

MOTHER

Where are you, Bob, where are you, Elsie?

BOB

Here.

ELSIE

Here.

FATHER

Maybe it's not true. We should have asked who saw him. The enemy--who knows him anyway!

BOB

Is it war now, Mama?

MOTHER

It's always war.

FATHER

We'll open the windows but close the drapes.

They do so.

FATHER

If we move the drapes just a little, we can see out.

MOTHER

It's dark outside, nothing to see.

FATHER

There's a new moon.

MOTHER

And everything is quite still.

ELSIE

It's not still, Mama. I hear something.

FATHER

What do you hear?

ELSIE

I don't know, what it is, but I hear something.

You can hear a stomping sound as if a monstrous creature were approaching.

MOTHER

What is it?

FATHER

Steps.

MOTHER

Nobody walks like that.

FATHER

Quiet!

The stomping steps are coming closer.

ELSIE

They are steps, Mama.

BOB

It's coming here.

The steps are coming roaringly close and stop. The following is spoken in a whisper.

MOTHER

Now he's stopped.

FATHER

Real close to our house.

MOTHER

It could be somewhere else. The sound can fool you. Look outside!

FATHER

I see nothing.

Pause

No, I don't see anything, but it's like a green light in old wood, like the light on the clock at night.

MOTHER

Quiet!

BOB

It's moving.

You can hear three definite beats on the gate.

FATHER

He's knocking at our place.

MOTHER

No, not at our place.

FATHER

At our place.

MOTHER

Sobbing: No.

FATHER

Quiet! Don't cry! He mustn't hear us.

MOTHER

Let's pretend we're asleep.

Three beats as before.

BOB

Does he want to come to our place, Mama?

MOTHER

Yes, he wants to come into the house.

BOB

Maybe he'll think nobody's at home and he'll go somewhere else.

MOTHER

He won't go anywhere else but here. He chose us.

ELSIE

Why us, for Pete's sake?

MOTHER

Oh, child--maybe because we were happy.

ELSIE

Doesn't he like that?

FATHER

Don't talk so loud, you guys!

MOTHER

What are we going to do?

The beats as before.

FATHER

We'll leave through the back door. Hurry!

MOTHER

We have to take some things with us, clothes, food.

FATHER

Nothing! You know that we aren't allowed to take anything along. He'll notice.

The gate is broken down with dull beatings.

FATHER

He's breaking down the gate. Let's hurry off!

MOTHER

Come, children!

FATHER

This way!

MOTHER

Are you there? Bob, Elsie!

CHILDREN

Here, here!

During this the voices come from a distance. After the gate has fallen down, the mighty stomping steps are coming closer and stop. It is still.

The following from outside.

BOB

Where are we going, Mama?

MOTHER

I don't know.

FATHER

The neighbor woman will take us in. *He calls in a whisper:* Hello, neighbor!

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Just come on in. I thought you might be coming.

During the following the sound moves into a closed room. The refugees are entering the house.

But I don't have that many beds. You must sleep on the floor.

FATHER

That doesn't matter.

MOTHER

Can you see from here what he's doing over there?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

He turned on all the lights and seems to be looking for something.

FATHER

We didn't take anything with us.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Of course not.

ELSIE

Quietly. Say, Bob!

53

BOB

the same What?

ELSIE

I did take something. My doll.

BOB

Be quiet, don't say anything.

MOTHER

That he had to pick us!

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Those are the rewards you aren't looking for.

FATHER

I wonder if someone is sleeping tonight?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

No one.

FATHER

Or all those where he didn't knock.

MOTHER

It's slowly getting light.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Tomorrow everything will run its usual course.

FATHER

Except with us.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Didn't you really take anything along?

MOTHER

Nothing. It was dark, after all, we couldn't have found anything.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

He's still looking.

MOTHER

What does he look like?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

A small man, nothing special.

MOTHER

His face?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

I haven't seen it yet.

FATHER

Let me look over there.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

He's coming to the window. He's looking out.

FATHER

I see his face. He has eyes as if he were blind.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

He's looking over here. Get away from the window!

FATHER

I see that he's blind, yet his eyes scare me.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

He's always looking over here. He's seen me. Maybe I have to greet him.

She calls out.) Good morning, neighbor!

Quiet.

He's not answering. I'm feeling cold. He's constantly looking over here.

FATHER

He's blind.

MOTHER

You said "neighbor."

FATHER

You've adjusted quickly.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

He's constantly looking over here.

FATHER

You've already written us off, haven't you?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Shouts. I greet you, neighbor.

Quiet.

FATHER

He doesn't answer. Maybe he's deaf and mute, too.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

He's constantly looking over here. You have to leave.

MOTHER

Leave? Why?

FATHER

Where to?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

You must leave. He doesn't want you to be here.

MOTHER

Don't be so cold hearted, neighbor! See, the little one just fell asleep.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Be off, quickly, be off!

FATHER

Come, we'll go to a different house.

MOTHER

Come, children!

Their voices fade.

FATHER

Bob, Elsie!

CHILDREN

Here. I'm tired. Here.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Alone. Now he's no longer looking over here. Oh, I know very well that he isn't blind. He can see better than all of us.

Pause.

The following from outside.

FATHER

Come, we'll ring the doorbell here. The mayor has always been our friend.

He has to give us a different place to live.

Doorbell. A window is being opened.

MAYOR

What do you want?

FATHER

You know what, Mayor. We had to leave our home.

MAYOR

Keep going, you no longer belong with us.

FATHER

But--

MAYOR

No buts. You no longer have a house in Freetown. And you are thieves.

MOTHER

Thieves?

MAYOR

Isn't Elsie carrying her doll in her arm?

MOTHER

The doll? My God, Elsie, did you take the doll along?

FATHER

We must take it back.

MAYOR

Too late. You did wrong, and we are all glad that you did. I'm your friend, and I advise you to leave before you get arrested. Not another word!

He slams the window shut.

