To Albert Speer

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We like the way you look, you see. It’s more what we had in mind. That fellow with his mouth all to the side, and the one working eyebrow, he makes us feel absurd,
as though our notions were at fault after all.
In a well-appointed room, one’s thoughts are shapely too. But you know! You were a builder of rooms. Of room. (Forgive me.)

We’re learning to read the generals’ maps, mysterious as money: A line may be held, but not in the hand. There are sliding populations, so we’ve had to invent a screen: Who won the World Series? What’s the capital of the state you’re from? The men we took for figures of speech turn up at our table, passing the salt, are rather the hosts than the company. Who knows no history is also condemned. The macadam leads straight to the armchairs we’ve slept in.

Of perfect contrition, a lamp and a shade.