

German Letters, 1935

Dong Li

January

toward unshakeable evening
fanatical engagement of the SA
no complaints exchanged
in between hiccups nausea
when do you call on fate
listless opus
hopeless Hitler
black white and red
Jew's flag flapping in triumph
pipedream on clothes pole
who votes for the status quo
next payday more vivid than Hindenburg's deathbed
Hitler's Germany
no Germany
Führer servitude slave ballot
death of the Jews
on earth
lulled in

February

still at the beginning
Eighteenth Century for weekends
shortage of breath burden of house
wearing thin
is your heart calling
tangos on records
years of the Republic
historical landfill
a world free and decent
who were the Europeans then
books not for the people despite the censor
Hemingway too pacifist
Wassermann intellectually Jew
do the English still feel for the landscape
evening dress ultimately for dinner
are you against mass
is Europe against city and state
whose intellect against whose blood
what do you say say

sense of justice whisking off battle line
nocturnal galas painting communist gang
romantic Dölzschen from a distance
he falls on black ice
anything pulls in the left leg
damped face hampered in
politics unchanged
through the park reminder of the past
Hornung for February
the Teutons oozing in bottomless well
frost and snow

March

general mood
dully yielding waiting despondent
who points to hope or less hope
victory of National Socialism
Hitler on the Saar horse
severe cold amounts to resolute cough
life work no more than journalism
who keeps a journal on raw wood
insipid intellectualism
what does the heart try to find

April

idealist nationalist communist
are you enslaved
snail pace of Eighteenth Century
Jewish child or Nordic child
are you coming on your own
what is your misfortune
who knows the evil
short walk on the Dölzschen plateau
dismissal through the mail
Germans
nothing short
of tragic
are you already there

May

in the name of the Reich
who needs house and garden

philosophical comforts suffice not
changing moods
who will be the next
were you dead through bullet rains
war mentality
if only
worse
who saw happy times
he wrote she typed
the keys lost teeth gathering dust
naked misery
government firm in the saddle
radical measures on the go
who clings to his house
who stays in Germany
in comfort and dishonor
do you have the face
when does the heart go out
reading inward

June

nothing but rumor
anything but secret
everybody has a condition
what's yours
do you call it human
no space between lines
memento mori mori memento
day after day digging in
delphinium for the garden
like this
no post
thus no prospect
limits of literary history

July

vanitas in machina
who jumps in the trench
who worries about the next shell
fleas and bedbugs
are you the enemies of state
Jews nationalized
Catholics sacrificed
set alight your own house

the roof falls first
time to dig your own grave
digging without hate
who is un-German
Nazi or you
sick on the Eighteenth Century
besieged besieged fortress
plague raging and wipes through
what principles do you hold about Germany
wobbling old man's teeth
sink the pleasure peasants

August

purger of the people
tram signs on Prager Straße
who buys from the Jew
traitor to the nation
no Jews do you want no Jews do you want
like this
or that
closing on the end
fermenting
gunrunning Levantine monster
who whispers the Jew
Jews Jews
are you yet to break the word

September

économiste finished littérature under way
nothing reckons on nothing
Jews cannot publish in Germany
helpless condition
what's yours
new laws on German blood and honor
no marriage between Jews and proper Germans
helpless condition
civil rights withdrawn
prohibition on proper German maids
helpless condition
bitter and bitterly German
who's in your camp
Brecht smuggled from Denmark
long live Lenin Heil Hitler
tear down the wall

helpless condition
winter garden roofless
elegant veranda useless
everybody has a condition
colored windows stripped light
spring without summer

October

Zion Zion
Jewish nation a comedy
candles burnt
nothing but
mood of panic
crowds of people
broken windows unrepaired
prayer for the dead
flee flee like a bee
no buzz in many tears
the loyal and the brave
this is the how
do you scribble it down
raised arm criminal or idiot
what do you say
serenity of heart embittered
who's there to cry out
German unity
special trains to the east
curved ceiling on the lookout
the last judgment near
whose carriages move sans horses
butter lines snaking
NSDAP youth über Berlin
without you and after
rabbis in England
boycott preach of German goods abroad
Hitler in Nuremberg
whisper due to larynx cancer
amplified thunder by loudspeaker
blood determines character and soul
does your soul rest in your blood
has the Jew spoiled your blood and soul
then you are dead, dead for race and Fatherland
ritual murders one more time

November

Hitler's apostles fell at Feldherrnhalle
and rose from the triumphant grave
religion destroyed and sprinted from radio
everybody is a mythic or has to be one
the age dependent on the cats
tragic or comic
what's your call
Nichelchen ailing in the music room
Muschel overnight in bed
Marta asleep on the floor
a stray cat needs a hut
where's yours

December

attend to tension
frivolous to the utmost
radio and airplane
power and powerless
Nickelchen fades daily
dreadful looking dreadful smell
will the tomcat recover
will you live a long life
path through park
morning memento
what's a rich way to repress
do you know
senseless in snow contrary to nature
shut up your mouth and drive your car

only the personal only the faith
God will not be taken you will be fine
language of the Twentieth Century:
We Would Die

mild winter no snow it is a sunny day Dölzchen alive the cemetery full of locals flowers laid
words left in fogged breath will return after a short walk taken slowly they are hesitant to
leave the house Nichelchen the tomcat died last night a soft little lump wrapped by her
cracked hands the cat used to sleep in the music room neither of the other two cats would
move in they have their own rooms they are still sleeping in their rooms their lethargy not
yet contagious everything takes her heart away now the cat intimacy dooms and looms when
the living pays tribute to the dead will the dead listen she does not cry but digs a little pit for
her dear cat its fur feels still soft to the touch its warmth evaporates with the slight wind the
garden is fenced will the corpse of the cat root its body fluids will flow its blood will brown

the earth she wonders whether she should plant a tree so that she can see it through the kitchen window will she then forget she almost forgets that they have just moved here not long ago but it feels like another life yes another life she knows he must be plowing through his Eighteenth Century now the part on Voltaire is done will he cheer up a little they have not taken a walk together for a long time they are attached to the house now they are enslaved by the lacks of electricity of heater of everything that needs to be in but they had no choice and they willed their own moving his boxes of books returned his other boxes of books shuffled up and down the stairs to the cellar the roof flat it looks all German no one is supposed to stand out Dölzschen houses all look the same brick wall rock garden and flat roof their house wooden at least not a dog kennel she looks pleased then her heart drops she hears a meow light yet insistent he is reading out loud his manuscript she shouts to ask him to shut up he runs out she runs to the fence a tomcat is trying to squeeze itself into the garden it gets stuck what is it looking for another stray cat dreadful looking and dreadful smell the old ailing Nichelschen went early perhaps it envisioned its quick return magic is not to be believed miracles do not happen in their desolate garden but something does stir like a little breeze in the tranquil air like a meow among the silent throng to the graveyards he seems to be smiling standing on the threshold she looks at him and around they are not taking a walk today the house is here the cat jumps off her hands she follows and flings her cold arms Schubert Schubert Schubert

