

# GEORG TRAKL

(AUSTRIA, 1887–1914)

LANGUAGE: GERMAN

## UNTERGANG (5. FASSUNG)

Über den weissen Weiher  
Sind die wilden Vögel fortgezogen.  
Am Abend weht von unseren Sternen ein eisiger Wind.

Über unsere Gräber  
Beugt sich die zerbrochene Stime der Nacht.  
Unter Eichen schaukeln wir auf einem silbernen Kahn.

Immer klingen die weissen Mauern der Stadt.  
Unter Domenbogen  
O mein Bruder klimmen wir blinde Zeiger gen Mitternacht.



Born in 1887 in Salzburg, Georg Trakl is considered one of the most important Austrian expressionists. He was the fourth of six children and was particularly close to his sister Grete, who, like him, was interested in the arts. When he could not pass the exams to enter high school, he got a tutor who introduced him to the French Symbolist poets. At the age of thirteen, Trakl began writing poetry. Although he was trained and worked as a pharmacist, he continued writing poetry, his true passion. During World War I, Trakl joined the army as a pharmacist and was directly responsible for the care of many severely injured soldiers. This gruesome work brought Trakl to a state of severe depression. He died from a drug overdose while living in an army hospital in modern-day Poland.

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY		
WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
Abend (n.)	late part of the day	evening, nightfall, sundown, twilight
am (prep.)	indicates place or state	in, inside
auf (prep.)	touching the top surface or inside of something	on, in, upon
beugt sich (v.)	to become or make curved	bends, flexes, leans down, twists
blinde (adj.)	unable to see	unseeing, blind, sightless
Bruder (n.)	man or boy sibling	brother, male sibling
den, der, die (art.)	indicates one as distinct from another (Note: In German, articles agree with the verb.)	the
Dornbogen (n.)	a plant shaped like a bow that has thorns	thorn bow, arc of thorn, arches of thorn
Eichen (n.)	tree or hard wood from tree	oak, oaken
ein, einem (indef. art.)	used before a singular noun	a, an
eisiger (adj.)	extremely cold	icy, frozen, cold, freezing, frosty
Fassung (n.)	account of something	version, story, side, account
fortgezogen (v.)	to move from place to place	migrate, wander, travel, journey
gen (prep.)	in the direction of	toward, against, into
Gräber (n.)	burial place	grave, tomb
immer (adv.)	at all times	always, every time, forever, for all time, forever and a day
Kahn (n.)	open boat sometimes used for a ceremony	barge, flat-bottomed boat
klimmen (v.)	to ascend using hands and feet	climb, scale, scramble, clamber
klingen (v.)	to be filled with reverberating sound	resound, sound, ring, reverberate
Mauern (n.)	flat side of a building or room	walls, ramparts
mein (adj.)	relating or belonging to me	my

TRANSLATION GLOSSARY		
WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
Mitternacht (n.)	the middle of the night	midnight, middle of the night, dead of night, witching hour
Nacht (n.)	time of darkness between each day	night, nighttime, darkness, blackness
o (interjection)	used to address someone directly	o, oh
schaukeln (v.)	to lead over repeatedly	sway, seesaw, swing, rock
silbemen (adj.)	metallic color	silver
sind (v.)	third person plural of the verb <i>to be</i>	are, exist, are present
Stadt (n.)	very large urban area	city, metropolis
Sternen (n.)	mass of gas in space, points of light in the night sky	stars, celestial body
Stime (n.)	front of the head	forehead, brow, temple
über (prep.)	a position directly above something	over, above
unsere, unseren (adj.)	belonging to us, to everyone	our
unter (prep.)	below or beneath something	under, beneath, below
Untergang (n.)	end of something	demise, decline, downfall, end
Vögel (n.)	two-legged winged animals	birds
von (prep.)	connected with something	from, of
weht (v.)	move with an air current	blow, gust, waft, bluster, propel
Weiher (n.)	small body of water	small lake, pond, pool
weissen (adj.)	without color, comparatively light	white, niveous (snow white)
wilden (adj.)	not tame, cultivated, or domesticated	wild, untamed, feral
Wind (n.)	movement of air	wind, breeze, gale, gust
wir (pron.)	refers to speaker and others	we
Zeiger (n.)	helpful hint	pointer, indicator, hint, gauge
zerbrochene (adj.)	no longer whole	broken, fractured, smashed, busted

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PHRASE BY PHRASE

UNTERGANG (5. FASSUNG) \_\_\_\_\_

Über den weissen Weiher \_\_\_\_\_

Sind die wilden Vögel fortgezogen. \_\_\_\_\_

Am Abend weht von nderen \_\_\_\_\_

Sternen ein eisiger Wind. \_\_\_\_\_

Über unsere Gräber \_\_\_\_\_

Beugt sich die zerbrochene \_\_\_\_\_

Stimme der Nacht. \_\_\_\_\_

Unter Eichen schaukeln wir auf \_\_\_\_\_

einem silbernen Kahn. \_\_\_\_\_

Immer klingen die weissen \_\_\_\_\_

Mauern der Stadt. \_\_\_\_\_

Unter Dornenbogen \_\_\_\_\_

O mein Bruder klimmen wir \_\_\_\_\_

blinden Zeiger gen Mitternacht. \_\_\_\_\_



## REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Pick a scribe for the group, and work together to answer the questions.

What are the best parts of this translation, and why do you think they are good?

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What elements of the original poem did you lose in the translation? What did you manage to keep?

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Did you achieve something new with your translation, and if so, does it make sense in the poem or not?

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