

YAKOV LINT

Resurrection

'D E U M Jesum Christum in gloriam eternam est. Nu.' Goldschmied turned over on the other side, put down the prayer book and tried to sleep. He pulled his coat over his head and nearly suffocated, he took it off and the light hurt his eyes. He turned from side to side, but cautiously, so as not to touch either of the walls. His head touched the wall behind him (it was padded) and his toes pressed against the chair between the bed and the fourth wall. He couldn't sleep a wink. They won't let you have your rest, not even in the coffin, you'd expect there'd at least be room to stretch your legs six foot underground. Not a chance. Psiakrew Pier-nie! It was only in Polish that he dared. As a Protestant he wasn't allowed to swear. I hope he's a midget, I'll put him under the bed. How can two people sleep in this place? A hundred guilders a week and he won't let me breathe. Meine goyim. Czort!

Swiss Alpine Club. Holiday at Arosa. Altitude 6,000 feet. First-class hotels. Reduced prices out of season. It's out of season all right. Who wants to go to Switzerland in October? Too early for skiing, too late for sun-bathing. Now would be the time to go, if I could. The calendar won't mind. He himself had brought the calendar. Every day a stroke. So far he had struck off 184 days, 184 years. Only the pencil had

butchered Latin

Polish

Yiddish

The calendar =
idealized
outside
world

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stayed untouched by it all. It hung on its nail, its point as sharp as on the first day.

The motto for October: In golden splendour flows the wine —and the picture: vintner carrying a basket full of grapes, clinking glasses with a young couple. Carriage, vines, women, a team of oxen in the background. Young woman smiles merrily. Husband smacks lips. Vintner holds one hand over his paunch.

I could stand it in Switzerland right now. Not too hot, not too cold.

In November they plough, in December they sing Holy Night, Silent Night beside the Saviour's cradle, in January skiing, in February too, in March they take the cable car up the Matterhorn (does it have to be March?), in April the young lambs playing in the meadow, in May a nightingale singing in the trees, in June they ski and swim.

But how will I live through such troubles?

Nothing about it in the calendar. A book tumbled down from over the bed. *Introduction to Inorganic Chemistry*, Dr K. Kluisenart, Groningen 1902. In 1902 I was still in Cracow. Do I need inorganic chemistry? I'm inorganic enough already. He put the book down and took paper and pen to write van Tuinhout a letter. Dear Mr van Tuinhout: Nothing doing. I can barely stand it by myself, if there are two of us I'll go mad. I'll give you a hundred guilders, but don't do that to me. Find him another place.

I'm a sociable man, but how can two live in this hole without killing each other? Besides, there's the difference in denomination. Try to understand.

He didn't write the letter, he didn't have time. Van Tuinhout was outside the wall. He gave the prearranged knock. Without having to get up, Goldschmied opened the two hooks.

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The trap door was pushed up slightly from outside and van Tuinhout climbed through the opening. Now what does he want? Has he found two more?

As usual van Tuinhout sat down on the bed without a word and for a time said nothing. Van Tuinhout was a pale man, about forty-two, thin hair, short straight nose and small brown eyes. When he spoke, he usually stuck his tongue out as though to give his words a last lick before he let them go; when he was silent, he played with his false teeth.

Meneer Goldschmied, he said finally: not tomorrow, tonight he'll be here. Right after dark.

Thank God, said Goldschmied, I would have had a sleepless night. Van Tuinhout eyed Goldschmied with suspicion. He had taken in roomers for fifteen years, but a Protestant, religious too, by the name of Efraim Goldschmied, origin unknown except that he was a *mof*, a German—that was a new one.

Whatever Goldschmied said in his mixture of Yiddish and Dutch sounded suspicious to van Tuinhout.

How old is he? asked Goldschmied.

Not more than thirty. Maybe twenty.

You mean there's no difference? Nu, we'll see. But remember, you promised. A week at the most, it'll get to be three—then I'll kill myself.

Meneer Goldschmied, it isn't my fault. I have to do what they tell me. It's only a week, then they'll put him somewhere else.

Did you protest at least, van Tuinhout?

Of course. But that's how it is. We can't be finicky. It's getting more dangerous every day. And the Jews have got to be helped.

You're telling me? Of course they've got to be helped, but

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does that mean putting two grown men in a box? Why, this isn't a room, van Tuinhout, it's a coffin.

It's not a coffin, Mr Goldschmied, you're always dramatizing, it's a closet. Where one can live, so can two—don't get me wrong—but that's how Mr Jaap and Mr Tinus want it. You think I have anything to say about it?

Suppose something terrible happens, Mr van Tuinhout. You'll be responsible.

Responsible? In the first place the Germans are responsible, in the second place Mr Jaap and Mr Tinus. I'm just carrying out orders.

Silence set in. What can I do with this goy? He's an idiot. Goldschmied rubbed his three-day beard. (Every three days he was allowed to use the bathroom in the rear hallway.) It can only end in disaster. That much he knew. A hundred and eighty-four days he had lived through it—and what's to prevent the war from going on for another twenty years? Cholera! He'd never live to see the end. A young fellow in the same hole? Two corpses in one coffin would have more room; besides, corpses wouldn't mind. Van Tuinhout didn't budge. He sat there with his hands in his pocket (it's not that cramped in here), stared straight ahead and seemed frozen. He didn't smoke, he didn't seem to be looking at anything, he just sat there. After four minutes Goldschmied began to feel uncomfortable. He knew exactly what was going on, but now that he had something to complain about, he didn't want to play along. He too waited four minutes, he too put his hands in his pockets and stared at the wall. I can outlast him at this any time. Goldschmied said his twelve Our Fathers. That's more than he can do. How can that man think nothing so long? He gave himself another dozen Our Fathers. Still van Tuinhout didn't budge.

