

HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT

at
THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
February 28 - March 1, 1964

Religious Studies I-A

THE MEANING OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

	5:30 pm	Registration and Room Assignments
F		
R	6:30 pm	Dinner
I	8:00 pm	<u>Lecture I</u>
D	8:45 pm	Study I
A	9:30 pm	Roundtable: Ques- tion of Worship
Y		
	10:30 pm	Evening Office

	6:45 am	Arise
	7:15 am	Morning Office
	7:30 am	Breakfast
	8:30 am	Seminar I
	10:00 am	Break
S	10:30 am	<u>Lecture II</u>
A	11:15 am	Study
T	12:00 N	Lunch
U	1:00 pm	Seminar II
R	3:00 pm	Break
D	3:30 pm	<u>Lecture III</u>
A	4:30 pm	Break
Y	6:00 pm	Dinner
	7:00 pm	Film Drama
	9:00 pm	Discussion
	10:00 pm	Conversation
	11:30 pm	Eucharist

"I sense
everywhere
a great desire
on the part of
intelligent laymen for
theological education
. . . They
are the persons
who would like
to know how
they can minister
in the
crucial affairs
of contemporary life."
--- Homrighausen

"toward the renewal
of the
church for the renewal
of the world"

	6:45 am	Arise
S	7:15 am	Morning Office
U	7:30 am	Breakfast
N	8:30 am	<u>Lecture IV</u>
D	9:30 am	Study
A	10:00 am	Seminar III
Y	11:30 am	Break
	12:00 N	Lunch
	1:30 pm	Benediction

SHORT COURSES

	I	II	III
Prayer	Problem	Presence	Groan
Theology	Question of Authority	Begin with what is	"God & Self"
Group	Stick with Paper	Listening	Resp. for Seminar
Study	Paper as a whole	Structure vs content	Window paragraph

MEAL STRUCTURE

	Dinner	Break	Lunch	Dinner	Break	Lunch
CALL	Fred self- consciousness gathering	Don	Don	Fred	Fred	Don
GRACES [Dale]	hungry	new nations	prison	sick & dying	unemployed	unthoughtful undisturbed & those who do not care
READINGS	"What did you Learn?" & Ticky- Tacky"					We shall over- come
CONVERSATION	Introductions	Social Issues	Presidential Election	Art Form	Meaning of Being Educated	Evaluation
	Fred	Don	Don	Fred	Fred	Don

Worship Lecturettes

- 1st - Fred
- 2nd - Don
- 3rd - Don
- 4th - Fred

THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

Week End Seminar THE MEANING OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

This seminar is an introduction to one of several basic courses offered in the study programs of the Ecumenical Institute. It is a concentrated course in which the problem and possibility of living as a full human being will be examined. Such questions as: What is life all about? How can I understand myself in this world? How can I genuinely and humanly participate in the activities of life? How can I be and act so that history itself is affected? will be the underlying queries determining the development. The ultimate aim will be understanding the meaning of the Christian faith for our lives in the twentieth century.

The course involves independent study, seminars and lectures. Each session of the course begins with a lecture for the whole group upon the subject on which the seminar sessions will be dealing. Each member of the seminar will read the assigned article for the particular session and will have created an analytical chart during the study period. The intention in the seminar will be to come to grips with the articles read by engaging in the kind of open discussion which enables each one to do his own thinking in the area under consideration.

The supplementary readings listed under each unit are not required assignments but are provided for occasional extra-curriculum reading. All of the readings are pertinent to the seminar subjects. One is theological and one is from contemporary literature. It is recommended that the papers be read in the order in which they are listed.

There are also included in the supplementary readings for each unit those books which deal generally with the topic to be discussed in the seminar; one is theological; one is philosophical; and one is a literary work.

It is expected that everyone who registers for the seminar will participate without absences, read the assigned work, prepare the chart form, and involve himself completely in every area of the course.

O man! Listen! What does the deep Midnight urge?
"I slept, I slept -- , from deep dreaming I am
awakened: -- the world is deep, and deeper than the
day has thought. Deep is the world's woe -- ,
joy -- deeper still than agony; woe urges: Perish!
Yet all of joy wants eternal being, wants deep,
deep eternal being!"

Orientation The New World of Modern Man

Lecture One THE LIMITS OF LIFE OR THE FINALITY OF GOD

Seminar I What am I finally up against in life?

Assignment for the seminar:

Niebuhr, H.R.: The Nature and Existence of God

Bultmann, Rudolph: The Crisis of Faith

Supplementary Reading:

Article

Orgel, Irene: Jonah

Books

Tillich, Paul: The Courage To Be, Yale Press

Wilson, Colin: The Outsider, Houghton Mifflin Co.

Camus, Albert: The Plague, Alfred Knopf Co.

Lecture Two THE POSSIBILITIES FOR LIFE OR THE CHRIST-EVENT

Seminar II Is there any word of possibility for life?

Assignment for the seminar:

Tillich, Paul: You Are Accepted

Supplementary Reading:

Articles

Kafka, Franz: Three Parables

Smith, Ronald Gregor: The New Man: Biblical Foundations

Books

Bultman, Rudolf: Jesus Christ and Mythology, Scribner

May, Rollo: Existence, Basic Books

Serling, Rod: Requiem For A Heavyweight, Bantam

Lecture Three THE SYMBOL OF LIFE OR THE CHRIST-STORY

Lecture Four THE AMBIGUITY OF LIFE OR THE VOCATION OF FREEDOM

Seminar III How can I make decisions about what to do?

Assignment for the seminar:

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich: Freedom

Supplementary Reading for the Week:

Articles

Barth, Karl: The Gift of Freedom

Camus, Albert: The Guest

Books

Barth, Karl: The Humanity of God, Knox Press

DeBeauvoir, Simone: The Ethics of Ambiguity, Phil. Lib.

Hansberry, Lorraine: A Raisin in the Sun, Random House

From THE CRISIS OF FAITH
by
Rudolf Bultmann

What, then, is this Christian faith, the crisis of which is our concern? What is that supramundane reality which is the object of Christian faith? What is God in the Christian sense?

God in the Christian sense is nothing other than what he is to every faith in which the idea of God is treated at all seriously. What, then, is conveyed by the idea of "God?"

Every human being knows or can know about its finiteness, for, consciously or unconsciously, it is driven this way and that by this finiteness, as long as it exists. It is no more its own master than it is its own creator. It is never perfect, but is driven this way and that by care, which reminds it of its finitude and of its imperfection:

"If no ear would hearken to me,
In the heart 'twould echo surely;
Changed in form before your eyes,
Gruesome power I exercise.
Vexing ever as your fellow
On the pathway, on the billow;
Ever found and never sought,
Cursed when not with flattery bought . . .
He whom once I make my own
Might as well the world disown . . .
Fortune, failure stand revealed
As whims -- he famishes though filled,
Joy or torment equally
Postponing to another day,
And as everything he leaves
For the future -- naught achieves."

In the first place it is everyday care for the morrow. Man is taken up with the provision, procuring and preparation of the means of living. Yet fundamentally he knows he cannot make life sure with the means of living. Everyone understands the story of the rich husbandman who thought to fill his barns with rich harvest and then to say to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat drink, and be merry." But God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided?" Everyone sees that the husbandman was a fool.

This mysterious power -- the power which limits man and is master of him even when he thinks he is his own master -- is God, the controller of man's future.

Or again, no matter how little life can free itself from this care for the things of every day or for the morrow, it refuses to see in this care what gives life its significance, but goes beyond it. Life is driven this way and that by the longing for the true and the beautiful, or even just by that indefinite longing which awakes in the "deep of the night" and in which it becomes clear that:

"Every pleasure seeks to be
embedded in eternity."

And yet even in all its lofty moments human life is not granted this eternity of pleasure or this pleasure of eternity. Does it indeed know any hours in which it could say to the moment -- "But tarry, for thou art so fair?" And even if it does -- then the moment just does not tarry! Man has no power over the temporal and the eternal. The power which controls them is God.

