It is July again. A new summer in Ostend.

The streetlamps from which Stefan Zweig said, more than twenty years ago, he would hang himself are still there. And the sea is the same too, the expansive long beach, the big, overly broad promenade, the elaborately curved casino with its large terrace, the bistrocs with their little marble tables outside, the wooden bathing huts in the sand. The newspapers lie on the bistro tables, but there are no newsboys calling out alarming headlines for the Austrian tourists to make fun of. The mood along the shore is boisterous, the season has just begun, it’s hot, the entire youth of Belgium seems to have gathered this summer in what the advertising brochures like to call the “Queen of Beach Resorts,” on the white spun-sugar promenade by the North Sea. July 1936. Ostend.

Stefan Zweig thinks back to that lost innocence, remembering a world he believed to be eternal, a world without end, and a man in a flat cap in a kingdom of the dead in mass revolt, a boneyard of masks.

But Ostend also conjures up memories of bursts of energy, and intensity and strength, of a new beginning with the force of a
catapult, ripping him out of contented inertia to encounter the utterly unexpected possibility of a new world and its equally unan-
ticipated sense of spiritual brotherhood. So even after the cata-
clysmic destruction began, with its aftershocks still to be felt now, in this new summer, the place itself will forever be associated with the hope of a sudden change in the course of the universe. What a youthful, yearning young man, so susceptible to wild enthusiasm, Stefan Zweig had been in 1914!

Twenty-two years have passed since that summer, years in which he has become a world star of literature. His name is as internationally famous as that of Thomas Mann, his books outsell those of any other German author around the world. His novellas, his historical biographies, and _Decisive Moments in History_ are global best sellers. He’s a child of Fortune, owns a little yellow castle in the woods up on the Kapuzinerberg overlooking Salzburg, corresponds with every great mind on the continent, and has long been married to his love of those years back then, Friderike von Winternitz. And now, in this new summer, he is a man struggling to find a foothold.

Zweig has barely ever bothered with present-day politics or religion in the world in which he lives. In history – yes! If it was the world of Mary Queen of Scots, Marie Antoinette, or Joseph Fouché, he knew every historical and political detail, the mecha-
nisms of power, the world-historical context, all of which he en-
compased in his books as part of the human story, the story of mighty, individual people. Or, occasionally, as the story of power-
less people who were singled out by a world-historical lightning bolt to change the course of destiny. None of it had anything to do with the world he actually lived in.

It is only in recent years that he has begun to sketch himself in his historical personages and his present world in historical events.

Two years ago he published a book about the humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam, and most recently a monograph titled _Castellio Against Calvin_, which carried as its subtitle “A Conscience Against Power.” Erasmus and Castellio are the heroes in whom he also describes himself, the ideals for which he strives: conscience against power, humanism, cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and reason. In the life and teachings of Erasmus, Zweig discerns the art of ameliorating conflicts by “well-intentioned understanding” and
“the absolute will to comprehend” per se. In Calvin’s opponent Castellio he sees the great anti-ideologue, who despised terror and intolerance and fought against them with his pen until, exhausted after the long struggle, he died without achieving victory. That Zweig, with his pleas for tolerance and understanding has recently been reaping a harvest of intolerance and incomprehension, in émigré circles first and foremost, is something he finds utterly bewildering.

But these are the years when decisions must be made, the years of resolution. Zweig is still writing out of a world, and about a world, that no longer exists. His ideal is pointless, unrealistic, risible, and dangerous. His analogies no longer have a place in a present in which the enemy holds all the power. What use is tolerance in a world in which any man and everything he lives for and everything he writes are in danger of being ground to a pulp?

“Fight or shut up,” Joseph Roth wrote to him. But Zweig doesn’t
want to fight. He wants to keep quiet in the first years after the Nazis seize power in Germany. Even after his books are burned on the Opernplatz in Berlin. Quiet – the better to keep working and living in peace. And perhaps the better to ensure that his books continue to be sold in Germany and he can continue to influence his readers there. For a time this even seems to work. In the first years of Nazi rule in Germany, Zweig’s books are still available to German readers.

This finally comes to an end in the summer of 1936. His German publisher, Anton Kippenberg, is no longer allowed to issue his books, yet Zweig still doesn’t switch to one of the German-language publishers in exile like Querido or Allert de Lange, which are based in Amsterdam. He goes to the little Austrian publishing house of Herbert Reichner, who, although he is a Jew, is still able to get his books shipped into Germany and thus is excoriated by many émigrés, including Roth, as Hitler’s house Jew, who’s prepared to make any compromise just to keep doing business with Germany. To Zweig, Reichner is still a fragment of Austria, a connection to his old homeland. He himself is barely ever there any more. Since his house on the Kapuzinerberg was searched by police in February 1934, on the hunt for weapons of the Workers’ Republican Defense Alliance, it’s been lost territory to him. This experience was not only an insult to his writings and his work, which for so many years has been dedicated to nonviolence – it was an intrusion by the state into his very world, and the protected realm of his creative output.

The house is now nothing more than a burden, a memory, a museum of his earlier life. Even when he lived there, it had had something of the aura of a museum. Zweig was a collector of antiquities, particularly of written artifacts: manuscripts, leaves of notebooks. He owned manuscripts by Balzac and Maupassant, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Goethe, Gustav Mahler, Mozart, and almost every contemporary writer. He had begged each of them for a sheet of paper, one story; he owned the manuscript of Heinrich Mann’s The Road to Hell, Herman Hesse’s novella Heu Mond, Arthur Schnitzler’s Call to Life, poems by Oscar Wilde and Walt Whitman, Richard Dehmel, Paul Claudel, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, plays by Frank Wedekind and Gerhart Haupt-
mann, and Rainer Maria Rilke’s *The Lay of the Love and Death of Christoph Cornet Rilke*, which begins:

Riding, riding, riding, through the day, through the night, through the day.
Riding, riding, riding.
And the heart has become so tired, and the longing so vast.
There are no longer any hills; hardly a tree. Nothing dares to rise up. Alien huts squat, thirsting, beside muddy wells. Nowhere a tower. And always the same scene. One has two eyes too many.

These things that were important to Stefan Zweig in the worlds of the intellect, of literature and of music, he possessed in the handwriting of those who had created them. They are relics of the world in which he feels at home, in which he lives, and whose existence he renews in his writing. He is a great admirer, a selfless worshipper of the art of others. This art, European culture, is his religion.