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Till the Last Judgment I'll let him sit, Goldschmied decided. He'll get his money anyway, but this time he can beg for it. Van Tuinhout gave a slight cough. Ah, he's starting in. Goldschmied gave a little cough too. (In this hole 'coughing' meant an almost inaudible clearing of the throat, and 'talking' meant a barely intelligible whispering.)

So make up your mind. Spit it out.

Van Tuinhout would rather have hanged himself than remind Goldschmied of his rent. Goldschmied knew the ritual by heart.

It was up to him to start in about the homework. Then came lamentations about Kees, the poor motherless boy, followed by a short speech about the moral degradation of children in wartime, and finally a word of consolation and encouragement. But today he would not start in, Goldschmied had made up his mind to that. The stubborn *mof*, thought van Tuinhout, he knows damn well I won't ask him for money. I can wait. After the third dozen Our Fathers Goldschmied had enough. To hell with him, he'll never be as generous as me.

All right, Goldschmied broke the silence, how's the homework going? Van Tuinhout was overjoyed. He still had the rabbits to feed and the supper to prepare. Perfect. He got the best mark in everything. How do you do it? Why, it's at least forty years since you went to school. I don't understand a word of it. Neither does Kees. Not even the teachers, if you ask me. You must be a genius. Every single answer was right. To tell the truth, the work is much too hard. He's only twelve. Yes, I know he's lazy. Maybe not lazy, but neglected. It's always that way without a mother. I can't keep after him all day long. And he takes advantage. It's lucky we have curfew at eight, or he wouldn't get home until morning. You should see the friends he bums around with all day. A bunch of thugs. Juvenile

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delinquents the whole lot of them. Every day I expect him to be locked up for theft or murder. He's capable of anything these days. In the street? The kind of people you find in the streets these days. Riffraff, soldiers, and whores. Respectable people don't go out. Don't exaggerate, said Goldschmied in whom this subject (streets, going out) touched a sore point. Look here, Meneer Goldschmied, war breeds criminals—what they see now they imitate later. Wait and see what happens after the war (I should live so long, thought Goldschmied). And said aloud: I should live so long, Mr van Tuinhout.

What do you mean, Mr Goldschmied, you think I'm telling fairy tales? What do you know? Sitting night and day in this hole. Have you any idea what's going on outside?

Have I any idea what's going on outside? asked Goldschmied with a slight shake of his head. (Why are the goyim so dumb? After all, I'm a Christian myself, so it can't be the religion: Goldschmied's everlasting puzzle.) That's it, Mr Goldschmied. You just sit here. Sometimes I envy you. Would you like to change places, van Tuinhout? I didn't mean it that way—but it's hard. Every day new regulations, sometimes you don't know if you're still allowed to use the pavement, because some of the regulations aren't posted. People vanish into thin air for no reason at all. Yes, you can consider yourself fortunate, Meneer Goldschmied, you're out of the rain at least.

So it's raining too?

Van Tuinhout looked at him with suspicion. With Jews you can talk, with Protestants you can talk (he himself was a member of THE BROTHERS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN,) but with a Christian Jew, a Jewish Christian, you don't know where you are. The Christians are hypocrites, most of all the Protestants, the Jews are too smart. To be on the safe side, he took Goldschmied's question literally.

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This morning the weather was good, he said, but it may very well rain tonight. Get on with it, said Goldschmied impatiently, he couldn't stand it any more.

As I was saying, Kees is getting to be more of a gangster every day. Do you know what he did yesterday? He took the ferry across the IJ and found himself a girl, a child, maybe ten years old ...

Nu? (Goldschmied was growing more and more impatient.) He's only a kid himself—you want him to sleep with an old woman?

Believe it or not, Meneer Goldschmied, he really did sleep with the child, but the police caught him in the act. I'll be surprised if they don't put him in jail.

He is a little young, Goldschmied admitted. At his age I was apprenticed already. Sixteen hours a day. We supplied umbrellas all the way to Budapest. No, for such things I didn't have time.

That's what I've been telling you, you're living here like in a hothouse, so sheltered. You can be glad you haven't any children.

Glad, no. Except maybe right now. Children, that's all I need.

Anyway, Meneer Goldschmied, everything is getting more expensive and the money is worthless.

That was the cue. Goldschmied took out his wallet and gave him the hundred guilders rent he was going to give him anyway. But van Tuinhout had certain principles. And one of them was: You can't ask these poor persecuted people for money. Renting rooms was his profession, hiding people was patriotism. If his protégé wished to contribute something of his own free will, he couldn't refuse. But never in all the world would he have asked.

appeasement

hypocrisy

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Bring me the next batch of homework soon, said Goldschmied, or the boy will be left behind.

Just one question. Doesn't the teacher notice that his homework is right and his answers in class wrong?

The teachers these days, Mr Goldschmied, aren't teachers: they're students who've flunked their exams. Today you could be a professor at the university.

I ask you, Goldschmied shook his head. Is it such an honour to be a professor at a university? My umbrellas are more interesting and it's a better living. But if the war keeps on much longer and the homework keeps coming, I'll be ruined. After the war, I'll need a flood to put me back on my feet.

Meneer Goldschmied, I'd like you to do me a favour.

What? You're asking me a favour?

The gentleman who's coming today, van der Waal his name is, he doesn't know you're paying me one hundred guilders a week. If it's all the same to you, please don't tell him. I have my reasons.

Don't worry, Mr van Tuinhout. I'll be silent like a tomb. I don't think I'll speak to him anyway. I'll just ignore him.

You promise, Meneer Goldschmied.

