Not that I've dismissed the possibility my brother is dead. We have discussed what is possible, what is not. They say there's every chance. No chance at all. Over a thousand displaced persons in these parts, perhaps more. So we move on. Towards. Away. Claiming another to take his place, as I place him in profile. Shapes suiting my fancy. Rooms with or without connecting doors. He watches when she isn't around. A perverse protection he knows she needs. From his need

he takes notes. For a book. Journal. Report in some hotel. I no longer question. Parts of him I want to know, others he tells me of. Trips he has made here before. The sea. Fruit. Dry river beds. Beds slept in, not slept in. Back, from islands. Concrete islands. Barren. Cultivated. Sunlight before the rain. Violence of day by day these thoughts. Stirs fingers onto insects at night. Their mark on white walls. Her head rolling in afternoon sleep. As in the half dark room, he listened to music. I listened to sounds, waited for those that never came. I didn't look up. Their bodies rotated, she above. Legs, arms moved with the music over him. On the floor, the bed. They made a tent of the sheet. Light in parts of skin. Movement so near, by stretching my hand into the open

I heard cicadas, wind colliding with trees. Sounding an ocean in the long room. I opened the shutters. Town huddled above the sea. Thin shadows of cypresses. She stood over

him, he pushed her down onto her knees. I drew the curtains. I couldn't see, but saw what next would happen. I was thirsty. Water heavy with smoke, heat, a bitter taste. Hardness of the glass, she saw herself in. Buzz buzz buzzing of a mosquito round a candle. Wax formed green rivers. Frozen. I tried lifting him from the floor. Laughter. Afterwards recognised as my own. The sea a faint white line. A longing

for rain. Olives dried in the sun no longer sensations. Grapes whiter from dust, sand, shaken in water. Seaweed he put round the bed, when my hair, neck were no longer part of the seaweed. Sun behind rocks. Shadow columns from fig trees, where I slept. Woke up hanging over the bed. In the next room I pictured her smile, larger it seemed than the face could hold. She held his head. He in a praying position, about to throw up. He moved between mirrors, measured the two rooms. Appeared naked on the balcony. Ah here you are I wondered where you had got to. He turned away, murmuring. Heat so unbearable if only it wasn't so dry if only it would rain. He gestured as if opening the sky. Split in half. He turned the air conditioner up.

We drank small cups of black coffee, thick, sweet. And sucked halva. Bread from an oven, in another part of the house. A spiral stairway he went down. She looked in the round mirror. Walls of mirrors. Circles of water, trees, faces edged off by shifting light. He rubbed an oblong stone. A fig opened slowly. Lips thin. Eyes narrowed on the deeper textures. Moments flashed, yellow, blue, orange. Sky so blue startles the eyes. Lying down I no longer saw the sea. Land a desert. Gulls, paper-wet, screamed. She looked for her brother against marble, steel railings, entrance halls, hotels. A museum I remember where I came across his signature, that perhaps wasn't there at all.

Up from the beach we held hands, ran across the dunes.

The lower dunes where we lay. Tall grass sand shaken, surrounded. Oceans of sand swallowed up crevices. The beach long, narrow. Hollows, patches, marks where others had been buried. Underwater we circled fish, each other. Shadows grew, slid across, terraced. Making patterns she leaned from. Hills of sand our shadows slipped over. We ate grapes dipped in the sea, salt added to their sweetness. Taken out of their skins. Wasps settled on the remains. Shoal of small white fish unchained at the water's edge. His hands cupped under. Network of fingers over the sea. Waves recoiled from places they struck. Hands felt the dry under parts of sand. One hill

in darkness. Sheep, goat bells heavier as we approached. Town lights, a fallen nest of fireflies, between the hills. Groups of musicians outside cafes. Men played dice. We were strangers. We were accepted, ignored. Initial curiosity. They went back to their beads, dice, drink. Men danced with men. Women watched, pretended not to. Priests still walking in cemeteries, passed by smiling, hands raised, gathered more dust on their robes, beards. Older men carried on gambling, talked of the political situation, fishing, money, the war. Countries they had seen, not seen, hoped for their sons to see. They spoke at times in a dialect we didn't understand. We were misinterpreted. Information given in exchange for money, clothes, cigarettes, drink. We were misinformed. He has now understood we have no choice, so we move from hotel to taxi, from taxi to train. Dining car to sleeper.