His altar is Ludwig van Beethoven’s desk, at which he loves to sit, and which he took with him to London, where Friderike set up a new apartment for him at the beginning of the year. Yes, he kept the desk, a page from Goethe’s *Faust*, and the latter’s poem about the violet annotated by Mozart. It’s the terrible, masochism-saturated opposite piece to the romantic “Little Wild Rose,” and it ends:

Alas! Alas! The girl went past:
Unseen the violet in the grass was crushed, poor violet.
It drooped and died, and yet it cried:
“And though I die, yet still I die
By her, by her,
By her feet passing by.

He parted company with the rest of the collection, selling it to the autograph dealer Martin Bodmer in Zurich.

In 1925 Stefan Zweig had written a novella about a blind old man who had once possessed one of the most astonishing collections of engravings and drawings in the world and now sits, sightless and impoverished, among his family in inflation-ravaged Germany, still proud of his works on paper, his collection, his entire
estate. Each day he has them laid out in front of him, one by one. But his unfortunate family, in sheer desperation, has long since sold the collection. The old man has no idea. An art dealer comes to visit from Berlin; the family begs him not to betray them. So the blind collector shows the stranger his pride and joy. Every sheet of paper is blank, for the family has substituted them as each piece was sold. The blind man is oblivious; his pride and his certainty that all this is his have remained untouched all through the years. “And thus this triumphant cascade of words continued for two whole hours. I cannot tell you how eerie it was to be with him as we looked at these hundred or two hundred blank scraps of paper, that were so unbelievably real to this tragic, innocent man that he described and praised every one of them in their exact order, without a single error. The invisible collection, which must have been scattered to the four winds long since, was so unmistakably present for this blind, heartbreakingly deceived man, and his passionate vision was so overwhelming, that even I began to believe in its reality.”

Now it is Zweig’s collection that is being scattered to the winds. He knows that years of wandering lie ahead, and that the new apartment in London will not become a new home. He wants to be free, or a little free, in this world of bonds and shackles.

Nineteen thirty-six is a year of farewells and decisions for Stefan Zweig. His German publishing house no longer publishes him, the German market is lost to him, along with Austria, his collection, and his magnificent house – all of it is now nothing but a wearying burden. It is not easy to jettison what one has built up over the years. An entire life. Will a new one begin? Everything old is a fetter. Most of all his wife, Friderike, who back in 1914, when she was still in her first marriage, had sent word to Ostend to “have lots of fun with Marcelle”; Friderike, whom he had married in 1920.

Stefan Zweig doesn’t want this marriage any more. Love is long gone.

It was two years ago that Friderike surprised him in Nice with his secretary Lotte Altmann. A painful situation for everyone involved, but Friderike was prepared to draw a veil of silence over it all. She knew her husband, she knew his books, his novellas about
passion. She knew what was to be expected, it was part of his life. And now she had just caught him at it for the first time. Friderike Zweig didn’t consider Lotte Altmann to be a real rival.

Later Friderike was keen to tell everyone who wanted to know, and everyone else as well, that it was she who had chosen Lotte Altmann as her husband’s secretary. Diligent, quiet, pale, sickly, unobtrusive, gifted at languages. These were the qualities that had struck Friderike and that in her eyes had made Lotte the ideal secretarial help for the duration of Stefan Zweig’s stay in England.

Lotte Altmann, born in Kattowitz in Upper Silesia in 1908, had studied French, English, and economics at the University of Frankfurt. As a Jew, she had already been denied formal status in the summer of 1933. Her brother was a doctor and since May 1933 was already banned from practicing. He and his whole family had soon decided to look on this as a kind of blessing, for it compelled them to leave Germany early, before the great wave of refugees was unleashed. Her brother opened a practice in London which achieved some considerable success; as time passed, more and more German émigrés came to him as patients. Lotte Altmann was attending language courses in the hopes of getting work one day as a librarian when the job with Stefan Zweig was offered to her in the spring of 1934. A dream for her; she would never have imagined being allowed to work with this world-famous man and even to be of assistance to him in many situations. She was twenty-six years old when she met him, unsure of herself, without a profession or a husband or a country. And a dream for him too, very uneasy in this foreign city and in the English language, and so more in need of support than he had ever been. He was fifty-three and world-famous. Famous, yes, but shy and strangely ill at ease in new situations and in company, never entirely sure of himself. Stefan Zweig was a seeker, always trying to locate the still center in himself, always pursuing self-awareness. A man who always admired others for their secure footing in the world. He, by contrast, was constantly summoning all his strength to stand steady without examining himself constantly to check that this stance was good and upright and respectable and proper and stable. For a man like him, a threatened state of exile was fatal. Riches and fame were of no help to him. He was totally dependent
on his homeland and the security it offered him, and on his friends. And he was worried about getting older. One of the darkest days of his life had been his fiftieth birthday. He couldn’t tolerate aging. And then into his life came this pale, beautiful, young, reserved, intelligent woman who worshipped him silently, admired his writing, and loved his shy ways. It was that very shyness that Friderike had tolerated at best, that she regarded as a silly, somewhat embarrassing affectation even after all their years of marriage. At some point it would happen, she thought, at some point his fame and social routine would cure him of it. But it didn’t get better; on the contrary, the older he got, the worse his insecurity, and the more acute his self-scrutiny, his unsteadiness, his fear of any gust of wind, and anything unknown.

Lotte was a known quantity to him from the very first. Without a word being said. Her quietness, her childlike joy in little things, her attentiveness when she looked at him and asked him things that no one had asked him for years, about his work and his books, things that Friderike and his daughters had long taken for granted about him. And he didn’t need to instruct her as to his literary intentions. All she had to do was to write his letters, ensure that there were always enough stamps, that bills got paid and appointments kept. But she wanted to know everything, not in a demanding way, but with a look that made him talk and talk. What he wrote had a significance. None of it was routine to her, or the obligations of the job. Through her eyes he recaptured his own vision of why he wrote, and the purpose of his labors, the fussing over every comma, his designs for a new world. Just the way Roth had once written to him in his wonderfully exaggerated fashion to say that it didn’t matter a shit if millions of Russians were learning the alphabet, the only thing that mattered was that someone called Stefan Zweig was writing. That was it. So none of it was in vain, none of it was some mere fulfillment of an obligation which, once in finished book form, would be attacked in every literary, political, and moral aspect by the critics and thrown to the winds. It was important, it was the creation of another world. This was what Roth kept telling him in his letters. And this was what Lotte Altmann said to him unbidden. It came from inside her. And Stefan Zweig loved her for it, with a silent, restrained, shy depth of feeling. “A young woman loves me,” he had written to Roth.
And when he was away from her, what he wrote to her in his somewhat old-fashioned, hesitant way was: “I wish you might miss me a little.” And that he worried about her, since she seemed to care so little about her own happiness. He wanted her always to know how much he himself cared about her happiness, and there was no way she could know this, but he was loyal, a faithful man when once he encountered true friendship. He never forgot. In this he was different from other men, he wrote, and would never forget her or what she was giving him. She could depend on this, she must depend on it, forever.