I promise. All day I'll look at the wall and pretend he's not there. You can rely on me. You have your reasons and I don't even want to know them. But now you must excuse me, I'm busy.

Between ten and twelve. All right?

A few minutes more or less don't matter, van Tuinhout, and in case you decide to put him somewhere else, it'll be all right with me too. I can manage for money, but the air here is another matter. I could do a good business in air if I had some, it's fantastic.

The knock came at about half past ten. Goldschmied looked

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up from his book. There he is. Exactly between ten and twelve. You can trust van Tuinhout. Van der Waal, said Goldschmied to himself, that means either Birnbaum or Wollmann. But he was mistaken. The young man who crawled in, Goldschmied guessed him to be nineteen, was called Weintraub.

To err is human. Weintraub had red cheeks, sweaty hands, and short-cropped hair. He had big blue eyes, a fleshy nose (poor boy, the bone is missing, thought Goldschmied) that looked Jewish at the end, but only at the end. He was short and thick-set. Had on a blue sweater and corduroy trousers, introduced himself as van der Waal, and tossed his small suitcase deftly under the bed.

Van Tuinhout showed his face for another two minutes in the opening, darting glances intended to impress it once again upon Goldschmied that the matter of the hundred guilders was a private arrangement between van Tuinhout and Goldschmied.

Goldschmied bent down to van Tuinhout and whispered: 'Don't worry. We practically won't see each other.'

Van Tuinhout handed him two copybooks. These are for next week. I'll bring the other two tomorrow.

Goldschmied took the copybooks and put them too under the bed. The wall was closed and the two sat on the bed.

Goldschmied looked the young man up and down, decided the view was incomplete, and said: Stand up. Weintraub stood up. Goldschmied got up too and stood beside him.

'Good. You get the shorter blanket.'

Maybe the young man was shy, he said nothing and looked the other way. How do you like it here, Goldschmied interrupted. Isn't it cosy?

Weintraub, his first name was Egon, saw the one chair, the bookshelf over the bed, the calendar of the Swiss Alpine Club

wishing for
rain

description

privacy!

shortage of air

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with the pencil hanging from a nail, and at the foot end of the bed (he couldn't believe his eyes) a cross a foot high with a crucified Jesus on it. He couldn't take his eyes off it.

That, Mr van der Waal, is mine. So are the calendar and the pencil. But the blankets belong to the landlord. No talking in here except in a whisper, even if it wrecks your voice, and don't breathe too much either. Air is very important, we've got to economize. What you exhale I inhale and vice versa, so I hope your teeth are good.

Still not a word out of Weintraub. He just looked at Goldschmied.

Goldschmied had sagging cheeks, a bald head, an enormous nose, and a chin that receded like a flight of steps. His lips were two thin lines, drawn down at the ends. Weintraub put his age at sixty. Actually he was only fifty-two. His hands were large and broad, he had sunken shoulders and a paunch. Two fingers of his right hand, pointer and middle finger, seemed to be crooked. Reminders of a wound in the First War.

With these fingers, said Goldschmied, I swore allegiance to Franz Josef; God punished me by making them crooked. My name, by the way, is Hubertus Alphons Brederode of Utrecht, but you can call me Efraim Goldschmied, that's what I call myself to show sympathy for the Jews.

Otherwise I'm a Christian, a real Christian, as you probably noticed right away.

(Still no sign of life from Weintraub.) A Christian, see, a goy, not one of us, one of them. Now do you see what I mean?

But baptized?

Thank God, you can talk. I was beginning to think they had cut your tongue out. Yes, baptized. Disgusting, isn't it?

Weintraub shrugged his shoulders. It's a question of taste. But are you hiding as a Jew or as a Christian?

description grotesque

brilliant

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Ha, a khokhem yet. Both, my young friend. This isn't only the cave of the Maccabees, it's also the catacombs of Amsterdam. I'm hiding double, so to speak. You see, I'm not an ordinary baptized Jew, I'm a convinced and pious Christian. I'd have had sores either way.

Either way? Why as a Christian?

Some day I'll tell you the story of my life, but there's no hurry, because I will have the honour of seeing you again. But in a nutshell: I am the deacon of a congregation in the Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Kerk. You know the church on the Overtoom, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul? Well, I, Goldschmied, am the deacon. Yes, the Catholic name is misleading, a leftover from before the Reformation—after the war we'll change it with God's help. And you, Weintraub? You're a Jew, I hope. Because two goyim in here would be too much. And I wouldn't be able to convert you.

Nobody can convert me. I'm not interested in such things. I'm of Polish origin.

Polish? Goldschmied could hardly contain himself. He almost shouted. Polish—don't say another word. Jeszcze Polska niezginela. He nearly fell on Weintraub's neck.

But, said Weintraub, I was only a baby when I came to Holland.

Doesn't mean a thing. Once a Pole always a Pole. What luck!

What's so lucky, you want to know? It's not so quick to explain. Polish isn't just a nationality. It's not so simple. The Poles are the chosen people the Jews would have liked to be. And why davke the Poles? Because the Poles have what the Jews haven't got. Sense and faith.

The Jews have no sense and faith? You're joking.

Pan Weintraub, I ask you, if the Jews had sense would they have gone on being Jews? Not a chance. They would have

= his true identity
"Poland is not dead as long as we are alive"
National myth

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gone over to the new religion long ago. And because they have no true faith, they are the worst heathen in the world in my opinion. Absolutely.

But, Mr Goldschmied, Weintraub protested ...

Don't interrupt me just because I'm right, that's how it is ... They're always talking about God, but they don't really believe in anything, except money. Sure, they are good at making up ethical laws in God's name, for everything they've got a law, but what's all this got to do with religion? Nothing. The whole Jewish religion is full of practical advice, but the sense of mystery, the feeling for holiness, that they haven't got; just like the Germans and that's not the only reason.

