Marc Sabat

is land a part

for contrabass and computer

PLAINSOUND MUSIC EDITION
is land a part (2014)
for contrabass and computer

commissioned by Frank Reinecke and the Bayerischer Rundfunk for Musica Viva, München

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These nine poems for contrabass and computer are the first part of a trilogy written for Frank Reinecke and Helge Slaatto, which continues in a second set for violin and computer and a final section with all three instruments. The form is a cycle of reflections, propositions in miniature, freely following along Uljana Wolf’s poems “Falsche Freunde” (kookbooks, Berlin, 2009) and Susan Bernofsky’s English translations of these poems, published as “False Friends” (Ugly Duckling Presse, Brooklyn, 2011). Each lyric is based around one letter of the alphabet, meandering in sound and sense to open an associative space across two languages.

Wolf’s work, drawing on the idea of translation, suggested to me another perspective of exploring “harmony” as perceived in music. Imagine individual streams of sound flowing along beside each other. These might at certain moments seem, to us listening, to reveal common sources, or to pool together like islands, before once again branching off to follow their own courses. I began by composing a text counterpoint joining the two sets of poems: adding pauses to bring them together in mutual annotation, meeting on shared phonemes, words, sounds, meanings. Based on this score, I directed, recorded and edited Uljana’s own spoken readings to form a first layer of harmony. Her rhythmic intonations are precisely transcribed in changing meters, creating a time structure for the instrumental and electronic sounds.

The shared letters, producing different contexts across two languages, have their analogy in the contrabass natural harmonics and their nodes. Because of their progressive thickness, each of the four strings has a different point at which bowing the microtonal high partials splinters into multiphonic chords. After mapping out neighborhoods around each occurrence of the various higher partials, I settled after some trials on the limits 19, 15, 11 and 9 for each of the respectively descending strings G, D, A, E. These harmonic nodes divide each string into unique melodies, which along with the multiphonics comprise a second recurring layer in the piece. Mirroring high in low, the bass register of the open strings poses another limit. Harmonic intervals, even the simplest – for example, the 4/3 perfect fourth between adjacent strings – become rougher, their periodic signatures dissolving into subaudio beating frequencies. This boundary between interval and pulsation limits the possibility of directly tuning the harmonic ratio by ear. Such sounds, and the occasional singing of their common partials, form a third layer of the piece.

A structural grouping of the textures is found in the space between live playing and sounds from the three loudspeakers. The contrabass is echoed in prerecorded doubles (harmonic pizzicati) and live sostenuto transformations of the contrabass bowing, captured in static spectral friezes, which at times decay to feature their strongest sinewave components. These are met, occasionally, by one to four lines of computer-generated sinewaves, emerging from the interferences and resonances between contrabass and voice to form their own pure gliding and roving lines apart.

is land a part was written in 2015 at the request of Frank Reinecke and is commissioned by Musica Viva of the Bayerischen Rundfunk.

Berlin, 12. January 2015
Accidentals

Extended Helmholtz-Ellis Ji Pitch Notation

for Just Intonation

designed by Marc Sabat and Wolfgang von Schweinitz

The exact intonation of each pitch may be written out by means of the following harmonically-defined signs:

\[\begin{align*}
\uparrow & \quad \text{raises} / \text{lowers by a 11-limit undecimal quarter-tone} \\
\downarrow & \quad \text{lowers} / \text{raises by a 13-limit tridecimal third-tone} \\
\uparrow & \quad \text{lowers} / \text{raises by a 17-limit schisma} \\
\downarrow & \quad \text{raises} / \text{lowers by a 19-limit schisma} \\
\end{align*}\]

Pythagorean series of fifths – the open strings

(... c g d a e ...)

\[\begin{align*}
\uparrow \downarrow & \quad \text{lowers} / \text{raises by a syntonic comma} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[81:80 = \text{circa 21.5 cents}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\uparrow \downarrow \uparrow \downarrow & \quad \text{lowers} / \text{raises by two syntonic commas} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[\text{circa 45 cents}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\downarrow \uparrow & \quad \text{lowers} / \text{raises by a septimal comma} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[64:63 = \text{circa 27.3 cents}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\downarrow \uparrow & \quad \text{lowers} / \text{raises by two septimal commas} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[\text{circa 54.5 cents}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\uparrow & \quad \text{raises} / \text{lowers by an 11-limit undecimal quarter-tone} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[33:32 = \text{circa 13.3 cents}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\uparrow & \quad \text{lowers} / \text{raises by a 13-limit tridecimal third-tone} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[27:26 = \text{circa 63.3 cents}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\uparrow & \quad \text{lowers} / \text{raises by a 17-limit schisma} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[256:215 = \text{circa 6.8 cents}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\downarrow & \quad \text{raises} / \text{lowers by a 19-limit schisma} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[113:112 = \text{circa 3.4 cents}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\uparrow & \quad \text{raises} / \text{lowers by a 23-limit comma} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[756:729 = \text{circa 16.5 cents}\]

