

## field trip

the first hour begins before the blank blackboard  
an indefinite article settles on the hatstand by the door  
which head flies towards us  
you grow up, suddenly  
is the cross on the wall empty the one on which Jesus hung for  
years  
he must have been removed overnight  
or have taken an express train to Athens with a through coach to  
the Adriatic  
just like the whole class did on a bitterly cold morning in early  
summer  
in our pointless summer coats we stood on the hill of the Acropolis  
two nights later  
and clawed Greek skills out of each other's eyes  
none of us made it to Peloponnes  
but to Hades in two nights

the history teacher did not want to be called Orpheus  
his recollection did not reach that far  
yet neither his name nor his face could conceal  
his kinship to an Anatolian slave  
it could have been worse for him  
we had a wide range of names we traded with great élan  
they leapt into the air and snapped indiscriminately like caged wild  
animals  
grade eleven A lined up amounts to a cage  
nobody arrived at the idea of release  
the black panther gets in Orpheus' way  
and rewrites history  
you don't need memory for that  
the fragment of a dream and a life begun just yesterday are enough  
to tell a story<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Geschichte* in German could be translated as story or history.

the history teacher points to the blackboard on which the future  
changes into physics  
the physicist turns around he barely wants to name his formula  
the one that entitles him to displace the history teacher  
verse appears on the board  
a text to sing along to  
we intone it and the teacher covers his ears  
even though he is praised for his deafness  
hysterically he shouts at us we remain lyrical  
the day transforms into a life's history  
any life it is not yet a discipline we will never be old  
to whom after all can you entrust your life at seventeen  
I envy the half-orphans who grow up with the mother  
the smell of feminine hands across the face at all times  
then the flesh gets its money's worth  
I imagine that biology is always feminine  
and geography mixed-gender hybrid  
in competition with algebra a small crooked  
weeping willow in the schoolyard unimaginable what went on here  
back then  
thirty-one years subtracted from  
nineteen hundred seventy-five  
the penal colony was housed here and the discipline at the time  
geology  
exhumations so no one can hide under his ancestors' gravestone  
a starry sky tipped into the open pit Peace Plaza  
their tongues fall out of the stones when you tip them over  
silence is cement  
the history teacher practices forgetting with us  
who would not call him Orpheus  
we knit summer coats out of transparent yarn  
what risk we take in geography  
for one day for the fraction of one day  
we want to dig dig dig a tunnel  
heading home a night train full of eleventh grade in an expedition  
coma  
we crossed under state borders fell overboard

were reborn through open windows  
in the wind's fluttering howl  
then the train stopped  
silence on command  
bleary-eyed in lockstep  
in the baggage fake marble souvenirs  
splintered footprints from some coast  
there we stood in rank and file  
little green men wanted to see our passports  
they were our own watching  
over the country that was left for us