FATHER

Come, we must go on.

ELSIE

May I take the doll with me?

MOTHER

Take it along, my child.

FATHER

We're not allowed.

MOTHER

Because she loves her.

FATHER

Well, alright, because she loves her.

MOTHER

Where to?

FATHER

Maybe someone else will take us in.

MOTHER

Nobody will take us in.

FATHER

Hello, neighbor!

VOICE

The hell with you, I'm not your neighbor. Get lost, you foreign trash!

FATHER

Weren't we all born here?

VOICE

Off with you, off! Do you think we want to get burnt because of you?

FATHER

Come along!

MOTHER

We don't have to ask anyone else. They're all standing behind their curtains and are looking after us. Nobody calls us in. They'll all be glad when we leave.

FATHER

They are all afraid. You can't blame them.

MOTHER

No, they are all as miserable as we are.

FATHER

We have our children.

MOTHER

And Elsie her doll.

ELSIE

My doll.

FATHER

That's the end of the houses. Thank God. We are getting into the open country. It's quite light.

MOTHER

And where are we going?

*There are sign posts at the roads,
easily recognizeable river beds,
Lookout posts on elevated ground,
maps, where the lakes are drawn in blue*

and the forests green,

--it is easy to find one's way on this earth.

*But you, who are walking beside me, the landscape
of your heart is as if disguised!*

*Groping around in the fog I am often overcome by fear
of the thicket and a secret abyss.*

*I know, you don't want me to wander through your thoughts,
the echo of your words is to lead me astray,*

--roads without a destination,

a terrain without an exit, deteriorated markings.

Each century gives us new things to hide,

a terrain, grown over to the curious eye of love,

covered up by loneliness, the ever thickening foliage.

THE FOURTH DREAM

On 29 December 1947 the cartographer Iwan Iwanowitsch Boleslawski was lying ill in his apartment in Moscow. He had a feverish flu and slept for two days, with short interruptions. He dreamed a lot, mostly of countries he had never seen. Of course, it's possible that he will still see them sometime during the rest of his life.

Outside.

ANTON

We had luck with our carriers, don't you think?

WASSILIJ

Fifty pounds without a grumble.

ANTON

Through the jungle, eight to ten hours.

WASSILIJ

Faithful and not expensive.

ANTON

But the cook? Wassilij, how are we going to get rid of the cook?

WASSILIJ

The cook would be all right, you would just have to shoot off his grin.

COOK

The food is ready.

ANTON

Canned meat.

WASSILIJ

And that? Fresh vegetables?

COOK

Grows everywhere here. Very good.

ANTON

Looks like leeks.

WASSILIJ

And tastes like boletus.

ANTON

But good.

COOK

Very good.

WASSILIJ

Where did you learn to cook, Kongo?

COOK

Never learned. Everything looks like leeks, tastes like boletus.

WASSILIJ

We'll have something to look forward to.

From a short distance a signal drum begins, followed by others in a farther distance.

ANTON

Drums, again.

COOK

Because you're eating now, white masters.

ANTON

Because we are eating now, you hear them, Wassilij. They forward messages on their drum for every twinkle of the eye.

WASSILIJ

We're interesting for the first few days. That'll change.

ANTON

I hope so. And why is everyone hovering around us? *In a changed tone.*

And you? Did you eat?

COOK

Ate already. Everyone.

WASSILIJ

Leeks? Boletus?

The Cook chuckles.

ANTON

I wouldn't like to be interesting. Twenty-three carriers, an overseer, a cook, that makes fifty eyes staring at you. Angrily. Heh, you!

COOK

Some more vegetables?

WASSILIJ

Enough. Good and filling.

ANTON

And a message sent on about each bite. That adds spice.

WASSILIJ

I'd prefer vinegar. Come, let's go into the tent.

ANTON

Yes, and smoke a pipe that they won't find out about in the next village.

In the tent. The drums, a little further away, continue.

ANTON

Put up tents, take down tents, is it worth it just to smoke a pipe?

WASSILIJ

Yes, we should have time, as long as a field bed. And so why don't we have any? Why don't we stay here where we are drummed to sleep, under a canvas one could sew together easily, where we, where we, where we--

ANTON

What?

WASSILIJ

I forgot what I wanted to say.

ANTON laughs.

What are we doing here, Anton? Where do we want to go?

ANTON

Amused. Have you forgotten that, too?

WASSILIJ

Forgotten completely.

ANTON

You're joking, right?

WASSILIJ

I'm asking you, Anton, because I no longer know why we are here.

ANTON

Dismayed. You don't know why we are here?

WASSILIJ

No, no grounds for alarm. It's just the heat. Temporary amnesia. *He laughs.*
It could make you laugh.

ANTON

Or not laugh.

WASSILIJ

A tiny gap, a short lack of blood in the brain that will pass. If you could help me?

ANTON

Sure.

WASSILIJ

If you would tell me where we want to go.

ANTON

Disturbed. Where we want to go?

WASSILIJ

From where, where to, why.

ANTON

After a short pause. I knew just a few minutes ago.

WASSILIJ

You still knew a few minutes ago?

ANTON

Yes.

WASSILIJ

And no longer know it? You neither?

ANTON

Your forgetfulness is catching.

WASSILIJ

Either that or it's the heat which is the same for both of us.

ANTON

Yes, the same heat, the same tent, and the same tobacco.

WASSILIJ

And the same memory. *Strained.* Well, don't worry, it'll come back. What do you think?

ANTON

Some things we know. Tent, drums, jungle.

WASSILIJ

That'll help us. It's the logical conclusions that count.

ANTON

An expedition apparently.

WASSILIJ

Yes, an expedition. From where, where to, why.

ANTON

The questions are clear.

WASSILIJ

That's comforting. It's Africa for sure.

ANTON

But since all expeditions have the same goal--

WASSILIJ

All of them? Are you certain?

ANTON

All expeditions are searching for happiness.