In addition to the harmonic definition of a pitch by means of its accidentals, it is also possible to indicate its absolute pitch-height as a cents-deviation from the respectively indicated chromatic pitch in the 12-tone system of Equal Temperament.

The attached arrows for alteration by a syntonic comma are transcriptions of the notation that Hermann von Helmholtz used in his book “Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik” (1863).

The annotated English translation “On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music” (1875/1885) is by Alexander J. Ellis, who refined the definition of pitch within the 12-tone system of Equal Temperament by introducing a division of the octave into 1200 cents.

The sign for a septimal comma was devised by Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770) — the composer, violinist and researcher who first studied the production of difference tones by means of double stops.
VORZEICHEN  
EXTENDED HELMHOLTZ-ELLIS JI PITCH NOTATION

für die natürliche Stimmung
konzipiert von Marc Sabat und Wolfgang von Schweinitz

Die Stimmung jedes Tons ist mit folgenden harmonisch definierten Vorzeichen ausnutzbar:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\flat & b \\
\sharp & f \\
\natural & n \\
\& & & & \\
\end{array}
\]

- Pythagoreische Quintenele des leeren Streicher-Saiten
  \(\ldots e g d a e \ldots\)
- Erniedrigung / Erhöhung um ein Syntonisches Terzkomma
  \(81 : 80 \approx \text{circa} 21.5\text{ cents}\)
- Erniedrigung / Erhöhung um zwei Syntonische Terzkommas
  \(\text{circa} 45\text{ cents}\)
- Erniedrigung / Erhöhung um ein Septimenkomma
  \(64 : 63 \approx \text{circa} 27.3\text{ cents}\)
- Erniedrigung / Erhöhung um zwei Septimenkommas
  \(\text{circa} 54.6\text{ cents}\)
- Erhöhung / Erniedrigung um den undezimalen Viertelton der 1½-Relation
  \(32 : 33 \approx \text{circa} 33.3\text{ cents}\)
- Erhöhung / Erniedrigung um den tridezimalen Drittelton der 1½-Relation
  \(26 : 27 \approx \text{circa} 65.3\text{ cents}\)
- Erniedrigung / Erhöhung um ein Selzehner-Schisma
  \(256 : 255 \approx \text{circa} 6.8\text{ cents}\)
- Erhöhung / Erniedrigung um ein Neunzehner-Schisma
  \(111 : 112 \approx \text{circa} 3.4\text{ cents}\)
- Erhöhung / Erniedrigung um ein Dreundzwanziger Komma
  \(736 : 729 \approx \text{circa} 16.7\text{ cents}\)

Zusätzlich zu der harmonischen Definition der Tonhöhe durch das Vorzeichen für jeden Ton ist auch der Cents-Wert der Abweichung der gewünschten Stimmung von der Tonhöhe des jeweils bezeichneten chromatischen Tons der gleichmäßig temperierten Zwölfton-Skala angegeben.

Die angeteilten Pfeile für die Alteration um ein Syntonisches Terzkomma sind eine kluge Transkription der Notation, die Hermann von Helmholtz in seinem Buch "Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik" (1863) verwendet hat. Die kommentierte englische Übersetzung "On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music" (1855; 1881) stammt von Alexander J. Ellis, der auch eine enorme Verfeinerung der Tonhöhendefinition innerhalb des Zwölftonsystems der gleichmäßig temperierten Stimmung durch die Unterteilung der Oktave in 1200 Cents eingeführt hat.

Das Vorzeichen für die Alteration um ein Septimenkomma wurde von Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770) erfunden, der als Komponist, Geiger und Wissenschaftler die durch Doppelgriffe erzeugten Differenztonen untersucht hat.
An informal introduction to the Helmholtz-Ellis Accidents
by Marc Sabat
Berlin, April 2009

In learning to read HE accidentals, without having to rely on an electronic tuning device, it is important to be familiar with three things:

First, to keep in mind the natural tuning of intervals in a harmonic series, which deviate from the tempered system.

