

Martin Heidegger
“Language in the Poetic Work [*Gedicht*]:
A Situating of Georg Trakl’s *Gedicht*”

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[] = GA page; {} = 1959 German version

[33/{37}] Here, to situate means initially ‘to point out the place or point something into place’ [*weisen*]. Then, it means to attend to or heed [*beachten*] that place. Both pointing into place and attending to the place are the preparatory steps of a situating. Yet we already risk enough, in what follows, if we content ourselves with taking the preparatory steps. The situating ends, as corresponds to a *Denkweg*, in a question. It asks for the broader location or context [*Ortschaft*] of the place.

[[outline for this three-part text](#)]

The situating speaks of Georg Trakl only in the manner [*Weise*] of giving thought [*bedenkt*] to the place of his *Gedicht*. For an age whose historical, biographical, psychoanalytic, and sociological interest is focused on bare expression [*nackten Expression*], such a procedure remains patently one-sided, if not even an *Irrweg*. Situating gives thought to the place.

Originally, the name ‘place’ [*Ort*] means the point of the spear. Everything comes together or is concentrated in it. The place gathers to itself, into what is highest and most extreme. What gathers [*das Versammelnde*] penetrates and pervades everything. The place, what gathers, overtakes/fetches into itself [*holt zu sich ein*] and preserves [*verwahrt*] what is overtaken [*das Eingeholte*], not like a capsule that closes off, but so that it shines through and exposes to the light what is gathered, thereby first releasing it into its essence.

Our task now is to situate that place which the poetic saying of Georg Trakl gathers into his *Gedicht*: the place of his *Gedicht*.

Every great poet only poetizes out of one unique/singular *Gedicht*. The measure of greatness is the extent to which he is entrusted [*anvertraut wird*]¹ to this singularity, so that he is able contain his poetic saying purely within it.

The *Gedicht* of a poet remains unspoken. None of his individual poems, nor their totality, says everything. Nevertheless, every poem speaks from the whole of – and says every time – a *Gedicht*. From the place of the *Gedicht* arises [34] the wave that in each instance moves [*jeweils bewegt*] the saying as a poetic saying. Yet the wave so little abandons the place of the *Gedicht* that its rising much rather lets all movement of the saga [*Bewegen der Sage*] flow back into its ever more veiled origin. The place of the *Gedicht*, as the source of the moving [*bewegenden*] wave, shelters the veiled essence of

¹ Usage/Custom [*Brauch*]

what can initially appear to metaphysical-aesthetic representation as rhythm. [kinesis of being; rhythm as pattern of *Schlage*; waves on pp. 70 and 72, from “Lament” (which starts with sleep and death); cf. waves in *Republic?*; susurrations or oscillations of pain (waves of pain)]

Since the unique/singular *Gedicht* persists in what is unspoken, we [first instance] can situate its place only by trying to point into the place, from what is spoken in the individual poems. But for that, every individual poem already requires an elucidation. This brings to a first shining that lucidity [*das Lautere*] that glitters through everything said poetically. [like a ray of light through clarified wine – Derrida]

One easily sees that a correct elucidation [*Erläuterung*] already presupposes the situating. The individual poems only gleam and sound [*leuchten und klingen*] from out of the place of the *Gedicht*. On the other hand, a situating of the *Gedicht* already needs to pass through a pre-cursory elucidation of individual poems.

Every thoughtful dialogue with the *Gedicht* of a poet persists in this reciprocal relatedness between situating and elucidating. [but see Conversation w/ Japanese, UzS 121 – Krell’s reference]

The only authentic dialogue with the *Gedicht* of a poet is the poetizing one: the poetic conversation between poets. But it is also possible, and at times even necessary, that there be a dialogue of *thinking* with poetry, for this reason: because a distinctive though in each case different relationship [*Verhältnis*] to language is proper to [*eignet*] them both.

The conversation of thinking with poetry deals with calling forth the *essence* of language, whereby mortals again learn to dwell in language.

{39} The dialogue of thinking with poetry is long. It has barely begun. With respect to Georg Trakl’s *Gedicht*, it requires a peculiar reticence. The thoughtful dialogue with poetry can serve the *Gedicht* only indirectly. Thus it stands in danger of disturbing the saying of the *Gedicht*, [35] instead of letting it sing from out of its own proper calm.

The situating of the *Gedicht* is a thoughtful dialogue with poetry. It neither expounds a poet’s outlook on the world, nor does it take inventory of his workshop. Above all, a situating of the *Gedicht* can never substitute for, nor even guide, our listening to the poem. Thoughtful situating can at most make the listening question-worthy and, in the most favorable case, make it more meditative [*besinnlicher*].

With these limitations in mind, we shall first try to point out the place of the unspoken *Gedicht*. To do so, we must set out [*ausgehen*] from the spoken poems. The question is: from which? The fact that each of Trakl’s poems points, with equal steadiness though not uniformly, into the one place of the *Gedicht* attests to the unique/singular harmony of his poems in the one basic tone [*Grundton*] of his *Gedicht*. [By contrast to, say, Hölderlin.]

But the attempt we shall now make to indicate his place must make do with just a few selected stanzas, lines, and phrases. The appearance that we thereby arbitrarily mislead/seduce [*verföhren*] is unavoidable. Yet the selection is guided by the aim of

bringing our attention to the place of the *Gedicht*, almost as if by a leap of insight or leaping glance [*Blicksprung*].

I

One of the poems says:

There is the soul, something foreign on earth.

Unexpectedly, with this sentence/proposition we find ourselves in a common representation/idea. It presents the earth to us as the earthly in the sense of the {40} transitory. The soul counts, by contrast, as the imperishable, the superterrestrial. Since Plato's teaching, the soul belongs to the supersensible. But if it appears in what is sensible, it does so only as cast away [*nur verschlagen*]. Here 'on earth' the soul is [36] miscast [*nicht den rechten Schlag*]. It does not belong to the earth. The soul is 'something foreign' here. The body is the soul's prison, if not something even worse. Apparently, then, there remains for the soul no other outlook than to abandon as soon as possible the realm of the sensible, which, seen in terms of Platonism, is what is not-truly-being and only decomposing. [*Schlag is the root of Geschlecht – Krell*]

Yet how remarkable! The sentence/proposition

There is the soul, something foreign on earth.

speaks from out of a poem entitled the "Springtime of the Soul."² No word of a superterrestrial homeland of the immortal soul sounds in that poem. We grow reflective, and we do well to attend to the language of the poet. The soul: 'a strange thing [*ein Fremdes*].' In other poems, Trakl often and happily uses the same construction: "a mortal thing," "a dark thing," "a solitary thing," "a spent thing," "a sick thing," "a human thing," "a pale thing," "a dead thing," "a silent thing." This construction does not always have the same sense, even ignoring the variety of its respective content. A 'solitary thing' or 'a strange thing' could mean something singular that in a given case is 'solitary,' or that by chance is 'strange' in a special and limited perspective. {41} 'Something strange' of this sort can be classified in the species of the strange in general and put away. Represented thus, the soul would be merely one instance among others of the strange.

Yet what does 'strange' mean? One usually understands by the strange what is unfamiliar [*Nichtvertraute*], what does not speak to/claim us, [37] such that it burdens and unsettles. But 'strange' [*fremd*], which is the Old High German '*fram*,' properly means: onward to somewhere else, underway toward... , off to whatever is in store for us. The strange wanders out ahead. Yet it does not roam about aimlessly, devoid of every determination/destiny. What is strange goes in search of the place where it can remain as a wandering thing. Barely disclosed to itself, 'the strange' already follows the call onto the way into what is its own [*Eigenes*].

The poet names the soul 'a strange thing on earth.' The earth is precisely what its wandering could not yet reach. The soul only now *seeks* the earth; it does not flee from

² Citation info provided here.

it. To seek the earth by wandering, so that on the earth it could poetically build and dwell, and thus for the first time save the earth *as* earth, fulfills the essence of the soul. Therefore, the soul is not by any means first of all soul, and then additionally, on whatever grounds, something that does not belong on earth.

The sentence

The soul is a strange thing on earth.

much rather names the essence of that which is called 'soul.' The sentence contains no assertion about a soul whose essence is already known, as if the point should be merely to specify, as a supplement, that something happens to this soul which is unbefitting and therefore alien to it: namely, that it finds neither refuge nor address [*Zuspruch*] on earth. To the contrary, the soul as soul is 'a strange thing on earth' in the basic trait [*Grundzug*] of its essence. Thus, it remains underway and follows, by wandering, the tug [*Zug*] of its essence. Meanwhile, the question importunes us: this thing that is 'a strange thing' in the elucidated sense, whither has it been called to turn its step? A stanza from the third part of the poem "Sebastian in a Dream" answers:

{42} O how still is a walk along the blue river
Sensing/pondering forgotten things, since in green boughs
The thrush called a strange thing into descent.

[38] The soul is called into descent or going-under [i.e., to die: *in den Untergang*]. Then it is so! The soul should end its terrestrial wandering and abandon the earth. That is not what the talk [*Rede*] in the designated lines is about. But yet they do speak of 'descent.' Certainly. Only the descent named here is neither catastrophe nor the mere withering away [*Erschwinden*] into decay [*Verfall*]. What descends along the blue river

Descends in rest and growing-silent. ("Transfigured Autumn")

Into which rest? Into that of the dead. But of which dead? And into which growing-silent?

The soul is a strange thing on earth.

The line in which this sentence belongs continues:

... ghostly gloams [*dämmert*]
Blueness over the mishewn forest...

The sun is named just above. The step of the strange thing advances into the gloaming [*Dämmerung*]. 'Gloaming' initially means growing dark. 'Blueness gloams.' Is the blue of the sunny day darkening? Is it disappearing in the evening in favor of the night? 'Gloaming' is nevertheless no mere descending of the day as dissolution [*Verfall*] of its brightness into the gloom [*Finsternis*]. Gloaming does not have to mean 'descent' at all. Morning, too, gloams. In it the day arises. Gloaming is at the same time arising. Blueness gloams over the 'mishewn or hewn away [*verhauen*],' over the tangled, withered-together forest. The night's blueness arises in the evening.

{43} ‘Ghostly’ gloams blueness. ‘Ghostliness’ marks the gloaming. We must give thought to what this oft-named ‘ghostliness’ means. The gloaming [39] is the declination [*Neige*: inclining plus dregs] of the sun’s path. That implies that the gloaming is just as much the decline of the day as the decline of the year. The last stanza of a poem entitled “Summer’s Decline” sings:

The green summer has grown so quiet
And the step of the stranger rings
Through the silvery night.
If a blue deer were to be mindful of [*Gedächte*] his path,

[To be mindful of] the melody of his ghostly years!

This ‘so quiet’ returns again and again in Trakl’s poem. We tend to think that ‘quiet’ [*leise*] only means ‘barely noticeable to the ear.’ In this meaning, what is called ‘quiet’ is referred to our representing. But ‘*leise*’ means slow [*langsam*]; *gelisian* means ‘to slip’ or ‘to glide’ [*gleiten*]. What is quiet is what glides away. Summer slips away into autumn, the evening of the year.

... And the step of the stranger rings
Through the silvery night.

Who is this stranger? Whose paths are they, of which ‘a blue deer’ might be mindful [*gedenken*]? Memory [*Gedenken*] means ‘sensing/pondering [*sinnen*] forgotten things,’

... since in green boughs
The thrush called a strange thing into descent.

To what extent should a ‘blue deer’ pursue in thought [*nachdenken*] what is descending? Does the deer receive its blue from that ‘blueness’ that ‘ghostly gloams’ and arises as night? Of course, the night is dark. But what is dark is not [40] necessarily gloom/pitch-black [*Finsternis*]. In another poem, the night is summoned with the words:

O, gentle cornflower sheaf of night.

The night is a bundle of cornflowers, a gentle one. (Accordingly, the blue deer is also called ‘the shy deer,’ the ‘gentle beast.’) From out of blueness the bundle gathers up the depth of what is holy [or healthy: *das Heilige*] in the ground of its binding. From out of the blueness gleams what is holy, though at the same time veiling itself with its own [*eigenes*] darkness/obscurity. This relates [*verhält*] itself while it withdraws itself. It bestows its arrival in that it preserves itself in relating [*verhaltende*] withdrawal. Brightness sheltered in darkness/obscurity is blueness. Bright, i.e., resounding [*Hell, d.h. hallend*], is originally the tone that calls from out of the sheltering of stillness and therefore clears itself. Blueness resounds [*hallt*] in its brightness in that it rings out. The darkness/obscurity of blueness gleams in its resounding brightness.

The steps of the stranger ring through the silver glittering and sounding of the night. Another poem sings:

And in holy blueness, gleaming steps ring forth.

Elsewhere it is said of blueness:

... what is holy in blue flowers ... moves the beholder.

Another poem says:

... An animal face
Transfixes before blueness, before its holiness.