When he went to Scotland to research his biography of Mary Queen of Scots, he took her with him. As his secretary, to write down what he dictated, but most of all as observer, as interlocutor, as an enraptured young woman who was so eager to learn everything about the life of Mary Queen of Scots, what it had really been like, how one might view it from today’s perspective, how Stefan Zweig saw it, how she saw it through his eyes.

For a long time Friderike Zweig guessed none of this. She was too convinced she knew her husband, and she despised pale Lotte too much. She was over-confident that her life as Frau Zweig would continue forever as it had been until now. So she passed over this little episode. But her husband did not. Not that he articulated this; she had to piece it together from hints and tales told to her by friends.

With the passage of time she was obliged to admit that something was irreparably broken. He had distanced himself from Austria and the yellow house, and now he was distancing himself from her too.

Friderike is very attached to the house in Salzburg; she identifies with its scale and its grandeur. And she doesn’t understand her husband’s revulsion at the police search, or at least she doesn’t share it. She can go on living there quite happily with her two grown daughters.

That’s all Zweig needs. He only has to hear mention of the two daughters and he goes into a rage: dependent, needy, vain, useless – the chains that weigh down his life. The refrain runs through his letters. But the heaviest burden is their mother.

The last time she was in London, they had only written com-
communication with each other. He made a list of the times when she was forbidden to enter the apartment. He needed peace and quiet. She didn’t stick to it. He was furious. She was persistent. He was evasiveness itself, hated conflict, particularly a conflict like this, when everything depended on it. “You are utterly heartless,” she said in a letter, as she left London after a huge fight, on her way back to Salzburg.

Friderike has no more than a suspicion that Zweig and Lotte Altmann are now a couple. Before her departure in May, she happened to go into a restaurant where he was sitting with Lotte. “An awkward encounter” was how she put it in a letter to her husband. In her correspondence with Stefan Zweig she only ever referred to Lotte Altmann as “A” or, in ironic quotation marks, as “Your close friend.” To friends, she speaks of her as the “Viper.”

Stefan Zweig flees through the world, striking off one fetter after the other, if possible without causing anyone pain. It’s an illusion. The fetters only tighten.

And the new book is no source of joy. Of all places, the protests start in unoccupied Switzerland. May was when there were anniversary celebrations of the Reformation in Geneva and other Swiss cities. Calvin was honored as a national saint. And he was the man whom Zweig in his book made into a forerunner of Hitler. Zweig’s friend the Communist Romain Rolland sent effusive congratulations from Villeneuve in Switzerland. “Your book is perfectly timed for the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. I don’t advise you to settle here any time soon. Beware the fury of the so-called ‘Momiers.’ When the French edition comes out, you’ll be torn to pieces. They’ll never forgive you for your attack on Calvin.”

The aggressive, battle-hardened, eminently political Nobel Prize–winner Rolland meant his congratulations seriously. He had encouraged Zweig repeatedly to go on the attack, and he seemed barely able to believe that his friend had so determinedly set out to follow him. But this letter filled Zweig with horror. It hadn’t been his intention. Was he once again going to reap nothing but hate for a book in which he was celebrating the gentle, flex-
ible, restrained Castellio as his hero? For this the French were going to tear him to pieces?

Him, Zweig, the herald of balance, of listening, of communication? But that is how it is in this world, in this year, on this continent. Moreover, he had yielded to the pressure from his publisher Reichner to finish the book in such haste that several historical errors were not caught in the first printing. A further joy for his enemies. The attacks didn’t let up.

Stefan Zweig was having a severe life crisis. He was tired, irritable, and depressed. He was sick of literature, he wrote. What he’d really like to do would be to buy up the entire printing of Calvin and burn it. “The only way to fight hatred must come from ourselves,” he replied to Rolland. He was dreaming, he said, of retreating into a mouse hole, and most of all, of never having to read a newspaper again. The universe, literature, politics – wouldn’t it be wonderful never to have to think about them again? Where would be the farthest place from it all? Where would he find the mouse hole for this summer?

A beach in Belgium, white house, sun, a broad promenade, little bistros looking out over the water. He wants Ostend.

With Lotte.

“Dear Fraulein Altmann,” he writes from Vienna to London on 22 June. They’re going to spend July together in Ostend, and they’re going to be setting off in a week.

“Large suitcases unnecessary,” he writes. “We’re going to live simply.”

This summer that other man, the man from Brody in the Far East of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, is living right nearby. For a few months he left Paris for Amsterdam, and at the end of May he wrote to Stefan Zweig: “You must realize that everyone everywhere has a relative, a mother, a brother, a cousin, but I come from a very long way away, and I don’t even know the names of my relatives in the East any more. And if they are still alive, they’re certainly living in absolute penury. What am I to do? I have to treat you as my brother, I beg you, allow me to speak to you just like a brother.”

Joseph Roth has reached the end. By comparison with him, Stefan Zweig’s problems are in the realm of luxury. Immediately
after the Nazis took power in Germany, Roth’s books were banned. Nor does he want them to be available there any more. “Hell reigns,” he writes to Zweig. He also says there can be no compromises with the enemy. Anyone who continues to have business in Germany, anyone who so much as maintains any connection to Germany, is a monster. He regards Zweig’s decision to keep his books on sale in Germany via the Reichner publishing operation as a betrayal. In May 1936, after it has become clear that Zweig’s books will no longer be able to be sold there either, a jubilant Roth writes: “I congratulate you on being banned in Germany.”

These two men have been bound for years by a remarkable love. Zweig, the elder by ten years, owner of a castle, man of the world, best-selling author — and Roth, successful journalist, feature writer in the twenties for the Frankfurter Zeitung, author of not very successful documentary novels, inhabiter of hotel rooms, drinker, gregarious, generous, garrulous, always surrounded by friends, audiences, and hangers-on. When finally he wrote Job and Radetsky March, novels that would in any rational world have brought him both fame and fortune, his books were banned and burned, and he went into exile.

