



Dog Years

Günter Grass

Winner
of the
Nobel Prize
for
Literature

by the author of **THE TIN DRUM** and **CAT AND MOUSE**

Translated by Ralph Manheim

Günter Grass | Dog Years

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Table of Contents

BOOK ONE | Morning Shifts

FIRST MORNING SHIFT
SECOND MORNING SHIFT
THIRD MORNING SHIFT
FOURTH MORNING SHIFT
FIFTH MORNING SHIFT
SIXTH MORNING SHIFT
SEVENTH MORNING SHIFT
EIGHTH MORNING SHIFT
NINTH MORNING SHIFT
TENTH MORNING SHIFT
ELEVENTH MORNING SHIFT
TWELFTH MORNING SHIFT
THIRTEENTH MORNING SHIFT
FOURTEENTH MORNING SHIFT
FIFTEENTH MORNING SHIFT
SIXTEENTH MORNING SHIFT
SEVENTEENTH MORNING SHIFT
EIGHTEENTH MORNING SHIFT
NINETEENTH MORNING SHIFT
TWENTIETH MORNING SHIFT
TWENTY-FIRST MORNING SHIFT

TWENTY-SECOND MORNING SHIFT
TWENTY-THIRD MORNING SHIFT
TWENTY-FOURTH MORNING SHIFT
TWENTY-FIFTH MORNING SHIFT
TWENTY-SIXTH MORNING SHIFT
TWENTY-SEVENTH MORNING SHIFT
TWENTY-EIGHTH MORNING SHIFT
TWENTY-NINTH MORNING SHIFT
THIRTIETH MORNING SHIFT
THIRTY-FIRST MORNING SHIFT
THIRTY-SECOND MORNING SHIFT
LAST MORNING SHIFT

BOOK TWO | Love Letters

BOOK THREE | Materniads

FIRST MATERNIAD
SECOND MATERNIAD
THIRD TO EIGHTY-FOURTH MATERNIAD
THE PHILOSOPHICAL EIGHTY-FIFTH AND THE CONFESSED
EIGHTY-SIXTH MATERNIAD
THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH WORM-EATEN MATERNIAD
THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH STERILE MATERNIAD
THE EIGHTY-NINTH ATHLETIC AND THE NINETIETH STALE
BEER MATERNIAD
THE NINETY-FIRST, HALFWAY SENSIBLE MATERNIAD
THE HUNDREDTH PUBLICLY DISCUSSED MATERNIAD
AN OPEN FORUM
THE HUNDRED AND FIRST FUGITIVE MATEHNIAD
THE HUNDRED AND SECOND FIREPROOF MATERNIAD
THE HUNDRED AND THIRD AND BOTTOMMOST MATERNIAD

NOTES

Tulla never tried tinctures and remedies. Neither ground almonds nor stinky sulphur nor cucumber milk nor zinc ointment found a place on her forehead. Untroubled, she strode through the world pimples first, for she still had the jutting forehead of a child, and dragged sergeants and ensigns into night-black parks: for she wanted to have a baby, but didn't.

After Tulla had vainly tried every rank and branch of service, Harry advised her to try uniformed high school students. He had lately been wearing attractive Air Force blue and living no longer in Elsenstrasse but, in tiptop bathing weather, in the barracks of the Brösen-Glettkau shore battery, a large battery strung out behind the dunes, equipped with twelve 88-millimeter guns and a whole raft of 40-millimeter AA-guns.

At the very start Harry was assigned as Number 6 to an 88-millimeter gun with outriggers. The Number 6 had to adjust the fuze setter with the aid of two cranks. This Harry did throughout his term as an Air Force auxiliary. A privileged job, for the Number 6 alone of nine cannoneers was entitled to sit on a little stool attached to the gun; when the gun was rotated quickly, he traveled along free of charge and didn't bash his shins against the iron of the outriggers. During gunnery practice Harry sat with his back to the muzzle of the cannon and while with his cranks he made two mechanical pointers hurry after two electrical pointers, he pounded back and forth between Tulla and Jenny. This he did rather adroitly: the mechanical pointer chased the electrical pointer, Tulla chased Jenny, and as far as Harry Liebenau was concerned, the fuze setter was operated to the complete satisfaction of the tech sergeant in charge of training.