WASSILIJ

I doubt it. In any case, it's not a logical conclusion.

ANTON

There is no other goal. Think!

WASSILIJ

I thought of meteorology.

ANTON

Long outdated.

WASSILIJ

I see.

ANTON

Concluded from tent, drums and jungle.

WASSILIJ

Happiness. But in what form?

ANTON

That's what our expedition is about.

WASSILIJ

And why here?

ANTON

Why not here?

WASSILIJ

Decisively. No, I don't believe all that.

ANTON

We don't want to argue. We have diaries, after all, sketches. We don't need memory.

WASSILIJ

Black on white, you'll see that I'm right.

ANTON

A watertight portfolio in Pack Three.

WASSILIJ

Good that you remembered that.

ANTON

We'd better check it right now.

Outside.

WASSILIJ

Kongo alone? Where are the others?

COOK

All left.

ANTON

Left? What does that mean?

COOK

Gone, off, left, parti.

WASSILIJ

And our luggage?

COOK

Also gone.

ANTON

The watertight portfolio in Pack Three?

COOK

Left, parti.

ANTON

Stolen. We are making you responsible, Kongo.

WASSILIJ

And how do you make him responsible?

ANTON

Our instruments, our groceries! We have to follow them.

WASSILIJ

Without weapons? Say, we don't stand a chance. *He yawns.* We best stay here. We still have the tent and two field beds.

ANTON

And the jungle and the drums.

WASSILIJ

What can you conclude from that? *He laughs.* It's the logical conclusions that count.

ANTON

And you? Why did you stay?

COOK

The dishes need washing, white masters.

ANTON

You're making fun of us, you rascal.

COOK

Duty, devoir, pflicht. The drums give the orders for everything.

WASSILIJ

The drums? Listen, Kongo, you're not a rascal, you're an honest, you're a faithful man, you're our friend.

COOK

Uncertain. Cannot stay.

WASSILIJ

You'll tell us everything, Friend Kongo, won't you? What are the drums saying now?

COOK

That I should go.

WASSILIJ

But they don't forbid you to tell us everything.

COOK

No. Remember the food.

ANTON

Canned meat and vegetables.

COOK

It was the vegetables.

ANTON

They tasted good.

COOK

It's a root that grows a lot here. Whoever eats it, loses his memory.

ANTON

I remember the taste exactly.

COOK

Like boletus. You'll forget it.

WASSILIJ

Go ahead! An antidote?

COOK

Don't know.

WASSILIJ

What are you all planning to do with us?

COOK

Nothing. It's logical.

WASSILIJ

Logical? Please be a little more specific.

COOK

If you stay alive, it's fine, if not, that's fine, too.

WASSILIJ

Very friendly.

The drums stop.

COOK

Farewell, white masters.

WASSILIJ

Faithful and not too expensive. He laughs.

ANTON

And didn't I ask you how we could get rid of the cook? What can you conclude?

WASSILIJ

Quite logical: That it wasn't difficult to get rid of him.

ANTON

That we can still remember very well. So we haven't lost our memory.

WASSILIJ

See, it's only half as bad. What's your name?

ANTON

Name?

WASSILIJ

Yes, what's your name?

ANTON

I don't know.

WASSILIJ

I'll call you One and myself Two.

ANTON

Yes, that's logical.

WASSILIJ

I feel so well, quite empty, quite without anxiety.

ANTON

Able to live any kind of life, you just have to decide, and birth will begin. A feeling of happiness, everything before the body, cocoon or umbel, there are so many possibilities.

WASSILIJ

Terrific. A successful expedition.

ANTON

Where are we?

WASSILIJ

Where should we be: where we've always been.

ANTON

Weren't we somewhere else before?

WASSILIJ

Nonsense, we've always been here. That's our house.

ANTON

House? House? Isn't it called a tent?

WASSILIJ

Part of Africa and watertight,--all words that lose their meaning. Finally.

ANTON

But that isn't our house. We must leave.

WASSILIJ

We're staying, today, tomorrow, the day after, after, after. Where should we go?

ANTON

Our goal is happiness.

WASSILIJ

(With contempt.) Goal, happiness, Africa, watertight. Happiness is here.

ANTON

No, somewhere else. I'll look for it.

WASSILIJ

You fool!

ANTON

Farewell!

WASSILIJ

I can't keep you.

ANTON

Further away. Here it goes through the thicket.

WASSILIJ

Loud, at first, then turning to mere talking. Yes, always straight through, between leeks and freedom of will, that's where it is somewhere, the cuckoo's egg. Fool, crazy fool! He yawns. Sleeping is happiness, happiness, happiness. Pause. But something's still missing, something used to be different.

The drums begin quietly and become louder.

WASSILIJ

Yes, that's it. Now I'm not wanting anything.

The drums at full volume.

The Greeks believed that the sun, on its travel across the sky, would rub against its path and thus create a tone that would be incessant, and forever monotonous and therefore inaudible to our ears.

How many such inaudible sounds live around us? One day they will become audible and fill our ears with horror. . . .

THE FIFTH DREAM

. . . Mrs. Lucy Harrison, Richmond Avenue, New York, heard them on 31 August 1950, after she had fallen asleep in the afternoon while mending the torn seam on a skirt.

DAUGHTER

That is the livingroom. It's most beautiful here.

MOTHER

This wonderful view! The river with its steamships, the park over there, the high rises--my God, is it ever pretty.

DAUGHTER

I'm so glad, Mama, that you came to visit.

MOTHER

I had to see your apartment finally. Want to enjoy your happiness a little. That makes me feel young again, as young as when I myself was on my honeymoon.

DAUGHTER

My sweet Mama!

MOTHER

Child, you are so fortunate! Such a good position Bill has, isn't that right?

DAUGHTER

Yes, Bill has a good salary.

MOTHER

And he spoils you, I can tell. This cozy sofa group, the record player--are you still playing the piano sometimes?