The blue is not an image to indicate the sense of what is holy. Blueness itself is the holy on account of its gathering depth that first shines only in the veiling. Face to face with blueness and simultaneously brought up short [*zum Ansichhalten*] by sheer blueness, the animal face transfixes and transforms itself into the countenance of the wild deer.

[41/{45}] The fixedness of the animal face is not that of the dead. In being transfixed, the face of the animal recoils. Its gaze is collected so that, by checking its movement [*an sich haltend*], it may look [*schauen*] toward the holy, into the “mirror of truth.” To behold [*Anschauen*] means to enter into growing-silent [*das Schweigen*].

Forceful [*Gewaltig*] is the growing-silent in stone.

So runs the immediately following line. Stone is the gathered sheltering/the mountains [*Ge-birge*] of pain. Rock [*Gestein*] gathers what gentles by sheltering it in what is stony; pain, as what gentles, stills/soothes into what is essential. Pain grows silent ‘before blueness’. The countenance of the deer, face to face with blueness, is taken back into gentleness. For, according to the word itself, gentleness [*das Sanfte*] is what collects [*das Sammelnde*] peacefully [*friedlich*]. This transforms discord by converting [*verwindet*] the wounding and searing [*das Versehrende und Sengende*] of wildness into becalmed [*beruhigten*] pain. [being overwhelmed → being exposed, not securely fixed; why stone/rock?; wildness as our inheritance that burdens or frightens us – conflict with the animal interpreted as conflict with ourselves (*animal rationale* as tension); wounding and searing as exposure (connected with flame of Geist? Or already with receptivity of living soul?)]

Who is the blue deer, to whom the poet calls out that it might be mindful of the stranger? An animal? Certainly. And only an animal? Not at all. For it is supposed to be mindful. Its face is supposed to look out for and to look on the stranger. The blue deer is an animal whose animality presumably rests [*beruht*] not in what is of the animal but in that looking mindfulness for which the poet calls. This animality is still distant and barely to be glimpsed. The animality of the animal as meant here thus vacillates in the indeterminate. Such animality has not yet been introduced in its essence. This animal – namely, the thoughtful one, the *animal rationale*, the human being – has not yet been designated/securely placed [*festgestellt*], according to Nietzsche’s claim. [*Beyond Good and Evil*, §62]

This assertion does not at all mean that the human has not yet been “confirmed” as a fact. It has been, all too decisively. The word means: the animality of this animal has not yet been brought into its fastness [*Feste*], i.e., brought “to its home,” brought into the native home of its veiled essence. Western European metaphysics has struggled for this secure placing [*Fest-stellung*] since Plato. It may be struggling in vain [*vergebens*]. Maybe for it the way into the “Underway” is still [42/{46}] mislaid/obstructed [*verlegt*]. The not yet securely placed animal, not yet standing fast in its essence, is the contemporary human being. [and only that one?]

In the poetic name ‘blue deer,’ Trakl summons that human essence whose countenance, i.e., counter-gance, in thinking of the steps of the stranger, is glanced at by the blueness of the night and thus is illuminated by the holy. The name ‘blue deer’ names mortals, who might be mindful of the stranger and might with him wander into the native home of the human essence.

Who are they, who undertake such wandering? Presumably it is the few and the unknown, if what is essential takes place otherwise in stillness, suddenly, and seldom. The poet names such wanderers in the poem “A Winter’s Evening,” the second stanza of which starts:

Many in wandering
Come on dark paths to the gate.

The blue deer, where and when it essences, has abandoned the hitherto essential figure/shape/configuration [*Wesensgestalt*] of the human. The hitherto human decays insofar as it loses its essence, i.e., it decomposes [*verwest*].

Trakl names one of his poems “Seven-Fold Song of Death.” Seven is the holy number. The song sings what is holy in death. Death here is not represented indeterminately and in general as the ending of earthly life. ‘Death’ poetically means that ‘descent’ into which ‘a strange thing’ is called. Therefore, the strange thing thus called is also named ‘a dead thing.’ Its death is not decomposition but the abandoning of the decomposed figure/shape/configuration [*Gestalt*] of human beings. For thus says the penultimate stanza of the poem “Seven-Fold Song of Death”:

O man’s decomposed shape, joined [*gefügt*] from cold metals,
Night and terror of sunken forests
And of the animal’s searing wildness;
Windless stillness [*Windesstille*] of the soul.

[43/{47}] The human being’s decomposed shape is delivered over to the agony [*Marter*] of what sears and to the piercing of thorns. Its wildness is not illuminated [= shone through] by the blueness. The soul of this human shape does not stand in the wind of the holy. Hence the soul is without passage. Hence the wind itself, God’s wind, remains solitary [*einsam*]. A poem that names the blue deer – which, however, can barely release itself from the ‘thorn thicket’ – concludes with the lines:

The solitary wind of God
Always echoes on black walls.

‘Always’ means: so long as the year and its solar course still persist in the bleakness of winter and no one is mindful of the path on which the ‘ringing step’ of the stranger advances through the night. This night itself is only the veiling that shelters the sun’s course. [the night of a single endless winter] Coursing [*Gehen*], *ienai*, means the Indo-Germanic *ier-*, the year.

If a blue deer were to be mindful of his path,

[To be mindful of] the melody of his ghostly years!

The year’s ghostliness is determined from the night’s blueness that gloams in a ghostly manner.

O, how somber is the hyacinth countenance of the gloaming. (“Underway”)

The ghostly gloaming is of such an essential essence that the poet expressly inscribes over one of the poems the words “Ghostly Gloaming” [or: “Spiritual Twilight”]. And in it the deer is encountered, albeit a dark/obscure one. Its wildness has at once the characteristic tug [*den Zug*] into gloom [*Finsternis*] and the decline toward still blueness. Meanwhile, [44] the poet himself, ‘on black cloud,’ traverses the ‘nightly pond, the starry sky.’

{48} The poem goes:

“Ghostly Gloaming”
Stillness, at the edge of the wood, encounters
A dark deer;
By the hill the evening wind quietly ends,

The blackbird’s lament falls dumb,
And the gentle flutes of autumn
Grow silent in the reeds.

On black cloud
You traverse, drunk with poppy,
The nightly pond,

The starry sky.
The sister’s lunar voice always echoes
Through the ghostly night.

The starry sky is exhibited in the poetic image of the nightly pond. This is how our customary representing thinks. But the night sky is this pond in the truth of its essence. By contrast, what we otherwise name the night remains rather only an image, namely, the pale and empty counterfeit of night’s essence. [not metaphor] The pond and the pond’s mirror return often in the poet’s *Gedicht*. The waters, now black, now blue, show the human being his own countenance, his counter-gance. But the ghostly night’s gloaming blueness appears in the nightly pond of the starry sky. The glitter of this blueness is cool.

Cool light issues from the shining of the moon (*selanna*). Gleaming all around her, the stars pale and even cool, [45/{49}] as the ancient Greek lines say. Everything becomes 'lunar.' The stranger stepping through the night is called 'the lunar one.' The brother hears the sister's 'lunar voice,' which always echoes through the ghostly night, whenever he tries to follow this passage upon the nightly pond in his boat, which is still 'black' and barely illumined by the stranger's golden radiance.

When mortals wander after the 'strange thing' called into descent (meaning now: the stranger), they themselves achieve strangeness; they themselves become strangers and solitary.

Through the passage on the nightly pond of stars, which is the sky over the earth, the soul ex-periences the earth for the first time as earth in its 'cool sap.' [from "Winter's Evening"] The soul glides away into the ghostly year's evening blueness that gloams. It becomes the 'autumn soul' and from there becomes the 'blue soul.'

The few stanzas and lines cited here point into the ghostly gloaming, lead onto the stranger's path, and show the manner and passage of those who, mindful of him, follow him into the descent. Toward the time of "Summer's Decline," the strange one becomes autumnal and dark/obscure in his wandering. [summary]

Trakl names one poem "Autumn Soul," the penultimate stanza of which sings:

Soon fish and deer glide away.
Blue soul, dark wandering
Soon part us from loved ones, others.
Evening changes sense and image.

The wanderers who follow the stranger soon see themselves parted 'from loved ones' who are for them 'others.' The others: that is the cast/imprint [*Schlag*] of the decomposed human shape. [*Verwesen/decomposition as parting (Schied) of Tower of Babel.*]

Our language names the human essence, cast in one mold and cast away [*verschlagene*] into this cast, 'kin' [*Geschlecht*]. {50} The word means just as much the human race in the sense [46] of humanity, as it does kinship groups [*die Geschlechter*] in the sense of lineage, tribe, and family, all this in turn cast into the duality of the sexes. The poet names the lineage of the human's 'decomposed shape' the 'decomposing' lineage. It is the family placed outside [*herausgesetzt*] of the kind [*Art*] of its essence and therefore the 'displaced' [or horrified: *entsetzt*] family. [we are not only the strange thing on earth but the displaced ones, and now cursed with discord; this displacement, however, may be taken in two ways – instead of discord, we may have duality]

With what has this lineage been struck/cast, i.e., cursed [*verflucht*]? Curse means the Greek *plēgē*, German '*Schlag*' [cast/strike]. [the first? second? blow] The plague of the decomposing lineage consists in this: that this ancient family has been cast out from one another/dispersed into sexual [or: familial, tribal, racial] discord. Each of these groups aspires to escape that discord into the released [*losgelassenen*] frenzy/revolt/turmoil [*Aufuhr*] of the sheer, ever-isolated wildness/savagery of the

wild deer. [isolated because not part of Geist, the community] The curse is not duality/the twofold [Zwiefache] as such, but rather discord. Discord bears the family out of the revolt/turmoil of blind wildness/savagery into the split [Entzweiung] and thus casts it away into/imprisons it in released isolation/unchained individuation. [it bears and casts by our own aspiration, trachten] Thus split and scattered [cast about, zerschlagen], the 'decayed/fallen race' [verfallene Geschlecht] is no longer capable of finding the right/just cast on its own. But it has the correct/just cast only with that generation whose duality wanders out ahead, out away from discord and into the gentleness [Sanftmut] of a single-folded/simple two-fold, i.e., is a 'strange thing' and thereby follows the stranger. [World Wars]

In relation to that stranger, all the offspring of the decomposing lineage remain others. Even so, love and reverence [die Liebe und die Verehrung] are attached to them. The dark/obscure wandering in the stranger's train nevertheless leads into the blueness of his night. The wandering soul becomes the 'blue soul.' [eros]

But at the same time the soul is parted [wird ... geschieden]. Where to? There, where that stranger walks, the one who sometimes is poetically named merely with the suggestive word 'that one.' In the old speech, 'that one' [Jener] is 'ener' and means 'the other one' [der 'andere']. 'Enert dem Bach' is the other side of the brook. 'That one,' the stranger, is *the other one* to the others, namely, to the decomposing lineage. {51} That one is the one called away [Hinweg- und Ab-] from others. The stranger is the one set apart/who has taken leave [Ab-geschiedene – secluded, segregated, cloistered, deceased, separated, departed; ekstai in Greek (Krell)].

Whither is such a one directed, who takes over in himself the essence of what is strange, [47] i.e., wandering out ahead? [This is the essence of the strange.] Whither is a strange thing called? Into descent. Descent is losing oneself [Sichverlieren] in the ghostly gloaming of blueness. It happens out of the decline of the ghostly year. If such decline must pass through the destructiveness of approaching winter, of November, then that losing-oneself does not mean, even so, crumbling into the unstable and into annihilation. Much rather, to lose oneself says, according to the sense of the word, to set oneself loose [sich loslösen] and slowly glide away. The one who loses himself does indeed disappear in the November destruction, but he does not at all disappear into it. He glides all the way through it, away into the ghostly gloaming of blueness, 'at vespers,' i.e., at evening. [here the danger and its resolution – structure of Verwindung]

At vespers the stranger loses himself in black November destruction,
Beneath rotten branches, past walls filled with leprosy,
Where the holy brother walked long ago,
Absorbed in the gentle lyre-play of his madness [Wahnsinn]. ("Helian")

Evening is the decline of the days of the ghostly year. Evening brings to completion a change. Evening, which inclines to the ghostly, gives other things to behold, other things to sense/ponder [sinnen].

Evening changes sense and image.

What shines, the aspects (images) of which the poets articulate, appears otherwise through this evening. What essences, whose invisible aspects the thinkers ponder [*nachsinnen*], comes to a different word through this evening. [new saying] From another image and another sense, evening transforms the saga of poetry and thinking, and their dialogue. Nonetheless, evening is enabled to do this only because {52} it itself changes. The day advances through it to a decline: one that is no end, but rather uniquely/singularly inclines to prepare that descent [48] by which the stranger enters into the start [*Beginn*] of his wandering. Evening changes its own image and its own sense. In this change is concealed a departure [*Abschied*] from the previous governance of days and seasons.