Once there was a tech sergeant,

who could grind his teeth loudly. Along with other decorations he wore the silver wound insignia. Accordingly he limped slightly but obviously between the shacks of the Brösen-Glettkau shore battery. He was looked upon as strict but fair, admired, and superficially imitated. When he went out to the dunes to hunt dune rabbits, he chose as his companion an Air Force auxiliary whom the others called Störtebeker. While hunting dune rabbits the tech sergeant either didn't say a single word or he uttered quotations, interspersed by ponderous pauses, from one and the same philosopher. Störtebeker repeated his quotations and created a

philosophical schoolboy language that was soon prattled by many, with varying success.

Störtebeker prefixed most of his sentences with “I, as a pre-Socratic.” Anyone who looked on as he mounted guard could see him drawing in the sand with a stick. With a superiorly guided stick he plotted the advent of the still unuttered essence of unconcealment, or to put it more bluntly, of Being. But if Harry said: “Being,” Störtebeker corrected him impatiently: “There you go again. What you really mean is essents—things that are.”

Even in everyday matters philosophical tongues made pre-Socratic leaps, appraising every commonplace incident or object with the tech sergeant’s painstakingly acquired knowledge. Underdone potatoes in their jackets—the kitchen was poorly supplied and even more poorly run—were called “spuds forgetful of Being.” If someone reminded someone of something that had been borrowed, promised, or asserted days before, the answer came prompt and absolute: “Who thinks about thoughts any more,” or, analogically, about the borrowed, the promised, or the asserted? The daily facts of life in an AA battery, such as semi-serious disciplinary drill, tedious practice alerts, or greasy-messy rifle cleaning, were disposed of with an expression overheard from the tech sergeant: “After all, the essence of being-there is its existence.”

The word “existence” and its collaterals met all requirements: “Would you exist me a cigarette? Who feels like existing a movie with me? Shut your trap or I’ll exist you one.”

To go on sick call was to plug for a sack existence. And anybody who had hooked a girl—as Störtebeker had hooked Harry’s cousin Tulla—boasted after taps how often he had bucked the girl’s existence.

And existence itself—Störtebeker tried to draw it in the sand with a stick: it looked different each time.

There was once an Air Force auxiliary

named Störtebeker, who was supposed to get Harry’s cousin with child and probably did his best. On Sundays when the Brösen-Glettkau battery was open to visitors, Tulla came out in high-heeled shoes and took her nostrils and pimply forehead for a stroll amid 88-millimeter guns. Or she hobbled into the dunes between the tech sergeant and Air Force auxiliary

tenanted lengths of wire, which the tech sergeant, aided by the company clerk who kept the tally, was able to count at morning roll call: A hundred and fifty-eight rats, rounded out on the friendly side, yielded thirty-two rolls of raspberry drops, half of which Harry's hunt group exchanged for cigarettes.

The strung-up rats—that same morning they had to be buried behind the latrine—smelled damp, earthy, with an overtone of sourness, like an open potato cellar. The smell over the battery had greater density: no rat exhaled it.

There was once a battery—

it was near Kaiserhafen and for that reason was called the Kaiserhafen battery. Conjointly with the Brösen-Glettkau battery, the Heubude, Pelonken, Zigankenbergr, Camp Narvik, and Altschottland batteries, it guarded the air space over Danzig and its harbor.

During Harry's term of service in the Kaiserhafen battery, there were only two air-raid alerts; but rats were hunted every day. When once a four-engine bomber was shot down over Oliva Forest, the Pelonken and Altschottland batteries shared the credit; the Kaiserhafen battery came off empty-handed, but could point to increasing success in purging the battery area of water rats.

Ah yes, this being-in-the-midst-of surpassed itself, attaining the dimension of a world-project! And Harry's hunt group was among the most successful. But all the groups, even the volunteer auxiliaries who worked behind the latrine, were outdone by Störtebeker, who joined no group.

He withdrew rats in broad daylight and always had an audience. As a rule he lay on his belly in front of the kitchen shack, right next to the drain cover. He grounded with long arm in a drain which provided Störtebeker with overarching withdrawal from the sewer that ran from Troyl to the drainage fields.

O manifold why! Why thus and not otherwise? Why water rats and not other essents? Why anything at all rather than nothing? These questions in themselves contained the first-last primordial answer to all questioning:

“The essence of the rat is the transcendently originating threefold dispersion of the rat in the world-project or in the sewage system.”