Second, to get to know how the accidentals refer to these overtone relationships.

Third, to observe that each written pitch may be related to many other pitches by natural intervals, and to tune it accordingly.

In most cases, this approach will allow the player to quickly and intuitively play just intonation (JI) pitches quite accurately. Any remaining adjustments can be made by ear, based on the specific sound of JI intervals.

Just intervals are readily learned because they are built up from simple, tuneable harmonic relationships. These are generally based on eliminating beating between common partials, finding common fundamentals and audible combination tones, and establishing a resonant, stable sonority which maximizes clarity: both of consonance and of dissonance.

A well-focussed JI sound is completely distinct from the irregular, fuzzy beating of tempered sounds. Just consonances, when marginally out of tune, beat slowly and sweetly and may be corrected with the most subtle adjustments of bowing or breath. Just dissonances produce a sharply pulsing regular rhythm and have very clear, distinct colors.

To become familiar with the notation and sounds of JI, the fundamental building blocks are prime number overtones 3, 5, 7, 11 and 13, each of which is associated with a specific pair of accidentals and a basic musical interval.

3 is associated with the signs flat, natural, sharp and refers to the series of untempered perfect fifths (Pythagorean intonation). Generally, A is taken as the tuning reference, and the central pitches C-G-D-A-E can be imagined as the normal tuning of the orchestral string instruments. The just C is rather lower than tempered tuning because of the pure fifths. The further this series is extended, the greater the deviation from tempered tuning: the flats are lower, the sharps higher.

5 is associated with arrows attached to the flat, natural, sharp signs and refers to the pure major third. These arrows correct the Pythagorean intervals by a Syntonic Comma, which is approximately 1/9 of a wholetone or 22 cents. So, for example, the note E-flat arrow-up is a just major third below G, and the note F-sharp arrow-down is a major third above D. In most music, flats are often raised by a comma and sharps are lowered. Because of the open string tuning, it is common to sometimes raise F and C (to match A and E) and to sometimes lower A and E (to match F and C). Corrections by one Syntonic Comma have been used throughout Western music history and are relatively familiar to the ear. However, traditionally these corrections have been hidden by players, for example in Meantone Temperament where fifths are mistuned narrow by 1 comma so that the third C-E ends up sounding pure. More recently, the currently prevailing Equal Temperament has made us accustomed to beating thirds, so at first the pure intervals may seem unfamiliar. To play the arrows accurately, one must carefully learn the sound of the consonant major and minor thirds and sixths, and learn to articulate comma differences clearly.

7 is associated with a Tartini sign resembling the numeral. It corrects the Pythagorean intervals by a Septimal Comma, which is approximately 1/7 of a wholetone or 27 cents. When the Pythagorean minor third is lowered by this amount, it becomes a noticeably low third often heard in Blues music.

11 is associated with the quartetone signs (cross and backwards flat). The accidental is used to raise the perfect fourth by 53 cents, producing the exact tuning of the 11th partial in a harmonic series. The sound is most easily learned by playing one octave plus one fourth and raising it by a quartetone.

13 is associated with the thirdtone signs (cross and backwards flat, each with 2 verticals). The accidental is used to lower the Pythagorean major sixth by 65 cents, producing the exact tuning of the 13th partial in a harmonic series. The sound is most easily learned as a neutral-sounding sixth, one-third of the way between the just minor and just major sixths (closer to minor than to major).

The following table presents the accidentals together with their associated ratios and cents deviations. To calculate the cents deviation from Equal Temperament of a specific written pitch (if desired) the following shortcut may be used:

1.) Find the cents deviation of the Pythagorean pitch, by calculating how many fifths it is away from A, multiplying by 2, and using a plus sign if it is on the sharp side and a minus if it is on the flat side.

2.) For each microtonal accidental, add or subtract its approximate cents value (as given above), keeping in mind whether the accidental is raising or lowering the pitch.