The Germans? What are you talking about?

Goldschmied didn't like to be interrupted. You want to know what I'm talking about? Listen and you'll find out. Why do the Germans shout so loud about nation and blood? Because they're not a united nation. It's exactly the same with the Jews; they shout too loud about their Jehovah and His chosen people. There's something fishy about that. So you'll ask what's fishy? Well, I'll tell you: their religion, that's where it begins. That's where everything begins. Between you and me, Weintraub, the Jewish religion is no good. What do I mean, religion? And what do I mean no good? I'll tell you, and Goldschmied whispered mysteriously: Because Jews have no religion and because they stopped being a nation thousands of years ago, that's why they have such a lousy time.

Moralizing, that's what they do. Philosophizing. The Greeks, the Romans and the English, they got somewhere in this world —except as individuals, the Jews never accomplished a thing, not where it counts, and what counts is to find a union between man's need of faith and his individual humanity. The Jews are still what they always were, scattered tribes of merchants and

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Bedouins with a small group of intellectuals, from a little, insignificant Mediterranean country. Super-chauvinists, all their national feeling is nothing but primitive clannishness—like the Indians. And their racial purity? Racism, my dear Weintraub, was invented by the Jews, not the Germans. Azoi it is. And only azoi.

Goldschmied leaned back against the wall, exhausted but happy. Come to think of it, thought Goldschmied, a fool is better to talk to than a wall.

➤ Weintraub was a kind of Palestine pioneer—a quarter Zionist, a quarter orthodox Jew (by upbringing), and the other half Dutchman. Until driven underground, that was two years before, he had worked on a farm as a hired hand. He had graduated from secondary school, though very late. Illness had delayed everything in his short life. He had been tubercular since the age of thirteen. Work and fresh air on the farm had done him good—the coughing fits had stopped; and he had been lucky during his two years in hiding, always somewhere in the country—his last hiding place had been raided, someone had denounced him, he had escaped at the last moment. Van Tuinhout's hideout was only temporary; the friends in the underground who were helping him were well aware that a consumptive in a wall was a danger to everybody.

A temporary solution, for a week or two at the most, until they could find him a new hideout with a peasant or gardener.

He had expected it to be small, but not this small; he had expected a bed of his own. How could he share a bed with this old codger when he didn't share a single one of his opinions?

But his ups and downs had made Weintraub philosophical. Well, he said to himself, it's an experience. I only hope he's not homosexual. That I couldn't stand.

Goldschmied was not homosexual—sex seemed never even

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to occur to him. Sex is not for me, he would say, it's for women and children. What interests me is my business, making umbrellas, and theology. Everything else is playing around.

They lived through the night, each rolled in his blanket, back to back (twice Weintraub woke up because he thought he was going to suffocate, but somehow he survived) until the grey dawn trickled in through a pipe connected with the chimney. When Weintraub sat up and rubbed the sleep from his eyes, Goldschmied was already sitting on the other side of the bed, his back turned to him, an open book on his knees and muttering something. He swayed his body, fell into a soft sing-song—reminding Weintraub in every way of his father chanting his morning prayers.

Goldschmied prayed in Dutch and Latin—both with the same Yiddish accent, crossed himself three times at the end, kissed the book, and put it back with the others above the bed.

Of course you don't pray. You heathen—now come the exercises, then comes breakfast, such a breakfast you won't get in Krasnopolsky—everything here is home-made—even the scrambled eggs. Stand as thin as possible against the wall—good. And now, one, two, three, four—Goldschmied lay down on the bed, propped up his back and began to bicycle in the air. After five minutes he said: That's for the legs. Now for the arms. He thrust his hands out to both sides a dozen times, each time hitting Weintraub in the stomach. (You hippopotamus, can't you make yourself thinner?) In conclusion a few knee bends.

That's that, said Goldschmied, it's healthier than tennis, and it doesn't make you perspire so much. Now it's your turn. Goldschmied stood on the chair and beat time.

One, two, three, four, one, two, three, four. And so on. That's enough. Save the rest for tomorrow.

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At nine van Tuinhout brought in a basin of water.

Mr van Tuinhout, the young man has to have his own water. We're not married. Goldschmied handed him the urinal to empty. He needs his own bottle too. What you Dutchmen need is a little of our Polish tidiness.

Goldschmied washed from head to foot, showing thin white legs, a blubbery back, and sunken buttocks.

Van Tuinhout came back five minutes later with Goldschmied's breakfast, a large cup of black coffee sweetened with saccharine, two slices of bread and margarine, and a dark-yellow mush on the edge of the plate—fried egg-powder.

He took away the basin and brought it back five minutes later with fresh water. Weintraub, who had decided to spend three days at a public bath after the war, dipped a corner of his towel and rubbed his face with it. Goldschmied looked up: Oh no, my friend, that won't do. After all, we sleep together. You wash yourself properly from top to bottom, or you can move to a hotel.

Weintraub mustered him. The hell with him, he thought. Not even my father had the nerve to tell me to wash and where.

But as a newcomer, he could only give in to the elderly goy.

Breakfast was cleared away, the bed made, and they sat on the bed, Weintraub with his legs crossed, Goldschmied with his elbows on his knees and the book on his chair.

Three weeks later. Weintraub was still there. I predicted it, Mr van Tuinhout, in six months he'll still be here—with God's help we'll move to the old people's home together. Van Tuinhout had nothing but curses for the situation. The underground had hoodwinked him. As it turned out, Weintraub was penniless. What should I do, Mr Goldschmied? I can't put him out in the street. He can't pay. What should I do?

