

Poem by Peg Boyers

Unsent Dedication

for Martin Heidegger—

This is *your* book.

You know this and do not know.
My book, but *yours*.

I cover my tracks, your tracks,
but the forest wind blows the cover,

fickle dirt over the path,
our path:

those days in Marburg,
the nights.

Meetings in the clearing.
Lichtung—

the light there in darkness, sudden as thought.
Your thought

the current that charges, my body
conducting the charge.

Remember?

The touch that taught meaning. Taught light.

Your tongue in my mouth.
My hunger for that. Word and flesh.

Appetite that grew with feeding
still grows.

Black wood of yearning.
Compulsion for light. *Lichtzwang*.

We'd do anything for it.
For clarity, we said.

As if thought could take us there,
our naked thinking-together

in the forbidden wood.
You the master, I the kneeling apprentice,

happy, submissive – unhappy
outgrowing the role.

We lay there, whispering secrets on the forest floor:
you lied, said you needed me.

Undaunted little Jewess at home in your rule.
My ruler. My measure. My Leader

leading me deep
through the thicket to Being,

inversions and reversals
in a camouflage of words.

The thrill of slow revelation,
strip-tease of layers timed to delay the blast

at the gnarled heart in the middle.
The muddle of knowing and needing-to-know.

Ideas better than sex, better still with.
You taught me. To see and not to see.

The mountain hut at Todtnauberg your classroom.
Tod –

Death, the hidden fact that didn't fit the system.
Being and Un-being, the veils you threw over it all,

secret goose step, deft pavane.
My dancing Rector, my brainy nature boy,

my peasant in lederhosen mit Fraulein
on the climb in britches and alpine hat,

rubbing arnica on our muscles,
sore from hiking, dodging thorns.

We were good at that
so long ago, and you are still,

now, where you hide, in the forest,
married, yet alone.

The clearing's grown over.
But the light at the center still draws me.

Here is my book, my German translation,
the antique title for you, O Philosopher:

Vita Activa –
the active life built on the thinking life.

You act as if thinking sufficed.
Life thought, but not lived.

Here is my book with no dedication.

*How could I dedicate it to you,
my teacher,
to whom I remained faithful
and unfaithful,
and both in love?*

*I kiss your brow and your eyes,
which I miss yet despise
and kiss again –*

Hannah

Peg Boyers is executive editor of "Salmagundi" and the author of a book of poetry, "Hard Bread" (2002). Her poetry has appeared in "The New Republic," "The Paris Review," and "Ploughshares," among others.

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