

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Preface.

Mann, Klaus

Brentwood, Los Angeles, 1940-08-00

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PREFACE.

date of his life? (1883-1924)

Franz Kafka, a German-speaking Jew in Prague, was no "professional writer" - which means that he did not regard the occupation of writing as a form of career or business. He took the act of writing as seriously as a priest should take his prayers. ~~writing was to him an infernal agony and supreme delight~~ His zealous conscientiousness in all matters concerning ~~the~~ style reminds us of Gustave Flaubert's radical aestheticism, while his passionate concern with the problem of our spiritual existence makes him akin to Søren Kierkegaard - two masters, by the way, whom Kafka admired most ardently. ~~He wrote, simply because there~~ were certain things in his mind - absorbing questions, grand and nightmarish visions - which he had to cry out, to clarify, to form: otherwise he would have suffocated.

The Castle + Jewel in

The atmosphere of Prague was, in the first quarter of this century, more thoroughly impregnated with literary ~~spirit~~ ^{savour} than that of any other European city, except Paris. That weird settlement at the entrance of Eastern Europe - Prague, gloomy and picturesque, full of ancient glory and present struggle - produced an abundance of good or even excellent literature, and also a few writers of genius, such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Werfel, - and Franz Kafka.

suggest mentioning first paragraph - Plus a word about their nature.

In his lifetime - which was shortened by a fatal disease and the incessant strain ~~of his mind~~ - only a dozen ~~or~~ initiated friends and connoisseurs grasped the puzzling phenomenon of his greatness. To the rank and file, literati he was just another curious character whom one met occasionally at a café house - a sickly ~~youth~~ ^{man}, melancholy, shy, ~~introverted~~ ^{gifted} with an almost frightening seriousness and a bizarre sense of humour. - ["A queer fellow," they whispered behind his back. "What does he write, incidentally?" And the other "colleague" shrugged, rather

cut

[illegible]

~~derisively~~ ^{How} ~~contemporaries~~: "How do I know... Short stories; novels he never finishes... He has no publisher, I suppose..."]

~~He refused to publish his works.~~ It was partly his mysterious pride partly his genuine modesty that made him averse to any kind of publicity. His friends had to struggle with him for a manuscript they wanted to send to a literary review or a publishing-house. When he died most of his writing was only known to a group of intimates - who found the ~~strict order~~ ^{imagination H. left no will - but the only one}, in his last will, to burn all his posthumous papers. It is a significant fact, however, that he abstained from performing that terrible work of destruction himself... ~~Now~~ ^{Then}, his nearest, most faithful and understanding friend - the novelist and critic Max Brod - had to meet the agonizing dilemma. Should he neglect Kafka's imperious ~~and cruel~~ ^{and cruel} wish? Was he to destroy a literary treasure the singularity of which he fully recognized? There can be no doubt that Brod's final decision - to save and edit the precious heritage - was the right and pertinent one. It is to him, to Max Brod, that we actually owe the preservation of Kafka's work; he is chiefly responsible for the gradual, belated growing of Kafka's fame.

^{peculiar} ^{sought} May we speak of "fame" in the case of an author who neither ~~seek~~ ^{sought} nor gained popularity and never was "a success" in the ordinary sense of the word? Kafka's books were not bestsellers - even not in pre-Nazi Germany, so impressionable and eagerly opened to all kinds of artistic experiments. Yet the actual effect of his works ^{has been} ~~is~~ more intense and lasting than that of many a literary sensation: ^{of the day} ~~the radiance~~ ^{his} of Kafka's subterranean ^{an influence has} ~~glory~~ proves penetrating and mysteriously strong. One ^{But awareness} ~~has~~ called him "the secret king of modern German prose". ~~The secret~~ ^{as crossed} of this inconspicuous greatness, ~~however~~, gradually ^{the} ~~transpired~~ ^{world} beyond the boundaries of German-speaking ~~regions~~. Most of his writings - the

three fragmentary novels, the shorter prose compositions, even portions of his diary - were translated into many languages; essays on Kafka were written, not only in German but also in English and French, Spanish, Czech, Swedish and Hungarian. His personal style - that unmistakable compound of baroque and classic elements, of dream-like romanticism and realistic exactness - ^{inspired and} has influenced young writers on both sides of the Atlantic.