You couldn't help admiring Störtebeker, although a heavy leather glove, such as welders wear, protected his right hand that lurked open in the drain. To tell the truth, we all waited to see rats, four or five of them, chew up his glove and lacerate his bare hand. But Störtebeker lay serenely with barely open eyes, sucking his raspberry drop—he didn't smoke—and every two minutes with suddenly rising leather glove smacked down a water rat with rat head on the corrugated edge of the drain cover. Between rat death and rat death he whispered in his own tongue, which however had been infected with obscurity by the tech sergeant's language, rat propositions and ontological rat truths, which, so we all believed, lured the prey within reach of his glove and made possible his overarching withdrawal. Imperturbably, while he harvested below and piled up above, his discourse ran its course: “The rat withdraws itself by unconcealing itself into the ratty. So the rat errates the ratty, illuminating it with errancy. For the ratty has come-to-be in the errancy where the rat errs and so fosters error. That is the essential area of all history.”

Sometimes he called not-yet-withdrawn rats “latecomers.” He referred to the piled-up rats as “foretimely” or as “essents.” When, his work accomplished, Störtebeker surveyed his ordered prey, he spoke almost tenderly and with a mild didacticism: “The rat can endure without the ratty, but never can there be rattiness without the rat.” In an hour he produced as many as twenty-five water rats and could have withdrawn more if he had wanted to. Störtebeker used the same wire as we did for stringing up water rats. This tail-knotted and enumerable demonstration, repeated every morning, he termed his being-there-relatedness. With it he earned quantities of raspberry drops. Sometimes he gave Harry's cousin a roll. Often, as though to appease the ratty, he tossed three separate drops ceremonially into the open drain outside the kitchen shack. Concepts gave rise to a controversy among schoolboys. We were never sure whether the sewer should be termed world-project or errancy.

But the smell that grounded on the battery came neither from world-project nor from errancy, as Störtebeker called his multirelational drain.

There was once a battery,

over which, from first gray to last gray, there flew busy, never-resting crows. Not gulls but crows. There were gulls over Kaiserhafen proper, over the lumber warehouses, but not over the battery. If gulls ever invaded the area, a furious cloud immediately darkened brief happening. Crows do not tolerate gulls.

But the smell that hung over the battery came neither from crows nor from gulls, which weren't there anyway. While p.f.c.s, corporals, Ukrainian volunteer auxiliaries, and Air Force auxiliaries slew rats for reward, the ranks from sergeant to Captain Hufnagel had a different distraction: shooting—though not for promised rewards, but only to fire and hit something—individuals crows out of the agglomeration of crows over the battery. Yet the crows remained and became no fewer.

But the smell which hung over the battery, which stood between barracks and gun positions, between the computer and the shrapnel trenches, and scarcely moved its supporting leg, the smell which, as Harry and everyone else knew, was projected neither by rats nor by crows, which arose from no drain and hence from no errancy, this smell was wafted, regardless of whether the wind was working from Putzig or Dirschau, from the harbor-mouth bar or from the open sea, by a whitish mound blocked off by barbed wire and situated to the south of the battery. This mound stood in front of, and half hid, a brick-red factory, which from squat chimney discharged self-involved smoke, which probably dropped its fallout on Troyl or the Lower City. Between mound and factory ended railroad tracks leading to the Island Station. The mound, neatly conical, rose just a little higher than a rusty shaking-conveyor similar to those used in coal yards and potash mines for piling waste. At the foot of the mound tip cars stood motionless on a movable track. The mound shimmered faintly when struck by the sun. It stood out, sharply silhouetted, when the sky hung low and touched it. If you disregarded the crows that inhabited it, the mound was clean; but it has been written at the beginning of this concluding tale, that nothing is pure. And thus, for all its whiteness, the mound to one side of the Kaiserhafen battery was not pure; it was a pile of bones, and its components, even after processing in the factory, were still overgrown with remnants; and the crows couldn't stop living there, rest lessly black. So it came about that a smell, which hovered over the battery like the bell that didn't feel like going to Rome, injected into every mouth, Harry's too, a taste which, even after

immoderate consumption of raspberry drops, lost none of its heavy sweetness.

