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**from PLACES YOU LEAVE  
(Bremen → Hamburg)**

To exist not to exist. To exist inside the betterment of a future.

Put your hands to your ears as in Munch's Das kind und der Tod. Say something back to the almond eyes of Modersohn-Becker's Mädchenkopf.

Beckmann's Sinnenda Frau turns in and looks into off the grey distance. And still this throbbing.

An EU flag irises your hair. The Schipol falls into a rising sun. Hunter valley green.

To exist, inside the jaw of a caught whale.

World  
spinning, don't slip  
away.

Over Bürgermeister bridge, children protest: one with a paper globe declaring KAPITALISMUS.

Child. Listen to the grown-up children who do not listen to you. They are wearing tailored suits and speak inside the static of *world-wide radio*. Android corporate on speakerphone. The sponsor for tonight wears a logo called JOKE. The replicants are laid out like stencilled furniture under heat lamps.

Child. Someone decided this is X. The exact point where the aliens will land.

Du spricht. Keine. Keins. The dayweight lump in your stomach.

You wait inside the absence of a window, count a sparrow's footprints. Malt of sleeplessness. The room cleans itself when you close the door.

Animal in a sensorial zodiac. The auditorium waits for you to speak but you cannot remember yourself beyond the functionaries of language. Two hundred hearts beat in mirror wind.

In heavy-breath silence, the culture secretary's jewellery titters. Everything gold down to the subtitles.

Because touch touches everything, moves through everything. And yet, nothing touches you.

As if life meant waiting for someone else. Don't touch me.

You write a letter to Gasquet on the riverbanks of the Weser. Nothing more than a creak in the wind of language.

You write: your tribunes are filled with silt. Strike it out. Revision: your tributes are filled with the filthiest of secrets.

To edit yourself out. Another kind of dying. Your hair crooked in the photobook.

You drag your Hippolytean iron foot. A simple valgus. Hunnishly indecent. In the archive footage, Bovary's eyes twitch like the wings of a butterfly.

Talus. Fenêtre. Optimal storage of the eye. The beating skin of the canal. Time's colour, soured only by time.

The children  
demand nothing,  
only a planet.

A portrait of rain weeps into fern shadows of the lake. Get up from your attic posing, shake loose the blinds.

In the Gak, Cézanne's artillery war against Impressionism. Chamomile and cow parsley in the pallet of Monet. Paint the bloodbody. The soulfall.

Between gradients of catastrophe and ignition, you blanch at posterity. Live for a speckle of sunlight on the sitter's throat.

Blanched out. The field shucked to a sinew of roots. The sniper's eye misses, in-blinks. Pull your skin over your face and then what?

The hand-me-down of public view. Headlights stare, X-raying your face. Blue diamond backdrop. A flag in outskirt mud.

Don't go knocking on doors here. They have invented a name for your namelessness. '[T]he murderous bad breath / of some dictator / no one wants to know anymore.'

Anymore than you. Sprötze's little pepper sack. Bodies wrapped like silkworms.

PAKO graffiti. Swastika keys. Arrivals met sternly at the gates.

As if hate  
could rival  
yourself.

The cab driver at Hamburg was an interpreter for the US army in Afghanistan. Last year they refused him entry. So his family are at home and he's pretending to be here with you, driving through the veins of the Elbe.

What echoes. What coheres. Look into the light, away from sacristy, salvation. Away from yourself to the Hanseatic city.

U-shaped burnholes outstare the Baum wall. New recruits in khaki tread planks at Landungbruken laughing at Captain San Diego, Willy Brandt. Cigarette smoke cauterises through yellowy teeth.

On pleated water you float. Defence: a pageant of confidence. Platzen for Cartier and pleased grimaces of the Reeper(bahn).

What brought you here and through which door does your conscience leave?

Inside the hipster hotel they are selling quotes from Goethe on the lids of jam jars. Umbrellas to pay for the rain. 'Wo viel Licht ist, ist starker Schatten' Where there's a lot of light, there's a stronger shadow.

You tap-tap the ankerstock, nothing but wind. You jigger a gaff sail, nothing but stitches in the wind's mouth.

You ask yourself: what splits the world more: ideas of men, or men of ideas? Action or religion? Christopher Columbus puddling his pesto on the plate or Pope Alexander praying to the god of war?

Lepanto. Alexandra. Hamburg. Liverpool. Your losses. Your token demons nailed to the mast. Your squadrons anchored. Your race-built Galleon Bull.

And every little  
ship overboard  
with silence.

You sign off the Brevisma with ideas of Ascension. The bloodcake of the world sliced open.  
Held to the lockchain of Sklaven Ketten (kettled slaves).

You sign off the offsetted death rates with rationales of human merchandise tallies and space  
allocation. Just like the unfairness of Fair Rosamond. Nothing *great* about the Great Elector.

Beyond imagination, the wielding of empire. Sink inside your own mouth for a mother of  
pearl medicament box.