Or again, life is driven this way and that by the desire for love, and by the feeling that there is truth in what in Karl Spitteler's (Olympian Springtime) Apollo says to Hera, who is haunted by the fear of death and would like to escape from death:

"In Ananke's cruel domain
In vale or mountain flourishes no solace to remain,
Save the solace of the eyes - twin stars in friendship blest.
And the syllables of love, by grateful lips expresses."

Some lives are poor in friendship and in love, and some rich, but even the rich life is aware of a final solitude into which it is forced:

"Can e'er man as he'd wish belong
On earth, to his fellow?
In the long night I thought of it and could but answer
No."

The power which drives man into this final solitude is God.

Or again, life is motivated by the thirst for knowledge and one is led to admit, "I see that we can nothing know." Or perhaps it is the impulse to action and to work. That in fact, is the way in which Faust finally sought to reach that moment to which he could say, "But tarry, for thou art so fair." Yet behind Want and Guilt and Care, for whom access to him or mastery over him is forbidden, comes our "brother, Death." And when the blind Faust takes delight in the clanking of the spades, they are not the spades which are getting busy on his work and bringing it to completion, but those which are digging his grave; and it is the foretaste of sublime happiness which is the highest and final moment. The power which sets a terminus to knowing and doing is God.

Or, finally, human existence is dominated by the idea of duty, by knowledge of the principle that "You can, for you ought." But it is well aware that life in accordance with the "You ought" is a struggle, in which it is a question of mastering oneself. It knows the voice of conscience which summons to duty and recalls from thoughtlessness and aberration to everyday things, and pronounces the verdict "Guilty" on wasted time and lost opportunity, impure thoughts and mean actions. The summons of the "You ought," divesting man of his self-determination, and the dictates of conscience showing man how small, incomplete and wretched he is--these are God.

It is God who makes man finite, who makes a comedy of man's care, who allows his longing to miscarry, who casts him into solitude, who sets a terminus to his knowing and doing, who calls him to duty, and who gives the guilty over to torment. And yet at the same time it is God who forces man into life and drives him into care; who puts longing and the desire for love in his heart; who gives him thoughts and strength for his work, and who places him in the eternal struggle between self-assertion and duty. God is the enigmatic power beyond time, yet master of the temporal; beyond being, yet working in it.

From YOU ARE ACCEPTED

by
Paul Tillich

Thus the state of our whole life is estrangement from others and ourselves because we are estranged from the Ground of our being, because we are estranged from the origin and aim of our life. And we do not know where we have come from, or where we are going. We are separated from the mystery, the depth, and the greatness of our existence. We hear the voice of that depth; but our ears are closed. We feel that something radical, total, and unconditioned is demanded of us; but we rebel against it, try to escape its urgency, and will not accept its promise.

We cannot escape, however. If that something is the Ground of our being, we are bound to it for all eternity, just as we are bound to ourselves and to all other life. We always remain in the power of that from which we are estranged. That fact brings us to the ultimate depth of sin; separated and yet bound, estranged and yet belonging, destroyed and yet preserved, the state which is called despair. Despair means that there is no escape. Despair is "the sickness unto death." But the terrible thing about the sickness of despair is that we cannot be released, not even through open or hidden suicide. For we all know that we are bound eternally and inescapably to the Ground of our being. The abyss of separation is not always visible. But it has become more visible to our generation than to the preceding generations, because of our feeling of meaninglessness, emptiness, doubt, and cynicism--all expressions of despair, of our separation from the roots and the meaning of our life. Sin in its most profound sense, sin, as despair, abounds amongst us.

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," says Paul in the same letter in which he describes the unimaginable power of separation and self-destruction within society and the individual soul. He does not say these words because sentimental interests demand a happy ending for everything tragic. He says them because they describe the most overwhelming and determining experience of his life. In the picture of Jesus as the Christ, which appeared to him at the moment of his greatest separation from other men, from himself, and God, he found himself accepted in spite of his being rejected. And when he found that he was accepted, he was able to accept himself and to be reconciled to others. The moment in which grace struck him and overwhelmed him, he was reunited with that to which he belonged, and from which he was estranged in utter strangeness. Do we know what it means to be struck by grace? It does not mean that we suddenly believe that God exists, or that Jesus is the Saviour, or that the Bible contains the truth. To believe that something is, is almost contrary to the meaning of grace. Furthermore, grace does not mean simply that we are making progress in our moral self-control, in our fight against special faults, and in our relationships to men and to society. Moral progress may be a fruit of grace; but it is not grace itself, and it can even prevent us from receiving grace. For there is too often a graceless acceptance of Christian doctrines and a graceless battle against the structures of evil in our personalities. Such a graceless relation to God may lead us by necessity either to arrogance or to despair. It would be better to refuse God and the Christ and the Bible than to accept them without grace. For if we accept without grace, we do so in a state of separation, and can only succeed in deepening the separation. We cannot transform our lives, unless we allow them to be transformed by that stroke of grace. It happens; or it does not happen. And certainly it does not happen if we try to force it upon ourselves, just as it shall not happen so long as we think, in our self-complacency, that we have no need of it. Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a

meaningless and empty life. It strikes us when we feel that our separation is deeper than usual, because we have violated another life, a life which we loved, or from which we were estranged. It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now perhaps later you will do much. So do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted." If that happens to us, we experience grace. After such an experience we may not be better than before, and we may not believe more than before. But everything is transformed. In that moment, grace conquers sin, and reconciliation bridges the gulf of estrangement. And nothing is demanded of this experience, no religious or moral or intellectual presupposition, nothing but acceptance.

In the light of this grace we perceive the power of grace in our relation to others and to ourselves. We experience the grace of being able to look frankly into the eyes of another, the miraculous grace of reunion of life with life. We experience the grace of understanding each other's words. We understand not merely the literal meaning of the words, but also that which lies behind them, even when they are harsh or angry. For even then there is a longing to break through the walls of separation. We experience the grace of being able to accept the life of another, even if it be hostile and harmful to us, for, through grace, we know that it belongs to the same Ground to which we belong, and by which we have been accepted. We experience the grace which is able to overcome the tragic separation of the sexes, of the generations, of the nations, of the races, and even the utter strangeness between man and nature. Sometimes grace appears in all these separations to reunite us with those to whom we belong. For life belongs to life.

And in the light of this grace we perceive the power of grace in our relation to ourselves. We experience moments in which we accept ourselves, because we feel that we have been accepted by that which is greater than we. If only more such moments were given to us! For it is such moments that make us love our life, that make us accept ourselves, not in our goodness and self-complacency, but in our certainty of the eternal meaning of our life. We cannot force ourselves to accept ourselves. We cannot compel anyone to accept himself. But sometimes it happens that we receive the power to say "yes" to ourselves, that peace enters into us and makes us whole, that self-hate and self-contempt disappear, and that our self is reunited with itself. Then we can say that grace has come upon us.

From FREEDOM
by
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Responsibility and freedom are corresponding concepts. Factually, though not chronologically, responsibility presupposes freedom and freedom can consist only in responsibility. Responsibility is the freedom of men which is given only in the obligation to God and to our neighbor.