He is an unhappy man, clear-sighted and angry, and he seeks salvation in the past, in old Austria and its monarchy, its empire, that took him, the fatherless Jew who grew up so far from the great, glittering capital, and raised him up and opened the world to him. A state that was a universe, that encompassed many different peoples without distinguishing among them, and in which one could travel freely without a passport or papers of any kind. The older he gets and the more the world darkens, the more he yearns to travel back in time to that other world that is transfigured in his eyes, and is lost.

“Lemberg still in our possession.” Now, so many years after it fell and the empire itself collapsed, Lemberg seems more completely his than ever before.

In the spring of 1936, Joseph Roth had started on the novel about his homeland. It was supposed to be called Strawberries. “In my hometown there lived roughly ten thousand people. Three thousand of them were crazy, if not a danger to the others. A gentle
derangement enveloped them like a golden cloud. They pursued their business and earned money. They married and begat children. They read books and newspapers. They spent no time worrying about the affairs of the world. They spoke to one another in every language in which the mingled peoples of our region communicated amongst themselves.”

He would never finish the book. His situation worsened dramatically in the course of three months. He had received advances for several novels, and these were long spent. The exiles’ publishing house, always on the verge of bankruptcy, would give him no more money unless and until he delivered a finished book. One novel, Conffession of a Murderer, was almost completed; another, Weights and Measures, was half-done; he wrote and he wrote. He used the material from the Strawberries novel to fill out the other books so as to finish them quicker. He knew this wasn’t a good idea. Even Zweig, who had always admired him to a fault, warned him in his letters not to “stuff” his novels. It was what had damaged the last book, he said. But what was Roth to do? He had no money.

From a distance, Stefan Zweig kept trying in his letters to appeal to Roth’s good sense, to get him to save money, to drink less, to stop living in the most expensive hotels. At the end of March he wrote, “You should finally have the courage to admit to yourself that no matter how great your stature as a writer, you are in material terms a poor, small Jew, almost as poor as seven million others, and you are going to have to live like nine-tenths of the people on this earth, in the tiniest and narrowest estate.” This letter almost put an end to their friendship. Joseph Roth was deeply offended. Zweig had put a name to the root of what divided them, the deep gulf that yawned invisibly between the assimilated Western Jew born to wealth, and the poor Eastern Jew from the far frontier of the monarchy. It was self-defense. For Zweig saw that he couldn’t help Roth, that it didn’t matter how much money he gave him, that he just kept sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss, because he was drinking more and more heavily, slowly losing his mind and with it his art. “You do not need to tell me, of all people, what a little poor Jew is,” Roth replied. “I have been one since 1894, and am proud of it. A devout Eastern Jew from Radziwillow. Stop it! I’ve been poor and I’ve been small for thirty years. I am poor.”
Roth cursed, stormed, begged Zweig to come to him. “I’m dying, I’m dying,” he wrote. And on 9 April: “Dear friend, if you want to come, then come soon, what’s left of me will be thrilled.” The situation was dramatic, and Roth heightened the drama in the letters to his friend. Zweig dodged. The only flights to Amsterdam were by Lufthansa, and he wasn’t going to fly Lufthansa. At the same time he wrote to his American publisher, Ben Huebsch, saying he was afraid of meeting Roth. He’d been telling him for years to rein himself in financially, alcoholically, and literarily. Nothing had helped, and nothing would ever help. “One could wish he would commit some minor infraction that would get him jailed for two or three months, but there’s no other way to stop him drinking.” And he added the information that would be fatal to Roth: “The quality of his books must suffer over the long term because of the folly of his way of life.”

Zweig, naturally, is right. But the American market is the only possible financial salvation for the German writers, and Huebsch the publisher is powerful.

Zweig wrote to Roth, “Roth, hold yourself together now, we need you. There are so few people and so few books in this overpopulated world!” But Roth was still clear-sighted, even now. A good judge of character and an acute reader. He knew that Zweig didn’t want to come, and that he didn’t want to see him. And he could read flight schedules: “It’s not correct that only German planes fly here. The only Lufthansa flight is the 6 a.m. Besides that one there are Dutch flights at 7 a.m., 10, 12, 3 p.m., 2:10 p.m., and 7:45. But you simply don’t want to come, and you’d do better to say so.” And yes, he would hold himself together, Zweig wasn’t to worry. He was holding himself together day by day, nobody could hold himself together more than he was doing day by day. “I write every day, if only to lose myself in the fates of strangers. Don’t you see, my fellow human, my friend, my brother – you once said Brother in a letter – that I’m close to dying?”

It was an aerial battle being fought in dire straits by the two writers. Aerial chess between friends. Who will give way? Can Zweig save his friend? Does he even want to? The man who wanted to free himself of all shackles was now attached to this particular shackle and couldn’t get free. Roth was not prepared to release him from the responsibilities of their friendship. Zweig
had a bad conscience, struggled with himself, and he did love his friend, he still admired his art, and he respected his judgment more than anyone else's. Roth had always been severe with him, devoid of leniency. The flowery, the cloudy, the metaphorically overflowing, the false images, the adjectives that only half fit — Roth was pitiless, both in his letters and in conversation. He didn’t care that he was dependent on Zweig and that the other man was so much more successful than he was. None of it had anything to do with precision, beauty, or literary quality. But he also knew what his own literary debt to Stefan Zweig was. He knew it and he put it down on paper. In 1930, he dedicated a copy of Job to him with these words: “Stefan Zweig, to whom I owe thanks for this Job — and more than Job, and more than any book — for the full measure of friendship: please accept this book and keep it as a small salute. Joseph Roth.”

In 1931 they had written together in Antibes, reading aloud to each other in the evenings what they had written during the day, correcting words, adding words. Roth read to Zweig from what was becoming the Radetsky March, and Zweig was happy and thrilled and started repeatedly to tell his own stories as he listened, interrupting the reader with memories of his own early Austria, pictures from his childhood.

And later, when Roth sent the finished book to his friend, he included a letter with it: “I totally forgot to tell you that you are the source of some of the scenes in my book, you will recognize them. Despite my dissatisfaction with the novel, I am very, very grateful to you.”

Henceforward Stefan Zweig’s literary counsel would be almost indispensable to him. In January 1933 Roth wrote to Zweig, “I cannot begin anything new whatever until I have talked to you. I have to have your goodness and your intelligence.”