He has been identified
"What we call Fame is nothing but the sum of all mistakes circulating about one individual." - These words, melancholy and haughty, are Rainer Maria Rilke's - another genius whose prince-like shyness despised and banished the clamorous approach of mass curiosity. Even Kafka, for all his aristocratic reserve, was not spared ~~the~~ awkward misinterpretations. ~~He has confounded him~~ ^{and} with the surrealists, with a certain decadent Viennese school: there were even attempts ^{at} of explaining enigmatic passages in his books, ^{1st} from a Marxian angle. ^{And} All ~~those~~ ^{of} interpretations are, of course, erroneous, and utterly fail to ^{define} recognize the true substance of his being and writing.

~~Both the humorous and the fantastic~~ ^{features} ~~unmediated~~ of his production are ~~accidental~~ - or rather, they are significant and essential only inasmuch as they express, ~~and~~ truthfully and precisely, certain moods and aspects of his complex and multifarious vision. He never meant to surprise and startle his readers by macabre tricks. He wanted to be plastic, plain and simple. His literary masters were Flaubert and Tolstoi rather than Baudelaire and ^{Dostoevski.} ~~Dostojewsky.~~ ^{He} ~~One~~ ^{been} has compared ~~him~~ with Edgar Allan Poe, but he admired Dickens. His supreme ambition was to describe ^{The} dismay and ecstasy of his inward adventures as thoroughly and realistically as Flaubert described all ^{the} details of Madame Bovary's

Here, inflow - not only from
his diary, but only from
on from his N.Y. but
from life itself - life as a

Kafka

appearance, or Tolstoi the face and smell of a Russian peasant. ~~He~~ is not surrealist but the most realistic explorer of spheres that are not less real for their being inaccessible to average travellers. His topography of nightmarish landscapes is as precise as any scientific report. The humorous, grotesque element in his descriptions - ~~is~~ disturbing to many of his admirers, and overestimated by others - is nothing but the natural consequence of his sober honesty. His own experiences were apt ^{taught} ^{even} to teach him that the Mystery has ~~also~~ ^{comic} aspects - ^{aspects} ~~which were~~ well known to medieval saints and sculptors. The Devil, or at least his minor emissaries, can assume a very clownish appearance - funny ~~as~~ as well as fiendish. There are Gothic statues ~~on~~ in which we ~~still~~ recognize that horrified laughter characteristic for Kafka's sinister ^{wit} ~~visionism~~. What ~~an~~ inconceivable tribulation ~~it~~ must have ~~been~~ ^{which} froze his tears, numbed the outcry of his despair, and left him that lurid jocularity as his only solace!

Kafka ~~he~~ was ~~possessed and~~ haunted by all sorts of fears and apprehensions. Ideas of Original Sin, of Guilt and Punishment were the very basis of his feeling and thinking. The God to whom he sent his almost hopeless prayers and whose Holy name he hardly ever mentioned, is Jehova, the Lord of Revenge, and there is no Savior to reconcile doomed mortal creatures with their merciless Father. Human beings have constantly to atone for crimes the gravity and even the names of which they cannot know. Our mysterious guilt is examined in an eternal trial; there is a hierarchy of hidden judges - and even the lowest is of such overwhelming majesty that we could not bear to see him face to face.

^{His} Kafka's huge and horrifying vision of the Trial and the Castle, in which the invisible Power hides, ^{not only} was influenced by the esoteric wisdom of the Cabballa, ^{but also by his own experience with} as well as by the over-complicated system of the ancient Austrian Bureaucracy, that extended its capricious tyranny

There are many ways of explaining the origin of those grand fixed ideas and ^{visions} ~~concepts~~ that dominated his ^{conscience} ~~consciousness~~ and ^{formed} ~~shaped~~ his ^{Faithless Religion} ~~vision~~.