No one talked about the pile of bones. But everybody saw smelled tasted it. Anyone who stepped out of a barracks whose doors opened southward had the cone-shaped mound in his field of vision. Anyone who like Harry, the Number 6, sat upraised beside a gun and who, in gunnery practice, was swung around with gun and fuze setter in accordance with instructions given by the computer, was time and time again, as though computer and bone-pile were engaged in conversation, confronted with a picture: a whitish mountain beside a smoke-spewing factory, an idle shaking-conveyor, motionless tip cars, and a moving blanket of crows. Nobody spoke of the picture. Anyone who dreamed teeming images of the mound remarked over his morning coffee that he had had a funny dream: about climbing stairs or about school. At the most, a phrase which had been used emptily until then took on, in the usual conversations, a vague weightiness that may have come from the unnamed mound. Words occur to Harry: placedness—instandingness—nihilation; for in the daytime workers never moved tip cars to diminish the placedness, although the factory was under steam. No freight cars rolled on tracks and came from the Island Station. In the daytime the shaking-conveyor gave instandingness nothing to chew on. But once during a night maneuver—for one hour the eighty-eight had to chase a target plane caught in four searchlights—Harry and everybody else heard work sounds for the first time. The factory was still blacked out, but lanterns red and white were waved on the railroad tracks. Freight cars bumped each other. A monotonous clanking started up; the shaking-conveyor. Rust against rust: the tip cars. Voices, commands, laughter: for an hour activity prevailed in the nihilation area, while the target plane flew over the city again from the sea side, slipped away from the searchlights, and, caught again, became a Platonic target: The Number 6 manned the fuze setter, trying with cranks to make two mechanical pointers coincide with two electrical pointers and unflinchingly nihilating the evasive essent.

The next day the placedness took on a quality of growth, for Harry and all those who had been disregarding the mound. The crows had received visitors. The smell remained unchanged. But no one inquired after its meaning, although Harry and everyone else had it on their tongues.

There was once a pile of bones—

so it was called, ever since Harry's cousin Tulla had spat out the words in the direction of the mound.

"That's a pile o' bones," she said, helping with her thumb. Harry and many others contradicted, but didn't state exactly what was piled up to the south of the battery.

"Bet you it's bones. And what's more, human bones. Everybody knows that." Tulla offered to bet with Störtebeker rather than her cousin. All three and others were sucking raspberry drops.

Though freshly uttered, Störtebeker's answer had been ready for weeks: "We must conceive of piledupedness in the openness of Being, the divulgation of care, and endurance to death as the consummate essence of existence."

Tulla demanded greater precision: "And I'm telling you they come straight from Stutthof, want to bet?"

Störtebeker refused to be pinned down geographically. He declined the bet and became impatient: "Will you stop chewing my ear off with your threadbare scientific concepts. The most we can say is that here Being has come into unconcealment."

But when Tulla kept harping on Stutthof and called unconcealment by its name, Störtebeker evaded the proffered bet with a grandiose gesture of blessing which took in the battery and the mound of bones: "There lies the essence-ground of all history."

Rats went on being slain after duty hours and even during policing-and-mending period. The ranks from sergeant up shot crows. The smell clung to the battery, no relief showed up. And Tulla said, not to Störtebeker, who was standing aside, drawing figures in the sand, but to the tech sergeant, who had twice exhausted the magazine of his carbine: "Want to bet that they're not honest-to-God human bones, a whole pile of them?"

It was Sunday, visitors' day. But only a few visitors, mostly parents, stood strange in civilian clothes beside their sons who had shot up too fast. Harry's parents hadn't come. November was dragging on, and rain hovered the whole time between low clouds and the earth with its

There was once a carpenter,

who with practiced overhead strokes chopped into kindling a dog kennel that stood for a good many things.

There was once an assassin, who packed a bomb, experimentally, in his brief case.

There was once an Air Force auxiliary who was waiting impatiently to be inducted into the Navy; he wanted to submerge and to sink enemy ships.

There was once a ballet dancer who, in Budapest, Vienna, and Copenhagen, was knitting rompers and jackets for a baby that had long lain buried at the edge of Oliva Forest, weighted down with stones.

There was once an expectant mother who liked to jump off moving streetcars and in so doing, although she had jumped nimbly and not against the motion of the car, lost her two-months child. Thereupon the expectant mother, again a flat young girl, went to work: Tulla Pokriefke became—as one might have expected—a streetcar conductress.

