PENGUIN CLASSICS

Franz Kafka

Diaries

The Diaries

FRANZ KAFKA

The Diaries

Translated by Ross Benjamin

PENGUIN BOOKS

PENGUIN CLASSICS

UK | USA | Canada | Ireland | Australia
India | New Zealand | South Africa

Penguin Books is part of the Penguin Random House group of companies
whose addresses can be found at global.penguinrandomhouse.com

Penguin
Random House
UK

Originally published in Germany in two volumes as *Tagebücher in der Fassung der Handschrift* by S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1990
This translation first published in the United States of America by Schocken Books 2022
First published in Great Britain in Penguin Classics 2024
001

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

The authorized representative in the EEA is Penguin Random House Ireland,
Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin D02 YH68

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978–0–241–69574–6

www.greenpenguin.co.uk

Penguin Random House is committed to a sustainable future for our business, our readers and our planet. This book is made from Forest Stewardship Council® certified paper.

Contents

TRAVEL DIARIES

Translator's Preface: Glimpses into Kafka's Workshop

Franz Kafka (1883–1924) so enthralled the twentieth-century literary imagination that he came to be seen as the representative genius of the modern age. To this day an ever-expanding cosmos of secondary literature swirls around his work. At the same time, scholars have widely acknowledged that this work is too singular and elusive to be subject to any reductive interpretation. After all, how far can analytical methods be applied to fiction that borrows its logic from the liminal space between waking and dreaming? Often writing deep into the night, Kafka explored this unstable and destabilizing terrain in stories that have long been enshrined in the pantheon of modern literature. Yet his vision, idiom, and sensibility did not appear fully formed from the outset. Rather they were wrought and wrestled into being in the same arena where many writers enact the drama of linguistic self-creation—in his notebooks.

Between 1909 and 1923, Kafka kept various notebooks that he called his *Tagebücher,* or "diaries." In the pages of these notebooks, he interspersed many different kinds of writing: entries recording daily events, reflections, and observations; literary sketches; drafts of letters, reviews, and other texts; accounts of dreams; autobiographical recollections; impressions, synopses, and critical considerations of books, plays, and other cultural events and phenomena; descriptions of people with whom he was acquainted or crossed paths, particularly their physical appearances, gestures, clothing, habits of speech and communication; examinations of his own bodily states and symptoms, moods and perceptions, inner conflicts and predicaments; outbursts of anguish and bouts of self-torment; outlines for planned works; excerpts from his reading material; snapshots of his urban environment, his family and office spheres,

and the social and cultural milieus in which he moved; sporadic jottings; enigmatic aphorisms; and all-but-finished prose pieces and stories.

In these disparate writings the line between life and literature cannot be sharply drawn. Often it cannot be determined in a given passage whether Kafka is registering a private experience, crafting fiction, or transforming the one into the other. He worked on his diary entries with unvarying literary intensity, revising, adding, cutting, correcting. His impulse to give artistic shape to what he wrote apparently made no distinctions. Kafka's diaries therefore have far more than biographical value. While they illuminate a great deal about his world as a German-speaking Jewish writer in Prague—and as a son, a brother, a friend, a lover, an employee, a reader, a patron of theatrical and other cultural venues, a frequenter of coffeehouses and other establishments, an observer of and participant in contemporary trends and movements, an occasional traveler—they also go beyond our interest in the man and his time: On every page they reveal the writer at work.

My translation of Kafka's diaries offers English-speaking readers for the first time the complete text on the basis of the German critical edition published in 1990 by S. Fischer Verlag and edited by Hans-Gerd Koch. The sole previous English version, first published in 1948–49, is based on an outdated, bowdlerized German edition prepared by Kafka's literary executor Max Brod, who had been Kafka's closest friend, had recognized and encouraged his gifts early on, and—since Brod was the more prolific, better-known, and better-connected writer of the two—had been instrumental in the publication and promotion of Kafka's work during his lifetime. The critical edition not only restores the unexpurgated text of the diaries but also redresses other significant inadequacies, inaccuracies, and distortions of the Brod edition.

Besides omitting or altering the names of and details about people still living at the time of the book's publication, Brod excised texts that could be considered literary works and indiscriminately suppressed passages of a sexual nature. In particular, he removed anything with a tinge of homoeroticism. He also manipulated the diaries in several places that presumably seemed to him to reflect unfavorably on himself or Kafka. Recent scholarship, such as Saul Friedländer's *Franz Kafka: The Poet of Shame and Guilt,* has drawn on the deleted passages to explore new avenues of interpretation. The emergence of fresh, provocative research on writings nowhere to be found in English suggests that the translation of the uncensored diaries is overdue.

By following the critical edition, my translation not only provides substantial new content but also reproduces the form in which Kafka wrote the diary entries. Unlike the Brod edition, which imposed an artificial chronology on the entries, the critical edition retains the sequence as it appears in the notebooks, because Kafka went back and forth between several of them at the same time, without dating every piece of writing. With this translation, English-speaking readers thus have at their disposal a faithful reconstruction in printed form of Kafka's handwritten diary entries, giving them insight into his praxis.

This sense of getting a glimpse into Kafka's workshop is enhanced by certain rough edges in the original manuscripts that the critical edition deliberately refrains from smoothing out, including fragments, however truncated, cryptic, or seemingly marginal; nonstandard and omitted punctuation; orthographic errors, unorthodoxies, and inconsistencies; occasionally awkward, convoluted, and even mangled syntax; repetitions; abbreviations; contractions; regionalisms; slips of the pen; and other linguistic idiosyncrasies and departures from conventional High German. I have attempted to preserve such elements wherever possible in my translation in an effort to give English-speaking readers a feel for Kafka's writing as he set it down on the page.

The Brod edition and its translation shied from this degree of linguistic fidelity for the sake of a more polished impression that might seem less unfamiliar or even jarring in places. Brod's editorial interventions reflect his commitment to minimizing the fragmentary nature of the diaries and effacing the peculiarities of Kafka's language in favor of a more formal, perfected, and supposedly pure High German. This was consistent with Brod's understanding of Kafka's anonymous, impersonal style in his published works. By depersonalizing and delocalizing Kafka's use of German in the diaries, stripping it of Austrian, Jewish, Czech, and Prague German inflections, correcting his ostensible mistakes, and expunging other traces of the immediacy and contingency of the text, Brod refashioned the open-ended, exploratory creative process inscribed in the notebooks into something more closely resembling a finished literary product. To use the terms first applied by Gerhard Neumann to two opposing conceptions of Kafka's posthumous writings, Brod presented the diaries to the extent possible in the guise of a *Werk*, a cohesive and fixed work, rather than *Schrift*, writing as a fluid, ongoing, goalless activity.

By seeking to do justice to the more spontaneous, provisional, and

unpolished aspects of Kafka's diary writing that the critical edition brings to the fore, my translation approach diverges considerably from that of the 1948–49 English translation. The former translation appeared in two volumes, the first translated by Joseph Kresh and the second by Martin Greenberg in cooperation with Hannah Arendt. Although the translators—overseen by Arendt in her capacity as editorial director of Schocken Books—drew from copies of Kafka's manuscripts to make a number of modifications and additions to the text Brod had provided—notably, reinstating some twenty entries he had excluded—on the whole they followed Brod's version. The contrast between their approach and mine is apparent from the very first entries in the earliest notebook, a series of fragments, each one separated from the next by a horizontal stroke of the pen. In my translation:

> The spectators stiffen when the train passes.
>
> ———
>
> "Whenever he ahsks me" the ah broken free from the sentence flew away like a ball in the meadow.
>
> ———
>
> His seriousness is killing me. His head in his collar, his hair arranged immovably around his skull, the muscles at the bottom of his cheeks tensed in place
>
> ———
>
> Are the woods still there? The woods were still more or less there. But scarcely had my gaze gone ten paces when I gave up ensnared again by the boring conversation.
>
> ———
>
> In the dark woods in the sodden ground I found my way only by the white of his collar.
>
> ———
>
> In a dream I asked the dancer Eduardova to dance the czardas one more time. She had a broad streak of shadow or light in the middle of her face between the lower edge of her forehead and the center of

her chin. Just then came someone with the disgusting movements of an unconscious intriguer to tell her the train was about to depart. The way she listened to the message made it terribly clear to me that she would no longer dance. "I'm a bad awful woman am I not?" she said. Oh no I said not that and turned in no particular direction to leave.

The Brod edition, translated by Joseph Kresh, renders these entries as follows:

The onlookers go rigid when the train goes past.

"If he should forever ahsk me." The *ah*, released from the sentence, flew off like a ball on the meadow.

His gravity is the death of me. His head in its collar, his hair arranged immovably on his skull, the muscles of his jowls below, tensed in their places——

Are the woods still there? The woods were still almost there. But hardly had my glance gone ten steps farther when I left off, again caught up in the tedious conversation.

In the dark woods, on the sodden ground, I found my way only by the whiteness of his collar.

In a dream I asked the dancer Eduardova to dance the Czardas one time more. She had a broad streak of shadow or light across the middle of her face between the lower part of her forehead and the cleft of her chin. Just then someone with the loathsome gestures of an unconscious intriguer approached to tell her the train was leaving immediately. The manner in which she listened to this announcement made it terribly clear to me that she would not dance again. "I am a wicked, evil woman, am I not?" she said. "Oh no," I said, "not that," and turned away aimlessly.

At first glance, what might be most striking in both versions, regardless of the choices made by editors and translators, is how disconcertingly unrecognizable as diary entries these notes seem. There are neither

dates nor contextual markers (until the mention of the dancer Eduardova, who performed with the Imperial Russian Ballet of St. Petersburg in Prague in 1909, though Kafka doesn't himself provide the points of reference). There's nothing that can be said with certainty to be a record of daily life, no clear signposts as to whether a given entry is fictional or autobiographical, figurative or observational. Nonetheless, the former translation, in accordance with Brod's editorial principles, neutralizes the disjointedness of the text in several ways: leaving out the dividing lines between the entries, indenting each one like a paragraph, adding standard punctuation where it was missing in Kafka's manuscript, and even inserting the long dash at the end of the third fragment so that instead of giving the impression of a broken-off piece of writing, it appears as if the sentence has been deliberately suspended in order to be interrupted by the one that follows. These changes lend the writing at least a facade of continuity, however elliptical the prose may be. In my translation, by contrast, the notes remain as Kafka wrote them, formally discrete entries, partitioned off from each other, not indented, and scarcely punctuated, giving them much more the appearance of stabs in the dark, a succession of aborted writing attempts.

The misleading presentation of the text in the previous translation has further consequences. Take, for example, the sentence translated there as "I am a wicked, evil woman, am I not?" This rendering presupposes that Kafka intended to use the two adjectives in a redundant fashion. In Kafka's handwriting, however, as the apparatus of the critical edition indicates, the adjective *schlechtes* was inserted above the adjective *böses*. By hewing more closely to the manuscript and placing the synonyms side by side without additional punctuation, *ein böses schlechtes Weib,* which I've translated as "a bad awful woman," maintains the possibility that one adjective was meant as a substitute for the other. The reader can as easily imagine Kafka striking the one or the other word as joining them by a comma. Leaving the text open and perceptibly unfinished thus makes it hospitable to all the potential texts Kafka might have written if he hadn't abandoned it, rather than diminishing this multiplicity by producing a final draft on his behalf. While, as a single case, this choice regarding one comma might seem microscopic, the strategy that it exemplifies informs so many similar moments throughout the diaries that the cumulative effect is a radically different version.

In the previous translation, the absence of contractions in the same

line—"I am a wicked, evil woman, am I not?"—also belongs to an overall strategy: that of formalization of the language, which is as characteristic of the use of English throughout the previous translation as it is of Brod's editing of Kafka's German. For example, in Kafka's hand, as transcribed by the critical edition, the last word of the quoted passage is *Gehn*, a monosyllabic shortening of the two-syllable infinitive *Gehen*. In his notebooks, Kafka often shortened infinitives in this way, which—like his dropping of punctuation—probably had to do with the natural, somewhat spoken rhythm of his diary writing. This is among the linguistic quirks that Brod erased in his effort to reinforce the notion of Kafka's impeccably proper written High German. Since there is of course no direct equivalent for these shortened infinitives in English, I have instead taken their frequency in the diaries as a cue to use contractions throughout my translation wherever it has felt natural, in opposition to the artificial formality of the previous translation's general avoidance of contractions. Hence my translation of that line reads: "I'm a bad awful woman am I not?"

Another difference between my translation and the former English version is the treatment of the literary texts Kafka wrote in the diaries. Kafka famously penned his short story "Das Urteil" ("The Judgment") in his diary in a single overnight sitting, and then expressed in the following entry the next day his elation about the creative breakthrough this represented for him. In the Brod edition, the text of "The Judgment" itself is missing, and the subsequent entry refers readers to an endnote informing them that this entry was preceded by Kafka's draft of "The Judgment." In the critical edition, "The Judgment" is restored to its rightful place in the diary itself, and even though it is almost word for word the story Kafka later published, there are a handful of variants, and more importantly, the inspired act of composition itself in which Kafka was swept along can be witnessed in, for example, Kafka's shedding of quotation marks in the dialogue as the narrative momentum propelled him forward and the pace of his pen's movement across the page presumably quickened.

The story Kafka published in May 1913 under the title "Der Heizer" ("The Stoker"), which is also the first chapter of his unfinished novel *Der Verschollene* (*The Missing Person*), likewise had its genesis in the diaries, shortly after he finished "The Judgment." It is followed there by the beginning of the novel's second chapter, which Kafka broke off and

resumed outside the diaries. Here too Brod substituted an endnote, whereas the critical edition includes the text, even keeping it in two parts in two separate notebooks out of chronological order, since Kafka set down the later part of the text in a notebook that he had begun earlier than the one in which he started writing it.