What about his cultural background, education, what kind of childhood? religion?

PREFACE.

The atmosphere of Prague was, in the first quarter of this century, more thoroughly impregnated with literary savour than that of any other European city, except Paris. That weird settlement at the entrance of Eastern Europe - Prague, gloomy and picturesque, full of ancient glory and present struggle - produced an abundance of good or even excellent literature, and also a few writers of genius, such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Werfel - and Franz Kafka.

Kafka was no "professional writer" - which means that he did not regard the occupation of writing as a form of career or business. In the day-time he worked in ^a dreary office - as long as his progressive disease did not prevent him from doing so - ; his evenings, however, and long hours of the night, were dedicated to the at once exhausting and elevating endeavour of producing a few pages of immaculate German prose. His zealous conscientiousness in all matters concerning style reminds us of Gustave Flaubert's radical aestheticism, while his passionate concern with the problem of our spiritual existence makes him akin to Søren Kierkegaard - two masters, by the way, whom Kafka admired most ardently.

In his lifetime only a dozen initiated friends and connoisseurs grasped the puzzling phenomenon of his greatness. Only those selected few ~~very close to him~~ realized the philosophic and artistic significance of his short prose compositions and his three fragmentary novels, The Castle, The Trial, and America - forming in their entirety a sublime "trilogy of human solitude", to use a formula ^{of} ~~invented~~ the novelist and critic Max Brod. To the rank and file of literati, Kafka was just another curious character whom one met occasionally at a café - a sickly youth of an aristocratic Jewish type: melancholy, shy, gifted with an almost frightening seriousness and a bizarre sense of humour.

He was no bohemian - :rather pedantic in the tidiness of his appearance; unpresuming, amiable and reserved; sometimes enchanting by the natural gracefulness of his manners - sometimes disquieting through the profound sadness of his eye and smile. He always looked younger than he really was. Even a picture taken in the last year of his fatal disease - in 1924 - shows a juvenile ^{figure} ~~picture~~ - slightly stooping but elastic and elegant. He was forty-one when he died. At that time most of his works were still unpublished.

It was partly his mysterious pride partly his genuine modesty that ^{made} him averse to any kind of publicity. His friends had to struggle with him for a manuscript they wanted to send to a literary magazine or a publishing-house. He left no will - except the strict injunction that all of his posthumous papers should be burned. His nearest, most trusted and understanding friend, Max Brod, had to meet the agonizing dilemma. Should he neglect Kafka's ~~and~~ imperious and cruel wish? Was he to destroy a literary treasure the singularity of which he fully recognized?

- The decision he finally made - to save and edit the manuscripts - ^(of course) was the only right and honorable one. It is to him, to Max Brod, that we actually owe the preservation of Kafka's work; he is chiefly responsible for the gradual, belated growing of Kafka's fame.

May we speak of "fame" in the peculiar case of an author who neither sought nor gained popularity and never was "a success" in the ordinary sense of the word? Kafka's books were not bestsellers - not even in pre-Nazi Germany, so impressionable and eagerly opened to all kinds of artistic experiments. Yet the actual effect of his works has been more intense and lasting than that of many a literary sensation of the day: his subterranean influence has proven penetrating and mysteriously strong. One critic has called him "the secret king of modern German prose." But awareness of this inconspicuous greatness gradually crossed the boundaries of the German-speaking world. Most of his writings were

translated into many languages; essays on Kafka were written, not only in German but also in English and French, Spanish, Czech, Swedish and Hungarian. His personal style - that unmistakable compound of baroque and classic elements, of dream-like romanticism and realistic exactness - has inspired and influenced young writers on both sides of the Atlantic.