Pox on your Bredenhof, your Pollox. Brackish your Rumfass. Tyrell stares through the  
cracked paint of his face. Deadliness of certitude.

After the firestorm. After the dreadnought. After the patron seas of sailors.

To see the harpooned bone of the ocean. His acidifying face abhorred by the sea.

‘Nimm meine Hand, und ich führe Dich zu Dir zurück.’ Take my hand and let me lead you  
back to yourself.

So you go. Into the sinking of PH, blaming the impaired formation of time. ‘Eternal beginner,  
new in your mistakes.’

To St Nikolau, where the steeple raises, not towards the construction of heaven, but the  
closing eyes of a blackened gargoyle over Reimersbrücke. Carpet ash of rooftop shells.

Every window blown out, but for your window. Lilyface white and ossified. Sidespun into  
practical dysfunction.

Your eye blinks inside the telescope. Leads to the where, back to yourself. As if to ask: what  
use are you merely cogging up the machine room engine (that is time)?

A liftshaft jolts. Memory shakes the viewfinder. You focus in on the Museum of Dungeons.  
A skeleton held from its head by a rope.

In the church, you light a candle and place it inside the gargoyle’s mouth. Men of war: is  
there anything more violent than this fragility?

The echoes do not cohere. Write me an elegy beyond sacristy. Amen.

IHR LEBEN FÜR EUCH. The Elbphilharmonie singing inside and out.

White oratorium.  
Brücke’s darkness,  
a chorus.

During the Lampedusa scenes, the woman in F6 is uncomfortable, crosses her leopard skin trousers. She shouldn't have come, she thinks, scratches the perfection of her brow.

‘With the uncleansed tear, in despair (one day despair will drive me to despair).’

‘Nein, wir hätten nicht kommen sollen‘ replies her husband, examining the golf ball face of his watch.

You note how all the plucked strings are made by white hands. Scream inside the sea's orchestra, but only the are fish listening.

A shrimp shell echoes with salt. A lighthouse, tongue-sharp, its singing bell freeze-frames the crawling cruise liner.

All elegy is a held note —

Track your footprints in snow at the Berlin Victory Monument. You have been up all night, watching Churchill's greasy finger blot the sky with fire. Boil the stars of Europe.

Groggy, you search for coffee only to find food menus. From your window, Hafen City's dredged propeller, unmoved.

You enter the Kunsthalle, extended as pro-tag. Faces of gaping blank holes stare through the human graph where the only distinguishable word is HOPEFUL.

14.40 over 560. You write it down but do not understand the equation.

It is about making choices: tick the NERVOUS box or the UNEASY box. As if choosing between statesmen and businessmen.

If someone could tell you why the card measures at 4x3 inches for seven days in February, it might all work out right.

On the map, blue is Israel. Syria red. Palestine missing. The manifesto declares protest as anti-ammunition. If red is 40%, how do you live without it?

Weaponries meaning stock prizes. NATO receipts.

'A game is their history, / unbloodied, older than ours, / They don't need historians, / henchmen...'

And so, splinter music. And so, a clock ticks above the bomb. Step this way says the businessman. I can stop you dead like a rattlesnake's eye.

You save the date. 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2045. When the financial singularity crashes. When the visor finally slips from your face. Or else this and with clearface heavies to tell you about it.

Gross capital cut-ups intended as much as stampbook fixities. How low might you go for half a kilo of speck? Car windows for 2hr limits. Mosques turning grey.

Every small consolation tradeable. Skeletons at the money counter. The bugs have their own voices and Goethe has been looking down on us, the unplucked chicken.

Your face shrinks into lines. A man who can grow numbers on his hands waits to count you at the weigh-in.

If you want to know why all this is happening ~~I don't want to know why this is happening~~ try speaking with the on-dead.

You pull away from the handshake and listen in. One ear busy with the voices you hear between radio stations.

You wheeze on a cane-backed chair, too tired to sit up or speak out, your finger on the dial of the late night local shock jock.

To talk with you, eye to iris, as if through a veneer of smoke. The glass on your mother's portrait breaks in your hand and her blood (yours) is speaking blood.

All elegy, a held note—

father, wounded  
by language, what song  
can you sing?



Speak. Speak to remember. But I don't want to remember, he replies.

The sky over Adolphplatz: enough spit to hiss rain.

On the harbour at Niederhafen, the cries of a gull strain through noise-cancelling headphones.

Silence turned up on the Domschorf. Chameleonic laughter in the Friseur salon. Yellow-tipped dockposts: matches struck against night.

What is this weight, this heaving circuitboard of water?

Over the Elbe, everything wears the false simplicity of order. Woodcuts soil the trees. A faint shadow on the horizon. Fields tilled into lines.

You hover until jolted back into the weird turbulence of living. Until such time. Such time. Your plane ticket stained with blood.

Somebody is speaking about safety procedures. But you never voted to proceed.

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