A few weeks later Roth goes through the second half of Confession of a Murderer with Zweig once more. He reads aloud, Zweig criticizes, thinks ahead, reformulates, offers ideas, notions, observations, cuts verbiage and repetitions, and points out false connections. Roth listens with fascination and close attention and is open to his suggestions.
In the spring of this year, Roth was totally bowled over for the first time by something his friend had written. The settling of accounts with the reformer, Calvin, was a great joy to Roth, the Jew who revered Catholicism. He read it over three nights, Roth wrote. “Despite all your worldliness, there was always a lingering impulse toward illusion in your books, or rather an unspoken hope, a certain moral ballast. You’ve jettisoned that, which has allowed you to reach higher. It’s the pristine, the clear, the transparent that I love so much both in the flow of thought and in the form itself. The ballast of metaphors has been dropped.” And he added: “You can imagine the pleasure this gives me, given my almost Calvinist fanaticism about the purity of language.” He continued in this laudatory vein, interrupting himself to say oh he was testing himself to see if his friendly literary conscience would allow him to write this to his patron. But yes, he had examined himself, and had nothing to reproach himself with. It was simply too good, and he wasn’t being venal. And added, happily, as ultimate praise: “I feel as if you’ve found your way home, and in a small way that I’m part of it.”

One writer finding his way home to another. Joseph Roth was a tactician, Joseph Roth was in despair, and wanted at all costs to have his friend by his side. He wanted to talk to him, write with him, drink together, he wanted to be next to him, freed of all worries by this man who paid for everything and solved all problems with his sunny common sense. So his letter was a little exaggerated. But he meant what he said about a homecoming. It was both wish and reality.

Roth felt on the verge of death. His room, he said, looked like a coffin. “Think about how you never know when you’re going to see someone for the last time. Letters can’t replace that moment when you see each other, greet each other, nor the other, when you say good-bye.”

Finally, Stefan Zweig gave in. Roth was part of the reason he decided that Ostend was to be the refuge that summer. His friend could get there quickly by train from Amsterdam; it wasn’t far. That there was, moreover, a ban on schnapps in Belgium, as Zweig wrote to tell him delightedly, will not necessarily have been a great attraction to Roth, but he knew his friend’s pedagogical
ambitions and would find ways to get around them. That it might be a plus that Zweig had chosen a seaside resort was not on Roth’s mind either. He liked to say that he didn’t set foot in the sea, and fish didn’t set foot in cafés either. Roth didn’t care about a hot sun, he didn’t care about beaches, and he didn’t care about a happy holiday atmosphere. Zweig appeased him by saying Ostend was a real city, with more of a café culture than Brussels, and more bistros than you could count.

But it’s hard to travel in these times if you’re a Jew with an Austrian passport and no means of bribing people, even for the shortest distances, even between the Netherlands and Belgium. Roth has spent two weeks already waiting in Amsterdam for his Belgian visa.

Then things get even more stirred up. Roth too has just separated from his life’s companion, Andrea Manga Bell – born in Cameroon, raised in Hamburg, married to a Cameroonian prince – with whom he’s been living for the past seven years. She has grown children from her first marriage, a son and a daughter; her husband left them after the birth of the daughter to return to Africa. He apparently possesses a fabulous fortune but pays absolutely nothing to his abandoned wife or the children. Andrea Manga Bell is a former actress who lived out her dream of a royal life in Africa on the stage, then worked as a graphic artist till she met Joseph Roth and took over as his secretary, typing his manuscripts. Since then she has earned no money of her own. So Roth had to support her. But Roth no longer has the will or the means. He went to Amsterdam in March so as to live more cheaply and get free of the family burden.

In June he writes to his companion and suggests that she come to Amsterdam or later to Brussels, to live with him there. But without the children. It’s time they supported themselves, or their fathers supported them, or whoever. But he, Joseph Roth, is no longer going to do it. If not, they must split up. He receives no reply for a long time. Then on 28 June, a telegram arrives from Tueke Manga Bell, Andrea’s daughter: “Please come at once!” Nothing else. Roth is in a dreadful state, fearing the worst; he has no money for a trip to Paris, he’s been waiting for days in the Hotel Eden for his Belgian visa; he makes a panicked phone call to
his French translator, Blanche Gidon, in Paris. She knows nothing either. Is this comforting in and of itself? Would she have heard if Manga Bell had died? Roth is in despair. For two days he waits for news from Tueke or from Blanche Gidon. Then another telegram from Tueke Manga Bell arrives. Her mother, on learning that Roth intends to part from her, has had a nervous breakdown.

At first Roth is relieved. He had really feared she had taken her own life. A nervous breakdown sounds more like a trick, a fake illness to make him come back to his senses and back to the family. But he’s had enough. “Frau Manga Bell has consistently refused to live according to my rules,” he writes a few days later to Blanche Gidon to justify himself. He’s plagued by guilt, doubly so because the fate of his first great love, Friedl, his wife, lies over him like a shadow. Back then in Berlin, she couldn’t live “according to his rules” either, a life of hotels and constant traveling to keep up with her husband. They had only lived together at the very beginning of their marriage in 1922–23, when they shared an apartment in Berlin-Schoeneberg. Then Roth found it burdensome, restricting, somehow false, and they moved from hotel to hotel. Friedl was young, slim, modern, pale, and very pretty. In photos she looked both shy and self-possessed. The marriage made her ill. Roth believes his whole life long that this is his fault. But she was already fragile, nervous, and uneasy in the world when they first met. Roth had written to his cousin Paula Gruebel back then, saying that Friedl “was afraid of people.” From Vienna, in the summer of 1922, he wrote, “She spends the day crossing over a ford in the Danube and back again, pretending it’s the sea, and lives the life of a creeping plant.” And he added, “I would never have believed I could love a little girl this long. I love her shyness in the face of any confession, and the feeling she has which is a mixture of fear and love, and her heart that is always frightened of the very thing she adores.”