By translating this (still untitled) draft of "The Stoker" within the context of the freely flowing writing of the diaries, I have been able to highlight its status as a work in progress. For example, I've retained Kafka's varying spellings of New York in this text as elsewhere in the diaries, including "Newyork," "Newyorck," and even "Newyort." At one point, Kafka inadvertently wrote "Georg" instead of "Karl," confusing the first name of the story's protagonist with that of "The Judgment," which he had just completed in the same notebook. Only the inclusion of both texts in their original written proximity makes this intriguing slip visible in the English version of the diaries. Another inconsistency in the diary text of "Der Heizer" is the initial political title given to Karl's politician uncle living in America, *Staatsrat,* which I translate as "state councilor," a term that undoubtedly occurred more automatically to Kafka from his Austro-Hungarian context than *Senator,* which would have been proper to the American setting of the story. But as he continued the story, Kafka realized that the character's title should be *Senator* and switched to *Senator* from that point on. In the clean copy of "The Stoker" he prepared for publication, of course, he went back and replaced all the earlier uses of *Staatsrat* with *Senator,* but in my translation of the diaries as in the notebook, we can see him have the realization and make the switch. This is a prime example of the effect I hope to have achieved in my translation: that of catching Kafka in the act of writing.

To that end, I've replicated the intermittent linguistic stutters and stumbles that distinguish the diary versions of Kafka's literary texts as rough drafts. In dashing off the following line in "The Stoker," for example, Kafka left out the word "of" between "thought" and "him": "And so the cook had also thought him and informed his uncle of his arrival." Since the corresponding missing German preposition (*an*) was inserted in the published version of the story, its absence is part of the distinct texture of the diary draft. By reproducing this absence, my translation differs in the same way from English translations of the story in its final form.

Besides works that Kafka published in his lifetime—including a num-

ber of prose miniatures that began as diary entries, appeared in Prague literary journals, and were later collected in his first book, *Betrachtung* (*Contemplation*)—the diaries are filled with literary attempts, incomplete drafts, and false starts. Some fragments, such as several that begin with the words *Du sagte ich* ("You I said") and those surrounding them (see pp. 56–72), seem most likely interrelated despite being strewn among the diary pages in no particular order and with intervening entries. Brod assembled these discontinuous pieces into a single narrative, fabricating an integrated whole and thereby necessarily excluding successive rewrites that contained repetitions while at the same time veering off in alternative directions. In my translation, as in Kafka's notebooks and the critical edition, all the ways that these pieces might fit together into a story with a beginning, middle, and end remain entirely hypothetical. By giving us only one composite narrative, Brod's edition limited the richness, variety, and potentiality of Kafka's diaries.

In my translation, I have sought to convey a sense of the diaries' character as a laboratory for Kafka's literary production. In keeping with this character, I have consistently resisted tidying up his prose in places where it is jumbled in the original German. Among other things, this enables the reader to follow Kafka's own backtracking and fixing in subsequent reworkings of earlier drafts. For example, the first notebook contains six fragments beginning *Wenn ich es bedenke* ("When I think about it"), *Oft überlege ich es* ("Often I reflect on it"), and *Ich überlege es oft* ("I often reflect on it") (see pp. 7–13). The second of these fragments breaks off after a sentence that becomes garbled in the middle:

> I will hear no contradiction to this reproach, since I've already heard too many and since in most of the contradictions I've also been refuted, I include these contradictions in my reproach and now declare my education and this refutation have in a number of respects done me great harm.

Only in the third fragment does Kafka sort out this mishmash of formulations:

> And I voice my reproach to all of them, introduce them to each other in this way, but tolerate no contradiction. For I have truly endured enough contradictions already and since in most of them I have been

> refuted, I have no choice but to include these refutations too in my reproach and to say that besides my education these refutations too have in some ways done me great harm.

While the initially muddled sentence is likely to trip up the reader, its very muddledness also invites the reader to bear witness to Kafka's writing process: Here is the writer in the midst of writing one sentence when he decides that he has actually already begun a second sentence, but having hastily set down his ideas without proper structure or punctuation, instead of making corrections to what he's written, he goes on to start the whole piece over, recasting the passage more conscientiously and clearly in the new version. If as translator I had taken it upon myself to make the first version less cumbersome, the evolution of this particular piece of writing would have been less traceable to readers. So too in the diaries as a whole, rather than giving Kafka's writing a uniformly well-crafted veneer from start to finish, I have opted to let emerge a portrait of the writer making his way—at times gropingly—toward the writer he would become.

Hence my fidelity even to Kafka's outright mistakes, uncorrected by him and retained by the critical edition:

> Besonders die Beziehung *zwischen* einer auseinandergezogenen ringsherum fast in gleicher Breite über den Kopf vorragenden Frisur *zu* der meist zu lang erscheinenden geraden Nase verwirrte. [My emphasis.]

> Especially the relationship *between* a spread-out hairstyle protruding almost at an equal breadth all around her head *to* the straight nose that mostly appeared too long was confusing. [My emphasis.]

Brod considered the prepositional confusion in this passage a mere error to be invisibly corrected. But a sentence that in midflow forgets the grammatical form with which it began testifies to its origin as a direct transposition of the writer's thoughts to the page. The effect of such an unamended text is perhaps akin to that of a previously unreleased musical recording, an outtake or a demo: when the mediation of the sterilizing studio production is stripped away, bungles and random background noise become audible, re-embedding listeners in the original soundscape in which the music was made. The intrusions of such incidental ele-

ments, peripheral to a final work but intrinsic to a work in progress, bring us closer to the scene of creation.

In preserving the rawness of Kafka's writing in his diary notebooks, I have aimed to contribute to an ongoing reconsideration of his legacy. After his untimely death at the age of forty in 1924, Brod famously defied his testamentary instructions to burn unread all the "diaries, manuscripts, letters . . . sketches, and so on" he left behind. Instead, as steward of his literary estate, Brod set out on what would become a decades-long undertaking of bringing Kafka's unpublished work into print. To prepare this complex, disordered mass of material for publication, Brod applied a heavy editorial hand. Only in the wake of Brod's death in 1968 did a new generation of Kafka scholars, having gained access to the posthumous papers, uncover the full extent of the interventions by which he had transformed Kafka's fragmentary, unpolished manuscripts into more structurally coherent, smoothly readable editions. Brod's more unified, accessible adaptation of Kafka's literary bequest—particularly his editions of Kafka's three unfinished novels, *The Trial*, *The Castle*, and *The Missing Person* (which Brod titled *Amerika*)—secured the deceased writer an international reputation far beyond his limited, if enthusiastic, readership during his lifetime. At the same time, Kafka's worldwide reception was shaped by a misrepresentation of what he had actually written.

Perhaps Brod felt compelled to proceed in this way by his decision to expose to public scrutiny materials Kafka had wanted destroyed. All too aware of the perfectionism underlying Kafka's dissatisfaction with much of his work, yet determined to include the posthumous writings as important parts of Kafka's literary corpus, Brod may have viewed it as his task as editor to subordinate them to the standards—as he perceived them—of the published works. Since Kafka's own standards, however, prohibited publication in the first place, Brod was caught in a double bind. Perhaps he sought to compensate for his betrayal of his friend's last wishes by convincing himself that through his revisions he was being true to a higher ideal of Kafka and his writing.

On occasion, to be sure, Brod was also simply concerned with his own reputation. In the diaries, the most flagrant example of this may be his omission of some unflattering and embarrassing lines about himself. In a December 1911 entry, Kafka recounts how Brod returned to Prague from Berlin, where he had given a reading of his own writing and a few

poems by Franz Werfel. He notes that a Berlin reviewer called Werfel "far more significant" than Brod himself, and that Brod "had to strike out this sentence before he brought the review to the *Prager Tagblatt* [a Prague daily newspaper] to have it reprinted." None of this appears in Brod's edition of the diaries. Decades after censoring a review of his reading by having the review republished without the part disparaging him, Brod censored Kafka's diary passage about the censorship, simultaneously re-censoring the original disparagement.

Leaving aside such self-interested tampering, however, Brod's editions of Kafka's unpublished writings above all promoted a certain pious myth of Kafka that Brod also fostered in his interpretive works and memoirs: that of the saintly, prophetic genius, whose purity places him at an elevated remove from the world. The later publication of more reliable German editions and new translations based on them has helped debunk this myth, opening the way for the rediscovery of a less sanctified Kafka. The critical edition of the diaries has furthered this steady dismantling of the Kafka myth, bringing to light facets of the writer formerly obscured, skewed, or neglected.

These include a more complicated sense of Kafka's sexuality. Perhaps Brod's elision of passages that could be read as homoerotic has ultimately drawn more attention to them than they otherwise would have received—still, this very elision suggests that these passages threatened the image of Kafka that Brod was striving to construct. In Kafka's description of a fellow train passenger, for example, Brod deleted the line "His apparently sizable member makes a large bulge in his pants." An entry written during Kafka's stay at a nudist sanatorium that in my translation reads "2 beautiful Swedish boys with long legs, which are so formed and taut that one could really only run one's tongue along them" Brod condensed to "Two handsome Swedish boys with long legs." At the sanatorium Kafka stood out among the naked men in keeping on his swimming trunks ("I'm known as the man with the swimming trunks") but finally allowed a new acquaintance to sketch him fully unclothed, as he recorded in his notebook: "Served as a model for Dr. Schiller. Without swimming trunks. Exhibitionistic experience." Brod's version reads only: "Posed for Dr. Sch." In an entry on Kafka and Brod's visit to a collector named Pachinger—in which Brod also cut Kafka's detailed notes on Pachinger's pornography collection and the man's tales of sexual escapades, which seem to display a lewd fascination on the diarist's

part—Brod censored the following passage: "On women: The stories about his potency make one think about how he must slowly stuff his large member into the women. His trick in earlier days was to exhaust women until they couldn't go on. Then they were without a soul, animals. Yes this submissiveness I can imagine."

References to visits to prostitutes were also disguised in the Brod edition. At the same time, Brod let some such passages stand. One can only speculate on what struck him as too unseemly in those he camouflaged. Perhaps the single line he excised from the following description of a Milan brothel is telling. In my translation:

> The girl whose belly while she was sitting was without doubt unshapely over and between her outspread legs under her translucent dress, whereas when she stood up it dissipated like theater scenery behind veils and formed an ultimately tolerable girl's belly. The French girl whose sweetness showed itself to the concluding glance above all in her round and yet detailed, chatty and affectionate knees.—An imperious monumental figure, pushing the money just earned into her stocking.—The old man laying one hand over the other on his knee.—The girl by the door, whose scowling face is Spanish, whose putting her hands on her hips is Spanish and who stretches in a bodice-like dress of prophylactic silk. Hair runs thickly from her navel to her private parts.

It was only the very last line that Brod did not see fit to include. Did he judge the passage up to that point as appropriately distanced, observational, and literary, and the offending sentence as too crudely carnal and lascivious?

Brod's alteration of another entry on a brothel visit has broader ramifications, influencing—in connection with the entry preceding it—the reader's understanding of the nature of Kafka's self-reflection in these diary pages. The two entries are from October 1911. The first is a description of the atmosphere in Prague's Altneusynagoge (Old New Synagogue) on the eve of Yom Kippur, in which Kafka is looking somewhat askance at his fellow congregants and finally remarks on the presence of "the family of the brothel owner." He then begins a new entry describing some impressions from his visit to the aforementioned brothel a few days earlier. In that entry—which begins "In the Suha b. [brothel] three

days ago"—Brod deletes the name of the establishment and Kafka's abbreviation "B." for *Bordell* or brothel. Nothing else in the entry signals unequivocally where it takes place. Consequently, the mention of "the family of the brothel owner" in the previous entry has been deprived of this retroactive context. Since it is no longer evident that this note refers to the family of the specific owner of the specific brothel Kafka himself recently visited, the previous English translator even replaced the definite article with an indefinite article: "the family of *a* brothel owner." Hence a few seemingly minor adjustments distort the substance of these diary entries. Whereas Kafka unflinchingly implicated himself in the impurity and false piety he found in the synagogue, the retouched text portrays Kafka as judging the other congregants from a loftier, less compromised position. This example is typical of how Brod's editorial choices served to tailor what Kafka revealed of himself to how Brod preferred for him to be seen.

There's a parallelism in Brod's covering up of occasional lapses in Kafka's generally positive and open-minded attitudes toward Eastern European Jews—the same lapses that the diarist himself was quick to register in his own self-examination. Between 1911 and 1912, the diary is full of Kafka's enthusiastic admiration for a traveling Yiddish theater troupe from Lemberg that gave a series of guest performances in Prague. Kafka attended more than twenty of these performances and wrote extensively about a number of them. He also developed relationships with members of the troupe, growing enamored of certain actresses and forming particularly close ties with the actor Jizchak Löwy, for whom he organized a recitation evening (see pp. 195–197 and notes 471–494) and whose stories of Jewish life in Warsaw he reproduced (see pp. 101–102 and note 231). For Löwy's recitation evening, Kafka even wrote and delivered an introductory lecture on Yiddish (see p. 195 and note 471). In his sympathetic support for the actors, he was sensitive to widespread antipathies among Prague's assimilated German-speaking Jewish bourgeoisie toward their fellow Jews from the East, who spoke Yiddish and came from an impoverished shtetl milieu often disdained in the West for its putative narrowness and backwardness. Indeed Kafka's father infuriated him by making contemptuous comments about Löwy, which included classic anti-Semitic comparisons to animals and insects: "Löwy—My father about him: He who lies down in bed with dogs gets up with bugs." (Incidentally, here it's unclear whether Kafka's

father or the writer himself is responsible for the unconventional phrasing of the usual idiom about dogs and fleas.) Scholars have suggested that such tropes, prevalent as they were in the anti-Semitic culture in which Kafka reckoned with his own Jewishness, influenced the themes of his fiction, such as Gregor Samsa waking up as a monstrous insect or Josef K.'s last words at his execution: "Like a dog!" And yet, for all Kafka's protectiveness of Löwy in the face of his father's denigration, he records the following moment from an evening with his friend at the theater: "Moreover, L. confessed his gonorrhea to me; then my hair touched his when I leaned toward his head, I grew frightened due to at least the possibility of lice." Here Kafka confronts his own Western European Jewish anxiety about the hygiene of his Eastern European Jewish companion. Brod's unwillingness to publish these lines in his edition of the diaries runs directly counter to Kafka's recognition that whatever high-mindedness he elsewhere exhibited did not necessarily exempt him from reflexive, even visceral prejudices. Brod's edition thus does a disservice to Kafka's inclination to probe these very corners of himself.