But where does evening lead the dark/obscure wandering of the blue soul? There, where everything has come together otherwise, has been sheltered and preserved for another arising.

The stanzas and lines cited so far point us into a gathering, i.e., to a place. What kind of place is this? How should we name it? Surely out of the measuring given to language by the poet. All saying of Georg Trakl's poems remains gathered on the wandering stranger. He is, and is called, 'the departed or secluded one/the one who has taken leave.' Through him and around him the poetic saying is tuned throughout to a unique/singular song. Because the poems of this poet are gathered into the song of the departed one, we name the place of his *Gedicht* *having-taken-leave* [or: *seclusion*].³

[summary and naming]

The situating must now attempt, by a second step, to take more clearly into attention [*Acht*] the place that has so far only been indicated [*angezeigten*].

II

Does having taken leave, as the place of the *Gedicht*, still permit of being lifted properly into the meditative view? If at all, then only in such a way that we now with brighter eye follow the stranger's path and ask: Who is the one who has taken leave? What is the landscape of his paths?

They run through the blueness of night. The light gleaming from his steps is cool. The closing words of a poem devoted explicitly to "the Departed One" [or: the One Secluded] name "the lunar paths of the departed one." To us, *the departed ones* also means *the dead ones*. But into which death has the stranger died? In the poem "Psalm," Trakl says:

[49] The madman has died.

The subsequent stanza says:

The stranger is buried.

³ [see supplementary text from 1941, GA 70, below]

In the “Sevenfold Song of Death,” he is called the “white stranger.” The final stanza of the poem “Psalm” says:

In his grave, the white mage plays with his snakes.

The dead one *lives* in his grave. He lives in his chamber, so still and lost in thought that he plays with his snakes. They are not able to do anything to harm him. They have not been strangled, but their evil has been transformed [*verwandelt*; cf. “Transformation of Evil”]. On the other hand, in the poem “The Cursed” it says:

A nest of scarlet serpents rears up
Languidly inside her shaken womb.

The dead one is the madman. Does this mean a mentally ill person? No. Madness [*Wahnsinn*] does not mean sensing/pondering [*Sinnen*] nonsensical delusions [*wähnt*]. ‘*Wahn*’ belongs to Old High German *wana* and means without [*ohne*]. The madman senses/ponders, and indeed does so like no one else. But he remains without the sense of the others. He is of another sense/mind. ‘*Sinnan*’ originally means: to travel, to strive after... , to strike out in a direction; the Indo-Germanic root *sent* and *set* mean way [*Weg*]. The one who has taken leave is the madman because he is underway to somewhere else. From there, his madness may be called a ‘gentle’ one; for he pursues [*nachsinnen*] a greater stillness. A poem that speaks of the stranger simply as ‘that one,’ the other, sings:

{54} But he went down the stone steps of the Mönchsberg,
A blue smile on his countenance and strangely pupated,
Down into his more still childhood and died;

[50] The poem bears the title “To One Who Died Young.” The one who has taken leave died away into the dawn/earliness [*die Frühe*]. Therefore, he is ‘the tender corpse,’ shrouded in that childhood that preserves with greater stillness everything in wildness that only scorches and sears [*Brennende und Sengende*]. [childhood here as the calmer, cooling possibility of our animal inheritance – closer to other animals, humanity still in question] Thus, the one who died away into the dawn appears as the ‘dark/obscure shape of coolness.’ The poem titled “By the Mönchsberg” sings of it:

The dark shape of coolness always follows the wanderer

Over the footpath of bone, the boy’s hyacinth voice
Quietly telling the forest’s forgotten legend, ...

The dark shape of coolness’ does not follow after the wanderer. It goes out before him, insofar as the boy’s blue voice reclaims what has been forgotten and *fore-tells* it [*vorsagt*].

Who is this boy who has died away into the dawn? Who is this boy, whose

... brow quietly bleeds
Ancient legends
And dark readings of the flight of birds... ?

Who is this one who has walked over the footpath of bone? The poet calls to him with the words:

O, how long, Elis, have you been deceased?

Elis is the stranger called into descent. Elis is in no way a figure/shape by which Trakl intends himself. Elis is just as essentially distinct from the poet as the figure/shape of Zarathustra is from Nietzsche the thinker. But both figures/shapes are alike in that their essencing and wandering starts with descent. {55} Elis' descent walks into the ancient dawn/earliness, which is older than the lineage [*Geschlecht*] that has grown old and is decomposing – older [51] because more sensing/pondering; more sensing/pondering because more still; more still because it itself stills more.

The boyishness in the shape of the boy Elis does not consist in the opposite of girlishness. Boyishness is the appearance of the more still childhood. This shelters and conserves in itself the gentle two-fold/duality of the sexes, of the young man just as much as of the 'golden shape of the young woman.' [two-fold w/o a fold? Aristophanic androgyne?]

Elis is not a dead boy who decomposes [*verwest*] in the lateness of the deceased [*Abgelebten*]. Elis is the dead boy who essences away [*entwest*] into the dawn. This stranger unfolds the human essence ahead into the outset [*Anbeginn*] of that which has not yet been brought to bear ([*Tragen*.:] Old High German *giberan*). That in the essence of mortals which has not been brought to term [*Unausgetragene*], which is more dormant and therefore more still, the poet names 'the unborn.'

[*Anbeginn* as *Anfang*; see p. 53 below for term in Trakl]

The stranger who has died away into the dawn is the unborn. The names 'an unborn thing' and 'a strange thing' say the same. In the poem "Serene Spring" stands the line:

And the unborn treasures its own rest.

It protects and keeps safe [*hütet und wahrt*] the more still childhood into the coming awakening of the human race. By resting thus, the one who died young *lives*. The one who has taken leave is not the one who died away in the sense of the deceased one. On the contrary. The one who has taken leave looks out ahead into the blueness of the ghostly night. The white eyelids that guard his looking gleam in bridal jewelry, which promises the more gentle two-fold of the sexes. [= marriage?]

In stillness the myrtle blooms over the dead one's white eyelids.

This line belongs in the same poem that says:

The soul is a strange thing on earth.

Both sentences/propositions stand in unmediated neighborhood. The 'dead one' is the one who has taken leave, the strange one, the unborn.

{56} But yet

[52] ... the path
Of one unborn [goes] on past gloomy hamlets, solitary summers.
("Song of Hours")

His way leads past that which does not receive him as a guest – past, but already no longer through it. The passage of the one who has taken leave is solitary, too, of course; nonetheless, this is from the solitude 'of the nightly pond, the starry sky.' The madman traverses this pond not on 'black cloud' but on golden boat. How is it with what is golden? The poem "Nook by the Forest" responds with the line:

Oft what is golden and true shows itself to gentle madness.

The stranger's path leads through the 'ghostly years,' whose days are everywhere steered into the true outset [*Anbeginn*] and are ruled, i.e., are right, from there. The year of his soul is gathered into what is right.

O! how just, Elis, are all your days.

sings the poem "Elis." This call is only the echo of another that has already been heard:

O, how long, Elis, have you been deceased?

Dawn, into which the stranger has died away, shelters the essential justice of the unborn. This dawn/earliness is a time of its own kind, the time of the 'ghostly year.' Trakl has titled one of his poems simply with the word "Year." It starts out: 'Dark stillness of childhood.' The counterpart to that dark stillness is the brighter childhood, which is brighter because yet more still and therefore other – the dawn into which the one who has taken leave has descended. The concluding line of the same poem names the more still childhood the outset:

[53] Golden eye of the outset [*Anbeginn*], dark patience of the end.

{57} The end here is not the consequence and fading sound of the outset. The end, specifically as the end of the decomposing lineage, arises ahead of the outset of the unborn lineage. As the earlier dawn, the outset has nevertheless already overtaken the end. [first beginning, other beginning]

This dawn preserves the originary essence of time, which essence is ever yet veiled. [= **historicity**] It remains even further closed off for the reigning [mode of] thinking, so long as the representation of time that everywhere since Aristotle and still today gives the measure remains valid. On that view, time, be it represented mechanically, dynamically, or in terms of atomic decay, is the dimension for qualitative or quantitative reckoning of duration, which runs off in one unit after another [*im Nacheinander*].

But true time is the arrival/approach of what has been [*das Gewesene*]. This is not what is past [*das Vergangene*] but the gathering of what essences [*das Wesende*]. That gathering arises before all arrival, in that as such gathering it shelters itself back in

what is in each case earlier for it [*in ihr je Früheres*]. To the end and to its completion correspond 'dark patience.' The latter bears what is concealed toward its truth. Its bearing/endurance bears everything toward the descent into the ghostly night's blueness. Nevertheless, to the outset corresponds a glancing and sensing/pondering [*Blicken und Sinnen*], which gleams golden because it is shined on by 'what is golden and true.' This is reflected in the night's starry pond, whenever Elis on his passage opens his heart to her.

A golden boat
Rocks, Elis, your heart by the solitary sky.

The stranger's boat tosses [*waxes and wanes?*], but playfully, not 'anxiously' like the boat of those descendants of the dawn who for the first time only follow the stranger. Their boat has not yet reached the heights of the pond-mirror. It sinks down. But where? In decay? No. And where to? Into the empty nothing? Not at all.

[54] One of the last poems, "Lament," ends with the lines:

{58} Sister of stormy melancholy,
See an anxious boat sinks
Beneath stars, [i.e., beneath]
The night's countenance that grows silent.

What does this shelter [*birgt*], this growing-silent of night that glances back [or: awaits] out of the stars' glittering? To where does the growing-silent belong, along with this night itself? To having taken leave. This latter does not exhaust itself in a mere state, that of being dead, in which the boy Elis lives.

To having taken leave belongs the dawn of the more still childhood, belongs the blue night, belongs the nightly paths of the stranger, belongs the nocturnal wingbeat of the soul, belongs already the gloaming as the gateway to descent. Having taken leave gathers up all this that belongs together, only not after the fact [*nachträglich*] but such that having taken leave unfolds itself into their already prevailing gathering.

The poet names 'ghostly' the gloaming, the night, the stranger's years and paths. Having taken leave is 'ghostly/spiritual' [*geistlich*]. What does this word mean? Its meaning and use are old. 'Ghostly' means what *is* in the sense of *Geist*, what stems from it, and what follows its essence. Customary usage today has restricted what is 'ghostly' to refer to what is 'spiritual,' to the spiritual status of priests and of their church. Even Trakl seems to intend this reference, at least for the superficial ear, when the poem "In Hellbrunn" says:

... The oaks grow green
So sacredly over the forgotten paths of the dead,

Prior to this, 'the shades of prelates, of noble women' are named, 'the shades of those long deceased,' which [55] seem to hover over the 'springtime pond.' But the poet, who sings here 'again the blue lament of evening,' does not recall 'the clergy' / 'spirituality,' when the oaks 'grow green so sacredly' for him. He recalls the dawn/earliness of those long deceased, which promises the "Springtime [Early Time] of the Soul." The

chronologically earlier poem “Ghostly Song” [or: “Spiritual Song”] too, sings nothing else, although in a manner still more veiled and more searching. The *Geist* of this “Ghostly Song,” which plays in a strange ambiguity, comes more clearly into words in the final stanza:

Beggar by the ancient stone
Seems in prayer to have deceased,
A shepherd gently leaves his hill
And an angel sings in the grove,
Nearby in the grove
Sings the children into sleep.

But the poet, if already he does not intend by what is ‘ghostly’ [*das ‘Geistliche’*] the clergy or spirituality, could yet simply and rightly name what stands in relation to spirit [*Geist*] the ‘spiritual’ [*das ‘Geistige’*] and speak of the spiritual gloaming, the spiritual night. Why does he avoid the word ‘spiritual’? Because what is ‘spiritual’ names the opposite of what is material. This represents the differentiation of two realms and names, in Platonic-Western terms, the cleft between the supersensible (*noēton*) and the sensible (*aisthēton*).

The spiritual so understood has come to be located among the rational, the intellectual, and the ideological. It belongs, together with its opposites, to the worldview of the decomposing lineage. The ‘dark wandering’ of the ‘blue soul,’ however, *separates* [scheidet] itself from this. The gloaming that dims toward night, into which the stranger descends, can be named ‘spiritual’ just as little as the stranger’s path. Having taken leave is ghostly, determined from *Geist*, but equally not ‘spiritual’ in the metaphysical sense.

[56] Yet what is the *Geist*? Trakl speaks in his last poem, “Grodek,” of the ‘mind’s [*Geistes*] hot flame.’ *Geist* is what flames, and only as this is perhaps a guttering, flickering thing. {60} Trakl does not primarily understand *Geist* as *pneuma* (breath, spirit), spiritually, but rather as flame, which bursts into flame, rouses, horrifies, disconcerts or baffles. Flaming is gleaming [*Leuchten*] that glows. What flames is the outside-itself, which clears and lets shine, which meanwhile can also go on consuming and can reduce everything to the whiteness of ashes. [cp. the *hupsipolis apolis*]

“Flame is a brother to the palest” says the poem “Transformation of Evil.” Trakl looks at ‘*Geist*’ from out of that essence which is named in the originary meaning of the word ‘ghost’ [*Geist*]; for *gheis* means: to be incensed, aghast, beside oneself.