The resulting value should be a cents deviation within 1 or 2 cents accuracy, which is an acceptable starting point for fine-tuning by ear.
THE HARMONIC SERIES 1 - 64 above “A0” (overtone row)

notated using the Extended Helmholtz-Ellis Pitch Notation
microtonal accidentals designed by Marc Sabat and Wolfgang von Schweinitz, 2004
23-LIMIT TUNEABLE INTERVALS below “A4”

tested and notated in three gradations of difficulty (large open notehead = easiest; small black notehead = most difficult)
by Marc Sabat (violin/viola) with assistance from Wolfgang von Schweinitz (cello), Beltrane Ruiz (bass), Anais Chen (violin)—Berlin, 2005
23-LIMIT TUNEABLE INTERVALS above “A3”

notated using the Extended Helmholtz- Ellis II Pitch Notation with cents deviations from 12-tone equal temperament based on $A = 0$ cents microtonal accidentals designed by Marc Sabat and Wolfgang von Schweinitz, 2004.
is land a part
for contrabass and computer

for Frank Reinecke
commissioned by Frank Reinecke and the Bayerischer Rundfunk for Musica Vita, München

A

Tempo Libero
\( \text{ca. 108} \)

Voice (Deutsch)

Voice (English)

Contrabass

Electronic Sounds

Tempo Giusto
\( \text{= 108} \)

D
E

A

A

start track with prerecorded voices

\( \text{A1} \)

Ch

S

music by Marc Sabat
poems by Uliana Wolf
English translations by Susan Bernofsky

commissioned by Frank Reinecke and the Bayerischer Rundfunk for Musica Vita, München
Giusto

stall - des-sen mor-gens zu berg  
(take a bet!)  
und nachts  
out of

Contrabass live sustain, slowly fading out

sustain until end of b. 36, slowly fading.
Tempo Giusto

\( \text{Tempo Giusto} \)

\( j = 108 \)

both hands play one-handed pizz. (osia : ord. pizz. ad lb.)
○ marks the plucking position,
with stem down = thumb
* marks the harmonic node

D
C lam che l als boss ein
c

E

\( \text{Sampled Contrabass} \)

pizz. sempre

C

\( \text{false friend, this chef, this boss, this kit-chen man or bes-sie's beau} \)

\( \text{I'll go-bble you, love,} \)

\( \text{Ein Loch, was bleibt. Lie-be hier ge-meint als do-nut, by which} \)

\( \text{ein Loch, the hole. love, ist al-lex, was blieb. lie-be} \)

\( \text{als do-nut, by which} \)

R

\( \text{Tempo Giusto} \)

\( j = 108 \)

both hands play one-handed pizz. (osia : ord. pizz. ad lb.)
○ marks the plucking position,
with stem down = thumb
* marks the harmonic node
Giusto

bei andern große schlaf aus, sel ten je doch das fra gli che rätsel. trom mel wir bel,

while putting others to bed, the riddle at hand, though remains unresolved. drum roll.

endlich mis ter chandler te le gram: i did not know it either. (damn.)

at last, chandler's te le gram arrives: i did not know either. (damn!)
Tempo Giusto
\( J = 108 \)

- **Voice (Deutsch)**
  - 42x109
  - Deutsch—
  - x

- **Voice (English)**
  - 42x106
  - English—
  - x

- **Contrabass**
  - sounding harmonics are approximate, multiphonics and higher octaves may sound
  - every repetition is lower by a very small amount (ca. 10%)
  - each string, play

- **Libero**
  - p poco sostenuto

- **Giusto**
  - ff molto pesante

- **S**
  - as before

- **D**
  - flog

- **E**
  - to f log a

- **Cb**
  - as before

- **Giusto**
  - p sostenuto

- **M**
  - e cantabile

- **F1**

- **F2**

- **dead horse:**
  - vergilcher sport
  - wir wollen lieber wie der liegen sehn,
  - oh ne s

- **E**
  - what foolish sport,
  - we'd rather see it fly again,

- **approximate sounds**
Contrabass

Electronic Sounds

(overlapping, slowly decaying, like a piano sustain pedal)

coordination with voice track ad lib.

(jul-klap, wir dach-ten ja,
na-tur-ally we thought)
D 18
lie-be
seh
nichts
als
jul-klap
not to say

E
love
was
big
jul-klap

Cb

GZ

D
er-le-gen-hei-
ab es
hält-le
und
fülle
ver-bren-
en
konnte
sich,

erere
were
no
dis-
illusions,
un-
veilings
you
can
burn
your
fingers
on,

E

Cb

S

G3

D

den
weg
i
en-schlas-
gen,
der die
schle-
ymacht,
das
buch,
das
bild,

E

the
path
you
choose
a
loop-de-loop,
whether
image
or
book,

Gs

S

Molto Libero

Cb
Tempo Giusto
\( \dot{z} = 108 \)

Voice (Deutsch)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ut</td>
<td>hat, der was?</td>
<td>ich frage dich.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voice (English)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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Contrabass

\( \text{Cb live sus} \)

Electronic Sounds

\( \text{(most recently potted sound, no decay)} \)
crushed, and most like-ly of felt- so you’ll feel shel-tered till a gust comes blus-te-ring by. a h-

wäh rend an de re be-kann-tlich

how co zy we’d hud-dle in a

sag test du

vi

and then part ways?