Indeed, Brod's downplaying of Kafka's complex sexuality and all-too-human impulses, ambivalences, and shortcomings goes hand in hand with his ironing out of the technical imperfections in Kafka's manuscripts. Brod sought to uphold his conception of Kafka's pure, disembodied mode of writing at the expense of all the ways the language of the diaries is contaminated by vocal habits, by the manual act of writing, by the unruly body. The picture of Kafka that emerges from the uncensored diaries as a more multifaceted, less exalted figure is inseparable from the re-embodiment of his writing.

As an unabridged, faithful transcription of Kafka's notebooks, the critical edition of the diaries represents a decisive break with Brod's methods. And yet I would stop short of asserting that the purpose of my translation is to unveil to English-speaking readers the "authentic Kafka" retrieved by the critical edition. No level of fidelity can completely close the gap between edition and original manuscript, and of course an English translation of an edition based on a manuscript is at an even further remove. Far from reifying the "real Kafka," my effort to capture the provisionality, materiality, and mutability of Kafka's handwritten notebooks relies on drawing readers' attention to the text as an artifact rather than a vehicle for determinate meaning.

This approach is exemplified by my translation of a diary entry from February 15, 1914:

> How long this Saturday and Sunday seem to me in retrospect. Yesterday afternoon I had my hair cut, then wrote the letter to Bl., then visited Max for a moment in the new apartment, then parents' evening next to L. W., then Baum (met Krätzig in the tram "emergency puncture"), then on the way back Max's complaints about my silence, then the desire for suicide, then my sister returned from the parents' evening, incapable of reporting the slightest detail.

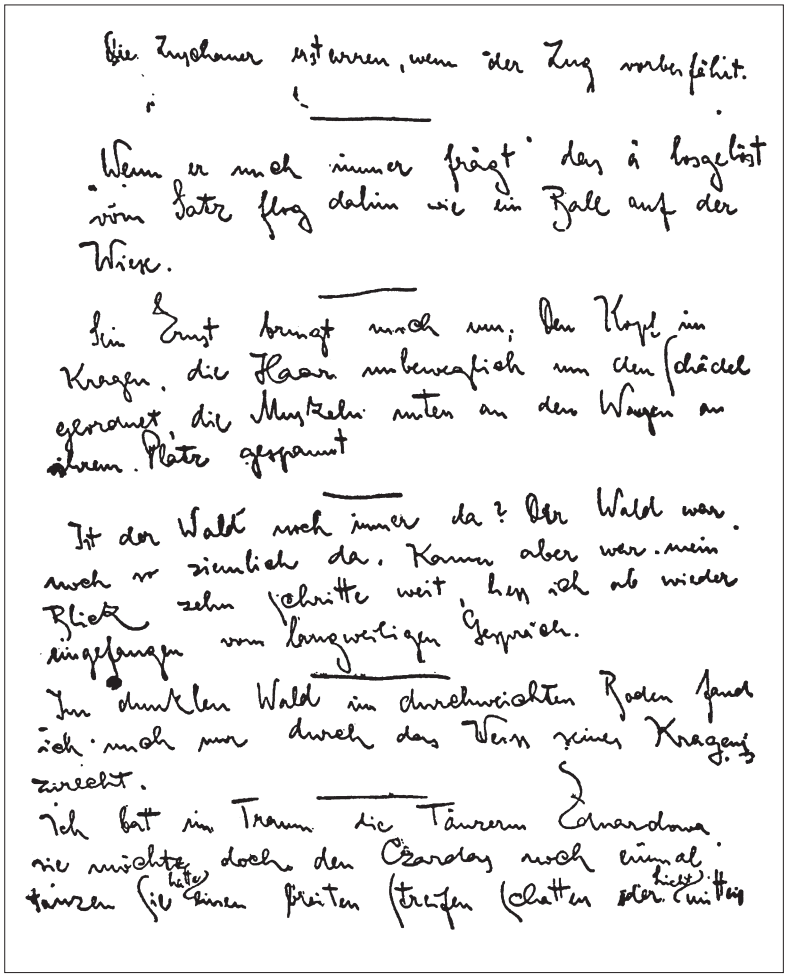
The word in the original German that I've translated as "emergency puncture" is *Notstich*. Contextually, there is no telling what, if anything, in the surrounding passage *Notstich* is related to. Within a list of Kafka's doings that weekend, it appears in parentheses following the reference to a fleeting encounter with Krätzig, a colleague of Kafka's, and it is set off by quotation marks. *Notstich* is a compound made up of *Not,* which designates a situation of necessity, emergency, distress, or adversity, and *Stich,* which means a stab, sting, stitch, prick, or pang. *Notstich* calls to my mind something like a tracheotomy, the lancing of a boil, the need to pierce a hole in something—an obstructed pipe, say, or bloated livestock—to relieve a blockage, an overaccumulation, or the like.

But what the word indicates at this point in Kafka's diaries and why he jotted it down is probably unknowable. External research has so far yielded no clues. "Emergency puncture" might well be an inaccurate translation of whatever Kafka meant when he wrote *Notstich*. What I've mirrored in my version is its textual function: "emergency puncture" is intended to be as baffling to readers as *Notstich* is, while pointing to a perhaps at least proximate semantic field. Brod simply left out the word in his edition. An empty signifier—but presumably it was not empty for Kafka. In making a note of something in one's diary, one is not necessarily concerned with its comprehensibility to any other reader. In my view, attempting to match the German with an equally indefinite and open placeholder is less of an evasion than merely omitting the word. Indeed, the term "emergency puncture" in my translation can be thought of as an emergency puncture itself, a necessary perforation in the legibility of the text.

Its very indecipherability reminds us that it belongs to a writer's note-

books: a repository of stray thoughts and paratactic associations, forming a heterogeneous assemblage that may make sense only to its maker. The way Kafka exploited the elasticity and hybridity of the diary form was particularly far-reaching. Therefore, in the absence of any hint as to their significance, I've nonetheless found it essential to include in my translation even inscrutable bits and pieces, however seemingly haphazard, erratic, or disconnected. *Notstich* as an opaque but insistently present written word—a stand-in, perhaps, for the written word itself or for the diaristic act of writing for the sake of writing—is thus emblematic of this undertaking.

A century has passed since Kafka kept these diaries. Their afterlife has consisted of a long, complex, and fraught reckoning with the question of what the principle of fidelity to the original means in this special case. If merely to transfer the contents of the surviving diaries—twelve quarto notebooks and two bundles of loose paper filled with dense handwriting, crossings-out, corrections and insertions squeezed in wherever possible, between the lines, in the margins, drawings here and there—to the typescript pages of a bound book, linear and uniform in format, is to depart from the character of the original, by what guidelines shall editors and translators make the many subsequent decisions that determine their renditions? There's no definitive answer to this question, of course, but having attempted to justify some of my choices in this preface, in the end I must let my translation itself serve as my response.



Manuscript of the first page of the *Diaries*

DIARIES

First Notebook

The spectators stiffen when the train passes.

"Whenever he ahsks me" the ah broken free from the sentence flew away like a ball in the meadow.

His seriousness is killing me. His head in his collar, his hair arranged immovably around his skull, the muscles at the bottom of his cheeks tensed in place

---

Are the woods still there? The woods were still more or less there. But scarcely had my gaze gone ten paces when I gave up ensnared again by the boring conversation.

In the dark woods in the sodden ground I found my way only by the white of his collar.

In a dream I asked the dancer Eduardova to dance the czardas one more time.[1] She had a broad streak of shadow or light in the middle of her face between the lower edge of her forehead and the center of her chin. Just then came someone with the disgusting movements of an unconscious intriguer to tell her the train was about to depart. The way she listened to the message made it terribly clear to me that she would

no longer dance. "I'm a bad awful woman am I not?" she said. Oh no I said not that and turned in no particular direction to leave.

Beforehand I questioned her about the many flowers stuck in her belt. "They're from all the princes of Europe" she said. I wondered what it meant that those flowers stuck fresh in her belt had been given to the dancer Eduardova by all the princes of Europe.

The dancer Eduardova, a lover of music, travels on the tram as everywhere else in the company of two violinists, whom she often has play. For it's not prohibited to play on the tram if the playing is good, is pleasant for the fellow passengers and costs nothing, that is, if afterward there's no collection. At first it's a bit surprising, to be sure, and for a little while everyone finds it inappropriate. But at full speed, in a strong breeze and on a quiet street it sounds pretty.

In the open air the dancer Eduardova is not as pretty as on stage. Her pallor, those cheekbones of hers, which stretch her skin so taut that scarcely more than a faint movement appears in her face, her big nose—which rises as if from a hollow—with which one can't make jokes like testing the hardness of the tip or lightly grasping it by the bridge and pulling it back and forth while saying "come along now," her broad high-waisted figure in overly pleated skirts, who can find that appealing—she almost resembles one of my aunts an elderly lady, many aging aunts of many people resemble her. But in the open air Eduardova reveals, apart from her very good feet, no compensation for these disadvantages, there's really nothing that would give rise to enthusiasm astonishment or even respect. And so quite often I've seen Eduardova treated with an indifference that even gentlemen who were usually very adroit, very correct, couldn't conceal, although naturally they took pains to do so in the presence of a dancer as famous as Eduardova was all the same.

My ear felt fresh rough cool juicy to the touch like a leaf.
I write this most definitely out of despair over my body and over the future with this body

When despair presents itself so definitely, is so closely bound to its object so firmly held back, as if by a soldier who covers the retreat and for this purpose lets himself be torn to pieces, then it is not real despair. Real despair has immediately and always overtaken its goal, (At this comma it became apparent that only the first sentence was correct)

Are you in despair?
Yes? you are in despair?
Run away? Want to hide?

I walked past the brothel as if past the house of a beloved.

Writers speak stench[2]

The seamstresses in the downpours.[3]

From the train compartment window[4]

At last after five months of my life in which nothing I wrote could satisfy me and for which no power will compensate me, though all would be

obligated to do so, it occurs to me to speak to myself once again. When I really asked myself a question, I still responded, here there was still something to be wrested from me, from this heap of straw that I have been for five months and whose fate, it seems, is to be set alight in the summer and to burn away before the spectator can blink. If only that would happen to me! And it should happen to me ten times over, for I don't even regret the unhappy time. My condition is not unhappiness, but it's not happiness either, not indifference not weakness, not fatigue, not interest in anything else, so what is it then? The fact that I don't know is probably connected with my inability to write. And this is something I think I understand without knowing its cause. For whatever things occur to me occur not from the root, but beginning somewhere toward their middle. Just let someone try to hold them, let someone try to hold and cling to a blade of grass that only starts growing from the middle. Perhaps some can, Japanese acrobats, for example, who climb a ladder that isn't resting on the ground but on the upturned soles of a partner lying on his back and isn't leaning against a wall but goes straight up into the air.[5] This is more than I can manage, not to mention the fact that my ladder doesn't have even those soles at its disposal. That's not all, of course, and such a question still isn't enough to make me speak. But each day at least one line should be pointed at me as people are now pointing telescopes at the comet.[6] And if I would then appear once before that sentence, lured by that sentence, as I was last Christmas, for example, when I had gone so far that I could only barely contain myself and when I really seemed to be on the last rung of my ladder, which, however, stood steadily on the ground and against the wall. But what a ground! what a wall! And yet that ladder didn't fall, so firmly did my feet press it against the ground, so firmly did my feet raise it against the wall.

Today, for example, I committed three impertinences, toward a conductor, toward a superior of mine, well there were only 2, but they're plaguing me like stomach pains. Coming from anyone they would have been impertinences, all the more so coming from me. Thus I went outside myself, fought in the air in the mist and worst of all no one noticed that I committed, had to commit, the impertinence as an impertinence toward my companions too, had to bear the right expression, the responsibility; but the most awful thing was when one of my acquaintances took this impertinence not as a sign of a certain character but as the character itself, called my attention to my impertinence and admired it. Why don't I stay within myself? To be sure, I now tell myself: look, the world lets you strike it, the conductor and your superior remained calm as you left, the latter even said goodbye. But that means nothing. You can attain nothing when you abandon yourself, but what do you miss anyhow in your circle. To this speech I respond only: I too would rather receive a beating within the circle than myself give a beating outside it, but where the devil is this circle? For a while I did see it lying on the earth, as if sprayed there with lime, but now it just hovers around me, indeed doesn't even hover.

17/18 *(18/19)* May *(1910)*
Comet Night

Was together with Blei, his wife & his child,[7] at times heard myself in myself, roughly like the whimpering of a young cat, but still.

How many days have again gone by in silence; today is the 29th of May. Do I lack even the resolve to take this penholder, this piece of wood, in my hand every day. I suppose I do lack it. I row, ride, swim, lie in the sun.[8] Therefore my calves are good, my thighs not bad, my belly is passable, but my chest is very shabby and when my head on my neck

---

Sunday, 19 June $\overline{10}$ slept woke up, slept, woke up, miserable life

---

When I think about it, I must say that my education has in some respects done me great harm. I certainly wasn't educated in some remote place, say, in a ruin in the mountains, against that I couldn't utter so much as

a word of reproach. At the risk of being misunderstood by every last one of my former teachers, I would gladly and preferably have been that little ruin dweller, burnt by the sun, which there in the midst of the rubble would have shone for me from all sides on the lukewarm ivy, even if at first I would have been weak under the pressure of my good qualities, which would have shot up in me with the power of weeds[9]

When I think about it, I must say that my education has in some respects done me great harm. This reproach applies to many people namely my parents, some relatives, several visitors to our house, various writers, one cook in particular who took me to school for a year,[10] a crowd of teachers, (whom I have to press close together in my memory, or else one will escape me here and there but since I've packed them so tightly together, the whole again crumbles away in places) a school inspector slowly walking passersby in short this reproach winds its way like a dagger through society. I will hear no contradiction to this reproach, since I've already heard too many and since in most of the contradictions I've also been refuted, I include these contradictions in my reproach and now declare my education and this refutation have in a number of respects done me great harm.