I'll make you a proposition, Meneer van Tuinhout. Just

quintessential
Jew

gmk3

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G. happy with
W
forget about the few cents he would have paid you. Put it on my bill. Give me twice as much homework.

Now what does he want? Van Tuinhout sucked his teeth. Does he think he can pull my leg?

I'll speak to my aunt—she has money, I can't ask persecuted people for money. I'll speak to my aunt, that's the best way.

Are you sure?

My aunt is obligated to us. My wife took care of her when she was down with varicose veins. She's got to help. She has more money than you and Weintraub put together.

Weintraub, said Goldschmied, we've known each other now for three weeks—and it looks like we'll be together for ever. To tell you the truth, I've almost got used to it; it's been like a change of air. But now, seriously, if you want to be my friend, you've got to stop coughing like that. That cough will cost us our lives. Coughing is all right in peacetime—you should have done all your coughing before, because now it can cost us our necks. Weintraub flushed. I thought, he said, it had stopped. But now it's started again. I doubt if I have six months to live. Six months, Weintraub, six months is a long time.

Yes, but the end can come any day. I never told you, Mr Goldschmied, but now I've got to tell you. I have tuberculosis. I can die any day. Goldschmied looked at his new friend sharply. If you're telling me the truth I won't be so hard on you any more. A man marked by death deserves consideration, special consideration. Marked by death? What does that mean in times like these? Weintraub couldn't stand it. What do you think will happen to you if you stick your head out of the door? Marked by death. It sounds so tragic—actually I may live to be seventy. But you, Goldschmied, how long do you expect to live—without tuberculosis?

Goldschmied didn't like the way this conversation was going.

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He was willing to feel sorry for a poor sick man, but that the candidate for death should predict an early end for him, Goldschmied, that was too much.

Weintraub, said Goldschmied—he wanted to get this thing settled once and for all. I'm not afraid, you see I'm living in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. My Jesus loves me, He'll see me through, His mercy is great, His will be done, as it says in our prayer. We'll see.

Now, after three weeks, Weintraub had ceased to live in a dream. The wall had become reality; actually he was very happy to be with this fellow Goldschmied. W happy with G.

He was ashamed of his coughing. Coughing was a sickness and he was ashamed of being sick. At the approach of a coughing fit—Goldschmied had learned to recognize the signs—he wrapped his young friend's head in a blanket, which he removed ten minutes later.

Every day there were three or four fits and the previous night had been especially bad. Something's got to be done about you, Weintraub. Maybe I should keep watch at night.

Weintraub didn't know what to say. Yesterday he had spat blood again. He felt the cough tearing his lungs to pieces, he was simply spitting them out. That cough is deplorable, disgraceful. What could be done?

Van Tuinhout is bound to turn up with good news any day. He's got to get out of this wall—if he doesn't, he'll die and everybody will be in danger. What day is it? he asked.

Goldschmied scrutinized Weintraub. He took the calendar (peasants ploughing a field. The Alpine Club's motto: He who sows will reap). Your twenty-fourth day, Weintraub. It's my two hundred and eighth. You don't catch up with me. This is the last winter. Next year you'll be in Jerusalem and I in my church. One more winter, Pan Weintraub. What's

in heaven

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one winter? I'm too old for skiing anyway. I'll stay here.

Knocking. Goldschmied pushed the hooks aside. Van Tuinhout appeared in the opening; a stranger was with him. One after another, they crawled in.

The stranger was large and broad-shouldered, with protuberant cheekbones and a wide chin. He wore glasses and a cap.

He looked like a repair man from the telephone company. This is Verhulst, van Tuinhout introduced him. He knows a peasant in Frisia who'll put van der Waal up.

But it won't be cheap, understand, said Verhulst. Goldschmied understood. How much is not cheap?

Fifteen hundred guilders. We're not getting anything from the underground.

Fifteen hundred guilders. That's a lot of money. Van der Waal hasn't got any. The underground is broke too. So what will we do?

Yes, what will we do? Hasn't he somebody he can borrow from? asked Verhulst.

Have you somebody, van der Waal? Goldschmied looked at him sternly. My parents are gone, said Weintraub. I have relatives, but where they are I don't know. I'll make you a proposition. I'll give you a pledge. He looked through his suitcase and brought out a small tin wrapped in paper. The three looked on eagerly. A pocket watch came to light.

It had a modern dial and was chrome-plated.

It's worth three guilders, said Weintraub and looked from one to the other. He was ashamed of his childish treasure. But it's worth a million to me. After the war I'll give you fifteen hundred guilders for it. It means a great deal to me.

Verhulst looked at him under his glasses. Goldschmied looked away. Van Tuinhout played with his false teeth. A short silence.

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Weintraub put the watch back in its box, wrapped it in the same paper and replaced the rubber band around it. He put it in his suitcase and shoved the suitcase under the bed.

Goldschmied was first to speak. In this wallet—he took the wallet from his jacket—there's still a hundred guilders. The last. Until my committee sends me some more money, that's all. He handed van Tuinhout the wallet. Van Tuinhout turned it over twice, thought of opening it to have a look, because he couldn't believe his ears, and decided to let well enough alone. He put the wallet down beside Goldschmied. Verhulst gave him a glance.

Van Tuinhout stood up, followed by Verhulst, they opened the trap, and Verhulst climbed out first. For a few seconds van Tuinhout's head remained in the opening. He gave Goldschmied a look of reproach and astonishment. My aunt won't do it, Meneer Goldschmied. She can't right now.

Goldschmied reached under the bed and gave van Tuinhout two copybooks: Here is the homework, Meneer van Tuinhout. The last. The trap closed. They were alone.