DAUGHTER

Oh, Mama, I must confess, I've become awfully lazy since we got the TV, the radio and the record player.

MOTHER

That doesn't matter. You would never have been a virtuoso. But you played "Where is My Rose of Waikiki?" quite nicely. When's Bill coming home from the office?

DAUGHTER

Around five.

MOTHER

Then we still have time. *Sighing with relief.* I'll sit down for a while over here. My God, it's so nice at your place! The table cloth is handsome.

DAUGHTER

Bill brought it for me the other day.

MOTHER

The other day? What was the occasion?

DAUGHTER

No special reason--to please me.

MOTHER

You have a good husband. *Suddenly.* Be still!

DAUGHTER

What is it?

MOTHER

What kind of sound is that?

Pause, during which you can hear a slight, but constant and forcefully scraping sound.

DAUGHTER

Oh, that's nothing, it's the elevator.

MOTHER

I see.

DAUGHTER

Are you hungry, Mama, or would you like something to drink?

MOTHER

No, stay here, I ate on the train. Come, sit next to me.

DAUGHTER

Shall I turn on the radio?

MOTHER

You aren't to do anything, just let me look at you. Yes, you look good--I can tell that you're happy.

DAUGHTER

Oh, Mama--

MOTHER

Now, what's that? Tears?

DAUGHTER

Just because I'm so glad.

MOTHER

Lucy, my little girl.

DAUGHTER

See, now it's ok again.

MOTHER

Your elevator is going constantly.

DAUGHTER

Yes, it's a big building with many apartments.

MOTHER

But that really is a strange elevator.

DAUGHTER

How strange?

MOTHER

I mean, the sound is strange.

Pause.

You hear the sound as before.

DAUGHTER

With a forced laugh. Oh, well, now I'm turning on the radio--the elevator seems to make you all nervous. *She turns on the radio.* And now I'll go and make a cup of tea. No argument! I have to go into the kitchen anyway to make dinner for Bill.

MOTHER

If you have to.

Music from the radio.

MOTHER

Shouting. Lucy, can you hear it?

DAUGHTER

From the distance. What, Mama?

MOTHER

"Where is My Rose of Waikiki"?

DAUGHTER

From the distance. Well, well, your favorite melody.

The mother hums along for a few bars of the song, breaks off suddenly.

MOTHER

You can hear the elevator even when the radio's playing. I have to check.

She leaves.

DAUGHTER

From the distance. What's the matter, Mama?

MOTHER

From the distance. I want to see what's wrong with the elevator.

DAUGHTER

Just forget it, Mama!

MOTHER

From the distance. The elevator isn't moving. It's standing still. And you can hear the sound anyway.

DAUGHTER

In a forced voice. Then it's some other sound. Don't be nervous.

MOTHER

It is strange.

DAUGHTER

Come, go into the room and listen to the music.

MOTHER

You're right. It's silly to have ears that are too sensitive.

The music on the radio stops. You hear the announcer.

ANNOUNCER

You've been listening to: "Where is My Rose of Waikiki." That brings us to the conclusion of our recorded concert. Following you will hear a lecture.

MOTHER

To herself. Lecture! Can't you think of anything better?

ANNOUNCER

The exact time: at the sound of the gong 5 o'clock.

Gong.

Now Professor Wilkinson will speak about the topic of: "Termites."

PROFESSOR

It isn't pleasant to live where there are termites. The insects gnaw with insatiable hunger everything, and man is powerless against them. Their method of eating is even more unpleasant since one doesn't notice their destructive activity until it's too late. Termites have the habit of hollowing things out from the inside and leaving a thin outer wall like a skin, which, of course, will turn into dust. So it can happen that you lie down at night in your home and wake up in the morning outside, because the house has turned to dust overnight.

MOTHER

Do you hear that, Lucy? *Laughing.* The termites eat the house, and you wake up outside.

DAUGHTER

Approaching. Shut it off, Mama!

The radio is turned off.

MOTHER

But that was interesting.

DAUGHTER

In despair. No, no!

MOTHER

What's the matter, Lucy? You're quite pale.

DAUGHTER

It's nothing.

Pause.

MOTHER

With certainty. Lucy,--You weren't laughing with joy a while ago.

DAUGHTER

Nonsense, Mama.

Pause, during which the noise is heard louder.

MOTHER

Those are the termites you hear.

DAUGHTER

Termites don't eat through concrete.

MOTHER

You don't want to admit it, Lucy, my child, I'm right, am I not?

DAUGHTER

Yes, Mama.

Pause like before.

MOTHER

I don't understand you. Why don't you move out?

DAUGHTER

It won't matter.

MOTHER

But Lucy!

DAUGHTER

They're everywhere.

MOTHER

How do you mean?

DAUGHTER

Haven't you noticed that you can hear the same sound everywhere? In New York as in California, in Mexico and Canada.

MOTHER

There are no termites in Albanville, you can bet on that. My house is safe.

DAUGHTER

You can bet on it: they are gnawing on your house just like here.

MOTHER

Someone would have noticed. Such nonsense.

DAUGHTER

Once you've heard it, you hear it everywhere, in the apartments and subways, in the trees and the grain fields. I believe they are also gnawing under the earth. The ground on which we stand is just a thin piece of skin, everything is just a thin piece of skin and it's hollow inside.

MOTHER

No, it can't be that bad yet. That's your imagination, Lucy.

DAUGHTER

A strong quake, and everything will cave in. There hasn't been a storm in a while.

MOTHER

And you think a storm--?

DAUGHTER

Yes.

MOTHER

In a forced attempt to laugh. It's felt muggy all day. Open the window, Lucy!

DAUGHTER

Yes, Mama. *She opens the window.*

MOTHER

No, it's not muggy outside. Fresh air, thank God. Now you can think sensibly again. Well, Lucy, it's clear, you aren't staying here. You come with me to Albanville, and then we'll see. When Bill comes home, I'll talk to him. Why isn't he here yet? It was five a while ago.