"What we call Fame is nothing but the sum of all mistakes circulating about one individual." - These words, haughty and resigned, are Rainer Maria Rilke's - another genius whose princely shyness despised and banished the clamorous approach of mass curiosity. Even Kafka, for all his aristocratic reserve, was not spared awkward misinterpretations. He has been identified with the surrealists, and with a certain decadent Viennese school; there were even attempts at analysing from a Marxist angle certain enigmatic passages in his books. All such interpretations are, of course, erroneous, and utterly fail to define the true substance of his being and writing.

He never meant to surprise and startle his readers by macabre tricks. He wanted to be plastic, plain and simple. His literary masters were Flaubert and Tolstoi rather than Baudelaire and Dostojevski. He has been compared with Edgar Allan Poe, but he admired Dickens. His supreme ambition was to describe the dismay and ecstasy of his inward adventures as thoroughly and realistically as Flaubert described all the details of Madame Bovary's appearance, or Tolstoi the face and smell of a Russian peasant. Kafka is no surrealist but the most realistic explorer of spheres that are not less real for their being inaccessible to average travellers. His topography of nightmare landscapes is as precise as any scientific report.

The humorous, grotesque element in his descriptions - disturbing to some of his admirers, and overestimated by others - is nothing but the natural consequence of his sober honesty. His own experiences taught him that even the Mystery has comic aspects - aspects well known, by the

way, to medieval saints and sculptors. The Devil, or at least his minor emissaries, can assume a very clownish appearance - funny as well as fiendish. There are Gothic statues in which we recognize that horrified laughter characteristic for Kafka's sinister wit. What inconceivable tribulation must have frozen his tears, numbed the outcry of his despair, and left him that lurid jocularity as his only solace!

Kafka was haunted by all sorts of fears and apprehensions. Ideas of Original Sin, of Guilt and Punishment were the very basis of his feeling and thinking. The God to whom he sent his almost hopeless prayers and whose Holy name he hardly ever mentioned, is Jehova, the Lord of Revenge, and there is no Savior to reconcile doomed mortal creatures with their merciless Father. Human beings have constantly to atone for crimes the gravity ~~and~~ and even the names of which they cannot know. Our mysterious guilt is examined in an eternal trial; there is a hierarchy of hidden judges - and even the lowest is of such overwhelming majesty that we could not bear to see him from face to face.

These fixed ideas and creative torments are deeply rooted, of course, in many circumstances and experiences of Kafka's personal life. The autobiographic content of his narratives is stronger than it may seem at first. Any psychoanalyst could define Kafka's religious pathos - his humble and yet mistrustful fear of God - as the ^{productive} ~~creative~~ "sublimation" of an obvious "father complex." The patriarchal figure of his father plays ^{ed}, indeed, a predominant role in ~~both~~ Kafka's biography, ~~and production~~. He admired and dreaded the father because of his solid strength, his well-balanced vitality. The father was the one who had lived as a man should live - who had mastered life; whereas the son, for all the problematic rapture of his inspiration, considered himself a failure in all matters that really count.

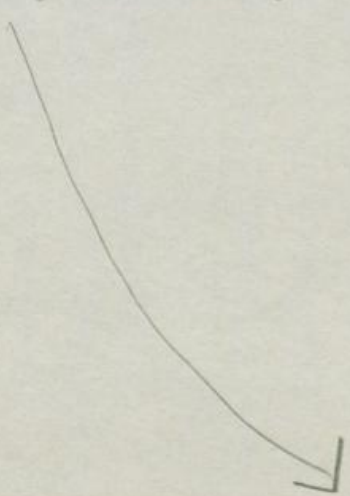
A failure he was, indeed, as far as crude realities of life are

concerned; he could not stand the work in a gloomy office; he had no
spectacular
success as an author, never made enough money to support himself; his
poor health prevented him from marrying; the one great romance of his
life was doomed to dreary frustration.