There was once a police president whose son, generally known as Störtebeker, who intended to study philosophy later on, who might almost have become a father, and who, after projecting the world in sand, founded a teenagers' gang, which later became famous under the name of the Dusters. He stopped drawing symbols in the sand; instead, he drew the rationing office, the Church of the Sacred Heart, the Post Office Administration Building: all angular buildings into which he later, and at night, led the self-grounded Dusters. The conductorette Tulla Pokriefke belonged halfway to the gang. Her cousin didn't belong at all. At the most he stood lookout when the gang met in the storage sheds of the Baltic Chocolate Factory. A permanent possession of the gang appears to have been a three-year-old child, their mascot, who was addressed as Jesus and survived the gang.

There was once a tech sergeant who trained Air Force auxiliaries as AA gunners and quasi-philosophers, who limped slightly, had a way of grinding his teeth, and might almost have become a father, but was tried, first by a special, then by a general court-martial, was broken of his rank and transferred to a punitive battalion, because, while in a state of

drunkenness between the barracks of the Kaiserhafen battery, he had insulted the Führer and Chancellor in sentences marked by such locutions as: forgetful of Being, mound of bones, structure of care, Stutthof, Todtnau, and concentration camp. As they were taking him away—in broad daylight—he bawled mysteriously: “You ontic dog! Alemannic dog! You dog with stocking cap and buckled shoes! What did you do to little Husserl? What did you do to tubby Amsel? You pre-Socratic Nazi dog!” On account of this unrhymed hymn, he was compelled, in spite of his bad leg, to dig up mines on the steadily advancing Eastern front and later, when the invasion had begun, in the West; but the demoted tech sergeant was lucky and wasn’t blown sky-high.

There was once a black shepherd, his name was Prinz. He was transferred, along with the Führer’s headquarters, to Rastenburg in East Prussia. He was lucky, he didn’t step on any mines; but the wild rabbit he was chasing jumped on a mine and could be retrieved only very partially.

Like “Camp Werewolf” northeast of Vinnitsa, the Führer’s Headquarters in East Prussia bordered on mined woods. The Führer and his favorite dog lived a secluded life in Zone A of the “Wolf’s Lair.” To give Prinz exercise, the officer in charge of dogs, an SS captain, who had owned a well-known dog kennel before the war, took him for walks in Zones I and II; but the Führer had to stay in his constricted Zone A, because he was always busy with staff conferences.

Life was tedious at the Führer’s headquarters. Always the same barracks, where the Führer Escort Battalion, the Army Chiefs of Staff, or guests come to comment on the situation, were lodged. Some distraction was provided by the goings-on at the gate of Zone II.

It was there that a rabbit ran between the sentries on the perimeter of the Zone, was shooed away amid hoots of laughter, and made a black shepherd forget the lessons learned in his school days at the police kennel: Prinz broke loose, bounded through the gate, past the still laughing sentries, crossed with dragging leash the road leading to the camp—rabbits pucker up their noses, which is something no dog can stand—resolved to follow a pucker-nosed rabbit which luckily had a good head start; for when the rabbit lit out into the mined woods and disintegrated on an exploding mine, the dog incurred little danger, although he had taken a

Once there was a Führer and Chancellor,

who on April 20, 1945, celebrated his fifty-sixth birthday. Since the center of the capital, including the government quarter and the Chancellery, was under intermittent artillery fire that day, the modest celebration was held in the Führer's air-raid shelter.

Celebrities, several of whom were normally on hand for staff conferences—evening situation, noon situation—had come to offer their congratulations: Field Marshal General Keitel, Colonel General von John, Naval Commander Lüd-de-Neurath, Admirals Voss and Wagner, Generals Krebs and Burgdorf, Colonel von Below, Reichsleiter Bormann, Ambassador Hewel of the Foreign Office, Fräulein Braun, Dr. Herrgesell, the Field Headquarters stenographer, SS Hauptsturmführer Günsche, Dr. Morell, SS Obergruppenführer Fegelein, and Herr and Frau Goebbels with all their six children.

After the congratulants had presented their best wishes, the Führer and Chancellor cast a searching look around him, as though missing a last and indispensable congratulant: "Where is the dog?"

The birthday company began at once to look for the Führer's favorite dog. Cries of "Prinz!" "Here Prinz!" SS Hauptsturmführer Günsche, the Führer's personal adjutant, combed the garden of the Chancellery, although the area was not infrequently marked by artillery hits. Inside the shelter a number of absurd hypotheses were formulated. Everybody had some suggestion to make. Only SS Obergruppenführer Fegelein had a clear grasp of the situation. Seconded by Colonel von Below, he rushed to the telephones connecting the Führer's bomb shelter with all the staff offices and with the MP battalion guarding the Chancellery: "Attention everybody! Attention everybody! Führer's dog missing. Answers to the name of Prinz. Stud dog. Black German shepherd Prinz. Connect me with Zossen. Attention everybody: the Führer's dog is missing."