DAUGHTER

Maybe it's not five yet.

MOTHER

I'll turn on the radio, and want the exact time. *She turns on the radio.* Where there's exact time, there's order. Where there's order, there are no secrets.

The radio turns on slowly.

DAUGHTER

He's still talking about the termites.

PROFESSOR

Thus goes the proverb of the Ewe in Central Africa: "The termite gnaws on things, gnaws on God's things, but it doesn't gnaw on God."

MOTHER

Is that the end?

DAUGHTER

Probably.

ANNOUNCER

You heard a lecture by Professor Wilkinson. We now give you the exact time. At the sound of the gong it will be 5:30.

Gong.

MOTHER

Five thirty. Where's Bill?

DAUGHTER

Maybe there's a little music on a different channel.

She turns the dial on the radio. There are various voices and types of music, until dance music stays tuned quietly.

MOTHER

Yawning. If I knew that he'll be out much longer, I would lie down for a little while. I've become terribly tired suddenly.

DAUGHTER

Sure, Mama, stretch out a little on the couch!

MOTHER

The long trip and the excitement now,—I feel quite strange.

DAUGHTER

Yes, sleep a little. I'll continue with supper.

MOTHER

The music is good, makes you quite sleepy. Then you can't hear that terrible sound so loud.

Pause, during which you can hear the music.

The doorbell rings. The radio is heard quite distant, when now--close--the door is opened.

DAUGHTER

Bill!

BILL

Hi, Lucy.

DAUGHTER

What's the matter? Why are you stopping on the stairwell?

BILL

Go into the kitchen, Lucy!

DAUGHTER

No kiss, Bill?

BILL

No, no kiss today. Don't touch me. I'm drunk. Let me pass, but don't touch me.

DAUGHTER

You're not drunk, Bill. God, what's the matter with you? Everything's so terrible already.

BILL

Come inside.

The door is closed.

DAUGHTER

Mama came to visit.

BILL

Where is she?

DAUGHTER

Here in the room--

The door is opened, the radio music is closer.

She's sleeping, she is tired form the trip. Are you hungry?

BILL

No.

DAUGHTER

Dinner will be ready soon. We'll have calf's liver.

BILL

I don't want anything.

DAUGHTER

You favorite meal.

BILL

I'm not hungry. Mama seems to be sleeping soundly.

DAUGHTER

I'll finish supper, and then we'll wake her.

BILL

Oh, leave the supper! Stay here for a moment!

DAUGHTER

Yes.

BILL

You're so beautiful, Lucy. Oh, God, how I love you!

DAUGHTER

Happily. Oh Bill--

BILL

No, stay, don't touch me. Oh Lucy, I could bawl, because you're so beautiful. Maybe you're not especially beautiful, but I love everything about you. I'll never kiss you again, Lucy.

DAUGHTER

Bill!

BILL

Stay on your chair! Tell me, did Mama suddenly get tired? I mean: Didn't you notice earlier that she was tired?

DAUGHTER

She said all of a sudden she wanted to lie down. I was supposed to wake her when you got home. I'll wake her now.

BILL

You can't wake her any more. She's dead.

DAUGHTER

Screams. Bill! What are you saying!

BILL

Stay in your chair! Don't touch her! Come, be reasonable, I don't have much time to talk. I'm damned tired, too.

Crackling sound from the radio.

BILL

A storm is coming. You can hear it in the radio.

DAUGHTER

I want to leave, Bill, I want to leave.

BILL

Where to?--Turn off the radio,--the crackling is awful.

The radio is turned off. You can hear the sound of the gnawing termites.

Do you hear it?

DAUGHTER

Whispering. I hear it. I want to leave, Bill.

BILL

Oh, stay, stay, Lucy,--don't let me die alone.

DAUGHTER

We don't want to die, we want to live.

BILL

I am going to die just like Mama.

DAUGHTER

No.

BILL

She is no more than a thin piece of skin that will disintegrate when you touch it.

DAUGHTER

But you,--not you!

BILL

I, too. I felt it on the way home. I was just looking at my watch, it was 5.30 when I noticed it. Now they are at my heart. It doesn't hurt, but I'm all hollow inside. If you touch me, I'll disintegrate.

DAUGHTER

Bill!

BILL

No, don't touch me. I'm incredibly tired. It was nice with you, it was nice living with you.

DAUGHTER

Bill!

Distant thunder.

BILL

The storm is coming closer. The house will fall apart under the thunder.

DAUGHTER

But you--not you.

BILL

Me, too, Mama too. Oh, Lucy--good night, beloved--good night.

Daughter screams out, while a loud, long, rolling thunder can be heard.

Wake up, for your dreams are bad!

Stay awake, because the horror is coming closer.

*It's coming to you, too, you who lives so far from the places where there's
bloodshed,
to you, too, and your afternoon nap,
during which you don't like to be disturbed.
If it doesn't come today, it will come tomorrow,
but be sure.*

*"Oh, pleasant sleep
on the pillow with red flowers,
a Christmas present from Anita, that she embroidered for three weeks,
oh, pleasant sleep,
when the roast was fat and the vegetables tender.
You think of the weekly news from last night while falling asleep:
Easter lambs, nature awakening, opening of the casino in Baden-Baden,
Cambridge won against Oxford by two and a half lengths,--
that is enough to keep the brain busy.
Oh, this soft pillow, first choice!
On it you forget the unpleasantness of the world, the news, for example:
The woman accused of abortion says in her defense:
The woman, mother of seven children, came to me with a baby,
for whom she had no diapers and who
was wrapped in newspaper.
Well, those are the affairs of the court, not ours.
You can't do anything about it, if one lies a little harder than another,
And whatever comes, our grandchildren may fight against it."*

"Oh, you are sleeping already? Wake up well, friend!

*The current is already running through the [electric] fences, and the guards
are in place."*

No, don't sleep, while the technocrats of the world are busy!