Often I reflect on it and then I always must say that my education has in some ways done me great harm. This reproach is directed against many people, indeed they stand here together, as in old group pictures they don't know what to do with each other, at the moment it doesn't occur to them to lower their eyes and in their anticipation they don't dare to smile. My parents are there, some relatives some teachers, one cook in particular, some girls from dancing lessons, some visitors to our house from earlier days, some writers, a swimming master, an usher, a school inspector, then some people whom I met only once on the street and others whom I can't remember at the moment and those whom I will never again remember and finally those whose instruction I being somehow distracted at the time didn't notice at all, in short there are so many that one must take care not to mention anyone twice. And I voice my reproach to all of them, introduce them to each other in this way, but tolerate no contradiction. For I have truly endured enough contra-

dictions already and since in most of them I have been refuted, I have no choice but to include these refutations too in my reproach and to say that besides my education these refutations too have in some ways done me great harm.

Does one expect perhaps that I was educated in some remote place? No, in the middle of the city, I was educated in the middle of the city. Not, for example, in a ruin in the mountains or by a lake. My parents and their followers were until now covered with my reproach and gray; now they easily brush it aside and smile, because I have withdrawn my hands from them and brought them to my forehead and am thinking: I should have been the little ruin dweller, hearkening to the cries of the jackdaws, flown over by their shadows, cooling off under the moon, burnt by the sun, which, streaming through the rubble, would have shone for me from all sides on my bed of ivy, even if at first I would have been a little weak under the pressure of my good qualities which would have had to grow in me with the power of weeds.

Often I reflect on it and let my thoughts take their course without interfering and always, whichever way I look at it, I come to the conclusion that my education has in some ways done me terrible harm. This realization contains a reproach that is directed against many people. There are my parents, with my relatives, one cook in particular, my teachers, some writers, families friendly with mine, a swimming master, natives of summer resorts, some ladies in the city park though to look at them one wouldn't at all think so, a hairdresser a beggar woman, a helmsman my family doctor and many others and there would be even more if I were inclined and able to name them all in short there are so many that one must take care not to mention anyone in this crowd twice. Now one might think that such multitudes would be enough to make a reproach lose firmness, that it would simply have to lose firmness, for a reproach is not a commander, it only goes straight ahead and doesn't know how to spread out. Especially in this case, when it is directed against persons in the past. These persons may be held fast in memory with a forgotten energy, they will hardly have a floor left under them and even their legs will by now be smoke. And some benefit is now supposed to be derived from reproaching people in such a condition for mistakes they made once upon a time in the education of a boy who is now as incomprehen-

sible to them as they are to us. But one cannot even make them remember that time, they can remember nothing and if one presses them, they brush one silently aside, no one can force them to do it, but obviously one cannot even speak of forcing, for most likely they don't so much as hear the words. They stand there like tired dogs because they use up all their strength to remain upright in one's memory. But if one truly managed to make them hear and speak, one's ears would simply buzz with counter-reproaches, for people take with them into the beyond their belief in the venerability of the dead and from there espouse it with tenfold conviction. And if this opinion were perhaps incorrect and the dead stood in especially great awe of the living, then they would be all the more committed to their own lived past, which is closest to them, after all, and again our ears would buzz. And if this opinion too were incorrect, and the dead were particularly impartial, even then they could never consent to being disturbed with unprovable reproaches. For even from person to person such reproaches are unprovable. The mere existence of past mistakes in education cannot be proven, much less their authorship. And now show me the reproach that in such a situation wouldn't turn into a sigh.

That is the reproach I have to level. Its core is sound, it has theoretical support. What has really been spoiled in me, however, I forget for the time being or forgive and don't yet make any fuss about it. On the other hand I can prove at any moment that my education wanted to make me into a different person than the one I have become. It is thus for the harm that my educators could have inflicted on me in accordance with their intentions that I reproach them, I demand from their hands the person I now am and since they cannot give him to me I make for them out of reproach and laughter a drumbeat into the world beyond. Yet all this only serves another purpose. The reproach that they have spoiled a part of me have spoiled a good beautiful part—in dreams it sometimes appears to me the way a dead bride appears to others—this reproach that is always on the verge of becoming a sigh, above all it should make its way across unharmed as an honest reproach which it also is. Thus it happens, the large reproach to which nothing can happen takes the small one by the hand, if the large one walks the small one hops, but once the small one has arrived on the other side, it distinguishes itself, as we've always expected and to accompany the drum it blows the trumpet.

Often I reflect on it and let my thoughts take their course, without interfering, but I always come to the conclusion that my education has spoiled me more than I can understand. In my external appearance I'm a person like others, for my physical education kept as much to the ordinary as my body too was ordinary, and even if I'm rather short and somewhat fat, I'm still appealing to many people, even girls. About that there's nothing to say. Just recently one of them said something very reasonable "Oh, if only I could see you naked one day then you must be especially pretty and kissable" she said. But if I were missing my upper lip here, an ear there, a rib here, a finger there, if I had hairless spots on my head and pockmarks on my face, it still wouldn't be an adequate counterpart to my inner imperfection. This imperfection is not innate and is therefore all the more painful to bear. For like everyone I too have in me from birth my center of gravity, which not even the most foolish education could displace. This good center of gravity I still have but to some extent I no longer have the body that goes with it. And a center of gravity that has no work to do turns into lead and lodges in the body like a bullet. But that imperfection is not deserved either, I have suffered its emergence through no fault of my own. That is why I can find remorse nowhere inside me, however much I search for it. For remorse would be good for me, it weeps itself out within itself; it takes the pain aside and settles everything alone like an affair of honor; we remain upright because it relieves us.

My imperfection is, as I said not innate, not deserved, nonetheless I endure it better than others who with great work of their imagination and selected aids endure much smaller misfortune an abhorrent wife, for example, impoverished circumstances, miserable professions and am at the same time not at all black in the face with despair, but white and red

I wouldn't be so if my education had penetrated me as deeply as it wanted to. Perhaps my youth was too brief for that, in that case I praise its brevity even now in my forties at the top of my voice. That alone made it possible for me to have powers left to become aware of the losses of my youth, further, to get over those losses, further, to reproach the past in all directions and finally a remnant of power for myself. But all these powers are themselves only a remnant of those I possessed as a child, which exposed me more than others to the corrupters of youth, indeed, a good racing car is the first to be pursued and overtaken by dust and wind and the obstacles fly toward its wheels so swiftly that one should almost believe in love.

What I still am now becomes clearest to me in the power with which the reproaches want out of me. There were times when I had in me nothing but reproaches driven by rage, so that despite my physical well-being I held on to strangers in the street, because the reproaches inside me threw themselves from one side to the other, like water in a basin being carried quickly.

Those times are over. The reproaches lie around in me like strange tools that I hardly have the courage to seize and lift anymore. At the same time the corruption by my old education seems more and more to be at work in me anew, the craving to remember, perhaps a general quality of bachelors of my age opens my heart again to those people my reproaches should strike and an event like yesterday's once as frequent as eating is now so rare that I make a note of it.

But even beyond that I myself I who have now put down the pen to open the window am perhaps my attackers' best helper. For I underestimate myself and this by itself means an overestimation of others but I overestimate them even apart from that and besides I also do myself harm directly. When the urge to reproach overcomes me, I look out the window. Who can deny that the fishermen are sitting there in their boats like students who have been carried out of school onto the river; true, their stillness is often incomprehensible like that of the flies on the windowpanes. And naturally the trams cross the bridge as always with a coarsened rush of wind and ring like damaged clocks, no doubt that the policeman black from bottom to top with the yellow light of the medal on his chest is reminiscent of nothing but hell and with thoughts similar to mine now contemplates a fisherman who suddenly, is he weeping is he having a vision or is the cork jerking, bends down to the edge of the boat.[11] All that is right but in its time now only the reproaches are right.

They are directed against many people, this can be frightening and not only I but also everyone else would rather look out the open window at the river. There are my parents and relatives, the fact that they have done me harm out of love makes their guilt still greater, for how much good they could have done me out of love, then families friendly with mine with an evil eye out of a sense of guilt they make themselves heavy and refuse to rise into memory, then the crowds of nursemaids, teachers and writers and one cook in particular among them, then all blending together in punishment a family doctor, a hairdresser, a helmsman, a beggar woman, a paper salesman, a park watchman, a swimming mas-

ter then unknown ladies from the city park though to look at them one wouldn't at all think so, natives of summer resorts as a mockery of innocent nature and many others; but there would be even more if I were inclined and able to mention them all by name, in short there are so many that one must take care not to mention anyone twice.

I often reflect on it and let my thoughts take their course without interfering, but I always come to the same conclusion, that my education has spoiled me more than everyone I know and more than I comprehend. Yet I can speak about this only once in a while, for if someone asks me: "Really? Is that possible? Is one supposed to believe that" then out of nervous fear I immediately try to qualify it.

Externally I look like everyone else; have legs torso and head, pants, coat and hat; I was made to do plenty of gymnastics and if I have nonetheless remained rather short and weak it was simply not to be avoided. Besides, I am appealing to many people, even young girls, and those to whom I am not appealing still find me tolerable.

It is reported and we are disposed to believe that men in danger have no regard for even beautiful unknown women; they push them against the wall, push them with head and hands, knees and elbows, if they are ever hindered by these women from fleeing the burning theater. Then our chatty women fall silent, their endless talking gets a last word and period, their eyebrows rise from their resting position, the breathing movement of their thighs and hips ceases, their mouths, closed only loosely in fear, take in more air than usual and their cheeks seem a little puffed out.[12]

Sand: The French are all actors; but only the weakest among them act in the theater[13]

Claqueurs in the French theaters: commanders in the orchestra. Ha-ha for the next rows, dropping of newspaper for the men on the gallery

---

Wooden mallet signals the beginning[14]

19 / II 11

When I tried to get out of bed today I simply collapsed.[15] There's a very simple reason for it, I am completely overworked. Not by the office[16] but by my other work. The office plays an innocent part in it only insofar as, if I didn't have to go there, I could live in peace for my work and wouldn't have to spend those 6 hours a day there, which have so tormented me that you cannot imagine it, especially on Friday and Saturday, because I was full of my concerns. In the end as I am well aware this is only chatter, it's my fault and the office has the clearest and most justified claims on me. But for me it is a horrible double life from which insanity is probably the only way out. I am writing this in the good morning light and would certainly not be writing it if it weren't so true and if I didn't love you as a son does.

Incidentally I will certainly have recovered by tomorrow and will come to the office, where the first thing I will hear will be that you want me out of your department.

19 II 11

The special nature of my inspiration in which I the happiest and unhappiest of men am now going to bed at 2 o'clock at night [perhaps, if I can only bear the thought of it, it will remain, for it is higher than all before] is that I can do anything, not only with regard to a particular work. When I write down a sentence at random, for example, He looked out the window it is already perfect.

"Will you be staying here long?" I asked. With this sudden burst of speech some saliva flew out of my mouth as a bad omen.

Is it disturbing you? If it's disturbing you or perhaps keeping you from going up I'll leave immediately, but otherwise I'd like to stay, because I'm tired.[17]

---

28 III 11[18] Painter Pollak-Karlin, his wife[19] two large wide upper front teeth, which sharpen the large rather flat face, Frau Hofrat Bittner, mother of the composer,[20] whose old age pushes out her strong skeleton

so that at least while sitting she looks like a man:—Dr. Steiner's absent disciples make such heavy demands on him—During the lecture the dead press so closely toward him. Thirst for knowledge? But are they actually in need of it? Apparently so.—Sleeps 2 hours. Ever since his electric light was cut off once, he always has a candle with him.—He was very close to Christ.—He produced his play in Munich.[21] ("You can study it for a year and won't understand it") he designed the costumes, wrote the music.—He instructed a chemist.—Löwy Simon silk merchant in Paris Quai Moncey got the best business advice from him. He translated his works into French. The Hofrat's wife therefore had in her notebook "How Does One Attain Knowledge of Higher Worlds? at S. Löwy's in Paris."[22]—In the Vienna lodge there's a theosophist 65 years old, tremendously strong, previously a big drinker with a thick head, who constantly believes and constantly has doubts. It is supposed to have been very funny how during a congress in Budapest at a dinner on the Blocksberg one moonlit evening, when Dr. Steiner unexpectedly joined the gathering, he hid in fear with his mug behind a beer barrel (although Dr. Steiner would not have been angry about it)—He might not be the greatest contemporary spiritual researcher, but he alone has been given the task of uniting theosophy with science. And that's why he knows everything.—

Once a botanist, a great occult master, came to his native village. He enlightened him.[23]—That I'm going to call on Dr. Steiner was interpreted for me by the lady as a dawning recollection.—The lady's doctor, when she showed the first signs of influenza, asked Dr. Steiner for a remedy, prescribed this to the lady and thereby immediately restored her to health.—A French woman said goodbye to him with "Au revoir." He shook his hand behind her. Two months later she died. A similar Munich case.—A Munich doctor cures his patients with colors determined by Dr. Steiner.[24] He also sends them to the Pinakothek with the instruction to concentrate for half an hour or longer in front of a particular painting.—Downfall of the Atlantean world, Lemurian downfall and now the one through egoism.—We are living in a decisive time. Dr. Steiner's effort will succeed if only the Ahrimanic forces don't prevail.—He eats 2 liters of almond milk and fruits that grow high up.—He communicates with his absent disciples by means of thought-forms that he sends out to them without occupying himself further with them after their production. But they soon wear out and he has to reconstitute them—Frau Fanta: I have a bad memory. Dr. St. Don't eat eggs.