*He suffered - not only from his disease,
but from the reality meant suffering to him. ~~that he was born at all - born~~
as a Jew in Prague, in the tumultuous period of World War and Revolution.*

He was scarcely interested in politics. Social problems appear in his
books only indirectly - disguised, transposed into a remote and mysterious
sphere. His vision of The Trial and The Castle, in which the invisible
Power hides, was influenced, not only by the esoteric wisdom of the
Cabbala, but also by his own experiences *(a) a minor functionary*
in the service of the ancient
Austrian Bureaucracy. His vast and meticulous epic of a pedantic and
capricious tyranny has no seditious verve nor is it really satirical.
Kafka's attitude toward the worldly authorities *expresses* the same half-
ironic apprehension and critical respect characteristic for his problem-
matic devotion to the inscrutable Father, human or divine.

The city of Prague meant to him, in a weird and definite way, the
microcosm in which he recognized the tragedy and struggle of mankind.
Prague was actually all he knew - his entire world, his paradise and his
prison. He yearned for other landscapes, for a lighter and brighter
beauty. But the few journey he could afford, in the company of friends
or alone, were short and hardly satisfactory.



over his country. For the city of Prague was really all he knew; it represented, in a very peculiar way, his entire world, his problematic paradise, and the prison from which there was no escape. He yearned for other landscapes, for a lighter and brighter beauty. But the few journeys he could afford, in the company of friends or alone, were short and hardly satisfactory.

The most extensive journey he ever made took place ^{wholly} ~~merely~~ in ~~the~~ ^{his mind} literary sphere. The goal of his bold excursion was the United States. His friends were highly surprised when he confided to them his ~~little~~ secret - that he was going to write a novel entitled Amerika; in fact, he had already begun.

"What do you know about America?" they asked. And he answered, cheerfully: "I know the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, and I always admired Walt Whitman, and I like the Americans because they are healthy and optimistic." He imagined that all Americans wore a perpetual smile. Later, in the years of his fatal disease, he met in a sanatorium several Americans who quite often grumbled and complained. He was deeply disappointed. But when he conceived his novel Amerika, in 1913, he knew no Americans at all and understood very little English. His only sources of information were the few books he had read - and his own poetic imagination.

He seemed unusually cheerful and confident while working on Amerika. His friends were pleased to notice that his looks and mood had improved almost miraculously. His relative optimism, however, did not entirely protect him from qualms and scruples. He was at that time reading, or re-reading, several novels by Dickens, and made the following remarks in his diary:

"Dickens, Copperfield. 'The Stoker', a ~~flat~~ ^{plain} Dickens imitation; even more so than the planned novel." (The first chapter of the America novel was published as a special little volume, called 'The Stoker', before the novel appeared.) "... My intention was, as I now see, to write a Dickens

novel, enriched by the sharper lights which I took from our modern times, and by the pallid ones I would have found in my own interior. - Dickens' wealth and naive, sweeping power: but, consequently, moments of horrible weakness... The impression of the senseless whole is barbaric - a barbarism which I was able to avoid thanks to my decadence..."

Strangely enough, in Kafka's mind the figure and the works of Dickens were vitally connected with the American atmosphere and landscape. ~~and~~ It was not Dickens' biting satire on America, in Martin Chuzzlewit, that lay behind this odd identification. The picture that Kafka cherished was of a fatherly genius called Charles Dickens, being welcomed to New York with wild enthusiasm by thousands of his American readers. Kafka often described to his friends the hilarious spectacle of all that exuberant public jammed on the dock, eagerly awaiting a new chapter of David Copperfield, waving and shouting as the boat with its literary treasure slowly pulls in.

As to his own novel, ^{Amerika} he was far from ^{accurate} giving an accurate sense of it when he called it an "Dickens imitation." For the resemblance with ^{to} Dickens is only accidental and superficial - while the differences between the sentimental or humorous circumstantiality of Dickens' style and Kafka's ^{Si} visionary precision are basic and essential.