Be suspicious of the power they pretend to use for you!

Be aware so that your hearts won't be empty, when they count

on the emptiness of your hearts!

Do the unuseful things, sing the songs they don't expect from your mouths!

Be bothersome. Be the sand, not the oil in the gears of the world!

DREAMS: AN INTERPRETATION

INDIVIDUAL DREAMS

In addition to interpreting the dreams through the teachings of depth psychology as mentioned in the introduction, other aspects are possible, namely looking at relationships and ways of communication, concentrating on historic-political or on contemporary references.

The First Dream

A great-grandfather, great-grandmother, grandson, woman, and child, representing four generations are the voices in the first dream. They have been travelling in a train car forever, it seems. It is dark. Nothing outside the car is seen, and the only sound heard is that of the rolling train. The food, moldy bread, is passed through a slot. They don't know where they are going nor how long they have been in the freight car ("I bet it's been forty years"). The great-grandparents had been taken from their home, at four o'clock in the morning, by men with mask-like faces, wearing the same suits. Only these two old people know a different world, a world that included dandelions, a sky, trees, the goat they milked every day, a dark blue suit, the acacia in front of the house, and raspberries by the fence.

The grandson, woman, and child don't know any of these things and call

them fairytales, lies, just words: The younger generation has no ties to the past. You don't believe things you cannot see, want proof for everything. The great-grandfather remembers and wants to keep his memories alive, but he had to remind his wife of the dandelions ("--what strange words you're using!"). In the end both are no longer sure these things really existed ("Did we just dream? . . . Maybe I did dream everything. . . ." "--and I only know about it from you--").

When a hole lets a sunbeam into the train car, the grandson looks out but does not understand what he sees. He's afraid and calls what he sees "terrible." The great-grandfather sees the dandelions he has been talking about, mountains, forests. But something is different: the people are giants, "tall as trees." After having seen the giants, he realizes that there is no hope to escape. And so the grandson closes the hole again: It is easier not to face things or people who scare you, better to leave things as they are, as you are used to, even if it means being imprisoned, living in the dark, and eating moldy bread. The drama escalates as the train goes faster and faster, becomes louder and louder, hinting at their inevitable death. The great-grandfather asks: "Isn't there anyone to help us?" to which the grandson only replies: "Who?"

The people in the train car remind the listener/reader of the Jews, torn out of their beds and stuck into trains which took them to places unknown, to a future of destruction; they also remind us of the people who were driven from their homes in eastern Germany and transported in train cars to an unknown future, some of them shot during the transport (Heidelberger). The men, all dressed the same, are reminiscent of the Gestapo, SS, the KGB, or

the Secret Police in the German Democratic Republic during the Communist regime.

The people, big as giants, suggest power. Giants, as characters in fairytales, usually represent evil power against which people have no chance. Power exists everywhere and can use force on anyone at any time. The people in the world don't want to face evil forces and prefer a world of isolation and repressed memories. They are the ones Eich wants to wake up.

The Second Dream

This dream, set in China, is the shortest one. The parents of a six-year-old boy respond to an advertisement in the newspaper. We learn only gradually that they come to the house of a wealthy couple to sell their son so that the rich man's life can be prolonged through the boy's blood, heart and liver.

Except for the parents, the characters in this dream have names.⁹ Eich uses the jargon of the business world: "demand," "advertisement," "guarantee," "references," "prices," "check," "deliver," and, in the cattle business, "breeding" (Goß). The business transaction is the longest sequence. The adults, the boy's parents, and the wealthy couple want to do business, ignoring the child's fear, misleading him, lying about their intentions:

Child: What do we want there?

Woman: Oh, nothing special.

.....

Child: The bell is so loud. I'm afraid.

Man: That's nonsense.

.....

Lady: Does he know something?

Woman: No.

.....

Child: The gentleman has such cold fingers.

Woman: Don't act up. That's the disease.

Child: I want to leave.

Man: Be quiet now!

.....

Child: Are we leaving now?

Woman: Father and I are leaving now. You'll stay for a while.

And, to distract the child from what is going to happen:

Gentleman: Do you like to play with trains?

Child: Yes, I love it.

Gentleman: Then you go to Li-bai in the kitchen . . . and play there.

The child's wish to stay outside and repeated requests to leave the place that frightens him are ignored: "Let's leave this place, Mother!" "I want to leave here." "Come, let's get away from here, Mother!" "Are we leaving now?" "I don't want to stay here."

The grown-ups in this dream again represent power. They have no concern for the individual, but are interested only in their "mission": The privileged profiteer from the lower class; the parents use parental force and sell their children like wares; and the maid, "only doing her job," is the

executioner. In addition, the scene is about ethical responsibility, about experiments performed in scientific research, and the slaughter of human beings. During the Nazi regime many prisoners in concentration camps became victims to research. Twenty children were murdered prior to the liberation to hide experiments that had been performed on them (Goß, 83). And again, this misuse of power could happen anywhere, since the currency paid for the child's life is not mentioned.

The Third Dream

A happy family, parents and their five children, are informed by a neighbor woman that the enemy is coming. They are to leave all possessions behind and leave through the back door just before the gate is broken down. Their attempts to find shelter in the neighbor's house, then to get help from the mayor and yet another neighbor, are futile--both are afraid of the unknown enemy, who appears to be blind, yet seems to see everything. Ruth Schmitt-Lederhaus suggests that this blindness symbolizes blindness to human suffering (150). At the same time, no one can hide from this destructive enemy.

The family finally gets into the open country. Here, again, the dream ends in an unknown future:

Mother: And where are we going?

