

TERENCE TILLER
CAMELS

I see them swaying their strange heads like geese,
nineteen camels in a string like geese in flight;
as if approaching a problem, or in quest
but baffled a little, a little unsure of their right.

But I am glad their supercilious look
sees as I see the powdery town, the tall
activity of streets, the buttoned-up faces,
the cars like secret agents, the want of it all.

Gentle and sure as pianists' hands, their feet
deliberating on the stone press out
in rhythms that have nothing to do with us
the coins of their aloofness in scorn or doubt:
the motion of the blind or the very proud:
they could be blind; but where their masked eyes fall
they have the sailor's distant and innocent gaze
for where this ends, for the limit and want of it all.

SONG

A poem for a minute
for the embracing smiling
light upon a planet
sown flower swelling
where there is no time being
waiting or double seeing
is the budding of bells
in the happy pulse.

And silver-glass for bodies
in bodies soft embracing
for the flower the word is
the stream of mirrors kissing
there being no time being
waiting or double seeing
where the seconds curl
in garlands from their scroll.

Every word a mirror
a watershed shining
jewel and giver and wearer
the difference of joining
being made no time being
waiting or double seeing
carry the poise of pearls
or crystal-pulsing hills.

HEINRICH FISCHER

GERMAN WRITERS OF TODAY

THE German scene today, a scene of ruin and chaotic disintegration, is an outward and visible sign of the collapse of the human spirit—the reflection and the result of not six but twelve years of war and terror. Grotesque confusion reigns in the literary life of Germany today. It is so grotesque that one is often scarcely able to distinguish which of the German writers was a criminal accomplice of Hitler, and which was one of Hitler's victims. To get even so much as the broad outline of this bewildering situation into focus, one must begin by drawing attention to some of the peculiar characteristics of the German intellectual landscape.

One of these peculiar characteristics has struck every foreigner who has begun to explore German literature as astonishing, and often downright incomprehensible. This was so, long before Hitler came on the scene. German writers show a remarkable turn of speed in their Protean self-transformations from one day to the next. In other countries the creative writer sets the intellectual fashion; in Germany the fashion creates the writer. There have been cases where German writers, within a single decade, have changed not only their political convictions, but also their style, and their whole approach to literature and life, and changed them not once only, but three or four times. This supple versatility, exemplified by many of the leading writers of Germany from Gerhart Hauptmann to Hans Carossa, is one of the