Geist so understood essences in the possibility of what is gentle *and* of what is corrosive or destructive. What is gentle in no way casts down that outside-itself of what bursts into flame, but rather holds it gathered within the rest/peace of what is friendly. What is corrosive comes from unbridled license [*das Zügellose*], which is eaten up in its own revolt/turmoil/frenzy [*Aufuhr*; cf. end of CPC] and thus drives maliciousness. Evil is always the evil of a *Geist*. Evil and its wickedness is not the sensible, the material. It is also not mere ‘spiritual’ nature. Evil is ghostly as the revolt/frenzy of what horrifies, blazing away into blind delusion – the horrifying that displaces into the fragmentation of what is unholy [*Ungesammelte des Unheils*] and

threatens to sear away/scorch [*versengen*] the collected [*gesammelte*] blossoming of what is gentle.

Yet where does the collecting of gentleness rest? How is it bridled? Which *Geist* holds its reins? How is the human essence ‘ghostly’ and how does it become so?

Insofar as the essence of *Geist* consists in bursting into flame, *Geist* breaks a path [*Bahn*], clears it, and brings onto the way. As flame, *Geist* is the storm that ‘storms heaven’ and ‘hunts down God.’ *Geist* chases the soul into being-underway, where it resorts to wandering out ahead. *Geist* displaces/deports into what is strange. ‘The soul is a strange thing on earth.’ *Geist* is what gives soul as a gift; it is what animates. [in Hölderlin, H finds *Seele* as essence of *Gemüt*, and poet as animator – Derrida] But the [57] soul, on the other hand, guards *Geist* in such an essential manner that *Geist* presumably never can be *Geist* without the soul. Soul ‘feeds’ *Geist*. In which way? How other than such that soul gives the flame of its own essence to *Geist* to borrow? This flame is the glowing of melancholy [*Schwermut*], the ‘gentleness of the solitary soul.’

What is solitary does not split up into the dispersion [*Zerstreuung*] to which every mere abandonment [*Verlassenheit*] is exposed [*preisgegeben*]. What is solitary bears the soul toward the unique/singular [*das Einzige*], gathers it into one [*das Eine*], and thus brings its essence to wandering. [cf. p. 33] As the solitary soul, it is the wandering soul. The glow/blaze at its core [*Gemüt*] is expected/burdened [*wird zugemutet*] to bear the weight [cf. *Schwermut*] of its dispensation into wandering – and thus to bear the soul toward *Geist*. [cf. BT §6, calling for an analytic of *Gemüt*]

To *Geist* lend your flame, glowing melancholy;⁴

begins a poem “To Lucifer,” i.e., to the light-bearer who casts the shadows of evil.

The soul’s melancholy glows only where the soul enters on its wandering into the broadest breadth of its own, i.e., of its wandering, essence. This happens if it looks toward the countenance of blueness and beholds what shines out of it. By thus beholding, the soul is ‘the great soul.’

O pain, you flaming beholding
Of the great soul! (“The Thunderstorm”)

The soul’s greatness is measured by the manner in which it is capable of flaming beholding, by which it becomes at-home in pain. To pain belongs [*eignet*] an essence that oscillates in itself/turns against itself. [cf. becoming at-home in uncanniness; pain as transition from saying to singing – Krell]

Pain tears away [*reißen fort*] by ‘flaming.’ [or radiating out beyond itself] Its rending, sweeping away [*Fortriß*] consigns [*zeichnet... ein*] the wandering soul into the juncture [*Fuge*] of storming and hunting that would like to hunt down God by storming heaven.

⁴ *Nachlassband* of the Salzburg edition

Thus, it seems [58] as if the rending, sweeping away were to overpower that toward which it sweeps [= greatness?], instead of letting it [= greatness] govern in its gleaming that veils.

{62} Yet this latter is capable of 'beholding.' It does not extinguish the flaming tearing-away [*Fortriß*] but rejoins it to the fitting submission of the beholding acceptance. [here is healing of the human relation to being] Beholding is the tearing back in pain by which pain achieves both its mildness and, out of that mildness, its governing [*Walten*], a governing that [both] reveals and conveys/escorts.

Geist is flame. It gleams glowingly. Gleaming happens in the beholding glance. For such beholding, the arrival of what shines takes place [*ereignet sich*], in which everything that essences comes to presence [*anwest*]. Pain is this flaming beholding. Its essence remains closed off for every mind that represents pain starting from sensation. Flaming beholding determines the greatness of soul.

Geist, which gives the 'great soul,' is – as pain – what animates. But the soul thus given is what quickens [*das Belebende*]. Therefore, each thing that lives according to its senses is pervaded by pain on the basis of the fundamental pull [*vom Grundzug*] of its own essence. Everything that lives is susceptible to pain.

Only what lives soulfully is capable of fulfilling the determination/destiny of its essence. In virtue of this capability, it is fitted [*taugt*] into the harmony of reciprocal support [*Sichtragen*] through which all that lives belongs together. [relationality] Measured by this relatedness of fitting [*Taugen*], everything that lives is fit [*tauglich*], i.e., good. But what is good is good in pain.

Corresponding to the basic trait of the great soul, everything animated is not only good in pain but is uniquely/singularly in this way [*auf diese Weise* – i.e., in pain] also true [*wahrhaft*]; for it is in virtue of the oscillation of pain that what lives can concealingly reveal those that presence along with it in their respective kinds [*in seiner jeweiligen Art*], or let them be truly [*wahrhaft sein lassen*]. [connection of truth and pathos]

The final stanza of one poem starts ["Serene Spring"]:

So painfully/in such pain good and true it is, what lives;

One could be of the opinion that the line only fleetingly touches on what is painful. In truth, the line introduces the saying of the whole stanza, [59] which remains tuned to the telling silence [*Erschweigen*] of pain. In order {63} to hear it, [we must] neither overlook nor even alter the carefully placed punctuation. The stanza continues:

And quietly an ancient stone touches you:

Again sounds the 'quietly,' which each time [*jeweils*] lets us glide into the essential relations. On the other hand, 'the stone' appears, which, if a calculation be permitted here, could be found in more than thirty places in Trakl's *Gedicht*. Pain conceals [*verbirgt*] itself in the stone, the petrifying [*versteinemd*] pain that preserves [*verwahrt*] itself in the enclosure/impenetrability [*Verschlossene*] of the rock [*Gestein*], in whose appearing the ancient origin [*Herkunft*] gleams out of the still glow of the earliest

dawn. As the outset [*Anbeginn*] that goes out ahead, this dawn approaches everything that becomes, everything that wanders, and brings toward it the arrival of its essence that can never be overtaken [*nie einholbar*].

The ancient stone is pain itself, insofar as pain glances earthily at mortals. [here the earthy, silent side of pain, in which its impenetrability and ineluctability appear] The colon after the word 'stone' at the end of the line indicates that here *the stone* speaks. Pain itself has the word. Having grown silent long ago, it says to those who wander, who follow the stranger, nothing less than its own governing and enduring:

Verily! I will always be with you.

To this verdict of pain those who wander, who listen into the leafy branches for the one who died young, reply with the words of the succeeding line:

O mouth! that through the silver willow quakes.

The whole stanza of this poem corresponds to the conclusion of the second stanza of another poem, dedicated "To One Who Died Young":

[60] And in the garden the friend's silver countenance lingered
Listening in the leaves or in the ancient rock.

{64} The stanza that starts off with:

So painfully/in such pain good and true it is, what lives;

at the same time resolves the chord struck at the start of the third part of the poem to which it belongs:

How everything becoming seems so sick!

What is disturbed, hampered, unholy and without health [*Unheile und Heillose*], everything that suffers from decay is in truth only the unique/singular outward look [*Anschein*] in which the 'veritable' is concealed: the pain that endures through everything. Therefore, pain is neither the resistant nor the useful. Pain is the grace [*Gunst*] of the essential [in] everything that essences. The one-fold of pain's oscillating essence determines/destines becoming from out of the concealed, earliest dawn and tunes it to the cheerfulness/serenity of the great soul. [we are disposed to take some things as essential over others]

So painfully/in such pain good and true it is, what lives;
And quietly an ancient stone touches you:
Verily! I will always be with ye.
O mouth! that through the silver willow quakes.

The stanza is the pure song of pain, sung to complete the three-part poem called "Serene Spring." The serenity of the earliest dawn of every essence that is just setting out/inceptual [*anbeginnlichen*] quakes from out of the stillness of concealed pain.

To customary representing, the oscillating essence of pain [turning in Dasein, *Kehre im Ereignis*] – namely, that pain only authentically rends or sweeps away as a rift that tears back [*zurückkreissender Riss*] – easily appears as absurd. But in this outward look [*Anschein*] is concealed the essential one-fold of pain. By flaming, it carries [61] to the furthest reaches whenever, by beholding, it keeps to itself most intimately. [cf. *Heraclitus*]

[now to explain that last claim: first, pain and beholding, then pain and flaming]

Thus, pain as the basic trait of the great soul remains pure correspond to the holiness of blueness. [pain as authenticity]

For this holiness gleams over the countenance of the soul in that the former withdraws into its own depth. The holy endures, if/whenever it essences, in each case only such that {65} it relates [*verhält*] in this withdrawal and refers beholding to fitting submission.

The essence of pain, its concealed relation to blueness, reaches words in the last stanza of a poem called “Transfiguration”:

Blue flower,
Which echoes softly in yellowed rock.

The ‘blue flower’ is the ghostly night’s ‘gentle cornflower sheaf.’ The words sing of the wellspring whence Trakl’s poetry springs forth. They conclude, and at the same time they bear, the “Transfiguration.” The song is lyric, tragedy, and epic all in one. The poem is unique/singular among all others, since in it the breadth of looking, the depth of thinking, and the simplicity of saying *shine* in an ineffable manner, intimately and forever.

Pain is only truly pain when it serves the flame of *Geist*. [must learn to be pained!] Trakl’s final poem is called “Grodok.” It is known as a war poem. But it is infinitely more because it is something else. Its final lines run:

Today an immense pain feeds the mind’s [*Geistes*] hot flame,
The unborn grandsons.

The ‘grandsons’ named here are not at all the unbegotten sons of the sons fallen in battle, the progeny of the decomposing lineage. If that were all, merely a break in the procreative advance of previous generations, then this poet would have to [62] rejoice over such an end. Yet he mourns; albeit in a ‘proud mourning’ that, flaming, beholds the resting of those unborn.

Those unborn are called grandsons because they cannot be sons, i.e., no immediate offspring of the fallen/decayed generation [*verfallenen Geschlecht*]. Another generation has lived between these two. It is another because of another sort, measured by its {66} other essential origin [*Wesensherkunft*] from the dawn of the unborn. The ‘immense pain’ is the beholding that flames over everything, that glances ahead into the still self-withdrawing dawn of that dead one to whom the ‘ghosts’ of those who fell early gave their lives [*entgegenstarben*].

But who protects this immense pain so that it feeds the hot flame of *Geist*? Whatever is by the cast/strike [*Schlag*] of this *Geist* belongs to that which brings onto the way. Whatever is by the cast/strike of this *Geist* is called 'ghostly.' That is why the poet has to name the gloaming, the night, and the year 'ghostly,' exclusively and above all other things. The gloaming lets the night's blueness arise/go up, sets it ablaze. The night flames as the gleaming mirror of the star pond. The year bursts into flame by setting the sun's course onto the way of its rising and descent. [new *Schlag*]

Which *Geist* is it that awakens this 'ghostliness,' and which the latter follows? It is that *Geist* properly named 'the *Geist* of the one who died young' in the poem "To One Who Died Young." It is the *Geist* who sets that 'beggar' of the "Ghostly Song" adrift into having taken leave, such that, as the poem "In the Village" says, he remains 'the poor man who died solitary in mind [*im Geiste*].'

Having taken leave essences as sheer *Geist*. It is the shining of blueness, a shining that rests in its depth and flames in stillness, a blueness that sparks a more still childhood into the goldenness of the outset. Toward this dawn glances the golden countenance of the Elis shape. In its return glance, it keeps safe [*wahrt*] the nocturnal flame of the *Geist* of having taken leave.