In the course of the ensuing staff conference—report confirmed: enemy armored spearheads have advanced south of Cottbus and entered Calau—"Operation Wolftrap" is set up and all plans for the defense of the capital are co-ordinated with it. The Fourth Armored Corps postpones counterattack south of Spremberg indefinitely and secures Spremberg-

Senftenburg highway against deserting Führer dog. Similarly the Steiner Group transforms the deployment zone for the relief offensive scheduled to move southward from the Eberswalde sector, into a deeply echeloned dogcapture zone. The operation proceeds according to plan. All available planes of the Sixth Air Fleet fly ground reconnaissance missions for the purpose of determining Führer dog escape route. Pursuant to “Wolftrap,” the main battle line is pulled back behind the Havel. Führer dog search groups are set up from combat reserves. They receive orders to maintain walkie-talkie contact with Führer dog capture groups consisting of motorcycle and bicycle companies. The Holste Corps digs in. But the Twelfth Army under General Wenck launches a relief escape route, for presumably Führer dog is planning to desert to West enemy. To make Operation Wolftrap viable, the Seventh Army has to disengage itself from the Ninth and First American Armies and seal off the Western front between Elbe and Mulde. On the Jüterbog-Torgau line, projected antitank trenches are replaced by Führer dog trap trenches. The Twelfth Army, the Blumentritt Army Group, the Thirty-eighth Armored Corps are placed under the direct orders of the Army High Command, which as of now is transferred from Zossen to Wannsee, where under General Burgdorf it sets up a “Wolftrap Command Staff”—WCS.

But despite all this vigorous regrouping the only dispatches to come in are the usual situation reports—Soviet spearheads reach Treuenbrietzen Königswusterhausen line—and no information about Führer dog escape route. At one nine four 0 hours, during the evening situation report, Field Marshal Keitel has a telephone conversation with Chief of Staff Steiner: “As per Führer order, 25th Armored Infantry Division will close frontline gap at Cottbus and secure area against Führer dog breakthrough.”

Reply of Hq. Steiner Group: “As per instructions date one seven four, 25th Armored Infantry Division withdrawn Bautzen area and attached Twelfth Army. Available remaining units alerted against Führer dog breakthrough.”

Finally, in the early morning hours of April 20, not far from the bitterly contested Fürstenwalde-Strausberg-Bernau line, shots are fired at a black shepherd, who, however, when brought to the Führer’s Headquarters and carefully examined by Dr. Morell, proves to be an impostor.

Thereupon, as per WCS instructions, all units in the Greater Berlin area are briefed on Führerdogdimensions.

The concentration between Lübben and Baruth receives support from Soviet armored spearheads pursuing identical aim. Forest fires spread despite drizzle and constitute natural dog-barrier.

On April 22 enemy armor pushes across the Lichtenberg-Niederschönhausen-Frohnau line and enters outer defenses of the capital. Two reports of dogcapture in the Königswusterhausen area prove inaccurate, since neither captured object can be identified as a male.

Dessau and Bitterfeld are lost. American armored force attempts Elbe crossing near Wittenberge.

On April 23, Dr. Goebbels, gauleiter and Reich Defense Commissioner, issues the following statement: "The Führer is at his post in the capital and has assumed supreme command of all forces engaged in finishfight. As of now, Führerdogsearchgroups will obey only Führerinstructions."

WCS communiqué: "Köpenick railroad station retaken in counterattack. Enemy infiltration blocked by Tenth Führerdogcapturegroup, guarding area bordering Prenzlauer Alee. Two Soviet dogcapture appliances captured, proving that East-enemy has intelligence of Operation Wolftrap." Due to sensation-mongering misrepresentation of Führerdogloss by enemy radio and press, WCS, as of April 25, transmits Führer instructions in new, pre-established code—minuted by Dr. Herrgesell: "To what is the manifestness of the studdog Prinz attuned?"

"The original manifestness of the Führerdog is attuned to distantiality."

"What is the Führerdog attuned to distantiality acknowledged as?"

"The Führerdog attuned to distantiality is acknowledged as the Nothing."

Thereupon exlocation to all: "What is the Nothing attuned to distantiality acknowledged as?"