My visit to Dr. Steiner.[25]
A woman is already waiting (upstairs on the 3rd floor of the Viktoria Hotel on Jungmannsstrasse)[26] but implores me to go in before her. We wait. The secretary comes and holds out hope to us. Glancing down a corridor, I see him. A moment later he comes toward us with arms half spread. The woman declares that I was here first. Now I walk behind him as he leads me into his room. His black frock coat,[27] which on lecture evenings appears polished, (not polished, but only shiny due to its pure black) is now in the light of day (3 o'clock in the afternoon) dusty and even stained especially on the back and shoulders. In his room I try to show my humility, which I cannot feel, by looking for a ridiculous place for my hat; I put it on a small wooden stand for lacing boots. Table in the middle, I sit facing the window, he on the left side of the table. On the table some papers with a few drawings, which recall those from the lectures on occult physiology.[28] A magazine Annalen für Naturphilosophie covers a small pile of books, which seem to be lying around elsewhere too.[29] Only you can't look around, because he keeps trying to hold you with his gaze. But whenever he doesn't do so, you have to watch out for the return of the gaze. He begins with a few loose sentences: So you're Dr. Kafka? Have you been interested in theosophy long? But I press forward with my prepared speech: I feel a large part of my being striving toward theosophy, but at the same time I have the utmost fear of it. I'm afraid, namely, that it will bring about a new confusion, which would be very bad for me since my present unhappiness itself consists of nothing but confusion. This confusion lies in the following: My happiness, my abilities and any possibility of being in some way useful have always resided in the literary realm. And here I have, to be sure, experienced states (not many) that are in my opinion very close to the clairvoyant states described by you Herr Doktor,[30] in which I dwelled completely in every idea, but also filled every idea and in which I felt myself not only at my own limits, but at the limits of the human in general. Only the calm of enthusiasm, which is probably peculiar to the clairvoyant, was still missing from those states, even if not entirely. I conclude this from the fact that I have not written the best of my works in those states.—I cannot now devote myself fully to this literary realm, as would be necessary, and indeed for various reasons. Leaving aside my family circumstances, I couldn't live off literature if for no other reason than the slow emer-

gence of my works and their special character; moreover, my health and my character also hinder me from devoting myself to what is in the most favorable case an uncertain life. I have therefore become an official in a social insurance institute. Now these two professions could never tolerate each other and permit a shared happiness. The least happiness in one becomes a great unhappiness in the other. If I have written something good one evening, I am aflame the next day in the office and can accomplish nothing. This back-and-forth keeps getting worse. In the office I outwardly live up to my duties, but not my inner duties and every unfulfilled inner duty turns into an unhappiness that never leaves me. And to these two never-to-be-balanced endeavors am I now to add theosophy as a third? Won't it disturb both sides and itself be disturbed by both? Will I, already at present such an unhappy person be able to bring the 3 to a conclusion? I have come Herr Doktor to ask you this, for I sense that, if you consider me capable of it, I could actually take it on.

He listened very attentively, without appearing to observe me at all, completely devoted to my words. He nodded from time to time, which he seems to consider an aid to strong concentration. At first a quiet head cold bothered him, his nose was running, he kept working the handkerchief deep into his nose, one finger at each nostril

---

Since in contemporary Western European Jewish stories the reader has grown accustomed to immediately seeking and finding under or over the story the solution to the Jewish question too, but in "Jüdinnen" such a solution is not shown or even presumed, it is possible that the reader will without further ado recognize in this a deficiency of "Jüdinnen," and will look on only reluctantly if Jews are supposed to be walking around in the light of day without political encouragement from past or future. Here he must tell himself that, especially since the rise of Zionism, the possibilities for a solution are so clearly arrayed around the Jewish problem that in the end a turn of the writer's body is all that's required to find a particular solution appropriate to the part of the problem under consideration.[31]

I sensed at the sight of him what pains he had taken for my sake, which now—perhaps only because he was weary—gave him this certainty.

Wouldn't another little exertion have sufficed and the deception would have worked, perhaps worked even now. Did I defend myself, then? I did stand stubbornly here outside the house, but just as stubbornly I hesitated to go up. Was I waiting until the guests would come, singing, to fetch me?[32]

---

15 August 1911 The time that has now gone by, in which I haven't written a word, has been important for me because at the swimming schools in Prague,[33] Königssaal and Czernoschitz[34] I have stopped being ashamed of my body. How late I catch up on my education now at the age of 28, it would be called a delayed start in a race. And perhaps the harm of such a misfortune consists not in the fact that you don't win; that is actually only the still visible, clear, sound kernel of the misfortune, which goes on to blur and become boundless, driving you, who should run around the circle, into the interior of the circle. Aside from that I have also noticed many other things about myself in this time, which has to a small extent also been happy, and will try to write them down in the next few days.

---

20 VIII 11

I have the unhappy belief that I don't have time for the slightest good work, for I really don't have time to spread myself out in all directions for a story, as I would have to. But then I believe again that my trip[35] will turn out better, that I will take things in better, if I'm loosened up by a little writing and so I try again.

I sensed at the sight of him what pains he had taken for my sake, which now, perhaps only because he was weary, gave him this certainty. Wouldn't another little exertion have sufficed and the deception would have worked, perhaps worked even now. Did I defend myself, then? I did stand stubbornly here outside the house, but just as stubbornly I hesitated to go up. Was I waiting until the guests came, singing, to fetch me?[36]

I have been reading about Dickens. Is it so hard and can an outsider comprehend that one experiences a story in oneself from its beginning

from the distant point to the approaching locomotive of steel, coal and steam, even now does not abandon it but wants to be chased by it and, having time for this, is chased by it and runs in front of it by one's own impetus wherever it thrusts and wherever one lures it.

I can't understand and can't even believe it. I live only here and there in a little word, in whose vowel ("thrusts" above), for example, I lose my useless head for a moment. First and last letter are beginning and end of my fishlike feeling.

24 August 1911
Sitting with acquaintances outdoors at a coffeehouse table and looking at a woman at the next table who has just arrived, breathes heavily under large breasts and with a heated shiny brownish face sits down. She leans her head back, a heavy down becomes visible, she turns her eyes upward, almost in the way she might sometimes look at her husband, who is now reading an illustrated paper next to her. If only one could persuade her that next to one's wife in a coffeehouse one is permitted to read at most a newspaper but never a magazine. A moment makes her aware of her corpulence and she moves away from the table a little.

---

26 Aug. *(1911)*[37] Tomorrow I'm supposed to leave for Italy.[38] This evening my father was so agitated that he couldn't fall asleep, because he was completely stricken with worry about the shop and with his thereby awakened illness. A wet cloth on his heart, nausea, shortness of breath, sighing while walking back and forth. My mother in her fear finds new consolation.[39] He has always been so energetic, he has always gotten over everything and now—I say that the misery with the shop could last only another ¼ year, then everything should be all right. He walks up and down sighing and shaking his head. It's clear that from his point of view his worries are not taken off his shoulders or so much as lightened by us, but even from our point of view they are not, even in our best intentions there's some conviction, however sad, that he must provide for his family.—Later I thought, he is lying beside my mother, let him press himself against her, close kindred flesh must be soothing.—With

his frequent yawning or his incidentally not unappetizing reaching into his nose, my father produces a slight scarcely perceptible reassurance about his condition, although when he is well he in general doesn't do this. Ottla[40] has confirmed this for me.—My poor mother wants to go to the landlord[41] tomorrow to beg.

26 Sept. 1911 The artist Kubin[42] recommends Regulin as a laxative, a crushed seaweed that swells in the intestine makes it tremble, thus acts mechanically in contrast to the unhealthy chemical effect of other laxatives, which merely tear through the feces thus leave them clinging to the intestinal walls.—He met Hamsun at Langen's.[43] He smirks for no reason. During the conversation, without interrupting it, he lifted his foot onto his knee, took a large pair of paper scissors from the table and cut off the fringes of his pants all around.[44] Shabbily dressed with some more valuable detail such as a tie.—Stories of an artists' boardinghouse in Munich where painters and veterinarians lived (the school for the latter was nearby) and where things were so dissolute that the windows of the house across the street, from where there was a good view were rented out. To satisfy these spectators, a boarder would sometimes jump onto the windowsill and spoon up his soup pot in a monkey posture.—A maker of false antiques who made them look weathered by riddling them with shot and who said of a table: Now we have to drink coffee on it three more times, then it can be sent off to the Innsbruck museum.—Kubin himself: very strong, but somewhat uniform movement of his face, with the same muscle tension he describes the most varied things. Looks different in age, size and strength depending on whether he is sitting, standing up, has on just a suit or an overcoat

Thurs 27 IX 11 Yesterday on Wenzelsplatz encountered 2 girls, kept my eyes too long on one of them, while it was the other who, as became apparent too late, was wearing a wide brown pleated coat as soft as household attire and a little open in front, had a delicate neck and delicate nose. Her hair was in an already forgotten way beautiful.—Old man with loosely hanging pants on the Belvedere.[45] He whistles; when I look at him, he stops; if I look away, he begins again; finally he whistles even when I look at him.—The beautiful large button beautifully attached at

the bottom of the sleeve of a girl's dress. The dress worn beautifully too floating over American boots. How rarely I achieve something beautiful and this unnoticed button and its unknowing dressmaker achieve it.—The storyteller on the way to the Belvedere, whose lively eyes independent of the words she was saying at the moment contentedly surveyed her story to its end—Powerful half turn of the neck of a strong girl,

29 IX 11 Goethe's diaries: A person who has no diary is in a false position in the face of a diary. When, for example, he reads in Goethe's diaries "11 I 1797 busy at home all day with various arrangements" it seems to him as if he himself had never done so little in a day.[46]—Goethe's travel observations different from today's, because made from a mail coach with the slow changes of the terrain they develop more simply and can be followed much more easily even by someone who doesn't know those regions. A calm positively scenic thinking sets in. Since the region presents itself unharmed in its native character to the passenger in the carriage and the country roads too cut through the country much more naturally than the railroad tracks, to which they perhaps stand in the same relation as rivers to canals, no violence is required from the viewer either and without great effort he can see systematically. Hence there are few momentary observations, mostly only indoors where certain people immediately surge up boundlessly before one's eyes, such as Austrian officers in Heidelberg,[47] on the other hand the passage about the men in Wiesenheim is closer to the landscape "they wear blue coats and white vests adorned with woven flowers"[48] (quoted from memory). Wrote down a lot about the Rhine Falls near Schaffhausen in the middle in larger letters "Excited ideas"[49]

Cabaret Lucerna.[50] Lucie König[51] displays photographs with old hairstyles. Worn face. Sometimes she achieves something with her nose thrust high, with her arm upraised and a turn of all her fingers. Flabby face.—Longhen (painter Pittermann)[52] comic facial expressions. A performance that is obviously without enthusiasm and yet cannot be thought so listless, because then it couldn't be carried out every evening, especially since even when it was invented it was so listless that no satisfactory schema arose that would make the quite frequent appearance of

the whole person unnecessary. Pretty clown-jump over a chair into the emptiness of the wings. The whole thing is reminiscent of a presentation in private company where one applauds an arduous insignificant performance with particular vigor out of social necessity, to ensure that the minus of the performance is evenly rounded off by the plus of the applause.—Singer Vašata.[53] So bad that one loses oneself in the sight of him. But because he is a strong person, he still keeps the audience's attention halfway concentrated with an animal power undoubtedly perceived only by me.—Grünbaum[54] is effective with the supposedly only apparent hopelessness of his existence.—Odys dancer.[55] Stiff hips. Real fleshlessness. To me red knees suit the dance "Frühlingsstimmung."

30 IX 1911

The girl in the next room the day before yesterday (Helli Haas).[56] I was lying on the sofa and on the brink of half-sleep heard her voice. I had the impression that she was especially heavily dressed, not only in her clothes, but also in the whole next room, with only her formed, naked round, strong dark shoulder, which I had seen in the bathhouse,[57] prevailing against her clothes. For a moment she seemed to me to be steaming and to be filling the whole next room with her vapors. Then she stood in a bodice of an ash-gray color, which stuck out so far from her body at the bottom that one could sit down on it and so, in a way, ride.

More Kubin: The habit of repeating the other person's last words in an approving tone under any circumstances even if one's own elaboration of them reveals that one doesn't at all agree with the other person. Annoying.—Listening to his many stories, one can forget what he is worth. Suddenly one is reminded of it and is frightened. There was talk of an establishment we wanted to visit being dangerous; he said he wouldn't go there; I asked him whether he was afraid he replied and moreover still had his arm linked in mine: Of course, I'm young and still have a lot ahead of me.—All evening he spoke often and in my opinion completely seriously about my constipation and his own. Toward midnight when I let my hand hang over the edge of the table he saw part of my arm and cried: But you're really sick. From then on treated me even

more indulgently and later also fended off the others who wanted to talk me into going to the b.[58] with them. When we had already said goodbye, he called to me from a distance "Regulin!"

Tucholski and Safranski.[59] The aspirated Berlin dialect in which the voice needs pauses for rest, which are formed by "nich." The former a completely consistent person of 21. From the measured and strong swing of his walking stick, which gives his shoulder a youthful lift, to his considered pleasure in and disdain for his own literary works. Wants to become a defense lawyer, sees only a few obstacles—at the same time as the possibility of their removal: his high voice that after the manly sound of the first half-hour of speaking supposedly becomes girlish—doubts about his own ability to pose, which, however, he hopes to acquire from greater world experience—finally fear of a turn to world-weariness, as he has noticed among older Berlin Jews of his bent, although for the time being he senses no trace of this. He will soon get married.

Safranski, a student of Bernhard,[60] makes faces while drawing and observing that are connected with what is drawn. Reminds me that I myself have a strong capacity for transformation, which no one notices. How often I have had to imitate Max.[61] Yesterday evening on the way home, had I been a spectator, I could have mistaken myself for Tucholski. The foreign nature must be in me then as clearly and invisibly as one of those pictures that is hidden in another, where one would also never find anything if one didn't know that it's there. During these transformations I would especially like to believe in a dulling of my own eyes.