The responsible man acts in the freedom of his own self, without the support of men, circumstances or principles, but with a due consideration for the given human and general conditions and for the relevant questions of principle. The proof of his freedom is the fact that nothing can answer for him, nothing can exonerate him, except his own deed and his own self. It is he himself who must observe, judge, weigh up, decide and act. It is man himself who must examine the motive, the prospects, the value and the purpose of his action. But neither the purity of the motivation, nor the opportune circumstances, nor the value, nor the significant purpose of an intended undertaking can become the governing law of his action, a law to which he can withdraw, to which he can appeal as an authority, and by which he can be exculpated and acquitted. For in that case he would indeed no longer be truly free. The action of the responsible man is performed in the obligation which alone gives freedom and which gives entire freedom, the obligation to God and to our neighbor as they confront us in Jesus Christ. At the same time it is performed wholly within the domain of relativity, wholly in the twilight which the historical situation spreads over good and evil; it is performed in the midst of the innumerable perspectives in which every given phenomenon appears. It has not to decide simply between right and wrong and between good and evil, but between right and right and between wrong and wrong. As Aeschylus said, "right strives with right." Precisely in this respect responsible action is a free venture; it is not justified by any law; it is performed without any claim to a valid self-justification, and therefore also without claim to an ultimate valid knowledge of good and evil. Good, as what is responsible, is performed in ignorance of good and in the surrender to God of the deed which has become necessary and which is nevertheless, or for that very reason, free; for it is God who sees the heart, who weighs up the deed, and who directs the course of history.

With this there is disclosed to us a deep secret of history in general. The man who acts in the freedom of his own most personal responsibility is precisely the man who sees his action finally committed to the guidance of God. The free deed knows itself in the end as the deed of God; the decision knows itself as guidance; the free venture knows itself as divine necessity. It is in the free abandonment of knowledge of his own good that a man performs the good of God. It is only from this last point of view that one can speak of good in historical action. We shall have to take up these considerations again later at the point at which we have left off.

JONAH

A Story by Irene Orgel*

I want to talk about Jonah, said the man on the psychoanalyst's couch.

Jonah and the whale? asked the doctor.

Jonah, said the patient, before he ever met the whale. Jonah first of all, when he was running away. Jonah, the man with the big fear pursuing him. When God looked for Jonah, he couldn't see him for the dust. When God called to Jonah, Jonah didn't hear him for the wind which was whistling in his ears.

Jonah ran to the end of the land, as far as he could go, and when he reached the end of the land and came to the edge of the sea, he took a boat.

"Do you have a reservation?" they asked him.

"No," said Jonah, because he never had time to plan ahead.

But there was one ticket left and Jonah thought he was lucky to get it, even though they charged him an exorbitant price.

Pictured him at the customs, Jonah with the guilty face. Any number of crooks and smugglers had gone on board without raising any suspicion at all. But Jonah was subjected to the closest search and questioning. They made him undo the knots in all the string around his suitcases (he hadn't been able to locate the key) and empty the unwieldy paper bags in which he'd thrown his last minute things.

Lord, what a muddle Jonah's luggage was in! He'd forgotten his toothbrush and his shaving kit. But, on the other hand, the bottom of his grip was full of old photographs and theater programs that he couldn't bear to throw away. There were photographs of several sweethearts he had very nearly married. One girl he had run after for years, but she had never given him a tumble. The reason he had this bric-a-brac with him when he reached the edge of the sea, was very simply this: he didn't know how long he'd be away. He didn't even know if he was coming back.

When Jonah finally stumbled up the gangplank and on board, he immediately went down to his stateroom, locked the door, and fell onto his berth. It was only when the engines started to turn over and his staring eyes saw upon the white ceiling the dancing reflection of fast-moving water, that Jonah's fists at last unclenched, and the sweat on his brow dried up. The peace and contentment which most people feel when they are beside their own hearth, was experienced by Jonah only when he was on a journey. All his deepest reading and thinking had ever been done on moving vehicles. As soon as he stopped moving he felt hemmed in. And even when he got a bit used to his moving surroundings--as soon as a bare stateroom began to take on the contours of home and habit, for instance--as soon as that happened, the unease came back to Jonah like a vulture.

So within his little locked cabin, lying with his face pressed down into his pillow, Jonah tried to hold onto the feeling of relief which came to him with the beginning of a journey. And his stomach felt the queasy rocking of the boat, and he lay listening to the creaking of all the shipboards and the rushing of the sailors to and fro.

* Harper's Magazine, October, 1955

"There's someone guilty on board," said the sailors when the storm arose.

"That's me," thought Jonah without a second thought. That's the sort of egotist he was. He didn't give a thought to all the crooks and smugglers on the passenger list. He didn't consider the cutthroats in the crew who had signed up to get away from the scene of their crimes. No, Jonah had this guiltier-than-thou attitude, and all that he could think of was Jonah.

He opened the door of his stateroom and he said:

"Here I am, boys."

The sailors picked him up (he had asked for it) and swung him by his arms and legs, one, two, three, and yo-heave-ho, and over he went. Splash! And into the jaws of the whale.

And in the belly of the whale, where it was warm and enclosed, and where it was physically impossible to run any further, Jonah gave up. It was the ultimate end to his flight. It might have been a padded cell. It could have been this room. It happened to be the belly of the whale.

(The womb phantasy, murmured the analyst.)

Well, whatever it was, continued the man on the couch, in ventro and de profundis Jonah cried out to the Lord. And this time Jonah's words weren't the panting incoherent snatches of a man running away from his Fear. This time it was despair; but it was his own despair. And for the first time he cried out with his own voice.

In the belly of the whale, Jonah was transformed. He reversed all his behavior patterns. It was like a religious experience. What am I talking about! It was a religious experience. He was the prophet Jonah, wasn't he? People who had known Jonah before, and met him after the whale, said:

"Jonah, you're a changed man."

It wasn't that his hair had turned white or anything obvious like that. It was simply that everything he had done before, he now did in reverse. He had been a fearful man and he had suddenly changed into an angry man. As precipitately as he'd run away from Nineveh, he now wanted to dash toward it. Just as sharply as he'd turned away from God's word, he now wanted to over-do God's word.

"Hey, son!" shouted God.

"I'm off to Nineveh," yelled Jonah. "Don't stop me."

"Wait a minute," said God, trying to keep up with him. "What are you going to do when you get there?"

"Fire a burst!" replied Jonah.

"Now take it easy," said the Lord, and he held Jonah back by his shirt-tail.

"But they don't listen to YOUR WORD," stormed Jonah, with his super-duper-super ego. "We're not going to stand for that, are we?"

So the Lord made him sit down and cool off under a gourd. Gurd or Goord, is it? I never said it out loud before. I never could see why the business about the gourd was stuck on the end of this story. Yet it's the logical ending. The gourd represents every living thing.

As if in a speeded-up, documentary movie, Jonah saw it sprout from seed, flower and then, to his consternation, it withered before its time.

"What's the big idea?" he protested.

"Look," said the Lord. "Don't you go getting sentimental over the life and death of a gourd. This happens to be one of the stiffest, prickliest, least organized of all the organisms in my vegetable kingdom. Whereas people, and this included even the people of Nineveh, are the most highly organized of all my organisms. Where's your sense of proportion, son?"

Then Jonah understood.

His fear and anger fell away from him, like so much unnecessary luggage, jettisoned. And this left room for love of the whole of creation to well up; in him. And he was no longer angry with Nineveh, which had after all represented nothing to him but his own past. Instead of a turreted town crammed with phantasmagoria, it now appeared before him as a plain ordinary, workaday city, and the people in it were only people, after all.

Imagine Jonah now, having left behind his luggage of confusion and turmoil. Free-striding and life-accepting, as he walked along the road to Nineveh. Simplicity was in his pocket, and the principle of the gourd was deep-rooted in his heart.

Without knowing the scientific details, he knew he was a man who had come out of the sea. And he knew he was a man who had come out of the sun. The Lord had told him all this when he said.

"Consider the gourd. Respect it."

Because Jonah still thought things out best when he was walking, he had a long, calm discussion with Lord on the way to Nineveh.

"If you created the seed and the life and the sprouting," Jonah asked, "why did you create the negating and rejecting? The fear and the anger and the running away?"