Weintraub, it's hopeless. You can see that. No money no life. I can't keep myself any longer and you're done for too. Weintraub—Goldschmied looked at him out of eyes in which this world was already extinguished—Weintraub, my friend, I think it's all over.

Weintraub's voice had a nervous flutter and seemed to come from far away: I won't survive it, neither here nor in Poland, Mr Goldschmied, but you, no children and baptized, all you have to do is get yourself sterilized, and you're free.

Goldschmied's whole body swayed and he spoke louder than usual: Jesus suffered more, and that's why He understands. He's got to help, because no one else will. He, the Anointed

everyone is out to make a fast buck

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One, is the only God. How do we know? Do you know the Talmud?

Why so serious, Goldschmied? You forgotten how to laugh? What kind of laughter, young man, did I ever have? Goldschmied continued:

He and He alone is the Anointed One; it is written in your holy Talmud, but one has to know how to read it:

➤ When a man stands up and the others remain seated, does it mean that those who remain seated, as I am seated here, are inferior to the one who stands up? Or does the one who stands up wish to dissociate himself from those who are seated? People stand up for various reasons. For instance, to mention only three: a man stands up because he has something to say and wishes to be seen; or he stands up because he wants to see something that he can't see when he is seated (for instance, if I want to see what is written on the Cross—as it happens I know it by heart—I have to stand up), or he stands up simply because he doesn't want to sit down any more.

In the first case—he wants to speak and be seen, in other words, he wishes to exalt his spirit, but to exalt one's spirit means to come closer to the Holy One, may He be praised. This standing up is therefore a good work.

In the second case, however—when a man stands up because he wants to see what he can't see sitting down—it means that his soul thirsts for wisdom, for wisdom does not come down to a man who is seated.

Therefore this standing up is also good.

And now to the third case—if a man stands up because he doesn't wish to be seated any longer, he is likewise doing a good work, for the heart in which dwells the love of the Almighty, holy is His name, is filled with joy and jubilation and wishes to

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be seated no longer. To sit, is it not to mourn? Therefore it is good to stand up: but what does this mean?

It means that the spirit, the soul, and the heart lift themselves out of their abasement, and standing up is to sitting as life is to death. When Rabbi Gershon ben Yehuda asked his student Rabbi Naphtali: Why do some stand up while others remain seated? he was really asking: How is it that some rise up from the dead and others do not? What does this mean? It means above all one thing: Some can rise up from the dead and others cannot. So you see, Rabbi Gershon admits (would he otherwise have asked such a question?) that there is such a thing as standing up, or resurrection, from the dead. But who can rise from the dead before he is judged? Who doesn't have to wait until the Prophet Elyahu announces the Messiah? Who? Only someone who doesn't have to wait for the Messiah. But if someone can stand up from the dead without waiting for the Messiah, can he be an ordinary man? Not in the least. Can he be an extraordinary man? No, because an extraordinary man is still a man. Therefore he must be what no one else can be, namely, the Messiah Himself. Therefore He who has stood up from the dead is the Anointed One. His name is Jesus Christ. Who else?

➤ As a baptized Jew without children, Mr Goldschmied, you'd only have to be sterilized and you'll be a Messiah yourself. You'll be able to stand up as much as you please—even in the tram, in the train, anywhere. And when you go to the cinema, you can take standing room.

Young man, Goldschmied gave him a friendly tug on the ear, you are making fun of me. But sterilization is no joke.

Take it from me, Mr Goldschmied, if they'd let me. This very minute. But they won't let me. They need me the way I am, half dead. But you? Goldschmied, who had grown fond

explodes the
theology

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of his young Polish friend, looked at him with a fatherly tenderness. They don't exactly need you, and aren't you being a little frivolous, van der Waal? Tuberculosis isn't enough for you, you want to be sterilized too?

Anything, Mr Goldschmied, anything is better than to die before your time. Even if they left me nothing but a mouth and a lung, believe me ...

Goldschmied wagged his head: Yes, I admit, in your case breathing is the most important thing in life, and maybe if I had your ... maybe if I, myself, well, you know what I mean—maybe I'd talk the same as you. But as it is? Am I a mad dog? Weintraub, who had come to love Goldschmied like his own uncle, was dismayed. The moment Verhulst disappeared through the trap, he saw himself getting out of the train at Westerbork. Westerbork, stopover on the way to the end. This has been going on for two years and twenty-four days. The Germans aren't to blame, or the Nazis, or the Verhulsts; it's this disease that's come down in my family. He died of TB, they'll say, nobody has him on his conscience, they'll say. Nobody will have me on his conscience, said Weintraub aloud, he died of TB, they'll say. A lump rose in Weintraub's throat.

But Weintraub, Goldschmied laid a hand on his shoulder, what do you care what they're going to say? Who dies for his obituary? Do you really think this world still needs more examples of murdered innocents? There's no shortage. No one will miss you except a few friends and relatives. Sad, but that's how it is.

Although Weintraub had his eyes on Goldschmied's lips as he was saying these words, his thoughts were far away: It's all an accident, pure chance that there was no other place that week; chance that I had to fall in with this van Tuinhout, who has to

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make his little deals. The fifteen hundred guilders wouldn't have done me any good either, or would they? The J is the meat hook. Everybody has to carry his own—if you've got it, they gas you right away, if you haven't they kick you and torture you until you admit you've got the hook. And then they hang you up on it. NB

It's not the J that matters, even without it you can be sentenced to death, it's the admission that counts. Admit you're a Jew. If it comes to that, what will Goldschmied do with his Jesus and his Talmud? He can live. He has only to say the word. He's not a Jew. He doesn't want children. He doesn't bother with sex, or not very much. Has he a martyr complex? Why does he want to die when he can live? If they find him here, that's an admission in itself. They'll smash the Cross over his head. As deacon of a Christian congregation, he had no need to hide.