The adolescent heroes of the English master-novelist have to ^{endure} stand suffering and adventures because the world is wicked - and because the great narrator had ^{But} to offer an exciting plot. Karl Rossmann, ~~the~~ the leading character of Kafka's story, is harassed by more profound and complicated ^{dangers} ~~problems~~: the problem of guilt ^{as such}, the mystic curse of Original Sin follows him over the ocean. We see ^{with a dash} this ~~bold and~~ ^{obscure} ~~lad~~ ^{as he arrives} in New York, welcomed by "the free breezes" of America and a Statue of Liberty furnished, surprisingly ~~enough~~, with an upraised sword. He seems almost happy, in spite of the hardships ahead - : happy, at least, as compared with his tragic relatives, the doomed heroes of Kafka's two other novels, The Castle and The Trial. Both of these remain strangely anonymous, - or rather, they hide their mysterious

(and symbolically, of course)

Question
More
2
adjectives

identity with the author behind the obvious initial ^{"K"}~~K~~; while young Karl Rossmann is permitted a name of his own, in which the fatal ~~K~~ ^{"K"} appears, but does not predominate. He is a younger, more fortunate brother of that nameless being, K., for whom there will be no America: ^{the one} who must remain in Europe, in Prague, to endure the merciless decisions of the inscrutable judges.

It may be, however, that Karl is guilty as well - notwithstanding the maid-servant's confession that she was the active party in the sordid affair that precipitated the youth's departure ^{from Europe}. He is not responsible - according to human judgment. But our judgment is, of course, subject to error and is easily refuted by the sentence of higher authorities. ^{the}

What is our guilt? Who defines its ^{roots}~~source~~, its consequences, and the chastisement it may deserve? Nobody knows if the stoker, that pathetic hero of the introductory chapter, is innocent or guilty - and the wayward laws dominating Karl Rossmann's life are not less mysterious. At first he seems favoured by a playful fate as he meets, almost miraculously, his benign and wealthy uncle, a certain Senator Jacob. But the uncle repudiates him as surprisingly as he offered him his protection - and we find the young adventurer, abandoned by his mighty benefactor, penniless and friendless on the highways, in a vast and unknown country.

What an amazing ^{panorama}~~landscape~~! - this American landscape seen through the clairvoyant eyes of a naive and ^{sensitive}~~innocent~~ youth. Every detail of Kafka's description of American life is quite inaccurate, and yet the picture as a whole has a certain poetical truth. The hyper-modern desk which the generous uncle puts at his nephew's disposal, looks like a grotesque piece of furniture in a Charlie Chaplin film: it is an alarming object

with innumerable technical tricks, secret drawers that pop open when one touches a hidden button, little trapdoors, complicated locks. The country house of a millionaire near New York is built like an ancient European castle - a typical Kafka castle in fact - ^{confusing, frightening, and} with countless corridors and galleries, tremendous staircases, an unfinished chapel, ~~a veritable labyrinth~~ ^{And} those astounding streets of American cities, with the Gothic lines of steel-constructed skyscrapers profiled against a wan, colourless sky, like cathedrals from another planet where people are praying to another God! ~~in~~ Those endless highways, flanked by little inns and dusty gardens where dirty men hastily swallow indescribable liquids and waiters run around with distorted faces as in permanent pain. ^{scenery} ~~panorama~~

^{Yet} In the midst of this bewitched ~~world~~ ^{scenery}, the great Trial continues - that tremendous drama of Justice which is also a farce - full of a sardonic irony; puzzling, terrifying and funny. Friendly and evil ghosts seem to fight with each other for the possession of Karl's soul, as God and Devil dispute ^{just} ~~about~~ ^{the} Doctor Faust in the medieval ^{miracle} ~~play~~ ^{for} ~~the~~ ^{miracle-} play. And a ~~tragic~~ play it is, comic and profound, in which Karl acts as hero, victim, sinner, martyr and clown. The benign ~~Ober-~~ ^{Ober-}

köchin, the Supreme Cook in the Hotel Occidental, represents the principle of Good ^{But this ~~off~~ ^{is} ~~was~~ ^{the} ~~efficient~~ ^{and}} as does Uncle Jacob. But as the latter proves incapable of ^{reliable guardian} ~~protecting his nephew against the temptations of a wicked world, the~~ ^{angel goodly} ~~motherly kitchen-queen seems quite unable to help her protégé when~~ ^{of helping} he finds himself in an alarming mess brought about by two fiendish demons, ~~the~~ Delamarche and Robinson, who keep tagging behind the child-like wanderer. The grand and appalling chapter, describing Karl's humiliation as a servant of those two ghastly crooks and their prodigious mistress, represents the burlesque and moving climax of the adventurous story.