"To tell you the truth," said God, "I had no idea it was going to go this far. Of all the roads it might have taken, this is surely the most surprising. When I was in the infinitesimal speck which held the potentiality of creation, how was I to know it would expand to become the universe? And when I blazed and exploded in the innumerable suns, how could I foresee that out of the near collision of two of them would leap the tide which would cool into planets? This by the way," said God confidentially, "I learned from Sir James Jeans. Most of what I know comes from Albert Einstein. Before that I had only Newton to go on. And before that..."

"But before Man," asked Jonah, shocked out of his wits. "Do you mean you understood nothing at all? Didn't you exist?"

"Certainly," said God patiently. "I have told you how I exploded in the stars. Then I drifted for aeons in clouds of inchoate gas. As matter stabilized, I acquired

the knowledge of valency. When matter cooled, I lay sleeping in the insentient rocks. After that I floated fecund in the unconscious seaweed upon the faces of the deep. Later I existed in the stretching paw of the tiger and the blinking eye of the owl. Each form of knowledge led to the more developed next. Organic matter led to sentience which led to consciousness which led inevitably to my divinity."

"And what will you become next?" asked Jonah.

"I don't know," said God reverently. "I am waiting to be told."

"By whom?" asked Jonah, and he looked around the lonely landscape in dismay.

"How I tremble," sang God. "In rapture before the next stroke of consciousness! How I yearn to be created further!"

"But I don't like this at all," cried Jonah. "Can't we go back in the way it used to be? You scared me to death most of the time. But how I loved to hear your scolding voice."

"I couldn't go on forever," said God severely, "telling tall stories about whales, any more than I could have remained inert once the first colloidal systems started to form or inchoate once the form of the atom was established."

"But it was cozy," sobbed Jonah. "You and me; I and thou."

"Now it shall be We are One."

"And shall I never call you father any more? And will I never hear you call me son again?" asked Jonah.

"You may call me," said God agreeably, "anything you please. Would you like to discuss semantics?"

So Jonah found himself alone on the road to Nineveh. And yet he was not alone. For the gourd was with him, and the lungfish, and the stars. He knew that he was a man who had come out of the sea. And he knew that he was a man who had come out of the sun. And in Nineveh he took root, and he flowered in the expression of his consciousness until he died.

He married a Nineveh girl, of course. That goes without saying. They had a double ring ceremony and there was a slight confusion as she didn't know her right hand from her left. Otherwise everything went off without a hitch.

The man on the couch fell silent. After a while he sat up and started to grope with his feet for his shoes on the floor. Then he bent over and slowly tied his shoelaces. Then he stood up.

Well, I just wanted to talk about Jonah, he explained diffidently.

And then he bolted from the room.

THREE PARABLES

by Franz Kafka

I. An Imperial Message

The Emperor, so it runs, has sent a message to you, the humble subject, the insignificant shadow cowering in the remotest distance before the imperial sun; the Emperor from his deathbed has sent a message to you alone. He has commanded the messenger to kneel down by the bed, and has whispered the message to him; so much store did he lay on it that he ordered the messenger to whisper it back into his ear again. Then by a nod of the head he has confirmed that it is right. Yes, before the assembled spectators of his death--all the obstructing walls have been broken down, and on the spacious and loftily-mounting open staircases stand in a ring the great princes of the Empire--before all these he has delivered his message. The messenger immediately sets out on his journey; a powerful, an indefatigable man now pushing with his right arm, now with his left, he cleaves a way for himself through the throng; if he encounters resistance he points to his breast, where the symbol of the sun glitters; the way, too, is made easier for him than it would be for any other man. But the multitudes are so vast; their numbers have no end. If he could reach the open fields how fast he would fly, and soon doubtless you would hear the welcome hammering of his fists on your door. But instead how vainly does he wear out his strength; still he is only making his way through the chambers of the innermost palace; never will he get to the end of them; and if he succeeded in that nothing would be gained; the courts would still have to be crossed; and after the courts the second outer palace; and once more stairs and courts; and once more another palace; and so on for thousands of years; and if at last he should burst through the outermost gate--but never, never can that happen--the imperial capital would lie before him, the center of the world, crammed to bursting with its own refuse. Nobody could fight his way through here, least of all one with a message from a dead man. But you sit at your window when evening falls and dream it to yourself.

II. Before the Law

"Before the Law stands a doorkeeper on guard. To this doorkeeper there comes a man from the country who begs for admittance to the Law. But the doorkeeper says that he cannot admit the man at the moment. The man, on reflection, asks if he will be allowed then to enter later. "It is possible," answers the doorkeeper, "but not at this moment." Since the door leading into the Law stands open as usual and the doorkeeper steps to one side, the man bends down to peer through the entrance. When the doorkeeper sees that, he laughs and says: "If you are so strongly tempted, try to get in without my permission. But note that I am powerful. And I am only the lowest doorkeeper. From hall to hall keepers stand at every door, one more powerful than the other. Even the third of these has an aspect that even I cannot bear to look at." These are difficulties which the man from the country has not expected to meet; the Law, he thinks, should be accessible to every man and at all times, but when he looks more closely at the doorkeeper in his furred robe, with his huge pointed nose and long, thin Tarter beard, he decides that he had better wait until he gets permission to enter. The doorkeeper gives him a stool and lets him sit down at the side of the door. There he sits waiting for days and years. He makes many attempts to be allowed in and wearies the doorkeeper with his importunity. The doorkeeper often engages him in brief conversation, asking him about his name and about other matters, but the questions are put quite impersonally, as great men put questions, and always conclude with the statement that the man cannot be allowed to enter yet. The man, who has equipped

himself with many things for his journey, parts with all he has, however valuable, in the hope of bribing the doorkeeper. The doorkeeper accepts it all, saying, however, as he takes each gift: 'I take this only to keep you from feeling that you have left something undone.' During all these long years the man watches the doorkeeper almost incessantly. He forgets all about the other doorkeepers, and this one seems to him the only barrier between himself and the Law. In the first years he curses his evil fate aloud; later, as he grows old, he only mutters to himself. He grows childish, and since in his prolonged watch he has learned to know even the fleas in the doorkeeper's fur collar, he begs the very fleas to help him and to persuade the doorkeeper to change his mind. Finally his eyes grow dim and he does not know whether the world is really darkening around him or whether his eyes are only deceiving him. But in the darkness he can now perceive a radiance that streams immortally from the door of the Law. Now his life is drawing to a close. Before he dies, all that he has experienced during the whole time of his sojourn condenses in his mind into one question, which he has never yet put to the doorkeeper. He beckons the doorkeeper, since he can no longer raise his stiffening body. The doorkeeper has to bend far down to hear him, for the difference in size between them has increased very much to the man's disadvantage. 'What do you want to know now?' asks the doorkeeper, 'You are insatiable.' 'Everyone strives to attain the Law,' answers the man, 'how does it come about, then, that in all these years no one has come seeking admittance but me?' The doorkeeper perceives that the man is at the end of his strength and that his hearing is failing so he bellows in his ear: 'No one but you could gain admittance through this door since this door was intended only for you. I am now going to shut it.'

"So the doorkeeper deluded the man," said K. immediately strongly attracted by the story.

"Don't be too hasty," said the priest, "don't take over an opinion without testing it. I have told you the story in the very words of the scriptures. There's no mention of delusion in it."

"But it's clear enough," said K., "and your first interpretation of it was quite right. The doorkeeper gave the message of salvation to the man only when it could no longer help him."

"He was not asked the question any earlier," said the priest, "and you must consider, too, that he was only a doorkeeper, and as such he fulfilled his duty."

"What makes you think he fulfilled his duty?" asked K. "He didn't fulfill it. His duty might have been to keep all strangers away, but this man, for whom the door was intended, should have been let in."