Libero

Giusto

Nunneva-

Nunneva-

Nunneva-
Poco Libero

D 37

be it not so!

E 42

nie will ich fahren

Hier

5/III 5/IV

G 47

aus deiner haut, nie ziehen,

4/IV 5/III

Poco Libero

47

never shall I be take myself out,
D

21

for instance is-land: i say gey-sers.

E

-tray. for instance, to ice-land. i say gey-sers.

Cb

D

27

you say eyes; they're watch-ing us, you say.

E

you say eyes; they're watch-ing us, you say.

Cb

D

33

they're blin-ded like a hedge-hog in the fog.

E

they're blin-ded like hedge-hogs in the fog.

Cb

S

(voices cross)

(2004)
D 38
Das gleiche Spiel, ich will die Ge-winnen lassen,
at home,

E 43
The same old story, I want the hedge-hog to win its race,

Cb 47
Dich gegen plagen hast, die das nachsehen haben.

S

Dich gegen plagen hast, die das nachsehen haben.

while you hate to see hares left

empty hanger.
am anfang war, oder zu beginn,
in the beginning, though, or at the start,

welche art laut, oder leise,
what art, what sort of sound, of silence:

listen, when they begin the beguine, und wann ist das?
listen, when they begin the beguine, when’s that?

und muss wer a sagt gar nichts, wer b sagt sich der
and mustn’t a lead to b, to being sure

lippenn gewiss (gebiss erst etwas später),
of one’s lips (teeth soon to follow)

und sein: sei sprechen dann the art of falling
to utter the shall, and then the art of falling

auseinander, der stille, dem rahmen,
apart, falling on the part of silence, of sense

immem apart, so ausgefallen wie
but never not strikingly, struck in twain

nur eben ein.
just as it strikes you.
am anfang bald, und bald am ende wieder:
in the beginning bald, bald at the end once more:

unsere haare, und dazwischen sind sie nicht
in between, this hair is hard

zu fassen, nicht in sich und nicht in griff zu kriegen,
to grasp, tricky to pin it up or down,

weder im guten noch im bad. stattdessen
for better or for bed. standing on end instead

morgens zu berg (take a bet?) und nachts out of bed
(fake a bet?) and at night out of hand

(siehe ad). am besten hältst du sie als igel,
(see the ad). perhaps best to crop it hedgehog close:

der hat noch jeden hare besiegt. liegt aber
he always gets his hare. but should you

eine strähne im brief, gar eine lange,
find a strand within a letter, long or brief,

halte sie unverfänglich an die wange.
press it sweetly to your cheek.
C clam chef
C clam chef

als boss ein falscher freund, als
what a false friend, this chef, this boss,
kitchen man in bessies tross:
this kitchen man or bessie’s beau: i’ll gobble you, love,
ein loch, love, ist alles, was blieb. liebe hier
and leave the hole. love
gemeint als donut, also known as: du not go. or
is a donut, by which i mean: do nut go, or
i’ll go nuts. or so it goes. die lieder, durch mögen,
i’ll go nuts. or so the song goes through
küchen. klamme hände
kitchens and guts. we haven’t yet sung of clammy hands.
kamen darin nicht vor. die männer hießen sam, and lord,
the men were all called sam, and lord,
how they could open clam. von ihren anderen kooky künsten
how they could open clam. their other kooky crafts
wollen wir lieber schweigen, oder summen,
we’ll leave unmentioned – or else just hum them,
mit zuckrig vollem mund.
plumply sated, sugar-mouthed.
D damit dick drum rum
damit dick

ein fluch, gar ein gesuch: wer hat
this curse is like a river none can dam. who killed

owen taylor umgebracht, und womit. damit. aha.

owen taylor and by what means?

wir rufen harry, dick, and tom: die
by which i mean: call up harry, tom and dick: they like

forschen gern in gürtelweiten, gründlich
to nose about the beltway, investigating

im dickicht darunter, bleiben dann, wie alle
the thickets below, and like all gumshoes

detektive, lange dran. zuweilen auch drum
they leave no stone unturned, nor rocks unpolished.