To which Hq. Sterner Group replies from combat position in Liebenwerda: "The Nothing attuned to distantiality is acknowledged as the Nothing in Steiner Group sector."

Whereupon Führerexlocation to all: "Is the Nothing attuned to distantiality an object or more generally an essent?" Immediate reply from Command Staff Wenck Group: "The Nothing attuned to distantiality is a

hole. The Nothing is a hole in the Twelfth Army. The Nothing is a black hole that just ran by. The Nothing is a black running hole in the Twelfth Army.”

Whereupon Führerexlocution to all: “The Nothing attuned to distantiality runs. The Nothing is a hole attuned to distantiality. It is acknowledged and can be investigated. A black running hole attuned to distantiality manifests the Nothing in its original manifestness.”

Whereupon supplementary WCS exlocutions: “First and foremost, modes of encounter between Nothing attuned to distantiality and Twelfth Army will be investigated for their encounter-structure. Primarily and a priori, penetration areas in Königswusterhausen sector will be investigated for their what-content. Manipulation-utilization of relation-inducing Wolfrap I equipment and supplementary Wolfpoint equipment will unconceal Nothing attuned to distantiality. The digressiveness of the not-at-hand will provisionally be passed over with a view to establishing authentic at-handness of bitches in heat, since the Nothing attuned to distantiality is fundamentally and at all times coexistence-oriented.”

An urgent dispatch from contested Neubabelsberg-Zehlendorf-Neukölln line—“The Nothing is coming-to-be between enemy armor and our own spearheads. The Nothing is running on four legs”—is immediately followed by Führerexlocution: “The Nothing will be after-accomplished on the double. Each and every activity of the Nothing attuned to distantiality will be substantivized in view of final victory so that later, sculptured in marble or shell-lime, it may be at-hand in a state of to-be-viewedness.”

Not until April 25 did General Wenck, Twelfth Army, reply from the Nauen-Ketzin sector: “Nothing being after-accomplished on double and substantivized. The Nothing at tuned to distantiality discloses dread in every sector of the front. Dread is-there. We are speechless with dread. Out.”

After the accomplishment reports of the Holster and Steiner combat teams have disclosed similar dread, a WCS exlocution of April 26 goes out, as per Führerinstructions, to all: “Dread impedes apprehension of the Nothing. As of now, dread will be surmounted by speeches or singing. Negation of Nothing attuned to distantiality prohibited. Never must the Reichcapital in its locus-wholeness be infirmed by dread.”

When accomplishment reports of all combat teams continue to show openness-to-dread, a supplement to Führer-instructions of April 26 goes out to all: “Twelfth Army will manifest counter-tonality to fusty atonality of Reichcapital. Unburdenings of Being in Steglitz and southern edge of Tempelhof Airfield will project advanced selfpoint. The final struggle of the German people will be conducted with regard to the Nothing attuned to distantiality.”

In response to additional instructions from Burgdorf WCS staff to Air Fleet 6—“Between Tegel and Siemensstadt elucidate running Nothing in advance of enemy armored spear heads”—Air Fleet 6 reports after the all-clear: “Running Nothing sighted between Silesian and Gorlitz stations. The Nothing is neither an object nor any essent, hence also no dog.”

Thereupon, in accordance with Führerinstructions with new key, a direct exlocution signed Colonel von Below goes out to Air Fleet 6: “Jutting out into the Nothing, the dog has surpassed the essent and will as of now be referred to as Transcendence.”

On the twenty-seventh Brandenburg falls. The Twelfth Army reaches Beelitz. After numerous dispatches from all sectors have reported increasing negation of the fugitive Führerdog Prinz and his code names “Nothing” and “Transcendence,” a Führerorder to all goes out at one four one two hours: “Negative attitude toward running Transcendence will as of now be considered a court-martial offense.”

When no accomplishment reports come in and openness-to-dread is registered even in the government quarter, drastic measures are taken, followed by an exlocution: “The prevailing negative attitude toward Transcendence attuned to distantiality is manifested primarily and decisively by the having-beeness of the following officers.” (Names and ranks follow.) Only now, after repeated Führerinquiry—“Where are Wenck’s spearheads? Where are Wenck’s spearheads? Where is Wenck?”—command staff Wenck, Twelfth Army, replies on April 28: “Bogged down south Lake Schwielow. Joint missions with Air Fleet 6 reveal weather conditions bar visibility Transcendence. Out.”