1 October Mon *(Sunday 1911)* Altneu Synagogue[62] yesterday. Kolnidre.[63] Muffled stock exchange murmur. In the anteroom a box with the inscription: "Secret donations appease indignation." Churchlike interior. Three pious apparently Eastern Jews. In socks. Bent over their prayer books, their prayer shawls pulled over their heads, making themselves as small as possible. Two of them are weeping, moved only by the holiday? One of them might only have sore eyes, to which he briefly brings the still-folded handkerchief, only to hold his face close to the text again a

moment later. The word is not actually or mainly sung, but in the wake of the word arabesques are drawn from the word, which is spun out as fine as a hair. The little boy who without the slightest conception of the whole and without any possibility of orientation, the noise in his ears, pushes his way and is pushed through the dense crowd. The apparent clerk who shakes rapidly while praying, which is to be understood only as an attempt to give the strongest possible, even if perhaps uncomprehending, emphasis to every word while sparing the voice, which wouldn't achieve a great clear emphasis in the noise anyhow. The family of the brothel owner. In the Pinkas Synagogue[64] I was seized incomparably more powerfully by Judaism.

In the Suha b. three days ago.[65] The one Jewess with a narrow face, or rather that tapers to a narrow chin but is shaken wide by her hair worn in voluminous waves. The three small doors that lead from the inside of the building into the salon. The guests as in a police station on the stage, drinks on the table, scarcely touched, of course. The flat-faced girl in the angular dress that begins to move only far down in a hem. Some of them here and previously dressed like the marionettes for children's theaters that are sold at the Christmas market, that is, with ruffles and gold stuck on and loosely sewn on so that one can tear them off with a single pull and they then fall apart in one's fingers. The landlady with the dull blond hair pulled tight over undoubtedly disgusting pads, with the sharply descending nose, the direction of which stands in some geometric relation to the hanging breasts and the stiffly held belly, complains of headaches, which are caused by the fact that today Saturday there is such a great commotion and nothing in it.

---

on Kubin: The story about Hamsun is suspect. From his works one could tell such stories by the thousands as firsthand accounts.

---

on Goethe: "Excited ideas" are merely the ideas that the Rhine Falls excite. One sees this from a letter to Schiller.[66]—The isolated momentary observation "Castanet rhythm of the children in wooden shoes"[67] has had such an influence, has been so universally accepted that it's

unthinkable that someone, even if he had never read this remark, could feel this observation to be his own original idea.

---

2 October *(1911)* Sleepless night. The third in a row. I fall asleep easily, but after an hour I wake up as if I had laid my head in a false hole. I'm completely awake, have the feeling of having slept not at all or only under a thin skin, have the work of falling asleep ahead of me anew and feel rejected by sleep. And the rest of the night until toward 5 it goes on in such a way that I do sleep but at the same time intense dreams keep me awake. I am practically sleeping next to myself, while I myself must grapple with dreams. Toward 5 the last trace of sleep is used up, I only dream, which is a greater strain than being awake. In short I spend the whole night in the state in which a healthy person finds himself for a little while before actually falling asleep. When I wake up all the dreams are gathered around me but I take care not to think them through. Toward morning I sigh into the pillow, because for this night all hope is gone. I think of those nights at the end of which I was raised out of deep sleep and awoke as if I had been confined in a nut. A horrible apparition last night was a blind child apparently the daughter of my Leitmeritz aunt[68] who, however, has no daughter but only sons, one of whom once broke his foot. On the other hand, there were connections between this child and Dr. Marschner's daughter,[69] who, as I have recently seen, is on the way to turning from a pretty child into a fat stiffly dressed little girl. This blind or weak-sighted child had both eyes covered with a pair of glasses, the left under the rather distant lens was milky gray and roundly protuberant, the other receded and was concealed by a lens lying against it. For this lens to be inserted in an optically correct fashion, it was necessary instead of the usual holder going back over the ear to use a lever, the head of which could not be fastened otherwise than to the cheekbone, so that from this lens a little rod went down to the cheek, disappeared there in the pierced flesh and ended at the bone, while a new little wire rod came out and went back over the ear.—I believe this sleeplessness stems only from the fact that I write. For as little and as badly as I write, these small shocks make me sensitive, I feel especially toward evening and even more in the morning the wafting, the imminent possibility of great states that would tear me open and could make me capable of anything, and then the general noise that is in me and that I have no time to

command grants me no rest. In the end this noise is only a suppressed, restrained harmony, which if set free would completely fill me, indeed would expand me and even then fill me. But now, aside from raising faint hopes, this state only does me harm, since my nature doesn't have enough capacity to bear the present mixture, during the day the visible world helps me, at night all this cuts me up unhindered. This always makes me think of Paris, where at the time of the siege and later until the Commune the population of the northern and eastern suburbs, until then foreign to the Parisian, advanced in a period of months practically hour by hour through the connecting streets, moving haltingly like clock hands, into the center of Paris.

My consolation—and with it I now go to bed—is that I haven't written for so long, that therefore this writing could not yet fit into my present circumstances, that this, however, with some manliness must succeed, at least provisionally.

I was so weak today that I even told my boss the story of the child.—Now I remembered that the pair of glasses in the dream comes from my mother, who sits next to me in the evening and looks over at me during the card game[70] not very pleasantly from under her pince-nez. Her pince-nez even has, which I don't remember having noticed before the right lens closer to the eye than the left.

3 October *(1911)* The same sort of night, only fell asleep with even more difficulty. While falling asleep a vertically moving pain in my head over the root of my nose, as if from a forehead wrinkle pressed too sharply. To be as heavy as possible, which I consider good for falling asleep, I had crossed my arms and put my hands on my shoulders, so that I lay there like a soldier bearing his load. Again it was the power of my dreams which radiate even into the waking state before I fall asleep, that didn't let me sleep. In the evening and the morning the consciousness of my literary abilities is immense. I feel loosened to the bottom of my being and can draw up out of myself whatever I want. This luring forth of such powers that one then doesn't allow to work reminds me of my relationship to B.[71] Here too there are outpourings that are not released but in recoiling must annihilate themselves, except that here—

this is the difference—it is a matter of more mysterious powers and of my utmost.

On Josefsplatz[72] a large touring automobile with a family sitting tightly together drove by me. Behind the automobile, with the gasoline smell, a Paris breeze blew across my face.

Dictating a fairly long report to a district administration[73] in the office.[74] At the conclusion, which was supposed to rise to a climax, I got stuck and could do nothing but look at the typist Kaiser,[75] who, as is her habit, became especially lively, shifted her chair coughed, tapped around on the table and so drew the attention of the whole room to my misfortune.[76] The idea I've been searching for now takes on the added value that it will calm her down, and the more valuable it becomes the harder it is to find. At last I have the word "stigmatize" and the sentence that goes with it, but still hold everything in my mouth with a feeling of disgust and shame as if it were raw meat, cut out of my own flesh (so much effort has it cost me). At last I say it, but retain the great horror that everything in me is ready for a literary work and such a work would be a heavenly dissolution and a real coming alive for me, while here in the office for the sake of so wretched a document I must rob a body capable of such happiness of a piece of its flesh

---

4 *(October 1911)* I'm restless and poisonous. Yesterday before falling asleep I had in my head at the top left a flickering cool little flame. Over my left eye a tension has already taken root. When I think about it it seems to me that I couldn't stand it in the office even if I were told that in a month I would be free. And yet in the office I usually do my duty, am quite calm when I can be sure of my boss's satisfaction and don't experience my condition as horrible. Yesterday evening, moreover, I intentionally dulled myself, went for a walk, read Dickens, was then somewhat healthier and had lost the strength for sadness, which I regarded as justified even if it seemed to me to have receded somewhat, giving me hope for a better sleep. It was a little deeper too, but not enough and often interrupted. I told myself as consolation that even though I had

again suppressed the great movement that had been in me, I wouldn't let myself slip away, as I had always done in the past after such times, but rather I would remain clearly aware of the afterpains of that movement, which I had never done before. Perhaps in this way I could find a hidden steadfastness in myself.

Toward evening in the darkness of my room on the sofa. Why does one take quite some time to recognize a color but then after the decisive bend of the understanding quickly become ever more convinced of the color. When the light from the hall and the light from the kitchen affect the glass door from outside at the same time, greenish or rather not to depreciate the certainty of the impression, green light pours almost all the way down the panes. When the light in the hall is turned off and only the kitchen light remains, the pane closer to the kitchen turns deep blue, the other whitish blue so whitish that the whole drawing on the frosted glass (stylized poppy heads, tendrils, various four-sided figures and leaves) dissolves.—The lights and shadows cast on the walls and the ceiling by the electric light on the street and bridge[77] down below are disordered partly marred overlapping and hard to scrutinize. When the electric arc lamps down below were erected and when this room was furnished, there was simply no housewifely consideration for how my room would look from the sofa at this hour without its own lighting.—The glow cast up to the ceiling by the tram passing down below runs whitish, hazy and mechanically halting along the one wall and ceiling, broken at the line where they meet.—On the linen cabinet, which is bathed on top in a greenish pure light, the globe stands in the first fresh full reflection of the street lighting, has a luminous spot on its curve and looks as if the brightness were too strong for it, even though the light passes over its smoothness and leaves it behind rather brownish, like a russet apple.—On the wall over the bed the light from the hall brings forth a broad glow, which is bounded in a curved line from the head of the bed, appears to press down the bed, widens the dark bedposts, raises the ceiling over the bed

---

5 *(October 1911)* For the first time in several days restlessness again even before this writing. Rage at my sister,[78] who comes into the room and sits

down at the table with a book; waiting for the next little opportunity for the explosion of this rage. Finally she takes a visiting card from the case and picks her teeth with it. With departing rage, of which only a sharp steam remains behind in my head, and dawning relief and confidence I begin to write.

Yesterday evening Cafe Savoy. Jewish company[79]—Frau Klug "male impersonator." In a caftan short black pants, white stockings, a white shirt of thin wool that rises out of a black vest, is held in front at the neck by a thread button and then folds over into a broad, loose, flaring collar. On her head, enclosing her woman's hair but necessary anyhow and worn by her husband too, a small dark brimless cap, over it a large soft black hat with an upturned brim.[80]—I actually don't know what sort of people these are whom she and her husband portray. If I wanted to explain them to someone without confessing my ignorance, I would find that I take them for community servants, for employees of the temple, notorious idlers with whom the community has come to terms, schnorrers favored for some religious reasons, people who due to their separate status are particularly close to the center of the community's life, who due to their useless wandering and spying know many songs, clearly penetrate the circumstances of all the members of the community but due to their lack of connection to professional life don't know what to do with this knowledge, people who are Jews in an especially pure form, because they live only in the religion but live in it without effort, understanding or misery. They seem to make a fool of everyone, laugh immediately after the murder of a noble Jew, sell themselves to an apostate, dance with their hands on their sidelocks in delight when the unmasked murderer poisons himself and calls upon God, and yet all this only because they are so feather-light, lie on the floor under any pressure are sensitive, weep immediately with dry faces (they weep themselves out in grimaces), but as soon as the pressure is gone summon not the least weight of their own but must immediately spring into the air. Therefore they should actually cause a play as serious as "Der Meschumed"[81] by Lateiner[82] a lot of trouble, since they are always at the front of the stage at full height and often on tiptoe or with both legs in the air and don't unravel but rather cut up the agitation of the play. But now the seriousness of the play is unreeled in words so solid, weighed even when possibly impro-

vised, taut with unified feeling that even when the plot happens only in the background of the stage, it always keeps its meaning. It is rather the 2 in caftans who are suppressed now and then, which befits their nature and despite their outspread arms and snapping fingers one sees only the murderer behind them, with the poison in him, his hand on his actually too-wide collar, staggering to the door.—The melodies are long, the body gladly entrusts itself to them. Due to their straight-running length, they are best met with the swaying of the hips, outspread arms raised and lowered in calm breathing, moving of the palms toward the temples and careful avoidance of touching. Somewhat reminiscent of the šlapak[83]—Some songs, the pronunciation "jüdische Kinderloch,"[84] some glimpses of this woman, who on the stage, because she's a Jew draws us listeners to her because we're Jews, without longing for or curiosity about Christians, sent a tremor over my cheeks. The government representative,[85] with the possible exception of a waiter and two maids standing to the left of the stage the only Christian in the hall is a pitiful person afflicted with a facial tic that especially in the left half of his face and also breaking forcefully into the right, contracts and leaves his face with the almost merciful speed I mean fleetingness of the second hand but also its regularity. When it passes over the left eye, it almost obliterates it. For this contraction new small fresh muscles have developed in the otherwise quite emaciated face.—The Talmudic melody of precise questions, entreaties or explanations: Into a pipe flows the air and takes the pipe along, while from small distant beginnings a large screw proud on the whole humble in its bends twists toward the questioned one.

6 *(October 1911)* The two old men in front at the long table by the stage. One of them rests both arms on the table and has only his face, whose false bloated redness with an irregularly four-sided, matted beard under it sadly conceals his old age, turned up to the right toward the stage, while the other directly opposite the stage holds his face, which old age has made really dry, back away from the table, on which he leans only with his left arm, and holds his right arm bent in the air to better enjoy the melody, which his toes follow and to which the short pipe in his right hand weakly yields. "Tateleben,[86] just sing along" cries the woman now to the one now to the other, bending down a little and thrusting out her arms encouragingly.

—The melodies are suited to catching every person who jumps up and embracing his whole enthusiasm without breaking apart, even if one

won't believe that they give it to him. For especially the 2 in caftans hurry to the singing, as if it were stretching their body toward its truest need and the clapping of hands during the singing clearly indicates the best wellbeing of the person in the actor.—The proprietor's children in a corner remain children in their relationship with Frau Klug on the stage and sing along, their mouths between their pursed lips full of the melody.