This is the only dream dealing with an intact family, who, by an unknown enemy, as described by the neighbor, is driven from a happy home. It is also the only dream in which love is stronger than the fear of the enemy: The daughter takes her beloved doll against the explicit order, but is allowed to

keep it. The neighbor woman, at first willing to take in the family, closes her door and chases the family away, because she is afraid that she, too, will be punished by the enemy. She quickly shifts from the role of a friendly neighbor to that of a citizen who quickly accepts the evil power, calling the enemy "neighbor," ready to denounce the family. Märki compares her to Kafka's character who is flirting with the enemy (31). Her actions are reminiscent of the many people who, during the Nazi regime in Germany and during the Communist regime in the German Democratic Republic, shifted their sympathies to those in power and turned in friends, even family members.

The waiting for the unknown is a fearful waiting, because it must be done in the dark (the lights are shut off). But nobody can hide from the enemy: he turns on the lights, can find his victims anywhere.

Australia, a country that had been spared during World War II, feared an invasion for a year after the conquest of Timor Island, after which it was within reach of Japanese planes. The fear of the family represents the fear of and helplessness against power in general.

Eich shows that those whose home is spared by the enemy, who may keep their security, do not care for those driven out, but are glad and relieved that they were not affected. We are to take on responsibility for all those who suffer and must not collaborate with unjust forces.

The Fourth Dream

The characters in this dream--the explorers Anton and Wassilij (in an earlier version they were named Michael and Peter), the African cook Kongo

and the carriers, cheap labor--are in a jungle. Kongo serves the explorers boletus, a type of edible mushroom, which causes loss of memory. They soon forget what their mission was and, unable to remember their names, give each other numbers. Without any carriers (all twenty-three of them left with the overseer), Anton leaves through the thicket to find happiness, which he thinks must have been their goal; Wassilij is sure to find happiness in sleep. Throughout the scene, drums forward messages, become louder and end.

Every move the explorers make is watched and reported by the drums. It is reminiscent of Orwell's "Big Brother," in 1984, watching every move:

Anton: Drums, again.

Cook: Because you're eating now, white masters.

Anton: Because we are eating now. . . . They forward messages on their drum for every twinkle of the eye.

. . . .

Anton: And a message sent on about each bite. . . .

. . . .

Anton: . . . smoke a pipe that they won't find out about in the next village.

In the real world, the eyes were those of government agents who misused their power.

Without memory, the explorers (people in general) are helpless, because they are no longer able to communicate; they have lost their history and identity.

Kongo, the black cook, calls the explorers "white masters." Ironically, the black man, the servant, becomes the master by taking away the memory of the "rulers," thus taking charge. He also uses words in foreign languages, "devoir," "Pflicht," "parti," showing that he has served white masters from various countries. Kongo also does not care what happens to the two: "If you stay alive, it's fine, if not, that's fine, too."

Eich satirizes explorers and technology:

Wassilij: I thought of meteorology.

Anton: Long outdated.

.....

Anton: . . . We have diaries, after all, sketches. We don't need memory.

.....

Anton: A watertight portfolio in Pack Three.

The explorers, in an African jungle with their instruments and intelligence, in the end no longer have either. Those who had previously been taken advantage of survive through their unbloody "revolution" by making the white masters quietly disappear.

The Fifth Dream

Mrs. Harrison is visiting her daughter Lucy, wanting to finally see her apartment and enjoy her happiness. She suddenly hears a noise, but the daughter keeps trying to distract her. A radio lecture on termites scares the daughter who finally tells her mother that the termites are everywhere, even under the earth, and a strong quake will make the whole world crumble. The

mother, tired, lies down and dies in her sleep. The daughter's husband Bill comes home late. He is also tired and knows he will die, too: "It was wonderful with you." The storm comes closer, and Lucy screams while a loud, long, rolling thunder can be heard.

This is the only dream in which the dreamer (the mother) is also a character in the scene. She represents materialistic values which, in her opinion, mean happiness:

This wonderful view! . . . is it ever pretty.

. . . .

Child, you are so fortunate! Such a good position Bill has. . . .

. . . This cozy sofa group, the record player. . . .

. . . .

My god, it's so nice at your place! The table cloth is handsome.

The mother does not want to know about the danger that is approaching. The gnawing sound, the danger, can be ignored, locked out, by turning the music louder. Once she knows what the noise is about, she wants Lucy to leave, thus running away from the problem:

Daughter: Haven't you noticed that you can hear the same sound everywhere? In New York as in California, in Mexico and Canada.

Mother: There are no termites in Albanville, you can bet on that. My house is safe.

Once the mother realizes that she cannot escape from it, she gives up (is tired), and dies. The daughter knows of the danger, knows that she cannot run from it, yet stays.

Lucy no longer plays music (on her piano), only listens to it on the radio or record player. Eich criticizes the media and wants the audience to be equally critical. The media is an example of industrial progress which may cause the loss of culture.

Even though this, too, is a fictive dream, Eich inserts something real: a lecture on termites. Obviously this lecture means to alert the listener to an approaching danger. The termites, an invisible, subversive power, gnaw through everything, even concrete, even at human beings. They are hollowing out existing values anywhere in the world and thus undermine the chance of mankind's survival. The personality of the individual is being gnawed at and made hollow until only a thin skin remains and then completely disintegrates (Goß, 102, 105).

Bill, successful, well-to-do, realizes too late that he, too, has become a victim of lost values. He says: ". . . I'm all hollow inside. If you touch me, I'll disintegrate," making even love impossible.

In the original version of Dreams, Eich included a sixth dream in which there was a bell that did not ring. People who pulled the string activated a guillotine.

Summary

All these dreams demonstrate power, real or imagined, that takes away the individual's freedom, security, dignity, memory, identity, life.

Eich wanted to wake up the sleeper, and with his radio play Dreams he asks the listener/reader to see what is going on in the world, to feel the pain

suffered, to hear the dangers everywhere. Each dream, a nightmare, describes the fear of people threatened everywhere and at any time: they are deported, sacrificed, driven away, psychologically broken, hollowed-out inside (Lermen, 121). Eich hopes that people everywhere will not accept misused power or danger without questioning it, without doing something about it. In the five dreams, he uses the question mark 197 times (Lermen, 121). These are the questions the audience must pose. Eich means that "Everything that happens is your business." Every one is responsible; no one is, was, or ever will be innocent. Evil power can only be faced together; nobody can help alone.