"You have not enough respect for the written word and you are altering the story," said the priest. "The story contains two important statements made by the doorkeeper about admission to the Law, one at the beginning, the other at the end. The first statement is: that he cannot admit the man at the moment, and the other is: that this door was intended only for the man. If there were a contradiction between the two, you would be right and the doorkeeper would have deluded the man. But there is no contradiction. The first statement, on the contrary, even implies the second. One could almost say that in suggesting to the man the possibility of future admittance the doorkeeper is exceeding his duty. At that moment his apparent duty is only to refuse admittance, and indeed many commentators are surprised that the suggestion should be made at all, since the doorkeeper appears to be a precisian with a stern regard for duty. He does not leave his post during these many years, and he does not shut the door until the very last minute; he is conscious of the importance of his office, for

he says: 'I am powerful'; he is respectful to his superiors, for he says: 'I am only the lowest doorkeeper'; he is not garrulous, for during all these years he puts only what are called 'impersonal questions'; he is not to be bribed, for he says in accepting a gift: 'I take this only to keep you from feeling that you have left something undone'; where his duty is concerned he is to be moved neither by pity nor rage, for we are told that the man 'wearied the doorkeeper with his importunity'; and finally even his external appearance hints at a pedantic character, the large pointed nose and the long, thin, black Tartar beard. Could one imagine a more faithful doorkeeper? Yet the doorkeeper has other elements in his character which are likely to advantage anyone seeking admittance and which make it comprehensible enough that he should somewhat exceed his duty in suggesting the possibility of future admittance. For it cannot be denied that he is a little simple-minded and consequently a little conceited. Take the statements he makes about his power and the power of the other doorkeepers and their dreadful aspect which even he cannot bear to see--I hold that these statements may be true enough, but that the way in which he brings them out shows that his perceptions are confused by simpleness of mind and conceit. The commentators note in this connection: 'The right perception of any matter and a misunderstanding of the same matter do not wholly exclude each other.' One must at any rate assume that such simpleness and conceit, however sparingly indicated, are likely to weaken his defense of the door; they are breaches in the character of the doorkeeper. To this must be added the fact that the doorkeeper seems to be a friendly creature by nature, he is by no means always on his official dignity. In the very first moments he allows himself the jest of inviting the man to enter in spite of the strictly maintained veto against entry; then he does not, for instance, send the man away, but gives him, as we are told, a stool and lets him sit down beside the door. The patience with which he endures the man's appeals during so many years, the brief conversations, the acceptance of the gifts, the politeness with which he allows the man to curse loudly in his presence, the fate for which he himself is responsible--all this lets us deduce certain motions of sympathy. Not every doorkeeper would have acted thus. And finally, in answer to a gesture of the man's he stoops low down to give him the chance of putting a last question. Nothing but mild impatience--the doorkeeper knows that this is the end of it all--is discernible in the words: 'You are insatiable.' Some push this mode of interpretation even further and hold that these words express a kind of friendly admiration, though not without a hint of condescension. At any rate the figure of the doorkeeper can be said to come out very differently from what you fancied."

"You have studied the story more exactly and for a longer time than I have," said K. They were both silent for a little while. Then K. said: "So you think the man was not deluded?"

"Don't misunderstand me," said the priest, "I am only showing you the various opinions concerning the point. You must not pay too much attention to them. The scriptures are unalterable and the comments often enough merely express the commentator's bewilderment. In this case there even exists an interpretation which claims that the deluded person is really the doorkeeper."

"That's a far-fetched interpretation," said K. "On what is it based?"

"It is based," answered the priest, "on the simple-mindedness of the doorkeeper. The argument is that he does not know the Law from the inside, but he knows only the way that leads to it, where he patrols up and down. His ideas of the interior are assumed to be childish, and it is supposed that he himself is afraid of the other guardians whom he holds up as bogies before the man. Indeed, he fears them more than the man does, since the man is determined to enter after hearing about the dreadful guardians of the interior, while the doorkeeper has no desire to enter, at least not

so far as we are told. Others again say that he must have been in the interior already, since he is all engaged in the service of the Law and can only have been appointed from inside. This is countered by arguing that he may have been appointed by a voice calling from the interior, and that anyhow he cannot have been far inside, since the aspect of the third doorkeeper is more than he can endure. Moreover, no indication is given that during all these years he ever made any remarks showing a knowledge of the interior except for the one remark about the doorkeepers. He may have been forbidden to do so, but there is no mention of that either. On these grounds the conclusion is reached that he knows nothing about the aspect and significance of the interior, so that he is in a state of delusion. But he is deceived also about his relation to the man from the country. For he is subject to the man and does not know it. He treats the man instead as his own subordinate, as can be recognized from many details that must still be fresh in your mind. But, according to this view of the story, it is just as clearly indicated that he is really subordinated to the man. In the first place, a bondsman is always subject to a free man. Now the man from the country is really free, he can go where he likes, it is only the Law that is closed to him, and access to the Law is forbidden him only by one individual, the doorkeeper. When he sits down on the stool by the side of the door and stays there for the rest of his life, he does it of his own free will; in the story there is no mention of any compulsion. But the doorkeeper is bound to his post by his very office, he does not dare strike out into the country nor apparently may he go into the interior of the Law, his service is confined to this one entrance; that is to say, he serves only this man for whom alone the entrance is intended. On that ground too he is subject to the man. One must assume that for many years, for as long as it takes a man to grow up to the prime of life, his service was in a sense empty formality, since he had to wait for a man to come, that is to say, someone in the prime of life, and so had to wait a long time before the purpose of his service could be fulfilled, and moreover, had to wait on the man's pleasure, for the man came of his own free will. But the termination of his service also depends on the man's term of life, so that to the very end he is subject to the man. And it is emphasized throughout that the doorkeeper apparently realized nothing of all this. That is not in itself remarkable, since according to this interpretation the doorkeeper is deceived in a much more important issue, affecting his very office. At the end, for example, he says regarding the entrance to the Law: "I am now going to shut it," but at the beginning of the story we are told that the door leading into the Law stands always open, and if it stands open always, that is to say, at all times, without reference to the life or death of the man, then the doorkeeper is incapable of closing it. There is some difference of opinions about the motive behind the doorkeeper's statement, whether he said he was going to close the door merely for the sake of giving an answer, or to emphasize his devotion to duty, or to bring the man into a state of grief and regret in his last moments. But there is no lack of agreement that the doorkeeper will not be able to shut the door. Many indeed profess to find that he is subordinate to the man even in wisdom, towards the end, at least, for the man sees the radiance that issues from the door of the Law while the doorkeeper in his official position must stand with his back to the door, nor does he say anything to show that he has perceived the change."

"That is well argued," said K., after repeating to himself in a low voice several passages from the priest's exposition. "It is well argued, and I am inclined to agree that the doorkeeper is deluded. But that has not made me abandon my former opinion since both conclusions are to some extent compatible. Whether the doorkeeper is clear-sighted or deluded does not dispose of the matter. I said the man is deluded. If the doorkeeper is clear-sighted, one might have doubts about that, but if the doorkeeper himself is deluded, then his delusion must of necessity be communicated to the man. That makes the doorkeeper, indeed, not a swindler, but a creature so simple-minded that he ought to be dismissed at once from his office. You mustn't forget that the doorkeeper's delusions do himself no harm but do indefinite harm to the man."

"There are objections to that," said the priest. "Many aver that the story confers no right on anyone to pass judgment on the doorkeeper. Whatever he may seem to us, he is yet a servant of the Law; that is, he belongs to the Law and as such is set beyond human judgment. In that case one dare not believe that the doorkeeper is subordinate to the man. Bound as he is by his service, even at the door of the Law, he is incomparably freer than anyone at large in the world. The man is only seeking the Law, the doorkeeper is already attached to it. It is the Law that has placed him at this post; to doubt his integrity is to doubt the Law itself."

"I don't agree with that point of view," said K. shaking his head, "for if anyone accepts it, one must accept as true everything the doorkeeper says. But you yourself have sufficiently proved how impossible it is to do that."

"No," said the priest, "it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary."

"A melancholy conclusion," said K. "It turns lying into a universal principle."