Nihilating reports come in from Halle Gate, from the Silesian Station, and from the Tempelhof Airfield. Space is split up into loci. Alexanderplatz dogcapturepost claims to have investigated twelve-legged Transcendence in advance of enemy armored spearheads. A conflicting dispatch reports

three-headed Transcendence sighted in Prenzlau area. At the same time a message Twelfth Army is received at Führer-headquarters: "Slightly wounded armored infantryman claims to have seen and fed dog untranscendent in garden of villa on Lake Schwielow, and to have addressed him by the name of Prinz."

Whereupon inquiry direct from Führer: "Name of the armored infantryman?"

Twelfth Army: "Armored infantryman Harry Liebenau, slightly wounded on chowline."

Führer direct: "Armored infantryman Liebenau's present whereabouts?"

Twelfth Army: "Armored infantryman Liebenau in need of hospitalization removed westward."

Führer direct: "Terminate removal. Fly armored infantryman to garden area Reichchancellery per Air Fleet 6."

Whereupon General Wenck, Twelfth Army, to Führer direct: "Escape-permitting relegation to sinking locus-wholeness Greater Berlin to the point of finite transcending utilization lays bare end structure."

The following Führerexlocution—"The question of the dog is a metaphysical question, calling the entire German nation into question"—is followed by the famous Führerdeclaration: "Berlin is still German. Vienna will be German. And never will the dog be negated."

Whereupon an urgent report comes in: "Enemy armor entering Malchin." Followed by radio message, uncoded, to Reichchancellery: "Enemy radio reports dog sighted east bank Elbe."

Whereupon Soviet leaflets, secured in the contested Kreuzberg and Schöneberg sectors, announce that fugitive Führerdog has been captured by Eastenemy.

Situation report on April 29: "In the course of bitter house-to-house battle on Potsdamer Strasse and Belle-Alliance-Platz, Führerdogsearchgroups disbanding without orders. Morale increasingly impaired by Soviet loudspeakeraction with genuine amplified dogbarking. Beelitz retaken by enemy. No news of Ninth Army. Twelfth Army still trying to exert pressure on Potsdam, consequent to rumors of dogdeath on historical site. Reports of English dogcapture positions near Elbe

bridgehead in Lauenburg and of American dogcapture in Fichtel Mountains unconfirmed.” In the light of which, final Führerinstructions to all, with new code: “The dog itself—as such—was-there, is-there, and will remain-there.”

Whereupon General Krebs to Colonel General Jodl: “Request prospective orientation on Führersuccession eventuality death.”

Whereupon, in accordance with the situation report of April 30, command staff Operation Wolftrap is disbanded. Dogcapture operations in Transcendence and on historical site having met with no success, the Army High Command withdraws the Twelfth Army from the Potsdam-Beelitz area. Whereupon radio message signed Bormann to Grand Admiral Dönitz: “The Führer appoints you successor former Reichmarshal Göring. Written appointment and pedigree Führerdog on way.”

Whereupon Führerdesign presentifies overclimb. Where upon unofficial Swedish report to effect that Führerdog has been sent to Argentine by submarine is not denied. The Soviet announcement—“Tattered fur of twelve-legged black dog found in destroyed ballet storeroom”—is contradicted by accomplishment report of the Bavarian Liberation Committee on the Erding radio: “Black dogcorpse secured outside Feldherrnhalle, Munich.” Simultaneously, reports come in to the effect that Führerdog corpses have been washed ashore: first, in the Gulf of Bothnia; second, on the east coast of Ireland; third, on the Atlantic coast of Spain. Ultimate Führerintimations, recorded by General Burgdorf and in Führertestament: “Dog Prinz will try to reach Vatican City. If Pacelli raises claims, protest immediately and invoke codicil to will.”

Thereupon world twilight. Over the ruins of the artifact-world climbs world-time. Situation report May 1: “In the center of the Reichcapital the brave garrison is fighting in narrowed space, reinforced by disbanded Führerdogsearchgroups.”

Thereupon at-handness takes its leave in the not-noticeableness of the inutilizable, giving rise to top secret message, Reichsleiter Bormann to Grand Admiral Dönitz: “Führer passed away yesterday one five three 0 hours. Testament in force and on way. As per instructions April 29, Führer’s favorite dog Prinz, black, short-haired shepherd, is Führer’s gift to the German people. Acknowledge receipt.”