Thus, then, having taken leave is neither merely the state of the [63] one who died young, nor the indeterminate space for his sojourn. In the manner of its very flaming/conflagration, having taken leave is itself *Geist*, and as such it is what gathers. This gathering fetches the essence of mortals back into their more still childhood, shelters that childhood as the not-yet-enacted/not-yet-brought-to-term cast [*Schlag*] that casts/stamps the coming lineage. What gathers in having taken leave holds/rescues [*spart*] the unborn out beyond what has passed away [*Abgelebte*] and into a coming resurrection of the human race out of the dawn. [!] As the *Geist* of gentleness, what gathers at the same time brings to stillness/soothes the *Geist* of evil. The revolt/turmoil/frenzy of that *Geist* rises to its most extreme malice there where it yet irrupts from/breaks out of/rages beyond even the discord of generations and breaks into/invades sibling rivalry. [what's the difference? (here the problem of evil, followed by response); Cain/Abel, Georg/Gretl]

But at the same time, in the more still one-fold [*Einfalt*] of childhood is concealed humankind's sibling two-fold gathered therein. In having taken leave, the *Geist* of evil is neither annihilated and denied [*vernichtet und verneint*] nor released and affirmed. Evil is transformed. In order to sustain/survive such a 'transformation,' the soul has to turn itself inward to the greatness of its essence. The greatness of what is great is determined by the *Geist* of having taken leave. Having taken leave is the gathering by which the human essence is sheltered back into its more still childhood, and this [in turn] is sheltered back into the dawn of another outset. As gathering, having taken leave has the nature of a place [or: essence of place]. [cf. *der andere Anfang*]

[turn to confirm the analysis]

But now to what extent is having taken leave the place of a *Gedicht*, and particularly of that *Gedicht* which Georg Trakl's poems bring to language? Does having taken leave have any relation at all or an intrinsic relation to poetry? [i.e., to singing] And even if

such a relation prevails, how should having taken leave fetch to itself a poetic saying as its place and determine it from there?

Is having taken leave not a unique/singular growing-silent of stillness? How can having taken leave bring a saying and singing onto the way? Yet having taken leave is not the desolation of having died off. In having taken leave, the stranger measures out [64] the leave-taking/departure from the previous lineage. He is underway on a path. **[being underway as departure and measuring]** What sort of path is this? The poet says it clearly enough and even in the concluding line of the poem “Summer’s Decline,” which line is emphasized by being set off from the rest:

{68} If a blue deer were to be mindful of his path,

[To be mindful of] the melody of his ghostly years!

The stranger’s path is ‘the melody of his ghostly years.’ The steps of Elis ring out. The ringing steps gleam through the night. Does their melody fade away into emptiness? Has the one who died into the dawn taken leave [*abgeschieden*] in the sense of something cut loose, or has he been set aside [*ausgeschieden*] in the sense of something selected, i.e., collected into a gathering that gathers more gently and calls in greater stillness?

The second and third stanzas of the poem “To One Who Died Young” provide a hint for our questioning:

But he went down the stone steps of the Mönchsberg,
A blue smile on his countenance and strangely pupated,
Down into his more still childhood and died;
And in the garden the friend’s silver countenance lingered
Listening in the leaves or in the ancient rock.

Soul sang death, the green decomposition of flesh
And it was the rustle of the forest,
The fervent lament of the deer.
From gloaming towers, the blue bells of evening always sounded.

A friend listens after [*lauscht ... nach*] the stranger. In thus listening, he follows the departed one and thereby himself becomes the wanderer, a stranger. The friend’s soul listens [65] after the dead one. The friend’s countenance is one that has ‘died away.’ It listens in that it sings death. That is why this singing voice is ‘the bird-voice of the deathlike one’ (“The Wanderer”). It corresponds to the friend’s death, his descent toward the blueness of night. But with the death of the one who has taken leave, he sings at the same time the ‘green decomposition’ of that lineage from which dark wandering ‘parted’ him. **[What Heidegger can do: listening, singing of death (the end of philosophy), the decomposed lineage (metaphysics), and the parting]**

{69} To sing means to praise and to guard in song what is praised. The friend who listens after is one of the ‘praising shepherds.’ Yet the friend’s soul, which ‘gladly listens to the white mage’s fairy tales,’ can only pursue in song [*nachsingen*] the one who has taken leave then: when having taken leave sounds toward the one who

follows after; when the melody that echoes there rings out; ‘when,’ as is said in “Evening Song,” ‘dark melody haunts the soul.’ [cf. the call of conscience, the *Anklang of the event*] If it happens, then the *Geist* of the one who died young appears in the glitter of dawn. The ghostly years of the dawn are the true time of the stranger and his friend. In their glitter, the previously black clouds become golden. They are likened now to that ‘golden boat,’ as which Elis’ heart tosses in the solitary sky.

The final stanza of the poem “To One Who Died Young” sings:

Golden cloud and time. In the solitary chamber
You often invite the dead man,
And stroll down the green river in familiar [*trautem*] conversation beneath elms.

To the haunting melody of the stranger’s steps corresponds the friend’s invitation to conversation. The friend’s saying is the song-filled wandering down the river, following into the descent toward the blueness of night, which [blueness or night] the *Geist* of the one who died young animates. In such conversation, the singing friend beholds the one who has taken leave. By his beholding, he becomes [66] in the return glance brother to the stranger. Wandering with the stranger, the brother achieves the more still sojourn in the dawn. He can call in the “Song of the Departed One”:

O to dwell in the animate blueness of night.

But in that the friend who listens after sings the “Song of the Departed One” and thus becomes his brother, the {70} stranger’s brother thereby first becomes brother to his sister, whose ‘lunar voice always echoes through the ghostly night,’ as the concluding lines of the poem “Ghostly Gloaming” say.

Having taken leave is the place of the *Gedicht*, because the melody of the stranger’s echoing, gleaming steps sets the dark wandering of the one following him ablaze into singing that listens. The wandering that is dark/obscure because it only follows after nevertheless lightens [*lichtet*] their souls into blueness. The essence of the singing soul is then yet only a singular looking ahead into the blueness of night, which shelters that more still dawn.

A blue moment is merely more soul.

is how the poem “Childhood” puts it.

Thus the essence of having taken leave is fulfilled. Having taken leave is the fulfilled place of the *Gedicht* for the first time when, as a gathering of the more still childhood and as the grave of the stranger, both at once, it gathers to itself those who follow the one who died young into the descent. They follow in that, listening after him, they bring the melody of his path into the sounding of spoken language and thus become the ones who have taken leave. Their singing is poetry. To what extent? What does it mean to poetize? [*Was heisst Dichten?*]

To poetize means to say-after [*nach-sagen*], namely, to say after [or to say according to, in pursuit of] the melody of having-taken-leave’s *Geist*, the melody addressed [*zugesprochenen*; i.e., to the poet]. Before it becomes a saying in the sense of speaking-

out, for the longest time poetry is [67] first a listening. Having taken leave fetches listening into [*holt ein*] its melody beforehand, so that this melody may ring through the saying in which it after-sounds [*nachverlautet*]. The lunar coolness of the ghostly night's holy blueness echoes and shines throughout all looking and saying. The language of saying thus becomes one that says after; it becomes: poesy [*Dichtung*]. What is spoken in it guards the *Gedicht* as the essentially unspoken. After-saying that is called into listening becomes in such wise 'more pious,' i.e., more fittingly submissive [*fügsamer*] to the address [*Zuspruch*] of the path on which the stranger walks out ahead, from the darkness/obscurity of childhood into the more still and brighter dawn. Therefore, the poet who attentively listens after [*nachlauschende*] can say to himself:

More pious [now], you know the sense of the dark years,
Coolness and autumn in solitary rooms;
And in holy blueness, gleaming steps ring forth. ("Childhood")

The soul that sings the autumn and the year's decline does not sink down in decay. Its piety is set ablaze by the flame of dawn's *Geist* and is therefore fiery:

O, the soul that quietly sang the song of the yellowed reed; fiery piety.

So says the poem "Dream and Shroud of Night" [or: "Dream and Derangement (*Umnachtung*)"]. The shroud of night named here is not a mere darkening of the mind [*Geistes*], any more than madness [*Wahnsinn*] is an insanity [*Irrsinn*]. [Cf. p. 49, above] The night that shrouds the stranger's singing brother remains the 'ghostly night' of that death which the one who has departed into the 'golden shudders' of dawn has died. Looking after this dead one, the friend who listens looks off into the coolness of the more still childhood. Such looking, meanwhile, remains a parting [*Scheiden*] from that generation/lineage, born long ago, which has forgotten the more still childhood as the outset that is yet kept in store [*aufbehaltene*] and has never brought to term [*ausgetragen*] what is unborn. The poem "Anif," [68] which has the name of a moated castle near Salzburg, says:

Great is the guilt of things born. Woe, you golden shudders
Of death,
When the soul dreams cooler blossoms.

But in the 'woe' of pain there is not only the parting *from* the old lineage. In a concealed and destined manner, this parting [*Scheiden*] has been decided/set apart [*entschieden*] for departure [*zum Abschied*], which is summoned out of having taken leave [*Abgeschiedenheit*]. {72} Wandering in its night is 'infinite agony' [*unendliche Qual*]. This does not mean endless torment [*Pein*]. What is infinite is devoid of every finite restriction and atrophy. The 'infinite agony' is consummate, fulfilled pain, pain that comes on in the fullness of its essence. In wandering through the ghostly night – which wandering again and again takes its leave from the unghostly night – the one-fold [*Einfalt*] of oscillation, which pervades pain, comes purely into play for the first time. The gentleness of *Geist* is called into hunting down God; its awe is called into storming heaven. [agony of spirit]

In the poem "Night," it is said:

Infinite agony,
That you hunted down God
Gentle *Geist*,
Sighing deeply in plunging waters,
In surging pines.

The flaming tearing-away [*Fortriß*] of this storming and hunting down does not tear down ‘the steep citadel,’ does not lay low the hunted one but lets it arise [*erstehen*] into looking at heaven’s sights, the pure coolness of which veils God. The song-filled sensing/pondering of such wandering belongs to the brow of a head thoroughly stamped by consummate pain. That is why the poem “Night” concludes with the lines:

[69] A petrified head
Storms the sky.

To this corresponds the closing of the poem “The Heart”:

[In the night storm]
The steep citadel.
O heart,
Shimmering across into snowy coolness.

The triadic harmony of the three late poems “The Heart,” “The Thunderstorm,” and “Night” has been so concealedly tuned into the one and the same of singing about having taken leave that the situating of the *Gedicht* currently being attempted finds itself strengthened by leaving the three designated poems in the echoing of their song, without an additional elucidation.

Wandering in having taken leave, looking at the sights of what is invisible, and consummate pain belong together. The patient one is jointed into pain’s rift. This one alone is capable of following the turn back into the earliest dawn of the lineage whose fate is preserved [in] an old family register, into which the poet inscribes the [following] stanza under the title “Into an Old Family Register”: [\[cf. p. 53, above\]](#)

Echoing of melody and soft madness
The patient one humbly submits to pain.
Look! Already the gloaming [*es dämmert schon*].

[Again night turns and a mortal thing laments
And another suffers with it.]

It is in such a melody of saying that the poet brings to shine the gleaming sights in which God conceals himself from the mad hunt.

That is why it is only “Whispered into the Afternoon” when the poet sings, in the poem thus titled:

The brow dreams colors of God,
Feels the gentle wings of madness.

[70] The one poetizing first becomes a poet insofar as he follows that ‘madman’ who died away into the dawn and, by the melody of his steps, calls out of having taken leave the brother who follows him. Thus the friend’s countenance glances [*blickt*] into the stranger’s countenance. The glitter of this ‘moment’ [*Augenblick*] stirs the saying of the listener. In the glittering that stirs, that shines out of the place of the *Gedicht*, that wave surges which moves [*bewegt*] poetic saying to its language/speech.

[cf. p. 33, above]

Accordingly, of what sort is the language of Trakl’s poetry? It speaks by corresponding to that Underway on which the {74} stranger walks out ahead. The path he has pursued [*ingeschlagen*] leads away from the old, decadent lineage. It escorts/guides toward descent into the dawn of the unborn lineage that is kept in store [*aufbehalten*]. The language of that *Gedicht* which has its place in having taken leave corresponds to the unborn human race’s returning home into the calm outset of its more still essence.

The language of this poetry speaks from out of the transition. Its path crosses over from the descent of what is decaying to the descent into the gloaming blueness of what is holy. The language of the *Gedicht* speaks out of traversing/passing over and through the nightly pond of the ghostly night. This language sings the song of the return home that has taken leave, which turns [*einkehrt*] from out of the lateness of decomposition into the dawn of the more still outset that has not yet been [*noch ungewesenen Anbeginn*]. In this language, the Underway speaks, through whose shining the melody of the ghostly years of the stranger who has taken leave appears, this gleaming and echoing melody. According to the poem “Manifestation and Descent” [or: “Revelation and Destruction”], the “Song of the Departed One” sings ‘the beauty of a lineage returning home.’