III. Couriers

They were offered the choice between becoming kings or the couriers of kings. The way children would, they all wanted to be couriers. Therefore there are only couriers who hurry about the world, shouting to each other--since there are no kings--messages that have become meaningless. They would like to put an end to this miserable life of theirs but they dare not because of their oaths of service.

THE GUEST

by Albert Camus

The schoolmaster was watching the two men climb toward him. One was on horseback, the other on foot. They had not yet tackled the abrupt rise leading to the schoolhouse built on the hillside. They were toiling onward, making slow progress in the snow, among the stones, on the vast expanse of the high, deserted plateau. From time to time the horse stumbled. Without hearing anything yet, he could see the breath issuing from the horse's nostrils. One of the men, at least, knew the region. They were following the trail although it had disappeared days ago under a layer of dirty white snow. The schoolmaster calculated that it would take them half an hour to get onto the hill. It was cold; he went back into the school to get a sweater.

He crossed the empty, frigid classroom. On the blackboard the four rivers of France, drawn with four different colored chalks, had been flowing toward their estuaries for the past three days. Snow had suddenly fallen in mid-October after eight months of drought without the transition of rain, and the twenty pupils, more or less, who lived in the villages scattered over the plateau had stopped coming. With fair weather they would return. Daru now heated only the single room that was his lodging, adjoining the classroom and giving also onto the plateau to the east. Like the class windows, his window looked to the south too. On that side the school was a few kilometers from the point where the plateau began to slope toward the south. In clear weather could be seen the purple mass of the mountain range where the gap opened onto the desert.

Somewhat warmed, Daru returned to the window from which he had first seen the two men. They were no longer visible. Hence they must have tackled the rise. The sky was not so dark, for the snow had stopped falling during the night. The morning had opened with a dirty light which had scarcely become brighter as the ceiling of clouds lifted. At two in the afternoon it seemed as if the day were merely beginning. But still this was better than those three days when the thick snow was falling amidst unbroken darkness with little gusts of wind that rattled the double door of the classroom. Then Daru had spent long hours in his room, leaving it only to go to the shed and feed the chickens or get some coal. Fortunately the delivery truck from Tadjid, the nearest village to the north, had brought his supplies two days before the blizzard. It would return in forty-eight hours.

Besides, he had enough to resist a siege, for the little room was cluttered with bags of wheat that the administration left as a stock to distribute to those of his pupils whose families had suffered from the drought. Actually they had all been victims because they were all poor. Every day Daru would distribute a ration to the children. They had missed it, he knew, during these bad days. Possibly one of the fathers or big brothers would come this afternoon and he could supply them with grain. It was just a matter of carrying them over to the next harvest. Now shiploads of wheat were arriving from France and the worst was over. But it would be hard to forget that poverty, that army of ragged ghosts wandering in the sunlight, the plateaus burned to a cinder month after month, the earth shriveled up little by little, literally scorched, every stone bursting into dust under one's foot. The sheep had died then by thousands and even a few men, here and there, sometimes without anyone's knowing.

In contrast with such poverty, he who lived almost like a monk in his remote schoolhouse, nonetheless satisfied with the little he had and with the rough life, had felt like a lord with his white-washed walls, his narrow couch, his unpainted shelves, his well, and his weekly provision of water and food. And suddenly this snow, without warning, without the foretaste of rain. This is the way the region was, cruel to live

in, even without men -- who didn't help matters either. But Daru had been born here. Everywhere else, he felt exiled.

He stepped out onto the terrace in front of the schoolhouse. The two men were now halfway up the slope. He recognized the horseman as Balducci, the old gendarme he had known for a long time. Balducci was holding on the end of a rope an Arab who was walking behind him with hands bound and head lowered. The gendarme waved a greeting to which Daru did not reply, lost as he was in contemplation of the Arab dressed in a faded blue jellaba, his feet in sandals but covered with sock of heavy raw wool, his head surmounted by a narrow, short cheche. They were approaching. Balducci was holding back his horse in order not to hurt the Arab, and the group was advancing slowly.

Within earshot, Balducci shouted: "One hour to do the three kilometers from El Ameur." Daru did not answer. Short and square in his thick sweater, he watched them climb. Not once had the Arab raised his head. "Hello," said Daru when they got up onto the terrace. "Come in and warm up." Balducci painfully got down from his horse without letting go the rope. From under his bristling mustache he smiled at the schoolmaster. His little dark eyes, deep-set under a tanned forehead, and his mouth surrounded with wrinkles made him look attentive and studious. Daru took the bridle, led the horse to the shed, and came back to the two men, who were now waiting for him in the school. He led them into his room. "I am going to heat up the classroom," he said. "We'll be more comfortable there." When he entered the room again, Balducci was on the couch. He had undone the rope tying him to the Arab, who had squatted near the stove. His hands still bound, the cheche pushed back on his head, he was looking toward the window. At first Daru noticed only his huge lips, fat, smooth, almost Negroid; yet his nose was straight, his eyes were dark and full of fever. The cheche revealed an obstinate forehead and, under the weathered skin now rather discolored by the cold, the whole face had a restless and rebellious look that struck Daru when the Arab, turning his face toward him, looked him straight in the eyes. "Go into the other room," said the schoolmaster, "and I'll make you some mint tea." "Thanks," Balducci said. "What a chore! How I long for retirement." And addressing his prisoner in Arabic; "Come on, you." The Arab got up and, slowly, holding his bound wrists in front of him, went into the classroom.

With the tea, Daru brought a chair. But Balducci was already enthroned on the nearest pupil's desk and the Arab had squatted against the teacher's platform facing the stove, which stood between the desk and the window. When he held out the glass of tea to the prisoner, Daru hesitated at the sight of his bound hands. "He might perhaps be untied." "Sure," said Balducci. "That was for the trip." He started to get to his feet. But Daru, setting the glass on the floor, had knelt beside the Arab. Without saying anything, the Arab watched him with his feverish eyes. Once his hands were free, he rubbed his swollen wrists against each other, took the glass of tea, and sucked up the burning liquid in swift little sips.

"Good," said Daru. "And where are you headed?"

Balducci withdrew his mustache from the tea. "Here son."

"Odd pupils! And you're spending the night?"

"No. I'm going back to El Ameur. And you will deliver this fellow to Tinguit. He is expected at police headquarters."

Balducci was looking at Daru with a friendly little smile.

"What's this story?" asked the schoolmaster. "Are you pulling my leg?"

"No, son. Those are the orders."

"The orders? I'm not" Daru hesitated, not wanting to hurt the old Corsican. "I mean, that's not my job."

"What? What's the meaning of that? In wartime people do all kinds of jobs."

"Then I'll wait for the declaration of war."

Balducci nodded.

"O.K. But the orders exist and they concern you too. Things are brewing, it appears. There is talk of a forthcoming revolt. We are mobilized, in a way."

Daru still had his obstinate look.

"Listen, son," Balducci said. "I like you and you must understand. There's only a dozen of us at El Aneur to patrol throughout the whole territory of a small department and I must get back in a hurry. I was told to hand this guy over to you and return without delay. He couldn't be kept there. His village was beginning to stir; they wanted to take him back. You must take him to Tinguit tomorrow before the day is over. Twenty kilometers shouldn't faze a husky fellow like you. After that, all will be over. You'll come back to your pupils and your comfortable life."

Behind the wall the horse could be heard snorting and pawing the earth. Daru was looking out the window. Decidedly, the weather was clearing and the light was increasing over the snowy plateau. When all the snow was melted, the sun would take over again and once more would burn the fields of stone. For days, still, the unchanging sky would shed its dry light on the solitary expanse where nothing had any connection with man.

"After all," he said, turning around toward Balducci, "what did he do." And, before the gendarme had opened his mouth, he asked: "Does he speak French?"

"No, not a word. We had been looking for him for a month, but they were hiding him. He killed his cousin."

"Is he against us?"