He looked at Goldschmied, who was passing a finger over the mountain ranges on his calendar, and tried to read his thoughts.

The word sterilization had but one effect on Goldschmied, to throw him into utter confusion.

The possibility of saving his life was more than his nerves could stand. How could he explain this to Weintraub? But he had to explain (or Weintraub would die with mistaken ideas and false hopes). The essential difference is between killing and being killed. Murderers after their deed need human mercy—but the murdered need divine mercy in advance. Goldschmied also knew it was all over, not with life, that would be no problem, but with hiding. Two hundred and eight is a cabalistic magic number, if you could only discover its meaning. Goldschmied knew the Talmud, Rashi's commentaries, and of course his Old Testament (how he had time left for

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his umbrellas was a mystery to his closest friends); when he wanted to start on the Cabala, it was impossible to find either teachers or books.

How easy it is to miscount, Weintraub. The years were too short. Two hundred and eight is a mysterious number. Why just two hundred and eight? Is two hundred and twenty better, or two hundred and fifty? The highest number is the best, but is there such a thing as the highest number? There is only infinity. But I've taken out my insurance on that. Is there any better life-insurance, with lower premiums, than Christ? If there were, Weintraub, wouldn't I have taken it out? A Jew who takes up Christianity has lost nothing and gained everything. For good Christians such a Jew is a Christian, but for anti-Semites I'm still a Jew. So I turn anti-Semite; that way I can go on seeing myself as a Jew (between you and me, I was an anti-Semite before and as a Jewish anti-Semite I couldn't stand myself). So now you know why I turned Christian. It makes everything so simple. With one exception: the regulation about the childless baptized. On one rotten condition they let me live—as a Jew, no conditions, they just kill me. They let me choose something I wouldn't wish on a dog. You have no choice. You don't have to turn into a dog; you can die like a normal, healthy human being.

That's why I don't want the day to come, because tomorrow I'll have to make up my mind and I can't choose. Because if a normal, healthy human being lets himself be killed when he has a choice—is that normal and healthy? And I'll tell you what's sick about the Jews: their religion. As Christians or Mohammedans they could have trampled on the world and established the Jewish justice they're always raving about. But no, they didn't want to. They didn't have the imagination or the power; to succeed they'd have had to become Christians.

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But they didn't feel like it. Instead of martyring, they let themselves be martyred; looking on is impossible. For Jews. Now I'll tell you the truth. I didn't hide because I'm a Jew, I hid to avoid choosing.

Then you can stand and look on, Mr Goldschmied: Weintraub was furious at the Talmudic complications with which Goldschmied tried to talk himself out of his fear. Why won't he admit it? The Nazis are to blame that a man like Goldschmied has to think such thoughts. By hair-splitting he had turned their guilt into a guilt of his own.

Jewish conceit, Mr Goldschmied; you won't even let the other fellow keep his guilt. How can anybody know where he stands if the victims take the guilt for themselves? No wonder they all climb into the trains of their own free will; they think it serves them right, and not that they're wronged.

Maybe we all of us suffer injustice, but does it really matter, Weintraub? If tomorrow I decide to be sterilized, I can look on as they finish you off.

The Nazis would have fired their ovens in any case, believe me, if not with Jews, then with Poles, Russians, gipsies. If they had let the Jews, God forbid, look on, or even worse, if they had let them help make the fire, not one, Weintraub, but the majority would have gone over to the Nazis. When it comes to anti-Semitism and organization, the Nazis could learn plenty from some Jews. But how could such a thing have been justified in the eyes of God?

Mr Goldschmied, you talk like that because you're scared stiff.

I talk the way I do because tomorrow you'll lose your life and I my sanity. To tell you the truth, I've considered it from time to time—but for the last three weeks, since you came, my last chance is gone too.

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Do you love me as much as that? asked Weintraub bewildered.

Like my own flesh.

Just admit you're a Jew, Goldschmied, and we'll go together.

What's that, Weintraub? You know I am a pious Christian.

My mazel!

Frankly, Mr Goldschmied, I have no sympathy for you. I'd rather be a live onlooker than a dead victim. You talk and talk. Religion, holiness, the Jews' mission. All a lot of phrases, slogans. Choice, dog, guilt. I don't give a shit about all that. In a few days they'll strangle me and burn me like a leper, and that's the end of Sholem Weintraub. They'll give me a number on a mass grave, coloured with gold dust, and I'll never, never be alive again. Resurrection is nothing but Talmudic hair-splitting, mystery, smoke and sulphur, hocus-pocus, theological speculation. There is no second time, not before and not after the Messiah, and He doesn't exist anyway. I want to live, Mr Goldschmied, I want to live and breathe and I don't care how—like a dog or a frog or a bedbug, it's all the same to me. I want to live and breathe, to live.

Weintraub's face turned dark-red and his glands swelled. Goldschmied reached for the blanket and threw it over Weintraub's head. But Weintraub shook it off. His eyes glittered, sweat stood out on his forehead, and his hands trembled as he shouted: Live, breathe, I want to live, live. Goldschmied flung himself on Weintraub, and tried to put his hand over his mouth, but Weintraub flailed like a wild beast and went on shouting. Live, live, I don't want to die like a dog. Cut off my balls and my cock with it, cut off my hands and feet, but let me live and breathe!

Weintraub broke into a coughing fit, and he spat and wheezed blood. Goldschmied sat stiff and pale on the chair

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and watched his young friend Weintraub who was beginning to decompose even before he was dead. Goldschmied's eyes stared into the void. There was a knocking and drumming on all four walls. Shouts were heard and a car stopping. Weintraub flailed about on the bed and seemed to choke with coughing. The drumming grew louder, angrier.

