



Heidegger

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He aimed to start the whole enquiry over
from scratch, no less, devising spiky questions
to penetrate the fundament of things
(and, incidentally, people), twisting, wrenching
German more cruelly than it
had been thumbscrewed before. So many
variants on Being already, yet he'd
torture more out. And people? Well,
the dual came pat in clandestine affairs;
the plural irked him, then he found the answer:
das Volk Hitler had just made into one.
Room for philosophy in the new *Reich*?
For a while it looked so: his students marched,
he strutted on beflagged platforms, intrigued.
Then he found that there were just too many
snouts in the trough, got jostled out, resigned..

When former lovers, Hannah, Elisabeth,
wrote to him distraught they'd lost their jobs
for being classed as Jews, he answered
as if they'd had the flu, hoped things improved.
Worried that Hitler might have feet of clay,
he turned to Hölderlin's last visions, making
the future a re-born pre-Socratic age
of Being. Puzzling? The age demanded
puzzles, as Stalingrad fell and cities





turned into rubble: no mysteries there.
But Being could be mystified forever
if you had the key. But what of Rilke?
He'd written some good verse, but was misguided.
Celan? Ah now, another gifted tongue –
but to demand some clear words on all those
dead Jews? Silence was unassailable, waiting
on the god to come. And always Being,
a stuff to spin more webs of ugly words.
He treated death like a feared headmaster,
incessantly invoked but never fetched
to face the class down. His own
a mountain idyll, buried beside the wife
he shared so little with. His sons
live on the swelling flood of royalties.

9 February 2009

