## The First Two Sentences for a Germany Book

When the first news of the mass murders of the Jews reached the town and everybody was of the opinion it was exaggerated, it surely couldn't be that bad, nevertheless, everyone knew very well that in fact that was the way things stood, that neither the vast numbers, nor the methods and refined techniques which one heard about, no matter how horrifying, were exaggerated, that everything had to be that way because it wasn't possible for it to be any other way at all, and that it was no longer the time to talk about whether in fact there were other milder, more humane procedures, of course no longer expulsions, now in wartime, but still approved ghettoes, with self-administration and so on, and when it became the turn of complete silence, when one's own self had been silenced away, one no longer knew

what or where and no longer felt opposition to anything, just dropped a casual word between a nonchalant joke and the solemn sentimental feeling of being caught up into a fatal battle of mythical importance, admittedly against one's will, when this point had been reached by those who ran around free in Germany and lived well, admittedly under the difficult conditions of war, when this point had been reached — which does not mean anything, for they had long since reached that point, if it only comes off as well now, so, when it was as it had always been, when that's the way it was, the bells tolled for nothing really special: the wedding of a brain injury victim - whose wish in consideration of his military distinctions could not be denied - a Seabees first lieutenant registered fit for garrison use, but for the next few years at any rate on leave, with a nurse named Erika, who had cut him down with her own hands from the window crossbar on which he had strung himself up in the sanatorium, and whom he strangled to death on the very evening of the wedding, in what was even conjectured to be a fit of mental derangement, which also does not mean anything, since being mentally deranged had been his official state up until then anyway, that is for two years, since his injury.

One for two years, the other for how long?