Blinds half way. Dips of black, quarter whiteness. Patches of water along the coast. Rain walked designing its own shadow. Winds condensed on summits, the straight sides of mountains. The sea cut swift movements of clouds. Over valleys grown wider, deeper, where rivers continually change their position. Bases of the hills bent back towards the course of the river. Lights, signs from cities, villages, towns I know only from maps, brochures. Long empty stations. Tracks

criss-crossed. A man walked along, swung a red light. Silence of the train halt. Shadow thrown on a long wall. He must have stood by the window. I slid the doors open. He wasn't there. The train moved on, stopped, hissed, shuddered. Form of horses

gathered, tossed their heads. Neighing grew fainter. Sound of hoofs on dry earth. Marble and limestone. Movement of not seeing her, perhaps dust blinded. I thought I heard his voice from another compartment. She stood in the doorway. He didn't look up. He used a new pen. Creases around his mouth, eyes. Creases in trousers. Hand groped for the table. He fell forward. The whisky bottle empty. Day after day, the nights slid across, rolled under. Windows closed. What's the time then? He twisted her wrist round. Your watch has stopped must have stopped. Hands pulled blinds up, down. On shutters, between them, lifting one slat up. Fingers in hair, the spine, scratches marked the outline of ribs. Note-paper covered in illegible writing. He works out a route, statement, report. His hand covered the paper, screwed it up, thrown out of the window, under the train. He drew slowly on the cigar, eyes half closed. Hands rested between his legs, head bent back, fingers sprang out, moved as though emphasising some dialogue.

We went for a drink. Another part of the train. A fat priest opposite a nun. Crucifix swung against hair, beard, chest, hair. The nun rose in the folds of blue light. We sat at the bar, avoided looking in the mirror opposite. He glanced occasionally sideways. A circle of wetness on polished wood she made many circles from. Swift turns his head made. She knew it was impossible. She remained. The drink became warm water. His knuckles red, dark hairs slipped through. I felt their weight. The heavier parts of window frames, wheels, metal. I leaned nearer. His head struck his arms. Out of trees her laughter came, went. The corridor twisted from me.

Doors rattled open, closed. Shapes darker closed in. A passing line of birds. In the dust, a sudden stirring of wings, out of branches.

He lay on dry leaves, a strand of yellow grass in his mouth. A large nest abandoned, her fingers traced the fibres, the rough surface of grass and twigs. He stood up, rose on his toes, chest thrust out, his head tossed back, forward. Women passed, water jugs on their heads. A place he knew, brought her to. He spoke of other places, women he'd known, wanted to know. I laughed, danced round him. He never dances. His hands feel the table's length. The hardness of that. Smoothness. Knees under moved together, separated. Rings up and down her fingers. Along earth wrinkles. The white of his eyes before completely shut. Shape of mouth corners shapes the corners of his eyes. Eyebrows. The shape of thoughts. Dreams

between tall buildings. Drone of traffic. He listened for the key to turn. Steps in carpeted places. Dialogue. What to say, what is anticipated, what is not. Accusations. Apologetic her smile. He gave his High Priest look from his Zen position in the middle of the bed. Submission to the image. To departures he perhaps sees from the hotel, through shutter slits. As she kisses her escort from the night. Perhaps a little curiosity. Double bed not slept in. The extra one with blankets in a heap. Notepaper on desk. Briefcase shiny brown. His shoes, less shiny, neatly together under the desk. Rooms we take the shape of. Yellow, white light crept in, when it could be any time of day. When she makes love with men younger than herself. Number amongst numbers. Room 311. He unfolded from his stunted position, and took out the ear plugs, their small roundness in his arm pits for softening. Shaped to his ears. The shape of these she came back to. Hello had a good rest? I think his eyes were open. He didn't reply in the darkness

of the compartment. Light held a soft yellow lump in its blueness. His words weighed, as he bent, picked up a cigarette. A pebble. He slung the pebble out to sea. I thought he was shaking, but it was the lurch of the train. We'll be there on time—we'll make enquiries once we get settled in. I remained in an upright position, and saw her body unfold from the folds of her dress. Motions of undressing alone, the quickness. And when with someone. Hair brushed slowly. A face behind the face.

Faces of officials. My own for them. No I don't belong to the Party, my brother might have done—I don't know. We were followed. We knew they were there in hotel lobbies, restaurants, cinemas, parks, cafes. Quite by accident I am involved. The cab driver watched us in the rear mirror. To be on the move again at least is something, he said, looking out of the back window. Whiteness of buildings at the checkpoint we were not allowed to cross. Perhaps they think we are spies, he said, laughing, and caught hold of her bracelet. Maybe we can bribe them.