Eich's Dreams should wake up today's sleeper as well: There are wars and conflicts; continued atomic research and rockets; Neo Nazis and White Extremists; economic power structures; poor communication among generations, peoples and nations; alienation; abuse of human rights; child abuse; hatred toward those seeking asylum.

The dangers and powers in the world, history--stories--must be told over and over again and must not be forgotten.

Those who do not remember the past

Are forced to repeat it.

(Text found near the exit of the museum at Dachau.)

NOTES

Since all secondary literature was in German, quotations and citations from the texts are my translations. English titles of Eich's publications are literal translations.

¹ Joachim W. Storck in Marbacher Magazin: Günter Eich 1907 - 1972. No. 45. (Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1988). All future references to this publication will be listed as M.

² After having completed four years of elementary and nine years of high school, the Abitur, without which study at a university is not possible, is bestowed upon the student.

³ Die Kolonne, a journal of poetry, first appeared in 1920, published by Wolfgang Jess in Dresden. In 1932 publication of the journal discontinued.

⁴ For example, in a book review of Hermann Hesse's Die Morgenlandfahrt (The Trip to the Orient), Eich wrote: ". . . that the gravest error Hesse made was that he wrote it at all" (M, 18).

⁵ Werner Weber said of the "Camp 16" poem, also called the "anti-Lorelei poem," that it was "an act against singing . . . anti-romantic criticism . . . the key word of the conditions is "no" (M, 28). These "no" lines are given below:

. . .
 I have no tent.

 I also have no blanket.
 . . .
 I find no comrade.
 . . .
 At night I speak only to myself.
 . . .
 There will be no word in the flowing of the Rhine River,
 . . .
 There will be nothing but rain,--
 no roof and no dam is protecting me--
 (M, 27)

⁶ Gruppe 47 was founded in Munich in 1947 by Hans Werner Richter. It was a circle of writers and young German literary critics, for the promotion of new German literature. During the semi-annual (1947 to 1955) or annual (1956 to 1967) conferences members and invited non-members read from unpublished works, which were verbally critiqued following the reading without the author's chance of a response. The Gruppe 47 Literary Prize was donated by publishers and radio stations. As the most important and, because of the position of its members, most influential group of German writers after WWII, the group was often accused of a literary monopoly of opinion, because of their social-political engagements and their open criticism of political and social conditions in Germany, although they had no organized political programs. Their influence and the unity of the group was

overestimated: it could only claim to be representative for the modern German literature because of its diversity (Wilpert, 321).

⁷ Maulwurf means mole. The German word means "throwing with the mouth", i.e., a mole digs up dirt with its mouth. Eich, saying that Maulwürfe (plural form) is a special expression in his family, used this term for short pieces of prose.

⁸ Ruth Schmitt-Lederhaus quoted many of the protesters. Following are a few examples of telephone calls:

Say, what kind of garbage are you serving us again on the radio
 . It's enough to make me want to throw up. . .

. . . That cannot appeal to any European taste. . . .

That is awful what you are serving your audience. (What would you like to hear?) Something nice, but not such cruel stuff about child murder and such shit. . . . (What didn't you like in the plays thus far?) . . . that you are putting fear into the audience. . . .

It seems to me that it's high time that the police get involved. . . .

⁹ Tschang-du, the name given to the boy, means "farmer's son"; Pi-gu, the sickly gentleman, means "butt"; Li-bai, the maid, is named after a famous poet in China; Li Wen-Tschu (the dreamer) means 10,000 books; and Tientsin is a real town, approximately 100 km from Peking (Professor Xiaozhao Huang).

The daughter of a rice merchant has this nightmare in November 1949, approximately a month after the creation of "New China," making her father, rich in the old society, a common citizen.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- Borchert, Wolfgang. Das Gesamtwerk (Complete Works). Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1949.
- Eich, Günter. Gesammelte Werke (Collected Works). Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1973.
- . Fünfzehn Hörspiele (Fifteen Radio Plays). Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1973.
- Goß, Marlies. Günter Eich und das Hörspiel der fünfziger Jahre: Untersuchung am Beispiel "Träume" (Günter Eich and the Radio Play of the Fifties: An Examination Using "Dreams"). Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag Peter Lang GmbH, 1988.
- Heidelberger, Maria. Personal Interview. Bremen, Germany, May 1995.
- Lermen, Birgit: Das traditionelle und neue Hörspiel im Deutschunterricht (The Traditional and New Radio Play in German Classes). Uni-Taschenbücher 506. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1975.
- Mannzen, Walter. In Marbacher Magazin: Günter Eich 1907 - 1972. Ed. Storck, Joachim W. No. 45. Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft. Herausgegeben von Ulrich Ott. Redaktion Friedrich Pfäfflin, 1988.

- Märki, Peter: Günter Eichs Hörspielkunst (Günter Eich's Art of Radio Plays). Studienreihe Humanitas, Studien zur Germanistik. Frankfurt a.M.: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1974.
- Mueller, Gisela. Günter Eichs Träume (Günter Eich's "Dreams"). A Thesis. University of Utah, 1985.
- Post, Klaus-Dieter. Günter Eich: Zwischen Angst und Einverständnis (Günter Eich: Between Fear and Agreement). Bonn: Bouvier, 1977.
- Schmitt-Lederhaus, Ruth. Günter Eichs "Träume": Hörspiel und Rezeption (Günter Eich's "Dreams": Radio Play and Reception). Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang GmbH, 1989.
- Storck, Joachim W., Ed. Marbacher Magazin: Günter Eich 1907 - 1972. Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft. Herausgegeben von Ulrich Ott. Redaktion Friedrich Pfäfflin, 1988.
- von Wilpert, Gero. Sachwörterbuch der Literatur. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1979.