He saw early on what was happening to her, even if he still swore the opposite in his letters: “She is normal and I am what you would have to call mad. She doesn’t read the same way I do, not so strongly, not trembling as much, she is less atmospherically predictable, she’s straightforward and sensible.” In reality, Roth already feared for her sanity in 1925. Four years later he wrote the novel that made him famous, the novel about the pious Jew Men-
del Singer who is tested beyond all measure by God, and whose daughter Miriam loses her mind. In *Job*, Joseph Roth was also describing the fate of his wife: “It is true that you cannot share your pain without doubling it,” he wrote in a letter in March 1929. “But this doubling also contains an immeasurable comfort. My suffering moves from the private sphere to the public and thus is easier to endure.” Later in the year Friedl suffered such a severe breakdown that she did not recover. Roth described it in a letter to his friend René Schickele in December 1929: “I’m writing to you in desperate need. Yesterday I traveled, indeed I fled to Munich. My wife has been ill since August, psychosis, hysteria, absolute fixation on suicide, she’s barely alive – and I’m harried and surrounded by dark red demons, headless, lacking the capacity even to lift a finger, faint and crippled, helpless, with no prospect of getting better.” At first Friedl’s parents took care of their sick daughter, then the next year, on the same day the last chapter of the *Job* novel was serialized in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, she was committed to the Rekawinkel sanatorium near Vienna. Later she was moved to the Steinhof psychiatric hospital, also near Vienna.

For the rest of his life Roth blamed himself for Friedl. And so naturally he is horrified when he hears of Manga Bell’s nervous breakdown. At the same time he is clearer than ever that he will not go back to her. He has already frequently been afraid of her, always after a fight. Ludwig Marcuse reports later that Roth once begged him urgently to accompany him to a reconciliation with his companion after a long quarrel. She was totally unpredictable, he said, and besides, she always carried a small pistol in her purse. He didn’t think it was impossible that she’d use it.

But his fear that Manga Bell may have a psychiatric disorder is almost greater: “I cannot carry the slightest psychic burden any more without the risk of dying,” he writes now to Blanche Gidon. “And I don’t want to die.”

One day, after learning of Manga Bell’s breakdown, Joseph Roth calls on the Belgian P.E.N. club for help. This finally works, and he gets his visa. But Roth hesitates about making the journey to Ostend. He’s discovered that not only Stefan Zweig and Lotte Altmann are there, but also the preacher Egon Erwin Kisch and the writer Hermann Kesten, fair-weather friends from better days.
Roth doesn’t feel they’re the right company in this dark summer: “I find it truly awkward to meet Kesten and Kisch in Ostend—which is unavoidable,” he writes to Zweig. “I can no longer have any patience for jokes.”

But Zweig really persuades him, he extols the virtues of Ostend, the hotel prices, the bistros, and concerning the end of Roth’s love affair, which the latter has described to him, he writes cheerfully: “And don’t make yourself ill over Ma.Be. It’s a stroke of good luck when things suddenly resolve themselves rather than pulling tighter and tighter.”

Stefan Zweig knows exactly what he’s talking about. Two months previously, at the height of the marital battles in the Zweig household, Joseph Roth had inserted himself cautiously into the argument on the side of Friderike, of whom he was very fond, and whose affectionate name for him was Rothi. She had left London more or less in flight. Roth wrote to Zweig, “It’s good that your wife has left. I think it’s not indiscreet of me to say to you that I advised her to do so. But don’t ever forget, dear friend, that she is an exceptionally fine human being and has earned consideration, and that she’s at an age when all women fear they’re going to be abandoned. It’s the age of panic.” And he added, “Dear friend, one must love and keep loving, these days. We’re all in such a muddle.”

Zweig did not reply. Until now, indirectly, as he congratulates him on the sudden end of his love. No comfort for Roth.

In a lecture that Roth gave on 12 June to a full house in the bookshop owned by his publisher-in-exile, Allert de Lange, that was titled “Faith and Progress” and was a much-applauded fulmination against the superstition that modern technology had the power to heal mankind and its very humanity, he ended with an appeal: “Let us set reason in the service of that for which it has been given to us: namely in the service of love.”

And so now: over the border and away from nervous collapse and a love that is over. His visa has come. Up toward the seashore, up toward a bistro, up to meet a friend. A summer of love. July in Ostend.

He clambers awkwardly out of the train at this, its final stop. Zweig, waiting on the platform, has already made all the arrange-
ments, porter, hotel, the journey from here to there. The re-
encounter between the two friends up here by the sea is initially a
little diffident, stiff, unsure on both sides. For a long time they’ve
only communicated by letter; Roth has given his old friend many
angry reproaches, and many declarations of love, some exagger-
ated, some the honest truth. Zweig has dissembled, has avoided
meetings, nervous, cautious, concerned to protect his own mental
equilibrium. In their letters they have established a competitive,
loving balance between friendship, envy, admiration, dependency,
love, smart-aleck superiority, and mutual jealousy. Roth’s despair,
alone in Amsterdam, begging for a visa to get to Belgium, has
plumbed new depths.

Now they shake hands. “Herr Zweig.” “Herr Roth! Finally. Wel-
come to the sea!” And then everything is back to normal. Roth’s
relief comes flooding back by the minute. A man, a friend who
organizes things for him, his connection to the sun, to common
sense, to the guarantee of a safe existence. How gladly he will
entrust himself to him this summer. How confident his step be-
comes immediately. And how happy Zweig is here and now, know-
ing that he can be the means of good fortune for his friend. How
he savors his own superiority. Yes, he feels for a moment once
again that he’s equal to life as he watches his friend walking
falteringly along the narrow streets. It’s as if they’re made for each
other. Two men, both falling, but holding each other up for a
time. . . .

So Zweig has an entire writing office here, and he’s working better
and more effectively than he’s done for years. His friend and editor
Emil Fuchs works on the volume of novellas more or less indepen-
dently while Zweig writes two of the miniatures for Decisive
Moments in History; one about the conquest of Byzantium, the
other about Lenin’s journey through Germany to Russia in the
sealed train in 1917.

Both of them come easily to him. He’s collected all the basic
materials already, and the history of Byzantium is a kind of by-
product of the big story he’s writing at the moment, and for which,
more than ever, he’s relying on help from Joseph Roth: “I’m work-
ing on this novella,” he’d written to Roth two months before
leaving for Ostend. “It’s really a legend, a Jewish legend, which I’ve built up both high and wide over a very narrow historical foundation. I think it’s going to be good, despite my reluctance to say such things. But I’m not so sure about the style. Which is why I need you to look at it.” But the style is not the only thing Zweig is unsure about in this instance. It’s the religious, or more accurately, the ritual aspect. At the end of June he writes to Roth, “It would be my good fortune to have you in place as my literary conscience for this legend. We could test ourselves together of an evening and teach each other the way we did in the good old days.” The novella that Zweig is writing will later appear under the title of The Buried Candelabrum. It’s the legend of a seven-branched candelabrum that wanders from Jerusalem to Babylon, returns, then is taken to Rome by Titus, stolen by the Vandals, and taken to Carthage, and finally back to Byzantium. Until Justinian brings it back to Jerusalem, although to a Christian church, at which point the candelabrum disappears forever. It is the story of the eternal Jewish wanderings that Stefan Zweig wants to continue and complete in Ostend. The story of the menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum, as the story of the Jews’ banishment and homelessness and their undying hope that one day there will be an end to the eternal wandering. As he wrote to Roth, he could only write about the things “that are relevant to the times and that provide some kind of reinforcement.” Yet it is fundamentally a story of hopelessness and sadness. The candelabrum is lost again and again. Zweig tells the story from the perspective of the Jew Benjamin Marnefesch, who as a boy is a silent and despairing witness to the first act of theft, when the Vandals’ slaves take the treasures of Rome on board their ships. In his attempt to snatch the menorah away from one of the slaves, his arm is shattered, he falls, and the menorah seems lost forever. “White foam ran over the keel, it slid forward with a hissing murmur, its brown frame was already rising and falling on the waves as if it were a living, breathing thing, and the galleon, under full sail, steered a straight course out from the roads into the endless expanse of the open sea.”