Because the language of this *Gedicht* speaks from out of the Underway of having taken leave, at the same time the language constantly speaks from out of that which it abandons in the departure [*Abschied*] and that [place] toward which the departure resigns itself/sets itself apart [*sich bescheidet*]. [motion] The language of the *Gedicht* is polyvalent and is this in its own way. We hear nothing [71] of the poem’s saying, so long as we only encounter it as accompanied by this or that dull sense of an unambiguous meaning.

Gloaming and night, descent and death, madness and deer, pond and rock, bird’s wing and boat, stranger and brother, *Geist* and God, and equally the color words: blue and green, white and black, red and silver, golden and dark – each of these respectively says manifold things.

‘Green’ is decomposing and blossoming, ‘white’ is pale and {75} pure, ‘black’ is enclosing in gloom and sheltering in darkness/obscurity, ‘red’ is fleshy purple and gentle rose. ‘Silver’ is the pallor of death and the sparkle of stars. ‘Gold’ is the glitter of what is true and the ‘gruesome laughter of gold’ [*“To the Ones Who Fell Silent”*]. The multiple meanings named here are at first simply ambiguous. But this ambiguity itself, taken as a whole, comes once more to stand on the one side whose other [side] is determined from out of the most intimate place of the *Gedicht*.

The poem speaks from out of an ambiguous ambiguity. [no longer simply a choice between present meanings] But these multiple meanings of the poetic saying do not flutter away from one another into indeterminate polysemy. The multivalent tone of Trakl's *Gedicht* comes from a gathering, i.e., from a harmony, that, meant for itself, remains ever ineffable. The multiple meanings of this poetic saying are not the imprecision of laxity but the rigor of letting, which has let itself in on and now joins itself to the diligence/caution/attention [*Sorgfalt*] of 'justly beholding.'

The saying suited to [*eignet*] Trakl's poems is secure in itself throughout its multiple meanings. It is often difficult for us sharply to delimit this saying from the language of other poets, whose polysemy stems from what is undetermined in an insecurity of a poet's [*poetischen*] fumbling, because they lack [or: their language lacks] the authentic *Gedicht* and its place. The singular rigor of Trakl's essentially manifold language is in a higher sense so univocal that it remains infinitely superior even to all the technical exactness of a merely scientifically univocal concept.

[72] It is in the same polyvalence of language, determined out of the place of Trakl's *Gedicht*, that the common words belonging to the biblical and ecclesial world of representation also speak. The transition from the old lineage to the unborn one leads through this region and its language. Whether, to what extent, and in what sense Trakl's poesy speaks Christianly, what kind of 'Christian' the poet was, what 'Christianly,' 'Christianity,' 'Christendom,' 'Christlikeness' mean here and in general – all this involves essential questions. Nevertheless, situating them hangs in a void, so long as the place of the *Gedicht* is not carefully discerned. Moreover, situating them demands a reflection [*Nachdenken*] for which neither the concepts of metaphysics nor those of ecclesial theology suffice.

A judgment about the Christlikeness of Trakl's *Gedicht* would have to give thought [*bedenken*], above all, to his two last poems, "Lament" and "Groddek." We would have to ask: why does the poet, here in the most extreme distress of his final saying, not call upon God and Christ, if he is such a committed Christian? Why does he name, instead of them, the 'sister's reeling shadow' as 'greeting'? Why does the song end, not with the assured outlook [*Ausblick*] on Christian salvation/redemption, but with the name of the 'unborn grandchildren'? Why does the sister also appear in the other final poem, "Lament"? Why is 'eternity' here called 'the icy wave'? Is that thought in a Christian manner? It is not even Christian despair.

But what does this "Lament" sing? In this 'Sister... / See...', does there not sound the intimate one-fold of that which, with every threat, through the most extreme withdrawal of the holy/healthy [*das Heile*], remains wandering toward the 'golden countenance of the human'?

Trakl's poesy speaks – and this at the same time means: grows silent – from out of the rigorous harmony of many-voiced language. This harmony corresponds to having taken leave as the place of the *Gedicht*. [73] Rightly to attend to [or heed; cf. 33] this place already gives us something to think/provokes thinking. We hardly dare, in closing, yet to ask after the broader location or context [*Ortschaft*] of this place.

In the first step of situating the place of the *Gedicht*, the penultimate stanza of the poem “Autumn Soul” gave us the final indication of departedness/having-taken-leave as that place. {77} The stanza named those wanderers who follow the stranger’s path through the ghostly night, so that they ‘dwell’ in its ‘animate blueness.’

Soon fish and deer glide away.
Blue soul, dark wandering
Soon part us from loved ones, others.

Our language names the free region that promises and grants dwelling the ‘land’ [or country]. Stepping-over into the stranger’s land happens through the ghostly gloaming in the evening. That’s why the final line of the stanza says:

Evening changes sense and image.

The land into which the one who died young descends is the land of this evening. The broader location or context [*Ortschaft*] of the place that gathers in itself Trakl’s *Gedicht* is the concealed essence of having taken leave, and is called “Occident” [*Abendland*]. This occident is more ancient, namely, earlier and therefore more promising, than the one that the Platonic-Christian West, and indeed the European West, represented [*vorgestellte*]. For having taken leave is the ‘outset’ [*Anbeginn*] of an ascending world-year, not the abyss of decay.

The occident concealed in having taken leave does not descend but remains, in that it waits for those who will inhabit it as the land of the descent into the ghostly night. The land of descent is the transition into the beginning [*Anfang*] of the dawn [*Frühe*] concealed in it.

[74] If we give thought to this, may we still talk [*reden*] of an accident [*Zufall*] when two of Trakl’s poems expressly name the occident? One is entitled “Occident.” The other is called “Occidental Song.” It sings the same [*das Selbe*] as the “Song of the Departed One” [*Abgeschiedenen*]. The song sets out with a call that inclines itself in wonder:

O the nocturnal wingbeat of the soul:

{78} The line ends with a colon that includes everything that follows it, even to the transition from descent into arising. At this point in the poem, before its two concluding lines, stands a second colon. There follows the one-fold word: “*One* lineage [*Geschlecht*].” The ‘one’ is emphasized. As far as I can tell, it is the sole italicized word in Trakl’s poems. This emphasized ‘*one* lineage’ shelters the basic tone from out of which the *Gedicht* of this poet grows silent about the mystery. The unity of the *one* lineage flows from the cast [*Schlag*] that – out of having taken leave, out of the even more still stillness that governs in it, out of its ‘saying of the forest,’ out of its ‘measure and law’ – gathers, along ‘the lunar paths of the one departed’ and in a one-fold manner [*einfältig*], the discord of the lineages into the gentler two-fold. [This new cast is the one event; see just below]

The ‘*one*’ in the word ‘*one* lineage’ does not mean ‘one’ instead of ‘two.’ The ‘one’ also does not mean the monotony of a dull identity [*Gleichheit*]. Above all, the word ‘*one* lineage’ does not name here any biological fact, neither ‘single-genderedness’ nor

‘equal-genderedness.’ In the emphasized ‘one lineage’ is concealed that unifying that unifies from out of ghostly night’s gathering blueness. This word speaks from the song in which the land of the evening is sung. Accordingly, the word ‘lineage’ here maintains its full, manifold meaning designated earlier. It names, first, the historical race of human beings, humanity, in distinction from all other living things (plants and [75] animals). The word ‘lineage’ names, second, the races, tribes, clans, and families of this human race. The word ‘lineage’ names at the same time, everywhere, the two-fold of the sexes.

The cast [*Der Schlag*], which imprints [*prägt*] the two-fold into the one-fold of the ‘one lineage’ and thus brings back the tribes of the human race, and thereby this race itself, into the gentleness of the more still childhood, does so in that it lets the soul pursue/cast itself into [*einschlagen*] the way into the ‘blue spring.’ {79} The soul sings the spring in that the soul grows silent about it. The poem “In Darkness” starts with the line:

The soul grows silent about the blue spring.

The verb ‘to grow silent’ [*Schweigen*] is said here in its transitive meaning. Trakl’s poem sings the land of the evening. It is a unique/singular calling after the *Ereignis* of the right cast, which [cast] speaks the flame of *Geist* into gentleness. In “Kaspar Hauser Song” it says:

[Kaspar Hauser was a famous feral child]

God spoke a gentle flame to his heart:
O human!

The ‘spoke’ is used here in the same transitive meaning as the previously mentioned ‘grows silent,’ the ‘bleeds’ in the poem “To the Boy Elis,” and the ‘smokes’ in the final line of the poem “At the Mönchsberg.”

God’s speaking is an addressing [*Zusprechen*] that assigns to the human a more still essence and calls the human, by such an address [*Zuspruch*], into correspondence. The human arises to this correspondence out of the authentic descent into the dawn [*die Frühe*]. The “Occident” shelters the arising of the dawn of the ‘one lineage.’ [this is the resurrection mentioned earlier, p. 63]

How shallowly we think when we claim that the singer of the “Occidental Song” is the poet of decay. How incompletely, and with what difficulty, we hear when we only ever invoke Trakl’s other poem called “Occident” in terms of its [76] last, third part, stubbornly failing to hear the middle part of this triptych, along with its preparation in the first part. The figure/shape of Elis appears again in the poem “Occident,” while “Helian” and “Sebastian in a Dream” are no longer named in the latest poems. [what does that mean?] The steps of the stranger echo. They are tuned from the ‘quiet *Geist*’ of the ancient forest legends. In the middle section of this poem, {80} there is already wrapped up [*verwunden*] the concluding section, in which the ‘great cities’ are named, ‘built of stone / on the plain!’ They already have their fate [*Schicksal*]. It is a different one than that which is spoken ‘by the greening hill,’ where ‘a springtime storm echoes’ – by the hill to which a ‘just measure’ [“Anif”] belongs [*eignet*] and which is also called the ‘evening hillside’ [“Springtime of the Soul,” “Revelation and Descent”]. People have spoken of Trakl’s “lack of history.” What does “history” mean in this judgment? If the

name means simply “historiology,” i.e., the representation of what is past, then Trakl is lacking/free of history. His poetry does not require historical “objects.” Why not? Because his *Gedicht* is historical in the highest sense. His poem sings the destiny of the cast [*Geschick des Schlages*] that casts away [*verschlägt*] the human race into its still withheld essence, i.e., saves the human race. [= the event – cp. *Die Angst verschlaegt uns das Wort* (GA 9:112, WM? 89)]

Trakl’s poem sings the song of the soul, ‘a strange thing on earth,’ that only by starting to wander gains [*erwandert*] the earth as the more still homeland of the lineage that returns home.

Is this dreamy Romanticism, at the fringe of the technically and economically oriented world of modern mass existence? Or – is it the clear knowledge of the ‘madman,’ who sees and senses/ponders other things than do the reporters of the latest news, who exhaust themselves in the historiology of the present, the pre-calculated future of which is in each case only a prolongation of the current news – a future that remains without the arrival of a destiny [*Geschick*] that approaches the human for the first time at the outset [*Anbeginn*] of his essence?

The poet sees the soul, ‘a strange thing,’ destined to a path that does not lead into decay but, on the contrary, into descent. This descent bows and joins itself to the forceful dying [77] that the one who died young already died. After him, his brother dies as the singing one. Dying away, the friend spends the night following the stranger, the ghostly night of the years of having taken leave/seclusion. His singing is the “Song of a Captive Blackbird.” This is what the poet names a poem dedicated to L.V. Ficker. {81} The blackbird is that bird that Elis calls into descent. The captive blackbird is the avian voice of the one like death. It is captive in the solitude [*Einsamkeit*] of the golden steps that correspond to the passage of the golden boat, on which Elis’ heart wanders through the star-pond of the blue night and thus shows to the soul the course of its essence.

There is the soul, something foreign unto earth.

The soul wanders toward the land of evening, which is pervaded by the *Geist* of having taken leave and, accordingly, is ‘ghostly.’

All formulas are dangerous. They compel what is said into the exteriority of rash opinions and easily corrupt reflection [*Nachdenken*]. But they can also be helpful, at least as a prompt and an indication for sustained meditation [*Besinnung*]. With this warning, we may say formulaically:

A situating of his *Gedicht* shows us Georg Trakl as the poet of the yet-concealed evening-land [*Abend-Land*].

There is the soul, something foreign unto earth.

The sentence/proposition stands in the poem “Springtime of the Soul.” The line that leads over to the final stanza, in which the sentence/proposition belongs, runs:

Forceful dying and in my heart the singing flame.

There follows the ascent of the song into the pure resounding [*Widerhall*] of the melody of the ghostly years, years through which the stranger [78] wanders and which the brother follows, the brother who starts to dwell in the land of the evening:

The waters flow darker round the beautiful play of fish.
Hour of mourning, aspect of the sun that grows silent;
The soul is a strange thing on earth. Ghostly gloams
Blueness over the mishewn forest and in the village
A dark bell rings long; peaceful escort.
In stillness the myrtle blooms over the dead one's white eyelids.

