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Silence

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über die Stille

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### *Noodle Soup*

Noodle soup is certainly not the best of all possible soups. Really it's hardly worth thinking about, unless some of my readers were to regard this soup and the hotplate it's sitting on at the beginning of this article as something unknown, as something strange and mysterious. That's unlikely. Everyone knows noodle soup and consumes it without giving it a second thought. — In the autumn of the year two-thousand-and-three, though, in the evening, on a Tuesday, I started brooding about the soup, the noodle soup that I wanted to warm up, and that, in my whole life up to that time, had given me no cause for brooding. Here, at this moment, on this Tuesday, it suddenly became the subject of an essential discourse. In the autumn of two-thousand-and-three I was standing at my hotplate in San Francisco and was talking to the soup. I had just noticed a slight reddening of the sky, a kind of inflammation. I was amazed at the cool moon that was rapidly gliding past. On this Tuesday in the year two-thousand-and-three, I wanted to coax the soup into getting a little hotter. I was talking to it quite calmly, quite politely. I kept talking politely to the soup, but it wasn't answering. It was silent. My impatience was growing as was my indignation and my appetite. So I decided in the autumn of two-thousand-and-three to raise the temperature of the hotplate, and I made, at the same time, an observation that led me to a new insight. I noticed that something moved. I was watching as something on the opposite side of the street fell. Something fell darkly against the lighting, against the neon signs, fluttering darkly in a really thin coat. — At this strange moment I heard myself screaming in San Francisco. — I don't expect my readers to follow me. I'm not counting on applause or understanding. I had raised the temperature of my hotplate and still saw this falling, this fluttering, and, at the end, the body's impact. At the same moment, in the autumn of the year two-thousand-and-three, the aforementioned soup began boiling over.

It began steaming; it was swelling up; it was foaming; it was flowing over the rim of the pot onto the hotplate and down onto the floor. And as the people were gathering on the opposite side of the street to bend over a fallen body, I was screaming in San Francisco. This example shows that a quite ordinary noodle soup that previously gave

only scant cause for reflection is capable of suddenly changing our life through an unexpected event. I should now speak of scalding, of the pain and the consequences of the pain, of the alteration of one's conception of reality, above all of the momentary loss of discernment and the ability to write. I will not do it, not here. — That there really is this soup, not only in my imagination but also in the year two-thousand-and-three in San Francisco, there's no doubt about that. We know that now. But what kind of soup that really is, how it smells, how it tastes, how it looks, we still don't know. With that we come upon a problem that has kept more than just the culinary arts busy for some time. At the end of my article I would therefore like to maintain: noodle soup is not the best, but certainly not the worst, of all possible soups. At least, I still think that's probably true.

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