Our papers were apparently not in order. The men played cards, smoked, coughed and spat under the unshaded light. The interpreter was expected in the morning. He arrived at noon, a small fat dog under his arm. His hands dug into the dog when I offered him the money. The dog watched us. Complexities of ringed fingers came up through the dog's wiry hair. Shutters closed around us. Silence outside. The guard made advances. Curly hair, sensual mouth, a girlish face. He continually slapped at flies. In another room a babble of voices, scrape of chairs. Paper rustled, numerous papers, forms we were told to fill in. Sweat trickled from the interpreter's forehead, above his mouth, through his moustache. There is one paper missing, he said, and offered me a cigarette, which I refused. We went to a longer, narrower room. The fan was out of order. A button had fallen off the interpreter's

shirt. Glint of cross, medal. I continued playing the part, I had no alternative after the money had been refused. She could tell how late it was by the barking of dogs, persistent, from one to another, across the town. His steps above, one two one. Two. One two. A scar on the interpreter's hand, thin purple on white, under the black. He panted. The dog whined from the table. Does God laugh at Himself madam—ah I beg your pardon you are a non-believer I notice from your papers. He laughed, edge of teeth over lower lip, made sucking noises, made as though he looked at the dog. Coiled his fingers round its collar. He offered me some melon. It's a pity I have a weak heart madam my dog has a weak bladder we make a good pair don't you think? Pool on the table trickled over some flowers. The dog sat on its haunches, lay on its back, pawed the interpreter's arms. I could not see the interpreter's eyes. A dozen lights spun in his spectacles. Two ringed plump fingers round the phone. Ah good your missing papers have been found—I hope you have a pleasant journey madam and good luck—God be with you—ah forgive us for the slight misunderstanding—a case of mistaken identity let's say. He half bowed. We shook hands.

Bundle of chickens, tied together by their legs, fluttered on the stairs. He sat on a bench, reading a newspaper. Pages he cut open with the edge of his hand. Finally he folded it together, creased on the inside, straightened out on the outside, and smoothed the surfaces. We were waved through the Control, men half drunk, asleep. She had seaweed in her hair, pieces of melon skin round her nails. The interpreter stood at the window, his face buried in the dog.

Land crusts. Staircases round a tower. Black flights of steps. Paper flowers, beer cans, wine bottles surrounded small white crosses. Unmade roads curled above chasms. Sea left behind, interior of mountains yawned in all its ridges, furrows, and closed up. Clusters of white buildings, olive trees, cypresses.

Half naked children squatted outside broken gates, doors, fences. Then he exploded, they have no right to keep us that long—interrogate us like that. Men looked vaguely up from cafe tables. Old, young women in black, took washing in, bent over ovens. Buildings turned pale yellow. Wind came off the sea. Spray on the pavements, roads, mixed with dust. God I think we're still being followed, he whispered, what is it they want?

The train halted. From his compartment it was day. From mine I saw the stars, glimpse of water, my face landscaped. Hairline around the mouth. Trees. The train moved on. Long front part twisted into, out of tunnels. He slid the doors apart, swayed there, grinning. Does he laugh at himself when alone? Eyes blink when dreaming. What are his dreams, needs, obsessions, demands, desires. Fantasies he rarely shares? The strangling of the interpreter's dog with its collar.

We'll soon arrive I've spoken to the porter. He flexed his wrist. Smudge of egg at the mouth corners. Sun squeezed between mountains. Mountains met clouds, many islands. A city he knows, that might be any city. A square, fountain, skyscrapers, blocks of concrete, steel, crystal towers. Cafes, dark humid interiors, waiters straightened up, weaved between potted plants. She stumbled over cripples in alleys, passage ways, knew they heard the rattle in her throat. The thought of knives thrown at her back, bent over the bill. Waiting. She knew this role well. Beggars played theirs to everyone's embarrassment. The dull thud of a body pushed out by the manager. She looked at the newspaper. Surrounded by ashtrays, bottles not quite empty. By the sea, even there eyes evaded, knowing he watched as she searched shapes appearing, crawling towards her, amongst his clothes, on chairs, the floor. Once she was dressed, he no longer wanted the day. His face pushed into two pillows, under the blankets, felt the pressure of her hands