

after which

there is no after

life coupled in

the couplet  
of memory  
and forgetting

would that it  
rupture open  
all affect

ageless  
trace of  
the illegible

punctured  
under  
prostrating  
pounding  
scraping

skin  
aerating

(firewide)  
(landslide)

chloroplasts  
stretched  
beyond  
chloroplasts  
stretched  
beyond

punctured  
couplets  
of rupture  
wide illegible

written  
under couple  
under trace

all measure

all affect  
of memory  
and forgetting

skin

stretched  
beyond all  
measure

there no  
life would  
open after

fireslide

(pounding  
scraping)

landwide

(prostrating  
aerating)

and ageless

after which

I remember thinking thinking how it was you great-grandmother who taught me there was no after<sup>1</sup> who taught me that skin taken into the infernal machinery of violence later awakens as if terror dug its face into the present and ruptured it wide open are you awake are you listening maybe then you could imagine that I would love you and that to show you I would strap myself in an upholstered seat bolted between bolted seats all stitched with the same upholstery and ascend into the cacophony of a mechanical black shadow that passes over the earth and its infernal grandeur which reminds me of the titan who with twisted bridles fought each day to catch the sun and keep it and though the story ends with a child whose descent from heaven unleashes a climate crisis is not the space between two words enough to tear us into prostrating protein that slides its loose limbed way into the earth and when the dirt is spent with tenants skin punctured stretched beyond all measure are not the remnants captured and incinerated until there is nothing left but cinder cinder being common to anything that burns or rather would this page survive me and give you room to find a home for this is why I write so that you might muscle open my imagination and give my mind what it cannot unravel though I have tried to grasp the matter pressed my fingers into plastic keys my digits turned into digitized chisels and rock hammers with these tools I cosigned my history into the electrocuted light of online ancestral registries but I could not find you I could not find your family it's just that years ago I had this dream<sup>2</sup> it bewildered me for in it I heard you as you gave away a son who would become my father's father and maybe this is why I hear you as I pass the shadow grass that grasps a trampled path to where your family was first taken and now here I am here I have landed and I am outside the concrete walls dressed as a troubadour petrified before the forest and still I hear nothing but what if I could reach you would you tell me what part of you is buried in me for that's the part of me that's buried in Poland or is it arrogant to think that and if it is then please remember that this is but a false poet's notice and that

<sup>1</sup> *Der schreckliche, eben jetzt abgelaufene Krieg hat eine große Anzahl solcher Erkrankungen entstehen lassen [...]*

If trauma rises from a crisis, illness illegible, immeasurable. Ageless [...]

*Bei den Kriegsneurosen wirkte es einerseits aufklärend, aber doch wiederum verwirrend, daß dasselbe Krankheitsbild gelegentlich ohne Mithilfe einer groben mechanischen Gewalt zustande kam [...]*

For instance, as with war neurosis: bodies taken into the infernal machinery of violence later rest on upholstery and awaken with the sickness. How enlightening, how bewildering [...]

*Schreck aber benennt den Zustand, in den man gerät, wenn man in Gefahr kommt, ohne auf sie vorbereitet zu sein, betont das Moment der Überraschung.*

As though terror dug its face into the trenches of the present and ruptured it wide open; impossible to notice it at a moment's notice.

<sup>2</sup> Shadows made by shadows made by grass grasp a trampled dirt path to where they were first taken. Names awaken to the cacophony of mechanical black forests and the camouflage of men who rip their way into the earth for a chance to capture

I would reach into the earth just to stain my fingers with the dirt that held your family when it was not safe for them to sleep but no I forgot about aeration forgot about the chloroplasts stretched beyond chloroplasts stretched beyond all measure forgot about what may have happened to those who did not make it over the Atlantic after which did they take to the atmosphere to congregate a sacred orbit and just stay there and when the sun's rays fall beneath the hemisphere does their celestial mass reflect the moonlight to contrail its glory across the God forsaken sky and down I look at these hands for is this not the place that bloomed a crimson harvest and that I would cut the petals to make a thread a red thread to tie around cut stems and then descend into the labyrinth for this is who I am I am Ariadne I am Theseus I am Minotaur all as one all taken together undercover and that I would trace the outline of your body see how I flick between finger skin and fingernail watch as I transplant this muck into my palms cupped an inkwell into which I spit and rub to write your surname Mauer fingers scraping on this rock this wall your last name alone remains for me to hold and I would do it for I have learned that this is why we name not so as to enumerate the world we enter but to discover what we still have left to lose and that is what survives the body to which a sound has been ascribed the sound survives the name the sound survives the time of utterance when there is only rhythm rhythm pounding through the prehistoric dirt it rises rising over this slumber sodded earth can you feel it when trapped between angled frames of stone surrounding Łódź these monoliths are my lined pages on them I write this poem and I pray that their names return to me return to me unburnt so that I may look upon their unfinished silhouettes uncouple affect from the embers just to write a path through memory through forgetting to find the image of myself that recollects the illegible trenches that shape my wrinkled face the way fingerprints prune under the enlightened shade of an ocean wave must its cinerous salt be what I have left to taste of them as when smoke takes to the clouds and it rains and rains and showers.

sunlight and its infernal grandeur as when the ancient titan—who with twisted bridles guides an equestrian machine—each day descends onto the earth: muscled mammals needing protein trample grass to feed in shadows. And here I rise in these slumber sodded fields of capture black as mechanical mammals awaken camouflaged cacophony guiding men to descend into twisted protein forests trampled shallow below the earth and its infernal dirt. Would I play the part of troubadour and travel past horse trampled paths that grasp at slumber forests to sing of mammals sodded into mechanical cacophony? I await the wood nymph's answer. Is she awake? Is she listening? *Mauer, Mauer.* call repeated. Taken name awakens concrete angles framing fields sodded with sunlight machines and muscled with infernal mammals who grasp the trampled grass and descend into mechanical black shadows as the twisted protein dirt sings the earth path back to Łódź:

*Allein*

*Allein*

bodies trapped inside  
bodies trapped in time  
bodies trapped inside  
bodies trapped in time

*Allein*

*Allein*

a line outside the ghetto.