Benjamin Marnefesch will be an old man when his fate and that of the menorah achieve their conclusion. It is roughly at the end of the first third of the book that the Jews of Rome gather at their cemetery on the day of the ninth of Av, the day of the
destruction of the temple, to read from the Kinim, the songs of Lamentation, to pray together, to mourn and remember the day when the world’s Jews lost their homeland. At the end of this day the Jews will learn that the candelabrum has been stolen again, and has been dispatched to Byzantium. Only one person will smile gently at this news: Benjamin, the most cultivated man in the congregation, senses that this bad news may conceal the kernel of its very opposite.

This passage defeats Stefan Zweig, perhaps because he lacks perspective, or his own personal memories, or experience, or participation, or historical material.

Zweig goes with Roth to Almondo, the Italian restaurant in Langestrasse, where he manages repeatedly to persuade him to eat. The host, Joseph Almondo, is proud of his two guests, and always serves them himself. And after they’ve eaten, they all drink a schnapps, a Verveine, together, to aid the digestion, as Almondo always remarks, to the joy of Joseph Roth.

In the afternoons Zweig can occasionally persuade Roth to sit out for a while on the terrace of the bistro with him and Lotte, in the fresh air, the wind, and the sun. Lotte has her camera with her; she laughs and asks the two friends to move together for a moment just this once, for a photo. Basically it’s enough already for Roth to have put up with the sun shining on his head, but he doesn’t really want to put up a fight on such a beautiful day. So he peers into Lotte’s lens looking rather skeptical, not to say almost truculent, and lifts his right eyebrow a little in mockery. He’s not vain, he doesn’t care that the hair on his forehead is thin and a little disheveled and his colorfully striped bowtie a little crumpled. His new black jacket sits perfectly. But what to do with his hands? Uncertainly he holds onto the table, lays his hand with its nicotine-yellow fingers still clutching the tail end of a cigarette next to a half-full glass of wine while Zweig slides over closer to his friend. His chair is somewhat higher, which makes him half a head taller than Roth; he smiles at him self-confidently. Zweig, whose tweed suit, waistcoat, and tie are making him too hot on this summer day, pays no attention to the camera, but looks at Roth. Lotte sees Zweig’s look through the lens; yes, he’s looking down at his friend, but it is a fatherly look, or a big brother’s,
gentle, loving, a little concerned. He sits there with a benevolent smile, and in Lotte’s camera it looks as if he’d have liked to put his arm round his friend’s shoulders, while Roth looks as if such a protective gesture is exactly what he fears.

Lotte takes her photo. Roth relaxes again, they talk about the day’s work more intensively and concisely than they have for a long time, in the way that they can do with nobody else. And Zweig tells Roth his problem with the Jewish legend and the passage that he just can’t get right. Such a thing is only possible with a relative, a brother, someone whose every line you know, someone whose old books you know, just as you know his new plans. “Terrible fate of a people, who must always wait for ‘tomorrow’ and ‘perhaps,’ always trust mutely in the written word and never receive a sign!” Zweig writes. And what was it like on the day of deepest mourning in the month of Av? What was that like, Roth?

In the evenings, they all go their own ways again, Roth to the Hôtel de la Couronne to Irmgard Keun – Zweig has given him money so that he can pay for his room weeks in advance – and Zweig back to his small apartment in the Maison Floréal by the sea, on the broad Albert I promenade, a beautiful dark corner house with a little tower. He lives on the fourth floor, Lotte on the fifth, and there’s no elevator. Yes it was barbaric for her, he had written to her beforehand, but that was the only way it would function. He needs his loggia – a workroom with a view of the sea and infinity. As Benjamin had seen it as a boy, watching the candelabrum disappear and wanting to save it: “He stared as if spellbound at the sea, which he espied for the first time. There it was, an endless mirror of blue, radiantly vaulted as far as the sharp divide where the waters met the sky and this enormous space seemed to him to be the dome of night, for it was the first time he had seen the full arch of the stars in the hollow of the heavens.”

So Zweig can look out at the North Sea every day and every evening. The lights of the casino shine all the way up into his room, making the sea in front of him all the darker.

Early next morning, a letter from Roth arrives, a little scrap of paper, only a few lines on it. A love letter, written in the course of
the previous night. “Dear good friend,” it says, “in the manner of
teenage girls and schoolboys, I have to tell you how sweet you were
to me today, with the hotel and everything, and so I’m telling you,
the way I would have said it at the age of eighteen when I tried in
vain to find you in your apartment in Vienna. I’m thanking you for
a piece of my youth and the capacity for sweet senseless talk. This
time I’m giving you something written. Your J.R.”

His visit to Zweig’s house, where he had stood outside as a
worshipful student – perhaps last night was the first time Roth
had ever told his friend that story. How he stood there to no avail
in a waistcoat, tie, and high white collar. It was only thirteen years
later that Stefan Zweig became aware of his young colleague
when Alfred Beierle, the skilled public speaker, gave him Roth’s
book *The Wandering Jews*, the history of the Jews of Eastern
Europe who come to the West and are regarded there as a “prob-
lem,” as “guests from the East,” somewhat embarrassing relatives
of the assimilated Western Jews, poor and most of them recogniz-
able at first glance as Jews.

It was the history of the world Joseph Roth himself came from,
of the situation of the Jews of the Soviet Union, of the emigration
to America: “Many emigrate out of some kind of urge, without
really knowing why. They follow a vague call of the wild, or the
specific call of a relative who’s already there. They have a yearning
to see the world and to escape the supposed confines of their
homeland, the will to be effective and have their strengths amount
to something.