The waters echo quietly in the sinking afternoon
And the shore's wilderness greens darker, joy in the rosy wind;
The brother's gentle song by the evening hillside.

Glossary:

Abgeschiedenheit – departedness, seclusion, having taken leave, apartness
Geschlecht – kind [translates *genus*], race, kin, kinship group, lineage, generation, sex, tribe, family
Dämmerung, dämmern – gloaming, to gloam (attested verb in Scottish usage)
Gestein – rock
Untergang – descent
Schweigen – growing-silent
Verstorben – deceased
Abgelebt – deceased
Verfallend – decaying
Verwesend – decomposing
Einschlagen – to pursue
Die Frühe – earliness, dawn
Gedenken – memory
gedenken – to be mindful of
Geistlich – ghostly
Geistig – spiritual
Anschauen – beholding
schauen – to look
Gluhen – glowing
Schwermut – melancholy
Leuchten – gleaming
Beschiene(n) wird/durchschienen – illuminate[d]
Geleit(en) – escort, to escort
gleiten – to glide
Nachkommen – offspring
Nachfahren – descendants
Enkel – grandsons
Zwietracht – discord
Glanz – glitter

klingen – to sound

läuten – to ring

tönen – to echo

Schlag – cast (whenever possible) → root of *Geschlecht*; to strike a blow, hit, beat (of wings or heart); *schlagen* is to stamp a coin

Entsetzen – terror (second trans.) with a weight toward horror (first trans.)

Schrecken – terror simply (first trans.)

[Compare also *Contributions*, §§269-270.]

From GA 70, §3: The Beginning's Having Taken Leave

We could say that the heavenly bodies pursue their courses and 'are,' even if no one at any time or anywhere represents them. We do say that. But *when* we say that, then we must also consider that 'then,' when no representing is [happening], [there] is also no 'then' and no 'when.'

But thus all being is posited by the human being and essences by his grace.

That would be too quickly concluded, if this is even a region for 'conclusions' and 'deductions' at all.

What-is is not without being.

Being does not essence without appropriating Da-sein.

Da-sein is not without inherence of the human being.

But then how is beyng supposed to remain independent of the human? The fact that the human belongs to the grounding of the truth of beyng does not say that beyng depends upon the human in the sense that beyng is posited by the human being.

How, then, does the human belong to beyng?

As the one who stands in the clearing, who catches up the accidental falling-out [*den Zu-fall*] of beyng into its truth and preserves it in the possibility that a world might be enjoined [*sich füge*].

In the whole region of the foregoing question being is immediately taken as what is constant. One cannot think being to himself in its inceptuality. One lays aside even the 'value' of having what-is be secure in itself in its constancy as soon as it is the highest being in virtue of unchanging duration.

But one forgets to ask with what right this claim may be placed on what is and on what grounds being may be equated to constancy.

One holds oneself entirely outside of the possibility, which is of course alienating, that being, not only what is, is not temporal [*zeitweise*], and that this not-being is of such a decisive essence that it even prevents the essencing of the nothing. Then, indeed, being would have to be wholly departed [*abgeschieden*] into its essence; for the destruction and elimination [*Zerstörung und Beseitigung*] of being cannot happen [*statthaben*], since it, too, is never produced and prepared.

Yet isn't even having taken leave then still a way in which beyng is? Sure. But this having taken leave is in each case the *Entgängen* into the uniqueness/singularity of the abyss. Singularity knows no persistence [*Fortdauern* (goes with 'after death')]. It is in each case inceptual and the proper, always unique/singular cleft. The 'remaining' that owns the beginning is not perduring but having taken leave as descent into concealing. That's why beginning out of having taken leave is in each case an abyss of bestowal, because it still bestows the guarantee of the essence of a gift. This warrantee could never be consigned [*übereignen*] without the nothing.

Beyng as the abyss of bestowal attunes the inherence of Da-sein to the inceptual basic mood of thinking.

Beyng is, and only beyng. But beyng is at times, in that it itself as appropriating of the between lets the clearing arise as the time-space. There is no 'time' that would precede and succeed beyng and that could serve as the span ordering it [*die Strecke der Einordnung*]. What is timeless is not the eternal but the beginning's having taken leave into concealing. This is the refusal of the word.

The suddenness of the beginning and of the event corresponds to the cleaving of departure into the singularity of concealing.

Technical reckoning and, what's of the same essence, historical reckoning has robbed us of every capacity to think time as time-space from out of the truth of beyng, or to think truth itself as the event of the beginning.

Because beyng is, and because only beyng is – beyng, however, from the essence of the appropriating beginning – therefore, beyng must also not be. So long as it is not, neither time nor even the nothing is; for the nothing essences in beyng, and time is the essencing of its truth. Therefore also, no duration can be counted during which beyng escapes into having taken leave. Therefore, the not-being of beyng never lets itself be grasped historically. But it has to be thought as essential decision, along with renouncing [the possibility] of determining it. But this only heightens the strangeness of beyng's suddenness, which gladly hides itself in the perduring of what is. The suddenness is the basic trait of the time of the directed throw [*Zu-wurf*], in which beyng appropriates the human being. To the awakening of the knowledge of beyng as the beginning, technicity and history offer the initially untrembling limits.

Beyng is the beginning.

Inception is taking to itself and holding in itself the entrance to the abyss, as well as trapping itself into the suspense of the between.

To begin is concealing into departure.

This concealing is the inceptual essencing of truth.

Truth is appropriation of Da-sein.

Appropriation belongs to the event.

The event is the inception of the beginning, insofar as the latter parts itself from what-is as what is inceptively nothing-less and in this 'from' lets what-is arise into the there. The event is beyng.

From the first section of "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1951), pp. 149-153 in GA 7:

... Therefore, [building as dwelling, i.e., being on the earth] steps back behind the manifold ways [*Weisen*] in which dwelling enacts itself, behind the activities of cultivation and construction. These activities subsequently lay claim for themselves alone to the name 'building' and, along with it, the matter of building. The authentic sense of building, namely, dwelling, falls into oblivion.

This event [*Ereignis*] looks at first sight as though it were no more than a change of meaning of mere terms. Yet in truth, something decisive conceals itself in it, namely: dwelling is not experienced as the being of the human; dwelling is never thought completely as the basic trait of being-human.

That language in a way takes back the authentic meaning of the word 'building,' which is dwelling, nevertheless attests to what is originary about these meanings; for with the essential words of language, what is authentically said in them easily falls into oblivion in favor of their foreground meanings. People have still barely given thought to the mystery of this process. Language withdraws its simple and high

speaking from human beings. But its inceptual appeal [*Zuspruch*] does not thereby become incapable of speech [*verstummt nicht*]; it merely grows silent. The human, of course, refrains from attending to this growing-silent.

But if we listen to what language says in the word ‘building,’ we *vernehmen* three things:

1. Building is authentically dwelling.
2. Dwelling is the way in which mortals are on the earth.
3. Building as dwelling unfolds itself into the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings.

If we give thought to this threefold, we *vernehmen* a hint and note what follows: as long as we do not recollect that all building is in itself a dwelling, we cannot even adequately ask, not to mention decide according to the matter, what the building of buildings might be in its essence. We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built insofar as we dwell, i.e., insofar as we are *the ones who dwell*. Yet in what does the essence of dwelling consist? Let us listen once more⁵ to language’s appeal [*Zuspruch*]. The Old Saxon *wuon*, the Gothic *wunian*, like the old word *bauen*, mean to remain, to stay in a place [*das Sichaufhalten*]. But the Gothic *wunian* says more clearly how this remaining is experienced. *Wunian* means: to be at peace; having been brought to peace, to remain in it. The word for peace, *Friede*, means *das Freie*, *das Frye*, and *fry* means: preserved [*bewahrt*] from harm and threat, preserved from..., i.e., spared [*geschont*]. To free authentically means to spare [*schonen*].⁶ Sparing itself does not consist only in that we do not do anything to the one spared. Authentic sparing is something *positive* and happens when we leave/keep [*belassen*] something beforehand [*zum voraus*] in its essence, when we expressly shelter something back into its essence,⁷ when we free it in a manner corresponding to the word: into a preserve of peace [*einfrieden*: to enclose]. To dwell, to be brought to peace, means: to remain at peace, enclosed [*eingefriedet bleiben*] into the free [*das Frye*], i.e., into the free space [*das Freie*], which spares each into its essence. *The basic trait of dwelling is this sparing*. It pervades [*durchzieht*] dwelling throughout its whole range. The range shows itself to us, as soon as we recollect that being-human consists in dwelling, namely, dwelling in the sense of the sojourn [*Aufenthalts*] of mortals on the earth.

Yet ‘on the earth’ already calls for [*heisst*] ‘under the sky.’ Both co-intend [*meint mit*] ‘remaining before the divinities’ and include ‘belonging in the human with-one-another.’ The four – earth and sky, the divine ones [*die Göttlichen*] and the mortal ones [*die Sterblichen*] – belong in one from out of an *originary* unity.

The earth is the bearing one [*Tragende*] that serves, the fruitful one that blossoms, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into [toward?] plant and animal [*Gestein, Gewässer, Gewächs, Getier*]. If we say ‘earth,’ we already think the other three, too, yet we do not give thought to the one-fold of the four.

The sky is the vaulting course of the sun, the shape-changing moon’s course, the wandering glitter of the stars, the times of year and their changes, the day’s light and gloam, the night’s darkness and brightness, the clemency and inclemency of the

⁵ [The first time concerned *buon* – meaning ‘to remain,’ ‘to stay in a place’ – as the origin of *bauen*. This got us dwelling as a way of being on the earth and as authentic building.]

⁶ [*Schonen*: to spare someone, to rest someone in sports, to protect something, to nurse or favor an injury, to go easy on someone, to look after, to take care of.]

⁷ Its own (event)

weather, the drift of clouds and bluing depth of the ether. If we say 'sky,' we already think the other three, too, yet we do not give thought to the one-fold of the four.

The divinities are the beckoning messengers of godhood [*Gottheit*]. From out of the holy governing of godhood, the god appears in his presence or withdraws himself into his veiling. If we name the divinities, we already think the other three, too, yet we do not give thought to the one-fold of the four.

The mortals are the humans. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death *as* death. Only humans die, and indeed continually, so long as they remain on the earth, under the sky, before the divinities. If we name the mortals, we already think the other three, too, yet we do not give thought to the one-fold of the four.

This one-fold of the four we name *the fourfold* [das Geviert: the square]. Mortals *are* in the fourfold, in that they *dwell*. But the basic trait of dwelling is sparing. Mortals dwell in the manner of sparing the fourfold into its essence. Accordingly, sparing that dwells has four folds.

Mortals dwell insofar as they save [*retten*] the earth – taking the word in the old sense still known to Lessing. Saving does not only snatch [*entreißt*] from danger; to save authentically means: to let go free [*freilassen*] into its own essence. To save [or salvage] the earth is more than to make use of it or even to toil away. Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate the earth, which is only one step from limitless exploitation.

Mortals dwell insofar as they receive the sky as sky. They leave to the sun and to the moon their passage, to the stars their paths, to the times of year their blessing and their inclemency; they do not make night into day nor day into harassed unrest.

Mortals dwell insofar as they await the divinities as divinities. In hope, mortals hold toward them what is un hoped for.⁸ They wait for hints of their arrival and do not mistake the signs of their absence [*Fehls*]. They do not make gods for themselves and do not offer their worship to idols. In misfortune [*Unheil*], they yet wait for the withdrawn health [*Heil*]. **[here is thinking]**

Mortals dwell insofar as they escort/initiate their own essence – being capable of death as death – into the custom/usage of this capability, that it may be a good death. To escort mortals into the essence of death does not at all mean to set death, as the empty nothing, as a goal. Nor does it mean to darken dwelling by blindly staring toward the end.

In saving the earth, in receiving the sky, in awaiting the divinities, in escorting mortals, dwelling as the fourfold sparing of the fourfold takes place [*ereignet sich*]. To spare means: to protect the fourfold in its essence.⁹ What is taken into protection must be sheltered. But if dwelling spares the fourfold, where does it guard [*verwarht*] the fourfold's essence? How do mortals fulfill dwelling as this sparing? Mortals would never be capable of this if dwelling were merely¹⁰ a sojourn on the earth, under the sky, before the divinities, with the mortals. Dwelling is far rather always already a sojourning with things. **[This is what goes badly when one is torn from the world.]** Dwelling as sparing preserves the fourfold in that with which mortals sojourn: in things.

⁸ The sudden, all at once letting-'hope for' does come – but thereby (along with such letting) keeps to itself in a yet more concealed manner.

⁹ But how if refusal/noncompliance? To comply/join itself [*sich fügen*] – to show still more its ownmost *Er-eignen* in the saga – when? then

¹⁰ Unclear! No more ontological difference.