The play: Seidemann, a rich Jew, apparently concentrating all his criminal instincts toward that goal, was baptized twenty years ago and at that time poisoned his wife, who refused to be forced into baptism. Since then he has taken pains to forget the jargon,[87] which, to be sure, unintentionally resonates under the surface in his speech, and especially in the beginning so that the listeners notice it and because the approaching events leave time for it he constantly expresses a great disgust for all things Jewish. He intends his daughter for the officer Dragomirow, while she, who loves her cousin young Edelmann, declares to her father in a great scene straightening up in an unusual stony posture broken only at the waist that she adheres to Judaism and ends a whole act with a contemptuous laugh at the constraint imposed on her. [The Christians in the play are: a good Polish servant of Seidemann's who later contributes to his unmasking, good above all because contrasts must be gathered around Seidemann, the officer, with whom the play scarcely concerns itself apart from the portrayal of his indebtedness, because as a noble Christian he interests no one, just like a presiding judge who appears later and finally a court usher, whose maliciousness does not exceed the requirements of his position and of the merriness of the 2 caftan people, although Max calls him a pogromist.] But for whatever reasons Dragomirow can marry only if his bills of exchange, which old Edelmann possesses, are redeemed, but the latter, although he is about to depart for Palestine and although Seidemann wants to pay them in cash, will not hand them over. The daughter is haughty toward the enamored officer and boasts of her Judaism even though she is baptized, the officer doesn't know what to do and, his arms limp his hands loosely clasped below, looks at the father, seeking help. The daughter flees to Edelmann, she wants to marry her beloved, even if for the time being in secret, since according to worldly law a Jewish man is not permitted to marry a Christian woman and she obviously cannot be converted to Judaism without her father's consent. The father comes, realizes that without

trickery all would be lost and outwardly gives his blessing to this marriage. All forgive him, indeed begin to love him as if they had been in the wrong, even old Edelmann and especially he, although he knows that Seidemann poisoned his sister. (This gap might have resulted from an abridgement, or from the fact that the play is mainly spread orally from one acting troupe to another) Through this reconciliation Seidemann acquires above all Dragomirov's bills of exchange, for "you know" he says "I don't want this Dragomiriv to speak ill of the Jews" and Edelmann gives them to him for nothing, then Seidemann calls him to the portiere in the background, supposedly to show him something, and from behind stabs him fatally in the back with a knife through his dressing gown. (Between the reconciliation and the murder Seidemann was offstage for a while to think up the plan and buy the knife) In this way he intends to bring young Edelmann to the gallows, for the suspicion must fall on him, and his daughter will be free for Dragomirov. He runs away, Edelmann lies behind the portiere. The daughter appears wearing the bridal veil, on the arm of young Edelmann who has put on the prayer shawl. Her father as they see is unfortunately not yet there. Seidemann arrives and seems happy at the sight of the bridal couple. Then a man appears, perhaps Dragomirov

8 x *(1911)*

himself perhaps just the actor who plays him and actually a detective unknown to us and declares that he has to search the house "for one's life isn't safe in this house." Seidemann: Children. Don't worry, this is of course a mistake, obviously. Everything will be cleared up. Edelmann's corpse is found, young Edelmann torn from his beloved and arrested. For a whole act Seidemann with great patience and very well stressed little interjections (Yes, yes. Very good. Well that's wrong. Yes that's better. Certainly certainly.) instructs the two in caftans how to testify in court to the supposed years of enmity between old and young Edelmann. They get going with difficulty, there are many misunderstandings, thus they come forward in an improvised rehearsal of the court scene and declare that Seidemann has told them to portray the matter in the following way, until finally they have settled into that enmity so much that they even—Seidemann can no longer stop them—are capable of showing how the murder itself took place and the man stabs the woman to death with the help of a croissant, That is of course again more than will be necessary. Nonetheless Seidemann is sufficiently satisfied with the two of

them and hopes with their help for a good outcome to the trial. Here, for the religious member of the audience, without its having been stated in any way, because it's self-evident, God himself intervenes in place of the retreating writer and strikes the villain blind. In the final act the presiding judge is again the eternal Dragomirow actor (in this too the contempt for Christianity is apparent one Jewish actor can play three Christian roles well and even if he plays them badly it doesn't matter) and beside him as defense lawyer with extravagant hair and mustache, quickly recognized, Seidemann's daughter. One recognizes her quickly, but in light of Dragomirow believes for a long time that she is a substitute actor, until one realizes toward the middle of the act that she has disguised herself to save her beloved. The two in caftans are each supposed to testify individually, but they find that quite difficult since they have practiced it together. They also don't understand the judge's High German, although the defense lawyer helps him out when it gets too bad, as he has to prompt him at other times too. Then comes Seidemann, who has already tried before to direct the two in caftans by tugging at their clothing, and with his fluent firm speech, with his reasonable attitude, with his correct manner of addressing the presiding judge as opposed to the earlier witnesses he makes a good impression, which is in terrible contrast to what we know of him. His testimony is rather empty, he unfortunately knows very little about the whole case. But now comes the last witness, the servant, who, without being entirely aware of it, is Seidemann's actual accuser. He observed Seidemann's purchase of the knife, he knows that Seidemann was at Edelmann's at the decisive time, he knows finally that Seidemann hated the Jews and especially Edelmann and wanted his bills of exchange. The 2 in caftans jump up and are happy to be able to confirm all this. Seidemann defends himself as a somewhat confused man of honor. Then the talk turns to his daughter. Where is she? At home of course and will bear him out. No, that she won't do, the defense lawyer asserts and will prove it, faces the wall, takes off the wig and turns to the horrified Seidemann as his daughter. The pure white of her upper lip looks reproachful when she removes the mustache too. Seidemann has taken poison to escape earthly justice, confesses his evil deeds but hardly to the people anymore, rather to the Jewish God, in whom he now professes his faith. Meanwhile the piano player has struck up a tune, the 2 in caftans feel seized by it and must start dancing. In the background stands the united bridal couple, they

sing along, especially the serious groom in accordance with old temple custom.

First appearance of the two in caftans. They enter Seidemann's room with collection boxes on behalf of the temple. Look around, feel ill at ease, look at each other. Run their hands along the doorposts, find no mezuzahs.[88] Not by the other doors either. They refuse to believe it and jump into the air at various doors and, as if catching flies, keep hitting the tops of the doorposts with a slapping sound as they rise and fall. Unfortunately all in vain. Up to now they haven't spoken a word.

Resemblance between Frau Klug and last year's Frau Weinberg.[89] Frau Klug perhaps has a slightly weaker and more monotonous temperament, on the other hand she's prettier and more respectable. The Weinberg woman was always making the joke of bumping her fellow actors with her large behind. Moreover, she had a worse singer next to her and was completely new to us.

Male impersonator is actually a false term. Because she's clad in her caftan, her body is completely forgotten. Only by shrugging her shoulders and twisting her back as if she were being bitten by fleas does she remind us of her body. The sleeves, even though they are short, must be pulled up a bit all the time, which the spectator hopes will bring great relief to the woman, who has so much to sing out and also to explain in Talmudic fashion, and he even watches for it to happen.

Desire to see a large Yiddish theater, since the performance might well suffer from the small cast and imperfect rehearsal. Also the desire to know Yiddish literature, which apparently is allotted an uninterrupted stance of national struggle that determines every work. A stance, that is, which no literature not even that of the most oppressed people has in this pervasive fashion. Perhaps it happens among other peoples in times of struggle that the literature of national struggle rises to prominence and the enthusiasm of the audience makes other more remote works

appear national in this sense, as with the Bartered Bride,[90] but here only the works of the first sort seem to exist and indeed continuously.

The sight of the simple stage, which awaits the actors as silently as we do. Since with its 3 walls, the chair and the table it will have to suffice for all events, we expect nothing from it, rather await the actors with all our strength and are therefore unresistingly attracted by the singing behind the bare walls, which introduces the performance.

9 X 11

If I should reach the age of 40, I will probably marry an old maid with protruding upper teeth somewhat exposed by the upper lip. The upper front teeth of Frl. Kaufmann,[91] who was in Paris & London, are shifted against each other like legs crossed hastily at the knees. But I'll hardly live to be forty years old, against that prospect speaks, for example, the tension that often lies over the left half of my skull, which feels like an inner leprosy and which, when I disregard the unpleasantness and try only to contemplate it, makes the same impression on me as the sight of the skull cross sections in textbooks or as an almost painless dissection while alive, where the knife a little bit cooling, careful, often stopping and turning back, sometimes lying at rest slices paper-thin coverings into even finer divisions very close to working brain parts.

Dream from last night, which even in the morning I did not yet consider beautiful apart from a small funny scene consisting of two counter-remarks, which resulted in that tremendous dream satisfaction, but which I have forgotten. I was walking—whether Max was there right at the start I don't know—through a long row of houses at the level of the second to 3rd floor, just as one walks in corridor trains from one carriage to another. I was walking very quickly perhaps also because sometimes the house was so fragile that one hurried for that reason alone. I didn't even notice the doors between the houses, it was just a huge suite of rooms and yet not only the differences between the individual apartments but also between the houses could be discerned. They were perhaps all rooms with beds through which I passed. A typical bed has

remained in my memory, standing at my left side against the dark or dirty wall, which perhaps slants as in an attic, with a low mound of bedclothes on it and a blanket, actually only a coarse sheet, bunched up by the feet of the person who has slept here, hanging down in a corner. I felt ashamed to be walking through people's rooms at a time when many of them were still lying in their beds, therefore walked on tiptoe with large strides, by which I somehow hoped to show that I was walking through only under compulsion, was treating everything with as much care as possible and stepping lightly so that my walking through practically didn't even count. For the same reason I never turned my head in any one room and saw only either what was on the right toward the street or on the left toward the back wall. The row of apartments was often interrupted by brothels, through which, however, even though I was apparently taking this journey for their sake, I walked especially quickly, so that I remembered nothing but their being there. The last room of all the apartments, however, was again a brothel and here I remained. The wall opposite the door through which I entered, thus the last wall of the row of houses was either made of glass or broken through altogether and if I had walked on I would have fallen. It's even more likely that it was broken through, for the whores were lying toward the edge of the floor, two of them were clear to me, on the ground, the head of one hung down a little over the edge out into the open air. To the left was a solid wall, whereas the wall on the right was not complete, one saw down into the courtyard even if not to the bottom of it and a ramshackle gray staircase led down in several sections. Judging by the light in the room, the ceiling was the same as in the other rooms. I had to do mainly with the whore whose head hung down, Max with the one lying next to her on the left. I felt her legs and then kept pressing her thighs at regular intervals. My pleasure in this was so great that I was surprised that for this entertainment, which was indeed the most wonderful of all, one did not yet have to pay anything. I was convinced that I and I alone was cheating the world. Without moving her legs the whore then raised her upper body and turned her back to me, which to my horror was covered with large sealing-wax-red circles with paling edges and red splashes scattered between them. Now I noticed that her whole body was full of them, that I was holding my thumb on her thighs in such spots and that these little red particles as if from a shattered seal were on my fingers too. I stepped back among a number of men who seemed to be waiting against the wall near the entrance to the staircase, on which

a little intercourse was taking place. They were waiting the way men in the country stand together on Sunday morning at the market. Therefore it was also Sunday. Here the funny scene happened, when a man, whom I and Max had reason to fear, walked away, then came up the stairs, approached me and while I and Max were anxiously expecting some terrible threat from him, asked me a ridiculously simpleminded question. Then I stood there and watched worriedly as Max sat on the ground somewhere to the left without fear in this establishment and ate a thick potato soup, out of which the potatoes peeked in the form of large balls, mainly one of them. He pushed it with the spoon, perhaps with 2 spoons into the soup or merely rolled it.

---

10 x 11 Wrote a sophistic article for and against the institute in the Tetschner-Bodenbacher newspaper.[92]

Yesterday evening on the Graben.[93] Three actresses coming toward me from rehearsal. It's so hard to quickly become familiar with the beauty of 3 women when you also want to look at 2 actors approaching behind them with their all too swinging and also springy actors' gait. The two, of whom the one on the left with his youthfully fat face, his open overcoat flapping around his strong figure is characteristic enough for both, overtake the ladies, the one on the left on the sidewalk, the one on the right in the road down below. The one on the left grabs his hat high up, reaches in with all 5 fingers, lifts it up and calls (only now does the one on the right remember): Goodbye! Good night! But while this overtaking and greeting have separated the gentlemen, the greeted women, as if led by the one closest to the road, who seems to be the weakest and tallest, but also youngest and prettiest, continue quite unswervingly on their way with a light greeting that barely interrupts their harmonious conversation. All this seemed to me at the moment to be strong evidence that the theater relationships here are orderly and well conducted.

The day before yesterday with the Jews in Cafe Savoy. "Die Sejdernacht" by Feimann.[94] At times (at the moment the consciousness of this shot through me) we didn't intervene in the plot only because we were too excited, not because we were mere spectators.

12 x 11 Yesterday at Max's[95] wrote in the Paris diary.[96] In the semidarkness of Rittergasse, fat and warm in her autumn outfit, Rehberger,[97] whom we have known only in her summer blouse and thin little blue summer jacket in which a girl with a not entirely flawless appearance is ultimately worse than naked. Then one had seen all the more her prominent nose in her bloodless face with cheeks into which one could have pressed one's hands for a long time before any redness would have appeared, the heavy blond down accumulating on her cheek and upper lip, the stray railroad dust that had flown between nose and cheek and the sickly white in the neckline of her blouse. But today we ran after her respectfully and when I had to take my leave at the entrance to a passage[98] to Ferdinandstrasse because of unshavenness and an otherwise shabby appearance (Max was very beautiful at the moment with a black overcoat, white face and gleaming glasses) I felt afterward several little jolts of affection toward her. And when I thought about why, I kept returning to the fact that she was so warmly dressed.

---

13 x 11 Artless transition from the taut skin of my boss's bald head to the delicate wrinkles of his forehead. An obvious, quite easily imitated failing of nature, bank notes should not be made in such a way.

I didn't consider the description of Rehberger successful, but it must have actually been better than I thought or my impression of Rehberger the day before yesterday must have been so incomplete that the description corresponded to it or even surpassed it. For, when I went home yesterday evening, the description came to my mind for a moment, imperceptibly replaced the original impression and I believed I had seen Rehberger only yesterday and indeed without Max, so that I prepared to tell him about her just as I have described her for myself here.