“Many return. More stop somewhere along the way. The East-
ern Jews have no home, but they have graves in every cemetery.
Many become rich. Many become important. Many become cre-
ative in a foreign culture. Many lose themselves and their pur-
chase on the world. Many remain in the ghetto, and it is only their
children who will eventually leave it again. The majority give to
the West at least as much as they take from it. But all of them have
the right to live in the West, at least all of them who sacrifice
themselves to get there.”

Zweig, the Western Jew, was so moved by this book that he
wrote a letter to Joseph Roth to thank him for it and for his
writing.

It was the beginning of their friendship, because Joseph Roth
did not just thank his long-admired hero for the letter, he was
ready with an immediate contradiction: “I don’t agree with you when you say that the Jews don’t believe in a hereafter. But that is a debate that would require a great deal of time and space.”

The envelope that reaches Stefan Zweig this morning contains not only the little piece of notepaper but a sheet filled with writing, but with no header. It’s the “written” thing that Roth mentioned in his letter thanking Zweig for his friendship. It begins: “On the day of the ninth of Av the Jews gathered in the cemetery, as religious tradition demanded. Some read from the ‘Kinim,’ the songs of Lamentation. Every word therein was salty and bitter, like a tear.” Roth writes about the graves, the inscriptions on the graves, and about one gravestone into which the menorah had been carved, “which signifies that under this stone were rotting the bones of a Jew who once had gone through life with a wise heart, careful hands, a lucid mind, a sure tread, clear-eyed, had felt the world, thought it, understood it, seen it, and walked all through it. He had been a true light in Israel, which is why the candelabrum lighted his grave.” It is also a text about the touch of pain felt by the congregation as they watch the ninth day of Av slowly draw to its end. And he concludes, “People were already closing the books, already beginning to think about their departure. Suddenly they heard the soft, melancholy creak of the old cemetery gate. Who might have left or come? The gate had been closed!”

Stefan Zweig reads and reads and is filled with deep gratitude. It is the text he has failed to write, the hinge, the day of deepest mourning in the Jewish cemetery in Rome among the overturned gravestones, before the gate opens and the messenger brings news that the menorah has been stolen again. Roth has written it for him, and Stefan Zweig inserts it into his legend, alters the tone and the melody a little, changes it into his text about the Jewish congregation of Rome, “as they gathered in the cemetery according to their custom, on the most grievous day of their year, the ninth day of Av, the day of the destruction of the temple, that day of grim memory that rendered their fathers homeless and scattered like salt across all the lands of the earth.” He writes about gravestones that announce “that he who lies here in eternal slumber, was a wise man and himself a light in Israel.” And finally, about the end of the day: “They did not notice that the ninth
A SUMMER IN OSTEND

of Av, the day of deep mourning, was slowly drawing to a close and
the hour was approaching of the last prayer. Then, outside, the
rusty gate of the cemetery creaked.

It will become in some small way their shared book, the story of
eternal flight and of the belief that there is a place, which will
hold its secret forever, where the Jews of the world will be able to
live in peace. Benjamin has a replica of the menorah made, it is
stolen again, disappears somewhere, but he has other plans for the
genuine one: “God must decide, he and only he, the fate of the
candelabrum. I will bury it, I know of no other way to truly protect
it, but for how long, who can tell! Perhaps God will leave it forever
in darkness and our people will have to wander comfortless, dusty,
and scattered over the back of the earth. Yet perhaps – and my
heart is filled with this faith – perhaps his will may decree that
our people go home to their land.” And then Zweig adds – and
perhaps this is a real return to his friend Roth and his belief in the
hereafter: “Do not concern yourself with the decision, leave it to
him and to time! Let the candelabrum be presumed lost. We, we
who are God’s secret – we are not lost! For gold does not disappear
into the lap of the earth like the earthly body and our people does
not disappear into the darkness of time. One will endure and the
other will endure, our people and the candelabrum! So let us
believe that that which we bury will rise again and light the
people, the homecomers. For only if we do not cease to believe will
we withstand the world.”

It’s an entreaty that Zweig is writing here with Roth’s assis-
tance. An entreaty born of faith and a hope for an end to flight,
including their flight – Zweig’s, Roth’s. That of their entire circle
here at the shore. What will happen after the summer? It is slowly
reaching its end.

As Roth had written in his text for Zweig: “It was already very
late in the summer, it was already a very old, very tired summer,
shortly before the fall. Summer itself resembled an old Jew, sum-
mer itself seemed to want to rest in the graveyard. It was mild,
good-natured, and of golden wisdom.”

A few days later they are all sitting together again. All burned
brown, except for Roth, the old enemy of sunshine. They are
sitting in the Flore once more, with its view of the sea and the little bathing huts. The actress Christiane Toller knits away defiantly, Kisch’s wife, Gisela, laughs whenever there’s something to laugh about, and even when there isn’t. Lotte Altmann is quiet, and it’s only when she coughs softly that the rest of the circle even notices she’s still there. Emile Fuchs looks at the sea, Stefan Zweig sits between Lotte and Fuchs, smoking and listening as Egon Kisch talks about Spain, the war of the Communists, the latest reports from the front, and the British writer Arthur Koestler about his travel plans, which should bring him into Franco’s headquarters. The swimmer Ernst Toller blazes away at him, admitted only half-seriously, but all the more loudly, merrily, and determinedly; Kesten laughs along with Gisela Kisch at the heatedness of the men, Christiane’s knitting, and Stefan Zweig’s silence. The novelist Irmgard Keun has fetched Joseph Roth out of the dark corner of the bistro into the light, drinks with him, and whenever he casts a brief, sarcastic remark into the circle, she seems for a moment to hesitate. She would so love to be on the side of the Communist believers, and also on the side of the harmless, somehow uninvolved laughing audience. But she’s with him, and his lack of belief is hers too, even if she knows that his religion, his monarchism, is just another form of escape, a trapdoor that is not open to her. There are laughter, argument, and things unspoken this evening at the Café Flore, but everything is more muted than at the beginning of the summer. Hope has melted a little further. Despite Spain. Because of Spain. Despite the German-Austrian agreement or because of it. And despite the peace in Germany and in Berlin in advance of the Olympics. Another summer is passing without the arrival of the decisive turning point, without real signs that the Fascist domination in Europe is approaching its end. At least not this summer, not this year, and for many people no longer within the timeframe they will live to see.