I doubt that very much. Köchin yes, not Jacob, He is malignant chance, Fortune, etc.

But as though the author found it intolerable to continue this macabre report, he suddenly ^{he}braks off his narrative, and when Karl re-ap=
pears - months, perhaps years later - he is looking for a new job, and
finds one in The Open Air Theatre of Oklahoma, - a kind of gigantic
WPA project, organized and financed by invisible but extremely powerful
benefactors. Kafka was especially fond of this concluding chapter, and
his friends tell us that he used to read it aloud in an "unforgettable
manner." With an enigmatic smile he declared that his young hero, Karl
Rossmann, might well find again, "in this almost boundless theatre",
his profession, his security and freedom, and perhaps even his ~~his~~ homeland
and parents - "as by a ^{admirable} ~~paradisiac~~ spell."

Kafka himself was not in the position to describe these happy
developments. The novel had to remain a fragment as did all of his
greater compositions, according to their imperative inherent law. The
very themes of these works - the topics of Guilt and Atonement, human
loneliness and the unfathomable riddle of the Supreme Law - prohibit
them from finding an end: they are essentially and necessarily endless.
Amerika, however, is the only one of Kafka's fragmentary novels on the
last pages of which a confident mood prevails. The youthful hero dis=
appears - running, capering like a reckless foal in the midst of a
vast, heroic landscape. His tragic brother and creator, Franz Kafka,
watches the agile figure gradually shrinking between the huge hills,
trees and buildings. Finally the poet turns away his beautiful, shadowed
forehead, bidding a plaintive farewell of mingled tenderness and re=
nunciation.

Kafka's ~~His own~~ excursion to the New World has come to an end. Here they
are again - the gloomy streets of Prague, the familiar background of
his suffering. The city, numb and solemn, welcomes her prodigal son.
The baroque statues, the cathedrals, the mysterious dwellings of the

alchemists, the libraries, the strange and sweetish smells of the ghetto - all this well-known beauty, well-known horror, receive him with a faint, unfathomable smile: Here you are - our son, our prisoner, our poet; this is Europe - your chain, your curse and your love: Europe, your bitter love: you must bear it, accept it. Here, you must continue your writing, your meditations and prayers; seeking and fearing God. Here you must bear the torments of your religious persecution mania, and must transform your constant agonies into the brittle beauty of your lucid prose. Here, you must serve and perish, to earn at last the gloomy crown - the dark glory of your own destruction. Bow your head! Recognize your fate! ~~for it is~~

not a good word
That is no escape.
~~vain to skulk~~

He does not try to skulk.
He is brave - the delicate but tenacious son of an ancient, heroic race, most experienced in suffering, humiliation, and long endurance. *But surely* Sometimes, however, his loving, sorrowful thoughts *must* wander *have ed* over the ocean, to visit that errant youth whom he *had* ~~has~~ created and abandoned there. He sends his wishes and his hopes. He wants Karl to be courageous - as courageous, indeed, as in his own place his elder brother *-K-* is obliged to be. The poet and prophet must glorify and analyze his doom; must continue his dialogue with a hidden God - indefatigable, witty, passionate, desperate, and yet faithful. But Karl *has to* ~~must simply~~ live - *And* ~~that is~~ no easy task either. He must live in America. He has, therefore, a special chance. His creator hopes that he may prove worthy of it. He does not want him to perish. For the poet, in all his glory and misery, deeply and simply loves his innocent creature, his favourite dream, his heir.

+++

Klaus Mann,

Brentwood, Los Angeles, August 1940

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