"I don't think so. But you can never be sure."

"Why did he kill?"

"A family squabble, I think. One owed the other grain, it seems. It's not at all clear. In short, he killed his cousin with a billhook. You know, like a sheep, kreezk."

Balducci made the gesture of drawing a blade across his throat and the Arab, his attention attracted, watched him with a sort of anxiety. Daru felt a sudden wrath against the man, against all men with their rotten spite, their tireless hates, their blood lust.

But the kettle was singing on the stove. He served Balducci more tea, hesitated, then served the Arab again, who, a second time, drank avidly. His raised arms made the jellaba fall open and the schoolmaster saw his thin, muscular chest.

"Thanks, kid," Balducci said. "And now, I'm off."

He got up and went toward the Arab, taking a small rope from his pocket.

"What are you doing?" Daru asked dryly.

Balducci, disconcerted, showed him the rope.

"Don't bother."

The old gendarme hesitated. "It's up to you. Of course, you are armed?"

"I have my shotgun."

"Where?"

"In the trunk."

"You ought to have it near your bed."

"Why? I have nothing to fear."

"You're crazy, son. If there's an uprising, no one is safe, we're all in the same boat."

"I'll defend myself. I'll have time to see them coming."

Balducci began to laugh, then suddenly the mustache covered the white teeth. "You'll have time? O.K. That's just what I was saying. You have always been a little cracked. That's why I like you, my son was like that."

At the same time he took out his revolver and put it on the desk. "Keep it; I don't need two weapons from here to El Aneur."

The revolver shone against the black paint of the table. When the gendarme turned toward him, the schoolmaster caught the smell of leather and horseflesh.

"Listen, Balducci," Daru said suddenly. "every bit of this disgusts me, and first of all your fellow here. But I won't hand him over. Fight, yes, if I have to, but not that."

The old gendarme stood in front of him and looked at him severely. "You're being a fool," he said slowly. "I don't like it either. You don't get used to putting a rope on a man even after years of it, and you're even ashamed -- yes, ashamed. But you can't let them have their way."

"I won't hand him over," Daru said again.

"It's an order, son and I repeat it."

"That's right. Repeat to them what I've said to you: I won't hand him over."

Balducci made a visible effort to reflect. He looked at the Arab and at Daru. At last he decided. "No, I won't tell them anything. If you want to drop us, go ahead; I'll not denounce you. I have an order to deliver the prisoner and I'm doing so. And now you'll just sign this paper for me."

"There's no need. I'll not deny that you left him with me."

"Don't be mean with me. I know you'll tell the truth. You're from hereabouts and you are a man. But you must sign, that's the rule."

Daru opened his drawer, took out a little square bottle of purple ink, the red wooden penholder with the "sergeant-major" pen he used for making models of penmanship, and signed. The gendarme carefully folded the paper and put it into his wallet. Then he moved toward the door.

"I'll see you off," Daru said.

"No," said Balducci. "There's no use being polite. You insulted me."

He looked at the Arab, motionless in the same spot, sniffed peevishly, and turned away toward the door. "Good-bye, son," he said. The door shut behind him. Balducci appeared suddenly outside the window and then disappeared. His footsteps were muffled by the snow. The horse stirred on the other side of the wall and several chickens fluttered in fright. A moment later Balducci reappeared outside the window leading the horse by the bridle. He walked toward the little rise without turning around and disappeared from sight with the horse following him. A big stone could be heard bouncing down. Daru walked back toward the prisoner, who, without stirring, never took his eyes off him. "Wait," the schoolmaster said in Arabic and went toward the bedroom. As he was going through the door, he had a second thought, went to the desk, took the revolver, and stuck it in his pocket. Then, without looking back, he went into his room.

For some time he lay on his couch watching the sky gradually close over, listening to the silence. It was this silence that had seemed painful to him during the first days here, after the war. He had requested a post in the little town at the base of the foothills separating the upper plateaus from the desert. There, rocky walls, green and black to the north, pink and lavender to the south, marked the frontier of eternal summer. He had been named to a post farther north, on the plateau itself. In the beginning, the solitude and the silence had been hard for him on these wastelands peopled only by stones. Occasionally, furrows suggested cultivation, but they had been dug to uncover a certain kind of stone good for building. The only plowing here was to harvest rocks. Elsewhere a thin layer of soil accumulated in the hollows would be scraped out to enrich paltry village gardens. This is the way it was: bare rock covered three quarters of the region. Towns sprang up, flourished, then disappeared; men came by, loved one another or fought bitterly, then died. No one in this desert, neither he nor his guest, mattered. And yet, outside this desert neither of them, Daru knew, could have really lived.

When he got up, no noise came from the classroom. He was amazed at the unmixed joy he derived from the mere thought that the Arab might have fled and that he would be alone with no decision to make. But the prisoner was there. He had merely stretched out between the stove and the desk. With eyes open, he was staring at the ceiling. In that position, his thick lips were particularly noticeable, giving him a pouting look. "Come," said Daru. The Arab got up and followed him. In the bedroom, the schoolmaster pointed to a chair near the table under the window. The Arab sat down without taking his eyes off Daru.

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes," the prisoner said.

Daru set the table for two. He took flour and oil, shaped a cake in a frying-pan, and lighted the little stove that functioned on bottled gas. While the cake was cooking, he went out to the shed to get cheese, eggs, dates, and condensed milk. When the cake was done he set it in on the window sill to cool, heated some condensed milk diluted with water, and beat up the eggs into an omelette. In one of his motions he knocked against the revolver stuck in his right pocket. He set the bowl down, went into the classroom, and put the revolver in his desk drawer. When he came back to the room, night was falling. He put on the light and served the Arab. "Eat," he said. The Arab took a piece of the cake, lifted it eagerly to his mouth, and stopped short.

"And you?" he asked.

"After you. I'll eat too."

The thick lips opened slightly. The Arab hesitated, then bit into the cake determinedly.

The meal over, the Arab looked at the schoolmaster. "Are you the judge?"

"No, I'm simply keeping you until tomorrow."

"Why do you eat with me?"

"I'm hungry."

The Arab fell silent. Daru got up and went out. He brought back a folding bed from the shed, set it up between the table and the stove, perpendicular to his own bed. From a large suitcase which, upright in a corner, served as a shelf for papers, he took two blankets and arranged them on the camp bed. Then he stopped, felt useless, and sat down on his bed. There was nothing more to do or to get ready. He had to look at this man. He looked at him, therefore, trying to imagine his face bursting with rage. He couldn't do so. He could see nothing but the dark yet shining eyes and the animal mouth.

"Why did you kill him?" he asked in a voice whose hostile tone surprised him.

The Arab looked away. "He ran away. I ran after him."

He raised his eyes to Daru again and they were full of a sort of woeful interrogation. "Now what will they do to me?"

"Are you afraid?"

He stiffened, turning his eyes away.

"Are you sorry?"

The Arab stared at him openmouthed. Obviously he did not understand. Daru's annoyance was growing. At the same time he felt awkward and self-conscious with his big body wedged between the two beds.

"Lie down there," he said impatiently. "That's your bed."

The Arab didn't move. He called to Daru: "Tell me."

The schoolmaster looked at him.

"Is the gendarme coming back tomorrow?"

"I don't know."

"Are you coming with us?"

"I don't know. Why?"

The prisoner got up and stretched out on top of the blankets, his feet toward the window. The light from the electric bulb shone straight into his eyes and he closed them at once.

"Why?" Daru repeated, standing beside the bed.

The Arab opened his eyes under the blinding light and looked at him, trying not to blink.

"Come with us," he said.