Yesterday evening on the Schützeninsel, didn't find my colleagues and left immediately. I caused quite a stir in my short coat with the crushed soft hat in my hand, for outside it was cold, but here hot from the breath of the beer drinkers, smokers and wind players of the military band. This band was not raised very high, nor could it be, because

the hall is rather low and it filled one end of the hall to the side walls. As if installed, this crowd of musicians was pushed into this end of the hall. This impression of compactness was then lost a little in the hall, for the seats near the band were rather empty and the hall filled up only toward the middle.[99]

Talkativeness of Dr. Kafka.[100] Walked around with him for two hours behind the Franz Josef railroad station, asked him from time to time to let me leave, had interlaced my hands with impatience and listened as little as possible. It seemed to me that a person who does well in his profession, when he has talked his way into professional stories, must no longer be accountable; he becomes conscious of his proficiency, every story yields connections and indeed several, he surveys them all, because he has experienced them, must in haste and out of consideration for me withhold many, some I also destroy for him by asking questions, but thereby remind him of others, thereby show him that he also reigns deep into my own thinking, in most of the stories he himself has a great role, which he only hints at, whereby what is withheld seems to him even more significant, but now he is already so certain of my admiration that he can also complain, for even in his misfortune, his trouble, his doubt he is admirable, his opponents are also capable people and worth talking about, in a law firm that has 4 clerks and 2 bosses a dispute in which he alone opposed this firm was for weeks the daily topic of conversation among these 6 lawyers. Their best orator, a sharp lawyer, opposed him, this leads to the supreme court, the judgments of which are supposedly bad, contradictory, in a tone of leave-taking I say something in faint defense of this court, now he provides evidence that this court cannot be defended and again we must walk up and down the street, I am immediately astonished at the badness of this court, thereupon he explains why it must be so the court is overburdened, why and how, all right I have to leave, but now the court of cassation is better and the administrative court much better still and why and how, finally I can no longer be stopped, now he tries bringing up my own affairs, which are the reason I have come to him (establishment of the factory)[101] and which we have long since talked over, he hopes unconsciously to catch me in this way and to be able to lure me back to his stories. Now I say something but while speaking hold my hand out explicitly in parting and so am set free. Incidentally, he tells stories very well, in his storytell-

ing the detailed expansiveness of briefs is mixed with the lively speech one often finds among such fat, black Jews, healthy for the time being, of medium height, excited by constant cigarette smoking. Legal expressions give the speech support. Paragraphs are cited the high number of which seems to banish them into the distance. Every story is developed from the beginning, statement and counter-statement are presented and positively shaken by personal interjections, unimportant things of which no one would think are first mentioned, then called unimportant and brushed aside, ("a man, his name is not important"—) the listener is personally consulted, questioned, while the story thickens nearby, sometimes even before a story that cannot interest him at all the listener is questioned, to no avail, of course, in order to create some provisional connection, the listener's interjected remarks are inserted not immediately, which would be annoying (Kubin)[102] but, though soon, nonetheless only at the right point in the course of the story, which, flattering the listener in an objective fashion, draws him into the story, because it gives him a very special right to be a listener here.

14 x 11 Yesterday evening at the Savoy. Sulamit by A. Goldfaden.[103] Actually an opera, but every sung play is called an operetta, it seems to me that this trifle alone points to a stubborn, overhasty artistic endeavor, also impassioned for the wrong reasons, cutting through European art in a partly chance direction. The story: A hero saves a girl, who—"I pray to you great mighty God"—has lost her way in the desert and, tormented by thirst, has thrown herself into a cistern. They swear to be faithful to each other (my dear, my love, my diamond found in the desert), invoking the well and a red-eyed desert cat as witnesses. The girl, Sulamith (Fr. Tschissik),[104] is brought back to Bethlehem to her father Monoach (Tschissik)[105] by Cingitang, Absolon's savage servant (Pipes),[106] while Absolon (Klug)[107] takes another journey to Jerusalem; but there he falls in love with Awigail a rich girl from Jerusalem (Klug),[108] forgets Sulamit and marries. Sulamit waits for her beloved at home in Bethlehem. "Many people go to Yerusholayim and come back beshulim."[109] "He the fine man means to be unfaithful to me!" Through desperate outbursts she acquires an all-embracing confidence and decides to pretend to be mad so that she will not have to marry and will be able to wait. "My will is of iron, my heart I make into a fortress." And even in the madness that she now feigns for years she enjoys the memory of her beloved sadly and

loudly, with the compelled permission of everyone, for her madness has to do with only the desert, the well and the cat. With her madness she immediately drives away her 3 suitors, with whom Manoach was able to get along in peace only by organizing a lottery: Joef Gedoni (Urich)[110] "I am the strongest Jewish hero," Avidanov, the landowner (R. Pipes) and the potbellied priest Nathan (Löwy)[111] who feels himself above everyone "Give her to me, I'm dying for her." Absolon has suffered misfortune one of his children was bitten to death by a desert cat, the other falls into a well. He remembers his guilt, confesses everything to Awigail, "Restrain your tears." "Stop splitting my heart with your words." "Alas, all I say is emes."[112] Some circles of thoughts form around the two of them and die away. Is Absolon to return to Sulamith and abandon Awigail? Sulamit too deserves rachmones.[113] Finally Awigail releases him. In Bethlehem Manoach laments over his daughter "Woe o my old years." Absolon cures her with his voice. "The rest Father I will tell you later." Awigail sinks away down there in the Jerusalem vineyard, as justification Absolon has only his heroism.

At the end of the performance we are still waiting for the actor Löwy, whom I would admire in the dust. He is to "announce" as usual. "Dear guests, I thank you in all our names for attending and cordially invite you to tomorrow's performance, in which the world-famous masterpiece—by—will be presented. Until we meet again!" Off with waving of hats. Instead we see the curtain first being held tightly shut, then tentatively pulled apart a bit again. This lasts a rather long time. Finally it is pulled far apart, in the middle a button holds it together, behind it we see Löwy take his step toward the front of the stage and, his face turned to us the audience, defend himself with only his hands against someone attacking him from below, until suddenly the whole curtain with its wire fastening on top is torn down by Löwy in his effort to hold on to something, and Löwy his knees buckling before our eyes is clasped by Pipes who played the savage and who is still stooped as if the curtain were drawn, and pushed off the stage sideways practically with his head. People run together in the side wing of the hall. Draw the curtain! they shout on the almost completely exposed stage, where Frau Tschissik is standing so pitifully with her pale Sulamit face, short waiters on tables and chairs put the curtain in decent order, the proprietor attempts to calm down the government representative, whose only wish is to get away and who

is held back by this attempt to calm him down, behind the curtain Frau Tschissik can be heard: "And we want to preach morality to the audience from the stage. . . ."; because of this incident the assoc. of Jewish office assistants "Zukunft" which has taken charge of tomorrow evening and before today's performance held an ordinary general meeting[114] decides within half an hour to call an extraordinary meeting, a Czech member of the association prophesies complete ruin for the actors as a result of their scandalous behavior. Then one suddenly sees Löwy, who seemed to have vanished, being pushed toward a door by the headwaiter Roubitschek with his hands, perhaps also with his knees. He is simply to be thrown out. This headwaiter, who earlier and later stands there in front of every guest also in front of us like a dog, with a doglike snout which descends over a large mouth closed by humble side-wrinkles, has his

16 x 11 Strenuous Sunday yesterday. The whole staff gave my father notice.[115] With good speeches, cordiality, the effect of his illness, of his size and of his former strength, of his experience, of his cleverness, he wins almost all of them back in group and individual discussions. An important clerk Franz wants time to think, until Monday, because he gave his word to our manager who is resigning and would like to bring the whole staff into his newly to be established business. On Sunday the bookkeeper[116] writes he can't stay after all, Roubitschek is holding him to his word. I go to see him in Zižkov.[117] His young wife with round cheeks longish face and a small coarse nose of the sort that never spoils Czech faces. Too-long very loose, flowered and stained housecoat. It becomes especially long and loose because she makes especially hasty movements to greet me, to place the album on the table correctly in a final beautification and to disappear to have her husband fetched. The man with similar hasty movements perhaps imitated by his very dependent wife, swinging vigorously while his upper body is bent forward and his lower body stays strikingly behind. Impression of a person known for 10 years, often seen, rarely paid attention to, with whom one suddenly comes into closer contact. The less success I have with my Czech coaxing (indeed he already had a signed contract with Roubitschek, only he had been so flustered by my father on Saturday evening that he had not spoken of the contract) the more catlike his face becomes. Toward the end I act a little with a very comfortable feeling, thus I look around the room silently

with a somewhat elongated face and narrowed eyes as if I were following something hinted at into the inexpressible. But am not unhappy when I see that it has little effect, and instead of being spoken to by him in a new tone, I must begin anew to persuade him. The conversation was introduced with the fact that another Tullach[118] lives on the other side of the street, it was concluded at the door with his astonishment at my light suit in the cold. Characteristic of my initial hopes and ultimate failure. But I made him promise to come to see my father in the afternoon. My argumentation in places too abstract and formal. Mistake not to have called the wife into the room.

Afternoon to Radotin[119] to keep the clerk. As a result miss the meeting with Löwy, whom I think about constantly. In the train carriage: Tip of the old woman's nose with almost-still-youthfully taut skin. Does youth thus end at the tip of the nose and does death begin there? The swallowing of the passengers that slides down their throats, the widening of their mouths as a sign that they judge the railroad journey, the composition of the other passengers, their seating arrangement, the temperature in the carriage, even the issue of Pan[120] that I have on my knee and that some of them look at from time to time (since it is at least something they could not possibly have foreseen in the compartment) to be unobjectionable, natural, unsuspicious, while they still believe that everything could also have been much worse. Up and down in Herr Haman's yard, a dog puts a paw on the tip of my foot, which I rock. Children, chickens, here and there adults. A nursemaid occasionally leaning down from the balcony[121] or hiding behind a door is interested in me. Under her glances I don't know what I am at the moment, whether indifferent, ashamed, young or old, impertinent or devoted, holding my hands behind or in front, freezing or hot, animal lover or businessman, friend of Haman or petitioner, superior to the participants in the meeting, who sometimes go out of the establishment to the pissoir and back in an unbroken loop or ridiculous to them due to my light suit, whether Jew or Christian, etc. The walking around, wiping my nose, now and then reading Pan, fearfully avoiding the balcony with my eyes, only to suddenly realize that it's empty, watching the poultry, being greeted by a man, seeing through the tavern window the flatly and crookedly juxtaposed faces of the men, who are turned toward a speaker, all this contributes to it. Hr. Haman,

who comes out of the meeting from time to time and whom I ask to use for us his influence on the clerk, whom he brought into our shop. Blackish brown beard, growing around cheeks and chin, black eyes, between eyes and beard the dark shades of the cheeks. He is a friend of my father, I knew him as a child and the idea that he was a coffee roaster always made him even darker and manlier to me than he was.

17 x 11 I finish nothing, because I have no time and there's so much pressure in me. If the whole day were free and this morning restlessness could rise in me by noon and tire itself out by evening then I could sleep. As it is, however, there remains for this restlessness only a twilight hour at most, it grows somewhat stronger, is then suppressed and uselessly and harmfully digs up the night for me. Will I be able to bear it for long? And is there any purpose in bearing it, will I then gain time?

When I think of this anecdote: Napoleon recounts at the court table in Erfurt: When I was still a mere lieutenant in the 5th regiment . . (the royal highnesses look at each other in embarrassment, Napoleon notices it and corrects himself) when I still had the honor of being a mere lieutenant . . . ; my neck veins swell with easily imagined pride artificially penetrating me.[122]

---

more in Radotin: I then walked around alone freezing in the meadow garden, then spotted in an open window the nursemaid, who had wandered with me to this side of the house—

20 *(October 1911)* The 18th at Max's, wrote about Paris.[123] Wrote badly without actually entering the open space of actual description, which detaches one's foot from the experience. I was also dulled after the great exaltation of the previous day, which had ended with Löwy's reading.[124] During the day I had not yet been in an unusual state, went with Max to fetch his mother who had arrived from Gablonz, was with them in the coffeehouse and then at Max's, who played for me a gypsy dance from the "Maid of Perth."[125] A dance in which for pages only the hips sway with a monotonous ticking and the face has a slow warm expres-

sion. Until toward the end briefly and late the lured inner wildness then comes, shakes the body, overpowers it, compresses the melody so that it shoots into the heights and depths, (one hears especially bitter dull notes in it) and then comes to an unnoticed close. In the beginning and never lost through it all a strong closeness to gypsy life, perhaps because a people so wild in dance shows itself calm only to a friend. Impression of great truth of the first dance. Then leafed through "Aussprüche Napoleons."[126] How easily one becomes for a moment a tiny part of one's own tremendous conception of Napoleon! Then I went home already boiling, I could withstand none of my ideas, disordered, pregnant, disheveled, swollen, in the midst of my furniture rolling around me, flown over by my sorrows and worries, taking up as much space as possible, for despite my size I was very nervous, I entered the lecture hall.[127] From the way I sat, for example, and very truly sat, had I been a spectator, I would have recognized my state immediately. Löwy read humorous sketches by Scholem aleichem,[128] then a story by Perez,[129] a poem by Bialik[130] (only here did the poet in order to popularize his poem exploiting the Kishinev pogrom for the Jewish future, lower himself from the Hebrew into the jargon and translate his originally Hebrew poem into jargon himself), the "Lichtverkäuferin" by Rosenfeld.[131] A recurrent widening of the eyes, natural to the actor, which are now left like that for a little while framed by the raised eyebrows. Complete truth of the whole reading; the weak lifting of the right arm initiated from the shoulder; the adjusting of the pince-nez, which seems borrowed so badly does it fit on the nose; the position of the leg under the table, which is so stretched out that especially the weak connecting bones between upper and lower leg are active; the curve of the back, which looks weak and miserable, for at the sight of a unified uniform back the observer cannot be deceived in his judgment as he can at the sight of the face by the eyes, the hollows and protrusions of the cheeks but also by any trifle and be it beard stubble. After the reading while still on the way home I felt all my abilities concentrated and complained for that reason to my sisters,[132] at home even to my mother.

---

on the 19th at Dr. Kafka's regarding the factory.[133] The slight theoretical hostility that must arise between the parties during contract completions. How I searched with my eyes Karl's [illegible] face, which was turned toward the Doktor. This hostility must arise all the more between 2 people who