Goldschmied stood up, climbed on the chair, and tore the Cross off the wall.

Shouts and stamping feet were heard, followed by unexpected silence, then boots pounded through the corridor, the trap was pushed up with rifle butts and a voice under a helmet shouted: Come on out, or I'll take the lead out of your ass.

An ambulance, Goldschmied heard himself saying from far off, he wants to live, but he's going to die on us.

Goldschmied crawled out first, he stood with upraised hands, the Cross protruding from his coat pocket, waiting for them to bring out Weintraub.

Two of them reached through the opening and picked Weintraub off the bed like a sack. Goldschmied was unobserved for a moment: running isn't in my line, he decided.

In the living-room stood two more men in uniform, through the window a small crowd and a patrol car could be seen. Van Tuinhout sat there with bowed head, staring into space.

The policeman with the most stripes was in Dutch uniform. He turned to Goldschmied.

You can take your things, of course, or just wait here and I'll get them. The first to come down was Weintraub, looking pale and sick—escorted by a policeman. Then came the Dutchman and his German colleague.

Each carried a small suitcase. I'll take them to the car, gentlemen, your friend seems unwell.

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He carried the suitcases to the car. Yes, Meneer, said the Dutchman, it's disgusting work, but what can you do. I'm only doing my duty. I have a wife and three children. One of my sons is just about your age, he said to Weintraub. Just lie down on the bench and if we drive too fast for you, please knock and we'll slow down a bit. There's no hurry. Goldschmied had recovered from his terror and Weintraub too felt new-born in the fresh air, even though it was damp and cold. So you know what it's like to feel sick? he asked the Dutchman.

I know plenty. O.K., he said to the German driver, but not too fast. The Dutchman turned round to Goldschmied: I've been suffering from headaches for years and this work is driving me crazy. I've got a good recipe for headache, Inspector, you should try it some time, said Goldschmied. Sugar water, bring it to a quick boil, mix it with honey and melted butter, and drink it down while it's still hot.

You don't say? And it helps? I'll have to tell my wife about that, she'll make me some up tomorrow. We menfolks are lost when it comes to cooking and such. Am I right? Ha-ha-ha.

Yes, that's a good idea, the German driver put in. I'll have to try it. I'm crazy about sweet things. Chocolate, candy, and all that kind of stuff, that's for me. I used to work in a chocolate factory, that was a few years back, it belonged to a Jew, but not any more. I should have known you then, called one of the policemen in the rear, a ramrod of a man in his forties. I'm crazy about chocolate myself. A nice piece of chocolate, as I always say, is as good as a meal. You can keep your chocolate, said the second policeman, who was standing with his rifle beside van Tuinhout. What I like best is fresh dill pickles and marinated herring. Naw, sweets ain't for me.

Why argue, Goldschmied interrupted. It's all a matter of taste. One likes sweet, another likes sour.

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That's the truth, the Dutchman agreed. How's your friend? he asked Goldschmied. I hope he's feeling better.

Weintraub listened to the whole conversation with closed eyes—chocolate, dill pickles, sugar water with honey—they're talking about normal things. In the last three weeks the conversation was all about religion and Jews and guilt. I almost died in that hole. If Goldschmied hadn't got me so riled with his high-flown speeches, maybe we'd still be sitting in that hell.

Suddenly life seemed to him reasonable and simple again, and he was ashamed of having acted like a madman. Now that there was air to breathe, all his fear had left him. The air has done you good, said Goldschmied, glad to see Weintraub looking normal again. Get a good lungful. You never know when there'll be more.

Van Tuinhout, who had so far sat silent and motionless, turned to the Dutch police officer: Who's going to take care of my boy when I'm gone?

The state, I suppose, I don't know exactly how it works—but the Germans always look after the younger generation, you've got to hand it to them.

They were taken to Gestapo headquarters. Don't be afraid, said Goldschmied to the livid Weintraub next day as he was carried from the cell to a waiting ambulance, we'll meet again, I'll take bets on it.

Weintraub didn't have one word to say for himself—his case was clear. After a lengthy cross-examination Goldschmied's case was also settled, and a week after his arrest he too arrived at the transit camp. No sooner had he passed through the gate than he ran into his friend, looking healthy and cheerful. They hugged each other. There were tears of joy in Weintraub's eyes. I can breathe again, Goldschmied, he cried with joy, what do you say to that, I can breathe again.

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Well, said Goldschmied, the air here isn't bad (it was a warm autumn day and the children were playing in the sun), it's nice in the outside world. You look new-born.

You look much better too, Goldschmied. Why, you stand up straight as a soldier. I always thought you had a hump.

Yes, Weintraub, if they just leave you alone, if they just let you stand and sit and walk up and down... it's like a second life.

I've missed you, Weintraub. When are you leaving?

Weintraub said blandly: My train leaves today. At five o'clock.

Today? When I've just come? Can't you take a later train? What's the hurry?

Today, Mr Goldschmied. Today at five. We shall meet again.

Still in this world?

Why, naturally, in this world, Mr Goldschmied, do you really believe those stories about Poland? Now that I'm feeling better, I don't believe them any more. Sick people get such crazy fears.

Goldschmied looked at Weintraub for a long moment, then turned and left him. As he left he said: You're right, Weintraub, we've got to keep our health, with all this fear we might as well be dead. Keep healthy, have a good trip, and make sure you get there all right. We shall meet again.

A week after this conversation the two did indeed meet. Weintraub was climbing the steep stairs to his holy Jerusalem and Goldschmied to his Jesus on the Cross. For to tell the truth, the city of Jerusalem is not so very big.