In the middle of the night, Daru was still not asleep. He had gone to bed after undressing completely; he generally slept naked. But when he suddenly realized that he had nothing on, he hesitated. He felt vulnerable and the temptation came to him to put his clothes back on. Then he shrugged his shoulders; after all, he wasn't a child and, if need be, he could break his adversary in two. From his bed he could observe him, lying on his back, still motionless with his eyes closed under the harsh light. When Daru turned out the light, the darkness seemed to coagulate all of the sudden. Little by little, the night came back to life in the window where the starless sky was stirring gently. The schoolmaster soon made out the body lying at his feet. The Arab still did not move, but his eyes seemed open. A faint wind was prowling around the schoolhouse. Perhaps it would drive away the clouds and the sun would reappear.

During the night the wind increased. The hens fluttered a little and then were silent. The Arab turned over on his side with his back to Daru, who thought he heard him moan. Then he listened for his guest's breathing, become heavier and more regular. He listened to that breath so close to him and mused without being able to go to sleep. In this room where he had been sleeping alone for a year, this presence bothered him. But it bothered him also by imposing on him a sort of brotherhood he knew well but refused to accept in the present circumstances. Men who share the same rooms, soldiers or prisoners, develop a strange alliance as if, having cast off their armour with their clothing, they fraternized every evening, over and above their differences, in the ancient community of dream and fatigue. But Daru shook himself; he didn't like such musings, and it was essential to sleep.

A little later, however, when the Arab stirred slightly, the schoolmaster was still not asleep. When the prisoner made a second move, he stiffened, on the alert. The Arab was lifting himself slowly on his arms with almost the motion of a sleep-walker. Seated upright in bed, he waited motionless without turning his head toward Daru, as if he were listening attentively. Daru did not stir; it had just occurred to him that the revolver was still in the drawer of his desk. It was better to act at once. Yet he continued to observe the prisoner, who, with the same slithery motion, put his feet on the ground, waited again, then began to stand up slowly. Daru was about to call out to him when the Arab began to walk, in a quite natural but extraordinarily silent way. He was heading toward the door at the end of the room that opened into the shed. He lifted the latch with precaution and went out, pushing the door behind him but without shutting it. Daru had not stirred. "He is running away," he merely thought. "Good riddance." Yet he listened attentively. The hens were not fluttering; the guest must be on the plateau. A faint sound of water reached him, and he didn't know what it was until the Arab again stood framed in the doorway, closed the door carefully, and came back to bed without a sound. Then Daru turned his back on him and fell asleep. Still later he seemed, from the depths of his sleep, to hear furtive steps around the schoolhouse. "I'm dreaming. I'm dreaming," he repeated to himself. And he went on sleeping.

When he awoke, the sky was clear; the loose window let in a cold, pure air. The Arab was asleep, hunched up under the blankets now, his mouth open, utterly relaxed.

But when Daru shook him, he started dreadfully, staring at Daru with wild eyes as if he had never seen him and such a frightened expression that the schoolmaster stepped back. "Don't be afraid. It's me. You must eat." The Arab nodded his head and said yes. Calm had returned to his face, but his expression was vacant and listless.

The coffee was ready. They drank it seated together on the folding bed as they munched their pieces of the cake. Then Daru led the Arab under the shed and showed him the faucet where he washed. He went back into the room, folded the blankets and the bed, made his own bed and put the room in order. Then he went through the classroom and out onto the terrace. The sun was already rising in the blue sky; a soft, bright light was bathing the deserted plateau. On the ridge the snow was melting in spots. The stones were about to reappear. Crouched on the edge of the plateau, the schoolmaster looked at the deserted expanse. He thought of Balducci. He had hurt him, for he had sent him off in a way as if he didn't want to be associated with him. He could still hear the gendarme's farewell and, without knowing why, he felt strangely empty and vulnerable. At that moment, from the other side of the schoolhouse, the prisoner coughed. Daru listened to him almost despite himself and then, furious, threw a pebble that whistled through the air before sinking into the snow. That man's stupid crime revolted him, but to hand him over was contrary to honor. Merely thinking of it made him smart with humiliation. And he cursed at one and the same time his own people who had sent him this Arab and the Arab too who had dared to kill and not managed to get away. Daru got up, walked in a circle on the terrace, waited motionless, and then went back into the schoolhouse.

The Arab, leaning over the cement floor of the shed, was washing his teeth with two fingers. Daru looked at him and said: "Come." He went back into the room ahead of the prisoner. He slipped a hunting-jacket on over his sweater and put on walking-shoes. Standing, he waited until the Arab had put on his cheche and sandals. They went into the classroom and the schoolmaster pointed to the exit, saying "Go ahead." The fellow didn't budge. "I'm coming," said Daru. The Arab went out. Daru went back into the room and made a package of pieces of rusk, dates, and sugar. In the classroom, before going out, he hesitated a second in front of his desk, then crossed the threshold and locked the door. "That's the way," he said. He started toward the east, followed by the prisoner. But, a short distance from the schoolhouse, he thought he heard a slight sound behind them. He retraced his steps and examined the surroundings of the house; there was no one there. The Arab watched him without seeming to understand. "Come on," said Daru.

They walked for an hour and rested beside a sharp peak of limestone. The snow was melting faster and faster and the sun was drinking up the puddles at once, rapidly cleaning the plateau, which gradually dried and vibrated like the air itself. When they resumed walking, the ground rang under their feet. From time to time a bird rent the space in front of them with a joyful cry. Daru breathed in deeply the fresh morning light. He felt a sort of rapture before the vast familiar expanse, now almost entirely yellow under its dome of blue sky. They walked an hour more, descending toward the south. They reached a level height made up of crumbly rocks. From there on, the plateau sloped down, eastward, toward a low plain where there were a few spindly trees and, to the south, toward outcroppings of rock that gave the landscape a chaotic look.

Daru surveyed the two directions. There was nothing but the sky on the horizon. Not a man could be seen. He turned toward the Arab, who was looking at him blankly. Daru held out the package to him. "Take it," he said. "There are dates, bread, and sugar. You can hold out for two days. Here are a thousand francs too." The Arab

took the package and the money but kept his full hands at chest level as if he didn't know what to do with what was being given him. "No look," the schoolmaster said as he pointed in the direction of the east, "there's the way to Tinguit. You have a two-hour walk. At Tinguit you'll find the administration and the police. They are expecting you." The Arab looked toward the east, still holding the package and the money against his chest. Daru took his elbow and turned him rather roughly toward the south. At the foot of the height on which they stood could be seen a faint path. "That's the trail across the plateau. In a day's walk from here you'll find pasture-lands and the first nomads. They'll take you in and shelter you according to their law." The Arab had now turned toward Daru and a sort of panic was visible in his expression. "Listen," he said. Daru shook his head: "No, be quiet. Now I'm leaving you." He turned his back on him, took two long steps in the direction of the school, looked hesitantly at the motionless Arab, and started off again. For a few minutes he heard nothing but his own step resounding on the cold ground and did not turn his head. A moment later, however, he turned around. The Arab was still there on the edge of the hill, his arms hanging now, and he was looking at the schoolmaster. Daru felt something rise in his throat. But he swore with impatience, waved vaguely, and started off again. He had already gone some distance when he again stopped and looked. There was no longer anyone on the hill.

Daru hesitated. The sun was now rather high in the sky and was beginning to beat down on his head. The schoolmaster retraced his steps, at first somewhat uncertainly, then with decision. When he reached the little hill, he was bathed in sweat. He climbed it as fast as he could and stopped, out of breath, at the top. The rock-fields to the south stood out sharply against the blue sky, but on the plain to the east a steamy heat was already rising. And in that slight haze, Daru, with heavy heart, made out the Arab walking slowly on the road to prison.

A little later, standing before the window of the classroom, the schoolmaster was watching the clear light bathing the whole surface of the plateau, but he hardly saw it. Behind him on the blackboard, among the winding French rivers, sprawled the clumsily chalked-up words he had just read: "You handed over our brother. You will pay for this." Daru looked at the sky, the plateau, and, beyond, the invisible lands stretching all the way to the sea. In this vast landscape he had loved so much, he was alone.