Sojourning with things, however, is not merely attached as a fifth something to the fourfold of sparing just articulated. On the contrary: staying with things is the singular manner in which the fourfold sojourn within the fourfold is at any time unitarily [*einheitlich*] accomplished. Dwelling spares the fourfold in that it brings the fourfold's essence¹¹ into things. But things themselves shelter the fourfold *only when* they themselves are left in their essence¹² *as* things. How does that happen? In that mortals nurse and nurture growing things and expressly construct things that do not grow. Cultivating and constructing are building in the more rigorous sense. Insofar as it preserves the fourfold into things, and as this preserving, *dwelling* is a *building*.

From "The Thing" (1950, first published 1951), translated by Albert Hofstadter in Poetry, Language, Thought 169ff/GA 7:173ff:

But now what is the thing as thing, that its essence has never yet been capable of appearing?

Has the thing never yet come sufficiently into nearness, such that the human has not yet learned to attend sufficiently to the thing as thing? What is nearness? We already asked that. So as to learn/experience it, we were asking about the nearby pitcher.

In what does the pitcher-ness of the pitcher consist? We suddenly lost sight of it, namely, in the moment when the semblance pushed itself forward that science could give us some information about the actuality of the actual pitcher. We represented the effective aspect of the container, its containing aspect, emptiness, as a hollow space filled with air. That is emptiness thought as actuality, thought in terms of physics: but it is not the pitcher's emptiness. We did not let the pitcher's emptiness be *its* emptiness. We did not attend to that which is the containing aspect of the container. We did not consider how containing itself essences. That's why what the pitcher contains also had to escape us. For scientific representing, the wine became mere fluid, and fluid became a universal aggregation-state of matter, possible everywhere. We left behind reflecting on what the pitcher contains and how it contains.

How does the pitcher's emptiness contain? It contains by taking what is poured in. It contains by retaining what was accepted. Emptiness contains in a twofold manner: by taking and by retaining. The word "to contain" is thus ambiguous. Yet taking what is poured in and retaining it belong together. Their unity, however, is determined starting from the outpouring to which the pitcher is fitted as pitcher. Emptiness's twofold containing rests in pouring out. As the latter, containing is properly the way it is. To pour out of the pitcher is to bestow as a gift [*schenken*]. The essence of containing emptiness is gathered up into bestowing as a gift. But gift-giving is richer than mere distributing [*Ausschenken*]. The gift-giving in which the pitcher is a pitcher is gathered up into the twofold containing, namely, into pouring out. We call the gathering of mountains a mountain range. We name the [174] gathering of the twofold containing into outpouring, which only together constitutes the full essence of gift-giving: the gift [*Geschenk*]. The pitcher-ness of the pitcher essences in the gift of the pour. Even the empty pitcher retains its essence from out of the gift, although the

¹¹ What is idiosyncratic [*Eigentümliches*]

¹² Their own [*Eigenen*]

empty pitcher does not permit distribution. But this not-permitting is suited to the pitcher and only the pitcher. A scythe, by contrast, or a hammer is incapable of not-permitting this gift-giving.

The gift of the pour can be a drink. It gives water, gives wine to drink.

In the water of the gift, the spring lingers. In the spring, the rock lingers; in the rock, the dark slumber of the earth, which receives rain and dew from the sky. In the water from the spring, the wedding of heaven and earth lingers. It lingers in the wine that the fruit of the vine gives, in which the earth's nourishment and the sky's sun are betrothed [*zugetraut*] to one another. In the gift of water, in the gift of wine, heaven and earth linger for a while. The gift of the pour, however, is the pitcher-ness of the pitcher. In the essence of the pitcher, earth and sky linger.

The gift of the pour is drink for mortals. It quenches their thirst. It refreshes their leisure. It cheers their companionship. But the pitcher's gift is also sometimes given for consecration. If the pour is for consecration, then it does not soothe thirst. It brings the celebration of the festival to the stillness of its height. Now the gift of the pour neither is given in a pub, nor is it a drink for mortals. The pour is the libation devoted to the immortal gods. The gift of the pour as libation is the proper gift. In giving the consecrated libation as a gift, the pitcher that pours essences as the gift that gives. The consecrated libation is what the word "pour," or "gush," properly names: devotion and offering. In Greek, "gush," "to gush" is *kheein*; in Indo-European, *ghu*. That signifies: to offer. To pour, where it is essentially accomplished, sufficiently thought, and genuinely said, is: to devote, to offer, and therefore to bestow as a gift. That alone is why pouring, as soon as its essence dwindles, becomes mere [175] distribution, until finally it decomposes in customary dispensing of liquor at the bar. Pouring is not sheer filling and decanting.

In the gift of the pour that is drink, the mortals linger after their fashion. In the gift of the pour that is a libation, the divinities – who receive the gift of gift-giving back as the gift of devotion – linger after their fashion. In the gift of the pour, mortals and divinities linger, differently in each case. In the gift of the pour, earth and sky linger. In the gift of the pour, earth and sky, divinities and mortals linger *all at once*. These four belong together, united of themselves. By anticipating everything that presences, they are folded into a singular fourfold [*Geviert*].

In the gift of the pour lingers the one-fold of the four.

The gift of the pour is a gift insofar as it stays earth and sky, divinities and mortals.¹³ [Recall that 'gift' means gathered gift-giving, the unity of containing as outpouring. To stay is transitive: to let linger, to keep around, to support; it's a version of containing that echoes the keeping/preserving language.] Yet abiding is now no longer the mere persistence of something on-hand. Abiding appropriates. It brings the four into the light of what is proper to them. From out of this one-fold, they are betrothed to one another. United in this to-one-another, they are unconcealed. The gift of the pour stays the one-fold of the four's fourfold. In the gift, however, the pitcher essences as pitcher. The gift gathers up what belongs to gift-giving: the twofold containing, what contains, emptiness, and the outpouring as devotion. What is gathered up in the gift gathers itself in this: it stays the fourfold by appropriating it. This manifoldly simple gathering up is what essences in the pitcher. German names what a gathering is in an old word. That is: *thing*. The essence of the pitcher is pure, gift-giving gathering up of the single-folded fourfold into a while. [time] The pitcher essences as a thing. The pitcher is a pitcher as a thing. But how does the essence?

¹³ To bring into abiding

The thing things. Thinging gathers up. By appropriating the fourfold, it gathers its while into something that is for a while each time: into this or that thing.

[176] ... [179]

The pitcher is a thing neither in the sense of the Roman *res*, nor in the sense of the medieval *ens*, nor even in the sense of the modern object. The pitcher is a thing insofar as it things. Only from out of the thing's thinging does the presencing of something present, of the kind 'pitcher,' take place and determine itself.

Today, everything present is equally near and equally remote. The distance-less reigns. All abridging and eliminating of distances nevertheless brings no nearness. What is nearness? To find the essence of nearness, we considered the nearby pitcher. We looked for the essence of nearness and found the essence of the pitcher as thing. But in this discovery, we glimpse at the same time the essence of nearness. The thing things. In thinging, it stays earth and sky, divinities and mortals; in staying, the thing brings the four near in their remoteness from one another. This bringing near is nearing. Nearing is the essence of nearness. Nearing nears the remote, namely, as remote. Nearness keeps remoteness safe. In keeping remoteness safe, nearness essences in its nearing. Nearing in such a manner, nearness conceals itself and remains, after its fashion, nearest of all.

The thing is not "in" nearness, as if the latter were a receptacle. Nearness prevails in nearing as the thing's thinging.

By thinging, the thing stays the united four, earth and sky, divinities and mortals, in the one-fold of their fourfold, united of itself.

The earth is what bears by building, what blossoms by nourishing, cultivating water and rock, plants and animals.

If we say earth, then we already think the other three along with it from out of the four's one-fold.

The sky is the sun's course, the moon's phases, the glittering of stars, the time of the year, light and dimness of the day, darkness and brightness of the night, the favor and inhospitality of weather, cloud drifts and bluing depth of the aether.

If we say sky, then we already think the other three along with it from out of the four's one-fold.

The divinities are the beckoning messengers of godhood. From godhood's concealed prevailing, the god appears in his essence, which him from every comparison with what presences.

If we name the divinities, then we already think the other three along with it from out of the four's one-fold.

The mortals are human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means: to be capable of death as death. Only the human being dies. The animal perishes. It has its death neither before it nor behind it. Death is the shrine of the nothing, namely, of that which in all respects is never some mere entity, of that which nonetheless essences, even as the mystery of being itself. Death, as the shrine of the nothing, shelters in itself the essencing aspect of being. Death, as the shrine of the nothing, is the mountain shelter [*Gebirg*] of being. We now call the mortals mortal – not because their earthly life ends, but because they are capable of death as death. The mortals are the ones they are, as mortals, by essencing in the mountain shelter of being. They are the essencing relationship to being as being.

Metaphysics, by contrast, represents the human as *animal*, as living being. Even when the *ratio* thoroughly governs the *animalitas*, being-human remains determined starting from life and lived experience. Rational living beings must first *become* mortals.

If we say: the mortals, then we already think the other three along with it from out of the four's one-fold.

Earth and sky, divinities and mortals, united to one another of themselves, belong together from out of the onefold of the united fourfold. Each of the four mirrors, in its own fashion, the essence of the rest. Each, after its own fashion, reflects itself back into its own within the onefold of the four. This mirroring is no displaying of a likeness [*Abbild*]. By clearing each of the four, the mirroring appropriates their own essence into the single-folded appropriation to one another. Mirroring in this appropriating and clearing manner, each of the four passes itself to each of the rest. The mirroring that appropriates sets each of the four free into its own, but binds those free ones into the onefold of their essential to-one-another.

The mirroring that binds into the free region is the play that betroths each of the four to each from out of the enfolding hold of appropriation. None of the four insists on its separate particularity. Each of the four, within their appropriation, has much rather been expropriated to what is its own. This expropriating appropriation is the mirror-play of the fourfold. From it, the onefold of the four has been wedded/risked [*getraut*].

We call 'world' the appropriating mirror-play of the onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals. World essences by worlding. That means: neither can the worlding of world be explained through something else, nor can it be fathomed in its ground from something else. This impossibility does not depend on the incapacity of our human thinking for such explaining and accounting. Rather, the inexplicability and unaccountability of the world's worlding rest in the fact that something like causes and grounds remains unsuited to the worlding of world. If human knowing desires an explaining here, it does not transcend the essence of world but falls below that essence. The human will to explain does not at all reach into the simplicity of the onefold of worlding. The united four are already suffocated in their essence when one represents them merely as individual actualities that are supposed to be accounted for through one another and explained from one another.

The unity of the fourfold is the squaring. Yet the squaring constitutes itself in no way such that it embraces the four and, as this embrace, is added to them only afterwards. The squaring just as little exhausts itself in that the four, now on-hand, just stand next to another.

The squaring essences as the appropriating mirror-play of those onefoldedly betrothed to one another. The squaring essences as the worlding of world. The mirror-play of world is the ring-dancing of appropriating [*Reigen des Ereignens*]. [182] For that reason, the ring-dancing does not first encompass the four like a hoop. Ring-dancing is the ring that rings, rules by joining [*fügend*], in that it plays as the mirroring. Appropriating, it clears the four into the glitter of their onefold. Glittering, the ring propriates the four everywhere openly into the enigma of their essence. The gathered essence of the world's mirror-play that thus rings is the slim-ring/circlet [*Gering*].¹⁴ In the slim-ring¹⁵ of the mirroring and playing ring, the four fit snugly into their united essence that is nonetheless proper to each. Thus snugly fitted, they compliantly join the world by worlding it.

Snugly fitted, malleable, pliant, compliant, light mean in our old German language *ring* and *gering*. The mirror-play of the worlding world, as the slim-ring of the

¹⁴ the gathering up of the joining that folds in the four's belonging together

¹⁵ *what gathers up into* what rings the binding that encloses, which yet sets free the truths of the open region – of the free region

ring, wrings free¹⁶ the united four into what is properly compliant, the nimbleness of their essence. From out of the mirror-play of the slim-ring of the nimble, the thing's thinging takes place.

The thing stays the fourfold. The thing things world. Each thing stays the fourfold into something that is for a while each time from out of the world's onefold.

If we let the thing essence in its thinging out of the worlding world, we recall the thing as the thing. Recollecting in this fashion, we let ourselves be touched by the worlding essence of the thing. Thinking thus, we are called by the thing as thing. We are – in the rigorous sense of the word – the ones conditioned by the thing/be-thinged. We have left the arrogance of everything unconditioned behind us.

If we think the thing as thing, then we spare [*schonen*] the thing's essence into the realm from out of which it essences. Thinging is nearing¹⁷ of world. Nearing is the essence of nearness. Insofar as we spare the thing as thing, we occupy nearness. The nearing of nearness is the authentic and sole dimension of the world's mirror-play.

[183]

¹⁶ liberates

¹⁷ in which the world's onefold lingers