rum. der löst bei manchen zungen, bei
rum lads like these make some folks sing while putting

der anderen großen schlaf aus, selten jedoch das
others to big sleep. the riddle at hand, though,

fragliche rätsel. trommelwirbel, endlich mister
remains unresolved. drum roll. at last,

chandler’s telegram: i didn’t know it either. (damn.)
chandler’s telegram arrives: i didn’t know either. (damn!)
ich habe, wenn ich ehrlich bin, einen elften finger, und wenn ich lüge auch. es ist ein knubbelfinger, der elfte, mit knarzenden knöcheln, so sähe das wort knuckles, it’s what the word churl would look like if it came to earth or scudded beneath it finger auf die erde, oder unter. an den zähen gelenken hängen sonntags meine enkel und twirl from the gnarly joints on the sabbath. such schaukeln. all das kommt plötzlich, aber wahr, wenn a muchness, but truly, when a wind geht, kann mans in den angeln quietschen hören. wind kicks up you can hear the hinges creaking.
to flog a dead horse: vergeblicher sport. wir wollens
lieber wieder fliegen sehn, ohne striemen stehn
see it fly again, see it stand unwhipped
im stall, im herbst, in jedem fall before it
within its stall, or failing that, before it
fell: well & lebendig. und falls wendig,
falls: well & alive. and if it’s lithe, let it be
fast wie wasser: schillerndes fell, wir striegelten faster,
fast as water, a shimmering coat, we curried it cunningly,
das keiner einen riegel schübe vor den quell, eine regel,
that no door be barred before the font, no rule
oder riemen, oder was sich sonst hier schindend
or strap to halt us in our labors
pflog.
till we make the hoofbeats scan.
julklapp, wir dachten ja, liebe sei nichts als julklapp. naturally we thought love was one big julklapp.

verlegenheiten gab es, hülle und fülle, not to say there were no disillusions, unveilings

verbrennen konnte man sich, den weg you could burn your fingers on, the path

einschlagen, der die schleife macht, das buch, you choose a loop-de-loop, whether image or book,
das bild, kaum heiße ware, doch viel rauch. not such hot commodities, though where

bis eine gelegenheit kam, die uns wahrnahm. there’s smoke... then we knocked an

wir wurden diebe. wir nahmen ein herz, opportunity and became thieves. we took heart,

und das gegenherz ein: möglich wärs, wir sind took a counterheart: could that be us here

uns jetzt präsent. in the present?
HAT HELL HUT
HAT HELL HUT

wer hat, der was? ich frage dich. breite krempe,
he who has a hat has what? i ask. broad-brimmed,
dach überm kopf, eckig, fleckig,
you say, a roof above one’s head, cornered, crushed, and
meistens aus felt — fühlt sich behütet bis zur
most likely of felt — so you’ll feel sheltered till a
nächsten bö. hütte wäre wohl
gust comes blustering by. a hut might
verlässlicher. während andere
be trustier, though some might say i’ve hidden you under
bekanntlich in der helle hausen, säßen wir zusammen
my skin. how cozily we’d huddle in a
im dunklen nest. aber sagtest du verlassen? alas!
heap of hides. and then part ways?
nie will ich fahren
be it not so! no home without you could be haven or heaven.

aus deiner haut, nie ziehen, ab, aus, von
never shall i betake myself out, away or off.
dannen, zurück, oder, zum abschied, den hut.
nor will i, parting, doff.
bei aller liebe, auch auf reisen, führen wir uns
leaving aside love, in flight or on the road,
zuweilen in die irre. for instance island:
we sometimes go astray. for instance, to iceland.
i say geysers, you say eyes; they’re watching us, you say,
i say geysers, you say eyes; they’re watching us, you say,
nay, i say, they’re blinded like a hedgehog in the fog.
nay, i say, they’re blinded like hedgehogs in the fog.
zuhause das gleiche spiel. ich will die igel
at home, the same old story. i want
auf dem feld gewinnen lassen,
the hedgehog to win its race, while you hate
dich dagegen plagen hasen, die das nachsehen haben.
to see hares left empty-handed.
in letzter instanz kommt ein eagle geflogen
then an eagle flies up and
und stiehlt uns, irgendwie unverfroren, die show.
coldbloodedly steals the show.