

Is is.

There is no distinction between ideology and image.

One.

He records his name on a gold medallion.

Two.

The philosopher must say is.

The world is legion.

The self is a suffering form.

Is is.

Waves rise and fall, but the sea remains.



If there is a story, it is this. At one point I had tears in my eyes. Now I consider the light of morning in a major university, reflecting on the failure of reason in *Alice in Wonderland*. Each week, I plan an assignment. *Students, interrogate form down to the last comma. Students, broadcast the crimes of history.* In March, the government, mired once again in a morass of confusion and double-dealing, had no way of explaining American casualties in the war. It had neither inside nor outside, like a long ago fire in the world.



I

It was a forlorn eve,  
my descent wintry.  
In that foreign midnight,

I sounded  
the chanceries of doubt  
as day drove up

in an ordinary yellow cab.  
To my astonishment,  
I seemed to be blindfolded

but the clock  
—*talk talk*—  
continuing called me,

a voice ever stranger  
in complaint.  
With my staff I came

to the first step,  
sanguine indeed,  
and dressed in a well-cut Western suit

—quite the best I saw on anybody  
during my whole stay  
in that unstable regime.

There were people in plots  
bowing to creation.  
*Please* I protested,

I had not come to stay.  
*You will go in*  
said Nobody,

*all will be quiet.*  
I looked down  
and could see thousands

crowding into the grounds  
*—my my—*  
and climbed into the burial site.

Within the twisted  
rows of graves,  
the teeth of under,

some spoke of hatred  
and some of hope.  
Blind, they wept on command,

in wheelchairs,  
on crutches,  
waving stumps.

It was rather haunting—  
the gate of shadows,  
the path unlit,

and ahead,  
also dark,  
an abandoned fortress.

Carried along by the crowd,  
our way lit by flashlights  
through dim corridors,

I said *Citizens*,  
*no no*.  
Ahead, a door opened.

I recognized the old council  
sitting round a table,  
some in religious collars,

the atmosphere a court.  
Chairing the proceeding,  
a tall, bearded figure

uttered a few words in German  
for my benefit.  
He had lived for a time

and remarked  
that I needed  
to be *dealt with*.

Listening quietly,  
I tried to avoid  
any show of emotion.

This clearly displeased him.  
He seemed to expect me  
to present my own commentary.

I said in reply

the following,

shaken and uneasy,

the slim thread of truth but little help . . .